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Evaluation of the UNESCO Education sector's work on Inclusion in Education (2016-2021)

Abstract and Acknowledgements

Abstract

UNESCO's approach towards inclusion in education is based on the principle of "every learner matters and matters equally" and as such an expression of the Agenda 2030 paradigm of 'leaving no one behind'. The evaluation confirmed that UNESCO - as the lead agency and custodian of SDG 4 - has pushed the inclusion agenda at global level by putting 'leaving no one behind' at the core of its Education Sector mandate and by promoting inclusion in education as a holistic concept, including through a number of landmark publications and events. UNESCO's comparative strengths in inclusion in education are particularly recognized in its global research, its normative work, and its convening power, and its presence is also clearly felt at the national policy level through capacity strengthening, exchange of practices and policy development. The Organization also made important contributions for enhanced inclusion of specific marginalised learners, such as refugees and people with disabilities. However with respect to capacity development at grassroots level, other organizations appear in a better position. Challenges also remain for translating the holistic concept of inclusion in education into practice and to establish the necessary linkages to the broader agenda of inclusion across other policy areas, such as social inclusion. UNESCO Member States expressed a strong commitment and more explicit emphasis on the concept of leaving no one behind with inclusion as the underlying paradigm across the new UNESCO 41 C/4 Medium-term strategy offering a strategic framework for a more holistic and intersectoral approach. UNESCO needs to build on the momentum and capitalise on the increased policy attention to achieve a more sustainable practice and continuous implementation towards advancing on inclusion in education. This will require a continuous joint effort, in particular to address enhancing challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations point to building on UNESCO's research and strengthening visibility and use of data available on vulnerable, and marginalised learners and barriers for inclusion, to promoting and mainstreaming inclusion in education more explicitly and more consistently across all thematic areas of the Education Sector, by building on the existing organizational expertise and structures, including through intersectoral task teams and by strengthening capacities, systems and processes to operationalise the strengthened focus for inclusion in education across UNESCO. The evaluation also recommends to engage increasingly with the organizations that often matter most when it comes to driving inclusion in education in practical terms, namely local education authorities, non-governmental organizations, organizations representing vulnerable or marginalised communities as well as teacher-parent associations.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADG	Assistant Director-General
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASP	Associated Schools Project
ASPnet	UNESCO Associated Schools Network
BSP	Bureau for Strategic Planning
CESA	African Union Continental Education Strategy for Africa
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EASNIE	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
ED	Education
EENET	Enabling Education Network
EiE	Education in Emergencies
EME	Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ER	Expected Result
ET	Evaluation team
GEM	Global Education Monitoring
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HQ	Headquarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IBE	International Bureau for Education
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGE	Inclusion and Gender Equality
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
IITE	Institute for Information Technologies in Education
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IOS	Division of Internal Oversight Services
IPL	Inclusive Policy Lab
LEG	Local Education Group
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MLA	Main Line of Action
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORCAP	Norwegian Capacity
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OOSC	Out of School Children
PAX	Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations
PEER	Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews
QUESST	Quality Universal Education for Syrian Students and Teachers
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SHS	Social and Human Sciences
SISTER	System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and Evaluation of Results
STEM	Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDIS	UN Disability inclusion strategy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNPRPD	UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
WFP	World Food Programme
XB	Extrabudgetary resources/ voluntary contributions

Executive Summary

UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in Education

1.   With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, United Nations Member States pledged to 'leave no one behind', promising a 'just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most disadvantaged are met.' UNESCO and its partners of the Global Education Coalition[1] have been working together to advance on the commitment of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) towards more inclusive and equitable quality education systems and the promotion of 'lifelong learning for all'.[2] In a rapidly-changing world which faces constant major challenges, it has never been more crucial to make education a universal right, and a reality for all.[3] The impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic, which is still unfolding, is making some inequalities more visible, further widening existing disparities and is leading to new inequalities and exclusion in education. The effects will be felt even more by marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

2.   While the role and work of UNESCO as the lead agency and coordinator of SDG 4 in relation to inclusion appears overall well defined, the UNESCO Education Sector is seeking to further improve and strengthen the focus of its work towards inclusion. In addition, it is striving to ensure that inclusion is more systematically mainstreamed and becomes a guiding principle in all its normative, monitoring and policy guidance, in its research and knowledge development as well as in its capacity development efforts. Within this context, the UNESCO Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS), Evaluation Office, at the request of the Education Sector, has conducted an evaluation of the work of the Education Sector as it relates to Inclusion in Education.

Objectives and methodology of the evaluation

3.   The evaluation aimed to identify what has been achieved so far, whether UNESCO is on the right track as a standard-setting organization towards achieving the 2030 inclusion agenda, and reconfirm the Organization's comparative strengths and optimal positioning in this area of work. It provides programmatic and strategic level recommendations to feed into the formulation of future strategic directions for the Organization's work on inclusion in education and inform the way forward.

4.   The evaluation was conducted between February and December 2021. It followed United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation norms and standards and ethical guidelines. The evaluation benefitted from an Evaluation Reference Group[4] to ensure quality of the process and deliverables. The evaluation process and tools were in line with UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation.

5.   The evaluation methodology included the reconstruction of a Theory of Change to explore the causal logic behind approaches and identify conditions, assumptions and contextual factors that influence implementation of inclusion in education. The evaluation triangulated data collected from a variety of sources, using a mixed-method approach including qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods.

6.   Consultations were conducted with a broad range of stakeholders, including through a survey of Member States via their UNESCO National Commissions and a survey of external stakeholders and partners, as well as interviews with representatives from UNESCO staff at headquarters, field offices, Category 1 Institutes, government and non-governmental stakeholders and partners, (inter)national civil society organisations including organisations representing vulnerable groups (such as persons with disabilities), and bilateral donors. Furthermore, country-level case studies and interviews explored interventions with a focus on crisis-affected people on the move and the mainstreaming of inclusion in education in policy planning and development work.

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1   The Global Education Coalition was formed specifically to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 school closures.
2   Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
3   Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020
4   Comprising representatives from the Education Sector at HQ (Section of Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education (EME), Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality (IGE), and Executive Office), UNESCO field offices (Amman, Bangkok, Juba); the Global Monitoring Report (GEM) team; Category 1 Institutes, i.e. the International Bureau for Education (IBE), the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), and the Communication and Information (CI) Sector, the Bureau for Strategic Planning (BSP).

KEY FINDINGS

As the main contributor to the formulation of SDG 4, UNESCO's work in education is intrinsically linked to leaving no one behind, with inclusion as one of the key paradigms underlying the 2030 Agenda. As the lead agency and custodian of SDG 4, UNESCO has pushed the inclusion agenda at global level by putting inclusion at the core of its Education Sector mandate. It has done so through its normative work5 and policy guidance and the Organization is recognised as the lead agency for promoting inclusion as a holistic concept.

7.   UNESCO unpacks what 'inclusion' as the underlying concept of the 2030 Agenda means and with its global position has been pushing already for decades for a more holistic approach to inclusion. UNESCO is focusing on the inclusivity of the whole education system rather than removing specific barriers for inclusion one by one. This means UNESCO supports the process of making systems more inclusive instead of only the elements that constitute an inclusive system per se. The contribution for which the Organization can be held accountable is to foster or uphold a conducive environment for countries, international organisations, and other stakeholders, to work together on the multi-faceted approach of inclusion in education contributing to SDG 4 and Agenda 2030 as a continuous process.

UNESCO has been playing a leading role as an agenda setter through landmark publications and initiatives that put inclusion in the spotlight. Many stakeholders identify UNESCO as the main driver for steering discussions on inclusion in education, offering conceptual clarification as well as guidance for governments and organisations.

8.   UNESCO landmark publications and related activities (conferences, consultations, and data collection) are frequently cited and promoted by other organisations, referring to their conceptual clarity, guidance, concrete examples and relevant data for governments and organisations working on inclusion. These include at the global level most notably, the 2019 Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education calling upon governments and other stakeholders to accelerate efforts and actions on areas of inclusion and the

Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM) 2020 on inclusion and education.[6] Other notable publications provide country-level information, such as the 2017 Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education[7] providing guidance on what building blocks constitute an inclusive education system, and the 2020 publication 'Towards inclusion in education: Status, trends and challenges, the UNESCO Salamanca Statement 25 years on'.[8]

UNESCO's comparative strengths in the field of inclusion in education are clearly recognised in its global research, and normative work, and the Organization's convening power around the topic.[9] UNESCO's presence is also clearly felt at the national policy level. With respect to capacity development at grassroots level, other organisations appear in a better position.

9.   UNESCO is recognised as the go-to institution with a global perspective on the wider spectrum of inclusion in education for high-level partners that work on inclusion in education. Several stakeholders also underline that it remains critical for UNESCO and its partners to keep alive the momentum of the 2030 inclusion agenda to ensure that the attention to inclusion does not fade when it comes to actually developing and renewing policies and education practices. Among other, they point to the importance of engaging with and involving local education authorities, as well as local-level civil society organisations, such as those that work directly with teachers, principals, parents and students, and those working with and for people with disabilities or other vulnerable groups directly. While these stakeholders are considered crucial for applying the holistic concept and for translating policies and principles into practice, they often demonstrate capacity gaps for engaging and working with donors and international development partners, such as UNESCO.

Inclusion is presented as the underlying paradigm of the new 41 C/4 Medium-term strategy 2022-29, demonstrating the stronger and more explicit emphasis by UNESCO Member States on the concept of leaving no one behind, including across the Global Priorities Africa and Gender Equality, as well as in relation to other priority groups such as Youth and SIDS.

10.   While 'leaving no one behind' was enshrined across the UNESCO 37 C/4 Medium-term Strategy 2014-202, the recently approved 41 C/4 Medium Term Strategy 2022-29

5   Such as the 1960 Convention against discrimination in education or the 2019 Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education. UNESCO (2019): https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf000037091

6   https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/

7   UNESCO (2017), A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254

8   UNESCO (2020), Towards inclusion in education: Status, trends and challenges: The UNESCO Salamanca Statement 25 years on: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374246

9   While outside the scope of this evaluation many country-level stakeholders still echo the effects of the often-mentioned 2008 IBE conference on "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future" http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/international-conference-education/48th-session-2008 as a global landmark that significantly influenced the discourse and reform thinking towards a more holistic concept of inclusion in education at national level.

more explicitly refers to the principle 'leaving no one behind' at the highest conceptual and strategic level of the Organization. This demonstrates Member States' and the Secretariat's strong commitment to the concept of inclusion as a priority issue to guide UNESCO's work over the next eight years. It thus provides a more holistic and enabling framework creating favourable conditions for an effective operationalisation of the concept of inclusion in education and intersectional considerations across sector specific programmes, other global priorities as well as through intersectoral actions.

UNESCO's current organizational structures, systems and resources dedicated to operationalising and mainstreaming the focus on inclusion across the Education Sector's mandate and intersectorally are still insufficient. A critical mass of human resources with specialised expertise on inclusion across the Education sector is lacking in particular in the field. Opportunities for intersectoral work can be further explored.

11.   Both internal and external stakeholders perceive work on inclusion in education within UNESCO as fragmented and scattered across different organizational entities, units and institutions often working in silos. While there are dedicated units working on inclusion specific activities, and despite the recognised importance of the topic, there is no single organization-wide coordination mechanism for mainstreaming inclusion across the Education Sector which limits organizational capacity to divide roles, take stock, coordinate and monitor contributions to this process. The number of staff with specialised expertise on inclusion in education, in particular across the field network,[10] has not kept pace with the growing emphasis on inclusion as a global paradigm underlying all of the ED sector's work.

12.   While there are emerging examples of intersectoral collaboration around inclusion, such as the intersectoral programme on Promoting Indigenous Knowledge, Culture and Languages or the Intersectoral Task Team on Disability Rights and Inclusion, the challenges to working intersectorally and to harnessing synergies within the Organization (between, for instance, HQ and field offices) as well as with its associated networks, such as the ASPnet or the UNESCO Chairs remain. The new 41 C/4 and C/5 strategic and programme planning approach, identifying overarching strategic objectives to which relevant entities across the Organization contribute, promises more structure on who, of the different entities and

sectors, will contribute to the overall strategic objectives, but practical details on how this will be operationalised and adequate systems and processes are still in development or not yet fully explored.

While the overall financial resources dedicated to inclusion in education are increasing, interventions on inclusion in the context of education in emergencies attract the majority of resources and it remains a challenge to mobilise resources for interventions dedicated to other vulnerable groups or for promoting and/or for mainstreaming inclusion as a holistic concept.

13.   UNESCO addresses a large variety of reasons for exclusion. Some vulnerabilities are better addressed than others across the inclusion related portfolio of activities. Gender equality and girls' education are most visible on the UNESCO agenda. Other areas such as, inclusion of people with disabilities, linguistic and ethnic minorities, vulnerabilities due to the lack of accessible ICT tools and are addressed as well, but at a more incipient level. Crisis-affected people on the move[11] form a particular target group for UNESCO as an area that increasingly attracts voluntary contributions.

UNESCO is well placed and connected to all the main players related to inclusion in education. It is equipped to promote inclusion across its work in relation to specific education sub-sectors, specific target groups, and reasons for exclusion. UNESCO is linked to these organisations, and well respected by its counterparts as the leading Organization on the topic. Overall, cooperation with other international organisations has been increasing.

14.   Obvious partners for UNESCO are those within the UN family and other multilateral organisations.[12] While the links with those organisations are often not primarily on inclusion in education, but within the context of extensive cooperation on other thematic areas (for instance work on TVET, higher education, teacher education, girls' education), inclusion and equity are touched upon, but often not at the forefront.

15.   UNESCO cooperates with other specialised organisations such as the EASNIE (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education)[13,] EENET (Enabling Education Network), INEE (Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies) and Open Society Foundation (OSF) on joint publications, projects, organising events and developing tools

10   However, some regional offices, such as the regional Office for Asia Pacific region in Bangkok have provided technical backstopping for country offices who do not have sufficient expertise.

11   Those affected by both armed conflicts (emergencies and protracted) and natural disasters and both directly and indirectly (host communities) affected (UNESCO terminology).

12   such as International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF, World Bank, GPE, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, UNHCR, Education Cannot Wait (ECW), United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Humanity & Inclusion (HI) and the Open Society Foundation (OSF).

13   https://www.european-agency.org/

and guidelines. Overall, cooperation with other international organisations has been increasing, and the cooperation approach is considered successful in terms of avoiding duplications and assuring synergies between organisations working on inclusion and inclusion-related topics.

Results of UNESCO's work are demonstrated through its contributions to conceptual clarity and global awareness (such as through Cali), as well as through achievements in data and oversight (including through UIS's and GEM collaboration), and contributions to the development of policies and capacities at country level (supported by Category 1 Institutes). Projects with a focus on including marginalised learners have also shown positive results such as for inclusion of people with disabilities, indigenous or refugee learners. However, translating the Organization's contributions into actual systemic change at country level takes time and cannot be easily measured.

16.   The evaluation found evidence for relevant contributions of UNESCO's work towards creating a conducive environment which has resulted in visibly higher levels of awareness for inclusion in education in Member States. National level stakeholders recognise the contributions of UNESCO in developing education policies, and more broadly through capacity building among policymakers and teachers alike, through events and advocacy campaigns on themes related to inclusion in education. However, there is still little evidence that UNESCO's support has contributed to actual advances towards inclusion in education across education systems and practices.

17.   Progress is most notable concerning UNESCOs support in knowledge development, exchange and learning. For instance, the 2020 GEM report on inclusion and education is one of the most visible examples and influential contributions of UNESCO's work in this area as confirmed by respondents to the survey. Follow-up products associated to this seminal publication, such as the Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER)[14] or the UIS/GEM partnership for the development of the UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE)[15] are highly appreciated for their potential in improving the knowledge base in Member States. However, Member States require continuous support for translating such broader insights into concrete policies and for monitoring implementation.

Despite its successes, UNESCO is not sufficiently systematizing information and good practices on inclusion specific initiatives and inclusion mainstreaming which requires collecting evidence and communicating what contributions the Organization can offer and what it has achieved in the field of inclusion across the Organization.

18.   UNESCO achievements in this field are currently not systematically recorded and brought together to generate and communicate an overarching perspective on what UNESCO contributes to inclusion in education. An organization-wide approach to tracking the mainstreaming of inclusion in education and results across the different education sector entities, as well as other programme sectors is not yet available beyond extracting initiatives and projects explicitly labelled as 'inclusion of specific vulnerable groups' and 'education in emergencies'. In addition, recent evaluations of projects that worked on inclusion-related topics are yielding only limited information about their effectiveness and potential lessons on what works for whom and under what circumstances, and their findings do not systematically feed into an organizational knowledge base to stimulate such learning. [16]

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14   See https://education-profiles.org/ Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER) map countries' laws and policies on inclusion in education offering insights through peer reviews and aim to help improve country's policies in education.

15   The UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) takes an intersectional approach at education disadvantage, providing data for considering inclusion from various specific angles.

16   As also underlined in the 2021 UNESCO Synthetic review of evaluations,

Conclusions and way forward

19.   The evaluation clearly demonstrates that UNESCO has a strong position and is on the right track as a standard-setting organization as it pushes the ever more important inclusion agenda at global level towards achieving the SDG 4 and the 2030 Agenda. It also confirms the Organization's comparative strengths through its work on conceptual clarification, its normative work, its global knowledge production, the exchange of practices, its strong convening power around the topic as well through its policy and capacity development work at country level. Furthermore, UNESCO made important contributions for enhanced inclusion of specific marginalised learners, such as refugees and people with disabilities.

20.   While UNESCO is recognised as the global standard setter and go-to-organization, challenges remain for translating the holistic concept of inclusion in education into practice and to establish the necessary linkages to the broader agenda of inclusion across policy areas in other programme sectors, such as social inclusion. While UNESCO tends to work closely with governments, as well as with other UN and development organisations, it faces difficulties and lacks capacities in the field to engage with the organisations that often matter most when it comes to driving inclusion in education

in practical terms, namely local education authorities, non-governmental organisations, organisations representing vulnerable or marginalised communities as well as teacher-parent associations.

21.   While the political commitment to inclusion in education is increasing at the level of Member States, taking meaningful and long-term action as an expression of such engagement requires a continuous joint effort. The recent enhanced challenges for 'equal access and quality education for all' as spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic created a momentum for a necessary next step to capitalise on the policy attention and achieve a more sustainable practice and continuous implementation towards achieving inclusion in education in the years to come.

22.   UNESCO needs to fully assume its role as the steward of the SDG 4 inclusion paradigm by further building on its research and strengthening visibility and use of data available on vulnerable and marginalised learners and barriers for inclusion, and by promoting and mainstreaming inclusion in education more explicitly and more consistently across all of the thematic areas of the Education Sector's work. This will require building on and adapting the existing organizational architecture, systems and processes to operationalise the enhanced focus for inclusion in education within the new C/4 and C/5 which is offering a framework for a more holistic and intersectoral approach.

Management Response

Overall Management Response

The Education sector thanks the Division of Internal Oversight Services for the evaluation. Inclusion in education is at the heart of SDG4 and continues to be a guiding principle of UNESCO's education programme. The findings of the evaluation clearly recognize UNESCO's commitment to inclusion, as well as comparative advantage relating to its research function, normative work and convening power. While also recognizing UNESCO's policy and capacity development work at country level, in particular growing support for enhanced inclusion of specific marginalised learners, such as refugees and people with disabilities, it does not capture the full scale of UNESCO's work at country level, as the evaluation examined a set of specific interventions.

The findings of the evaluation are timely and allows the Secretariat to give further impetus to the global momentum around inclusion that has been built up in recent years. In addition, they provide a solid basis for informing and evolving UNESCO's programming and thinking around inclusion across the Education Sector's mandate and intersectorally beyond the time-bound recommendations.

Recommandations	Management response
Recommendation 1: Strengthen the inclusion and equity dimension in the monitoring and reporting process of UNESCO's education-related normative instruments, particularly for the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education. Addressed to: UNESCO Education sector, in particular the Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, Division for Education 2030, Division for Peace and Sustainable Development and relevant Category 1 Institutes By December 2024	**Accepted** In line with UNESCO's Strategy on standard setting instruments (2016-2021), the Education sector is committed to ensuring that education-related normative instruments become more impactful at country level, particularly in the current context, where the pandemic has caused widespread and profound disruption of education globally. The Education sector has already started examining the changing dimensions of the right to education and the need for an evolving framework that responds to contemporary challenges and growing inequalities. The recommendation rightfully highlights the need to further integrate the inclusion and equity dimensions in the monitoring and reporting processes of corresponding instruments and particularly in the 1960 Convention which will be pursued by the Sector for better implementation.
Recommendation 2: Systematically use UNESCO's normative instruments and tools for policy guidance on inclusion for all of the Education Sector's programme and project planning and implementation. Addressed to: UNESCO Education Sector Divisions, field offices and Category 1 Institutes in cooperation with UNESCO ED Executive Office By June 2024	**Accepted** The Education sector agrees that there is an opportunity to capitalize on its rich array of resources and normative guidance to further mainstream inclusion in education for its own programme planning purposes in all its thematic areas. There are practical ways in which such guidance can be put into practice by developing easy to use tools that can be appropriated by staff during the inception of workplans and projects. The Executive office will also integrate such guidance in its appraisal process of workplans and project reviews

Recommandations	Management response
Recommendation 3: Operationalize the mainstreaming of inclusion in education by building on UNESCO's existing inclusion networks and structures, i.e. the Gender focal points of the ED sector, the Intersectoral Task Team of the International Decade of Indigenous languages (IDIL), the Intersectoral Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, the Intersectoral Task Team on Disability Rights and Inclusion, in order to further systematize inclusion in UNESCO's operations through training, leveraging champions, or through an organization-wide network or community of practice on inclusion. Addressed to: UNESCO Education sector in collaboration with other Programme sectors, BSP, PAX and Gender Equality Division By December 2024	**Accepted** The Education sector has very actively participated in and contributed to different task teams and internal networks whose work is promoting, among others, inclusion in education. This recommendation gives the opportunity to define a more structured model of the existing inclusion architecture which can play a rigorous role in embedding inclusion in education, and look for ways, including through training, leveraging champions to ensure a more institutional approach.
Recommendation 4: Increase the availability, use, and dissemination of data on inclusion to learn what works for whom under which circumstances. Addressed to: UNESCO Education sector By June 2023	**Accepted** This recommendation is being implemented and will continue, as the Sector relies on existing available data around inclusion to inform its own programming and support to Member States, as well as to advocate for inclusion and equity. In particular, UNESCO will seek to enhance the use of data on inclusion through the PEER and WIDE databases.
Recommendation 5: Focus on engagement and strategic partnerships with marginalised/vulnerable groups and their representatives. Addressed to: UNESCO Education Sector Divisions, field offices and Category 1 Institutes in cooperation with the ED Executive Office. By December 2024	**Accepted** The Education Sector agrees that focusing on inclusion and equity implies engagement and an inclusive dialogue with diverse constituencies, particularly marginalised groups and their representatives, ensuring that they are part of co-creation processes. This is already part of on-going efforts and will be further systematized in UNESCO's outreach and programmes, also in line with recommendation 3.

1. Introduction

1.1   Background

1.   The commitment of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) to ensure 'inclusive and equitable quality education' and promote 'lifelong learning for all' is an expression of the 2030 Agenda paradigm to leave no one behind, promising a 'just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most disadvantaged are met'[17].

2.   In a rapidly-changing world which faces constant major challenges – from technological challenges to climate change, conflict, the forced movement of people, intolerance and hate – it has never been more crucial to make education a universal right, and a reality for all.[18] The substantive impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic which is still unfolding is further widening disparities and leading to further inequalities and exclusion in education, with effects to be felt for decades to come and even more by marginalised and disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities and crisis affected people on the move.

3.   UNESCO and its partners of the Global Education Coalition[19] have been working together to advance towards more inclusive and equitable quality education systems and are supporting countries in their efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 school closures, address learning losses and adapt education systems, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.[20]

4.   While the role and work of UNESCO as the lead agency and coordinator of SDG 4 in relation to inclusion appears overall well defined, the UNESCO Education Sector is seeking to further improve and strengthen the focus of its work in inclusion as well as ensure that inclusion is more systematically mainstreamed and becomes a guiding principle in all its normative, monitoring and policy guidance efforts, as well as capacity development efforts undertaken by its different education sector entities and field offices.

5.   Within this context, the UNESCO Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) Evaluation Office, at the request of the Education Sector, has conducted an evaluation of the work of the Education Sector as it relates to Inclusion in Education as part of IOS' corporate biannual evaluation plan (2020/21).

1.2   Purpose and use of the evaluation

6.   The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess and generate findings, lessons learned, regarding the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the UNESCO Education Sector's work pertaining to the field of inclusion in education. It is intended to provide programmatic and strategic level recommendations for fully integrating and mainstreaming inclusion across the work of different Education Sector units and field offices.

The evaluation is therefore intended to **feed into the formulation of future strategic directions for the Organization's work on inclusion in education** and inform the way forward for recently developed and new initiatives. The **primary intended users** of the evaluation are UNESCO's Education Sector, in particular the Section of Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education (EME) and the Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality (IGE), as well as senior management, in particular the Assistant Director General (ADG) for ED, Directors of ED Divisions in HQ, as well as UNESCO Category 1 Institutes and Education Regional offices, senior management of other relevant Programme Sectors, the Bureau for Strategic Planning (BSP), the Division for Gender Equality (GEN), the Sector for External Relations and Priority Africa (PAX), as well as relevant managers and programme staff at Headquarters, and Field Offices. Member States, and UNESCO's constituencies, other UNESCO partners and networks are considered as secondary users of the evaluation.

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17   Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
18   Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020
19   The Global Education Coalition was formed specifically to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 school closures.
20   See for the evolution of school closures and learning loss across the world since the outbreak of the pandemic: https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse

1.3   Objectives and scope of the evaluation

7.   The evaluation objective aims to identify what has been achieved so far, whether UNESCO is on the right track as a standard-setting organization towards achieving the 2030 inclusion agenda and reconfirm the Organization's comparative strengths and optimal positioning in this area of work, in particular in view of the Organization's limited resources compared to its vast mandate. Current developments as well as future opportunities are also explored from a holistic and interdisciplinary perspective.

8.   In terms of **scope**, the evaluation assessed the work of the UNESCO Education Sector on inclusion in education at global, regional and national levels within the framework of programmes and activities conducted through both the Regular Programme and Extrabudgetary resources/voluntary contributions with a focus on the last three biennia, 2016/17 to 2020/21.

9.   The geographical scope of the evaluation is global. Furthermore, in line with the Terms of Reference the evaluation focuses on the Education Sector's efforts towards mainstreaming inclusion in education on the one hand but also zooms in on the Sector's inclusion specific work, with a particular focus on learners[21] with disabilities, and on crisis-affected people on the move[22].

10.   Finally, the evaluation assesses the Education Sector's inclusion-related work against UNESCO's global priorities Africa and Gender Equality, and its coherence and continued relevance in the framework of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda of 'leaving no one behind' and SDG 4 in particular. While not a thematic focus area in the context of this evaluation, gender equality is assessed from both a mainstreaming and intersectional perspective across inclusion specific interventions.[23]

11.   The five key dimensions for the evaluation are based on the six OECD –DAC criteria as follows:[24]

(i)   UNESCO's relevance, comparative strengths and opportunities in the field of inclusion in education; (*RELEVANCE, EXTERNAL COHERENCE*)

(ii)   Partnerships, cooperation and fundraising in particular for inclusion specific programming; (*EXTERNAL COHERENCE, RELEVANCE and (FINANCIAL) SUSTAINABILITY*)

(iii)   Internal coherence throughout the organization and interdisciplinary cooperation; (*INTERNAL COHERENCE, EFFICIENCY*)

(iv)   Results achieved, signs of impact and sustainability; and, (*EFFECTIVENESS, (SIGNS OF) IMPACT, SUSTAINABILITY*)

(v)   Visibility, knowledge management and communication. (EFFECTIVENESS, SUSTAINABILITY)

13.   As this evaluation is conducted in a context where the substantive impact of the current **COVID-19 pandemic** is still unfolding, it also reviews the extent to which UNESCO's work on inclusion in education has reacted and been able to take the impact and evolving dynamics of the current COVID-19 pandemic into consideration. The implications of COVID-19 have therefore been addressed - as relevant - across the above key dimensions, in particular in its prospective and forward-looking dimensions.

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21   In this context 'learners' is referring to all potential learners; those already within the education system and those excluded from the education system. It also refers to young and older learners.

22   In line with UNESCO terminology this refers to those affected by both armed conflicts (emergencies and protracted) and natural disasters and both directly and indirectly (host communities) affected.

23   Gender equality is deliberately not the focus of this evaluation, in particular as separate specific evaluations with a focus on gender equality have been or are being conducted, such as the evaluation 'From ambition to action: evaluation of the UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality (2020) and the 2021/22 ongoing Evaluation of the UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality (Part 2).

24   The evaluation questions are further operationalised in an evaluation matrix (Annex 14).

1.4   Methodology

14.   The evaluation was conducted between February and December 2021.

1.4.1   Evaluation approach and principles

15.   In line with the above purpose the evaluation primarily takes a formative orientation but also includes summative elements. This is essential in order to learn what has been achieved so far, what worked, why and under what circumstances, and what the successes, good practices and challenges have been. The evaluation followed a theory-based and participative approach.

16.   The evaluation was conducted in line with UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards and reflects the requirements outlined in the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation, as well as in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.

17.   The evaluation process was designed in four key phases:

Phase 1: The Reconstruction of the Theory of Change (ToC)[25] helped assess the causal logic behind approaches and identify conditions, assumptions and contextual factors that influence implementation of inclusion in education interventions. Based on the reconstruction of the ToC the expected change process was mapped and then confronted with the actual/observed change process. Furthermore, a stakeholder mapping was conducted (see annex 5). The understanding of this process was informed by a broad consultative approach in which representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups, including those representing disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, were invited to participate.

Developed by the evaluation team based on document review and initial consultations, the ToC was discussed and refined during a ToC workshop with the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) in April 2021 and is presented in Chapter 2.

Phase 2: Assessment against the evaluation criteria: with the help of a detailed evaluation matrix[26], past activities were assessed against the OECD DAC[27] evaluation criteria[28] and woven into more prospective considerations. The assessment of evaluation questions was grouped by the five key dimensions and is presented in Chapter 3.

Phase 3: Analysis, and development of conclusions and recommendations: Based on the reconstructed ToC, the assessment and the analysis against the evaluation criteria, data was triangulated and fed into the overall assessment and analysis in line with the evaluation questions. This contributed to formulating the conclusions and recommendations with a forward-looking perspective as presented in Chapter 4.

Phase 4: Validation, Revision and Quality assurance: During a validation workshop in December 2021, preliminary recommendations and suggested actions were further discussed with the ERG and key stakeholders from the Education Sector, with the aim to further refine and validate the conclusions and recommendation. Furthermore, the draft evaluation report underwent an external quality assurance, and the ED sector provided a management response to the evaluation and to the individual recommendations.

1.4.2   Data collection methods

Desk review

18.   The analysis of relevant UNESCO documentation and of other related research and literature fed the reconstruction of the ToC and provided an overview of UNESCO's work on inclusion in education (portfolio analysis) as well as insights on the results achieved. Documents consulted included project documentation, publications and reports from UNESCO Headquarters (HQ), Field Offices and relevant Category 1 institutes, and as relevant sources from other organisations. Annex 10 provides an overview of the documentation and literature consulted.

Interviews at global, regional and Member State level

19.   To get a deeper insight into UNESCO's work, a total of 69 respondents from a broad range of stakeholder groups were interviewed, including UNESCO staff as well as external stakeholders. Indicative interview protocols /checklists for the HQ interviews, Field Office interviews and external partners' interviews were based on a selection of relevant questions per respondent group from the evaluation matrix (see annex 14 Evaluation Matrix and

25   The ToC is a tool to understand strategic planning and operational implementation mechanisms of initiatives with ambitious and complex goals,

26   In line with the Terms of Reference (ToR) and based on further analysis, the detailed evaluation matrix is available in annex 14.

27   OECD DAC Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Cooperation

28   In 2019 the OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) has defined six evaluation criteria – relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability

Annex 15 Interview Protocols). The interviewees were carefully selected ensuring a wide range of different stakeholders and different perspectives were included in the evaluation.

20.   In addition to interviews at global level, interventions in several Member States were selected to collect more in-depth information within a specific country level context. Criteria for selection included coverage of different type of interventions, coverage of country level work in different regions, coverage of interventions targeting different types of vulnerabilities (disability, crises-affected people on the move). This country-specific focus allowed interaction with the various categories of stakeholders at the national level (programme specialists, project coordinators, development partners, experts, and policymakers) to feed into the assessment of broader outcomes and provide meaningful illustrations and evidence to underpin broader findings. In consultation with the ERG, country-level case studies and /or interviews were conducted on the following topics:

(i)   **inclusion specific work with some focus on crisis-affected people on the move (Jordan, Arab States)** to assess inclusive education in migration situations, i.e. on how UNESCO in cooperation with national authorities and other partners operationalised inclusion in education for crisis-affected people on the move through its work in Jordan (evidence based and crisis sensitive planning, support at policy level and strengthening institutional capacities on inclusion and diversity more broadly). It also looked at how UNESCO has been supporting the Ministry of Education in developing its education management information system (EMIS), and at UNESCO/IIEP's crisis-sensitive planning work, the role and positioning of UNESCO in the transition from humanitarian support to development work when it comes to inclusion in education; the experience during COVID-19 with planning support to the ESP but also other national plans such as the Jordan Response Plan; as well as the broader leading of UNESCO for SDG4 and how it is used to mainstream inclusion in education.

(ii)   **inclusion mainstreaming in sector planning and policy development work (through policy reviews; sector-wide planning; and CapED policy support) (Lao PDR, Asia and the Pacific, and Mozambique, Africa)** to assess how UNESCO in cooperation with national authorities and other partners set the foundations and operationalised inclusion in education from the perspective of its inclusion mainstreaming objective. The process and results of developing the National Policy on Inclusive Education and the subsequent National Strategy and Action Plans on Inclusive Education were the focus in Lao PDR, and UNESCO's involvement in the process of developing the Education sector plan, and the resulting attention to inclusion in education was the focus in Mozambique.

Survey

21.   A comprehensive survey targeted two broad respondent groups: i) all 204 UNESCO Member States and Associated Members, i.e. National Commissions and/or Permanent Delegations and ii) external stakeholders and partners[29], i.e. international level and country level key stakeholders and partners working on inclusion in education as well as on sectoral education developments (e.g. in primary education, TVET, teacher education) that touch upon inclusion in education from a mainstreaming perspective. With the request to share and further disseminate the survey to other relevant national, regional and international stakeholders in a snowball approach, the survey was open from mid-June to mid-September 2021 and was available in English, Spanish and French. Two reminders were sent before the final closure of the survey. In total, 188 people responded to the survey, of whom 91 from UNESCO Member States and 97 from UNESCO partners (see details in annex 16 Aggregated Survey Results).

22.   In total, more than 250 stakeholders contributed to the evaluation. The following table provides an overview of the sampling distribution per type of stakeholders as identified in the stakeholder mapping (annex 5) consulted across all methods. Criteria for selecting interviewees included geographic, gender balance as well as a balanced contribution of the different types and levels of UNESCO internal and external global, regional, national of stakeholders. A more detailed description of the methodology is available in the Annex 9.

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29   The survey to external stakeholders was distributed via UNESCO contacts at HQ and field office level.

Table 1. Sampling covered by the evaluation

Informants	Collection tool	Respondents	Specifics
UNESCO HQ	Interviews	13 interviews	
UNESCO Field Offices	Interviews	9 interviews	From Africa, Arab States, Asia and Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean
UNESCO Category 1 Institutes	Interviews	12 interviews	IIEP, IITE, IBE, UIS
UN family	Interviews	10 interviews	
Member States	Interviews Online survey	6 interviews 91 responses in survey	National Commissions and Ministries of Education
Development partners	Interviews Online survey	16 interviews 53 responses in survey	(Inter)national civil society organisations and bilateral donors
Other stakeholders	Interviews Online survey	3 interviews 44 responses	Including from academia/ education providers
Total		**69 interviews** **188 responses in survey**	

Limitations and strengths

23.   While conducted within a challenging context, the evaluation demonstrates some strengths as well as limitations.

- The COVID-19 pandemic and confinement measures resulted in the evaluation being fully conducted at a distance. All interviews, also those at country-level, were conducted online. While this presented some limitations, it also allowed for more flexibility and ensured that a larger number of stakeholders across different regions could be consulted.

- Furthermore, an extension of the initial duration of the evaluation allowed for adequate time for conceptual clarification at the beginning and necessary reflections and consultations on the preliminary findings at the end, thus for strengthening and validating the conclusions and recommendations.

- While a portfolio of inclusion specific interventions has been identified by the Education Sector as the focus for this evaluation, the selected interventions are not fully representative of the wealth of interventions with relevance to inclusion, (i.e. intersectional work related to education of indigenous girl learners, or other work to support safe, inclusive learning environments). In order to capture all of the UNESCO Education Sector's work with relevance to inclusion, and relevant intersectional work, a sector- or organization-wide comprehensive stocktaking exercise and analysis would be required. However, this was beyond the Terms of Reference for this evaluation.

- The topic of the evaluation is wide also from a mainstreaming perspective, and concerns most if not all of the Education sector's work. Based on the TORs and given the resources available for the evaluation, the evaluation was therefore

not able to assess the full scale of UNESCO's work touching upon inclusion in education, in particular at the country level.

- Furthermore, UNESCO's reporting system (System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and Evaluation of Results, SISTER) allows to generate overviews of UNESCO's work. However, the labelling of projects and UNESCO activities covering different areas of UNESCO's work on the topic across the different entities is not systematically marked as related to inclusion. Hence, it remains challenging to extract a comprehensive and detailed overview of UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education.

- As inclusion in education is not always explicit and not understood the same way by all stakeholders, some biases may have influenced the results of potential respondents to the survey (for instance those working on interventions targeting a specific vulnerable group). Other potential stakeholders might have interpreted that the survey was less relevant for their work. This might have influenced the response rate.

2. The UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion

2.1 Background on Inclusion in Education

24.   Universal access to education has been a global objective for a long time since education was enshrined as a human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (article 26). In 1960, UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education stressed the right to equal access to education and an equal standard of education for all. Education for all was globally further supported during the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien in 1990. A broad coalition of national governments, civil society groups, and development agencies such as UNESCO and the World Bank Group committed to bring the benefits of education to "every citizen in every society.[30]"

25.   The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action of 1994 was the first joint recommendation that advised governments and civil society on the advantages of an inclusive education system. These efforts were further embedded in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, which refer to universal primary education (MDG 2) and gender parity (MDG 3). However, the MDGs insufficiently stressed the importance of inclusive approaches in education systems. In the same year, the Dakar Framework for Action recognized the learning needs of the poorest and most marginalized, including children with disabilities[31].

26.   Building on the 1994 Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education[32], the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and especially Article 24 on education[33] provides a legally binding instrument to ensure the provision of inclusive education for learners with disabilities. The General Comment no 4 (2016) further elaborates on the normative content of Article 24, stating that inclusive education should be understood as 'a fundamental human right of all learners; a

principle that values the well-being of all students; a means of realizing other human rights; and finally, the result of a process of continuing and pro-active commitment to eliminate barriers impeding the right to education, together with changes to culture, policy and practice of regular schools to accommodate and effectively include all students.'[34] The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)[35] served a similar purpose related to the right to education for indigenous peoples. These developments related to inclusive education all lead to the post-2015 agenda and the associated SDGs.

27.   The post-2015 development agenda is based on the 2030 Agenda of 'Leaving no-one behind' and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which strongly emphasise inclusiveness across all 17 goals.

28.   UNESCO as the lead agency and coordinator of SDG 4 puts inclusion at the core of its Education Sector mandate. The Organization has contributed significantly to the development of the Education 2030 agenda, as outlined in the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all. However, inclusion is regarded as a paradigm and central theme across all the SDGs as sustainable development should involve all, no matter where you live; where you are from; where you work; what gender you have; what age you have; which abilities and disabilities you might have. Furthermore, every goal in the 2030 Agenda requires education to empower people with the knowledge, skills and values to live in dignity, build their lives and contribute to their societies. Especially when it comes to education (SDG 4), 'inclusive' together with 'equitable' are the adjectives used in relation to 'quality education'. The SDG 4-related targets refer to inclusive education for all educational levels and learning contexts (formal, non-formal and informal learning) related to gender, vulnerability, disability, and indigenous people.[36]

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30   The Dakar framework for Action
31   https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1681Dakar%20Framework%20for%20Action.pdf
32   The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action] on Special Needs Education - UNESCO Digital Library
33   Article 24 - Education | United Nations Enable
34   United Nations (2016) CRPD/C/GC/4 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; General comment No. 4 (2016) Article 24: Right to inclusive education, p. 3-4: https://www.google.com/
35   https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf
36   SDG4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Several SDG 4 targets also refer explicitly to aspects of inclusion in education: Target 4.5: Equity. Eliminate all discrimination in education. "By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access at all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations." Target 4.a: Education facilities and learning environments. "Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all."

29.   The 2015 World Education Forum "Equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030 - Transforming lives through education" produced the *Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of SDG 4*[37] which designates UNESCO as the leading UN agency for the implementation of SDG 4. Article 7 of the Incheon Declaration puts inclusive education at the heart of the discussion:

> "Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all. We therefore commit to making the necessary changes in education policies and focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind."[38]

30.   Inclusion in education features increasingly prominently at regional level as well. The African Union Ministers responsible for education, gender and humanitarian affairs in 2019 expressed their commitment to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, referring to the Agenda 2063 and African Union Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA).[39] Furthermore, in 2020 the African Union launched its disability inclusion guideline for youth exchange aimed to support hosting and sending organizations working in the field of youth exchange and youth mobility programs in their efforts to be more inclusive for youth with disabilities by putting in place necessary support measures.[40] The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Enabling Masterplan 2025 for instance underlines the rights of persons with disabilities across all three pillars of the ASEAN Community, and fosters Member States' commitment towards inclusive communities. In Europe, Ministers of Education re-affirmed their commitments to inclusive education to

support migrants and refugees to reach their full participation in access to education and integration in society. In 2017, the European Council, the European Parliament and the Commission endorsed the adoption of the European Pillar of social rights underlining inclusive education. The European Semester process and the Education and Training Monitor are used to monitor Member States' progress on inclusive education and provides evidence on the role of education in fighting inequalities and promoting social inclusion.

31.   A recent important milestone at the global level for inclusion in education is the 2019 Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education[41], agreeing on a **definition of inclusion** as *"a transformative process that ensures full participation and access to quality learning opportunities for all children, young people and adults, respecting and valuing diversity, and eliminating all forms of discrimination in and through education."* The term inclusion represents a commitment to making preschools, schools, and other education settings, places in which everyone is valued and belongs, and diversity is seen as enriching. It also calls upon all governments and other stakeholders to accelerate efforts and actions on the areas addressed by the Global Education Monitoring Report 2020 on inclusion and education.[42]

32.   The 2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report on inclusion and education reminds all that "no matter what argument may be built to the contrary, we have a moral imperative to ensure every child has a right to an appropriate education of high quality."[43] The GEM report explores the challenges holding countries back from achieving this vision and demonstrates concrete policy examples from countries managing to tackle them with success. In relation to the GEM report the data availability on inclusion in education improved.[44]

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37   Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action - UNESCO Digital Library
38   Article 7 of the Incheon Declaration.
39   https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/35725-pr-pr-hld_on_gender_and_education-1.pdf
40   AU(2020), Disability inclusion guideline for youth exchange: https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39289-doc-au_disability_inclusion_guide.pdf
41   UNESCO (2019), Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370910
42   https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/
43   https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2020/inclusion
44   Worldwide Inequality Database on Education (WIDE); new online monitoring tool, Scoping Progress in Education, (SCOPE)) and country Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews, (PEER) prepared by the GEM Report are made available. Furthermore, regional reports on inclusion in education in Latin America and the Caribbean (November 2020) and Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (February 2021) became available.

2.2   Understanding of inclusion in education for this evaluation[45]

33.   The academic literature acknowledges that inclusion in education or inclusive education is a multi-faceted policy area requiring a broad range of actions in different areas (curriculum, assessment, teaching, support, access, resources, leadership, vision etc.) within and beyond education in order to improve the inclusive education culture.[46] Including within UNESCO's own work, for instance in the recent UNESCO publication: Towards inclusion in education: status, trends and challenges: the UNESCO Salamanca Statement 25 years on (2020) [47] as well as in the 2020 GEM report, there is acknowledgement that a range of meanings and purposes are attached to the concept of inclusive education.[48]

34.   There are different approaches to conceptually capture inclusion in education. It can range from securing at least a minimal right to some basics of education for specific disadvantaged or marginalized groups (a narrow interpretation of inclusive education); to broader holistic approaches seeing inclusivity and diversity as core characteristics for any education system and as a prerequisite for an education in and for democracy.[49] In the latter, "It is a political aspiration and an educational methodology."[50] This is sententiously described as *"every learner matters and matters equally."*[51] In this perspective, individual differences are not seen as problems to be fixed, but as opportunities for democratizing and enriching learning.[52]

35.   It is important in this evaluation to distinguish between 'inclusive education' and 'inclusion in education'. The first describes the organisation of education ('methodology') in which all learners are in the same learning setting. Inclusive education is different from segregated education, where students learn in separate environments, designed or used

to respond to their particular needs or impairment, in isolation from other students; or integrated education, where students are placed in schools or educational settings with peers of a similar age but students are required to adjust to the mainstream.[53] The second, 'inclusion in education' on the other hand is linked to the political aspiration and represents a continuous reflection about the level of inclusivity of the entire education system. A broadened understanding of inclusive education will pave the way towards inclusion in education. Inclusive education can therefore be seen as a key strategy to attain inclusion in education.

36.   Hence, in this evaluation, *inclusion in education is defined as 'a continuing process that helps identify and overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners.'*[54] This definition focuses less on the operational aspects pertaining to *how* countries and education systems solve specific issues related to learners with specific characteristics or disadvantaged backgrounds or who are in a specific vulnerable or marginalised situation. What matters is that the stakeholders are actively engaging on steadily advancing towards inclusion. This can mean that within certain concrete educational settings and policies, the segregation of groups comes to be defined as part of this process to reach inclusion in education (for example considering grouping young children by their mother tongues). While the evaluation recognises that there are strong links between inclusion in education and social inclusion, these are not fully explored in this evaluation, as this goes beyond the scope and resources available for this exercise. However, the evaluation regards inclusion in education as integrally linked to a broader context of social inclusion. Inclusion in education is both contributing to social inclusion and a result of broader social inclusion measures. In other words, working on inclusion in education means directly working on social inclusion.

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45   A more detailed description on the concept of inclusion in education is provided in the annex (Annex 2: The concept of inclusion in education: eliminate barriers to access, presence, participation, and achievement)

46   See for instance: Mitchell, D. (2015). Inclusive education is a multi-faceted concept. Published in Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal, 5(1), 9-30.

47   https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374246

48   Slee, R., (2018), Defining the scope of inclusive education: Think piece prepared for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report Inclusion and education, p. 5.

49   Bernstein, B. B. (1996). Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: theory, research, critique. London, Taylor & Francis; Knight, T. (1985). An Apprenticeship in Democracy. The Australian Teacher, 11(1), 5 – 7; Pearl, A. and Knight, T. (1998). The democratic classroom: theory to inform practice. Cresskill, N.J., Hampton Press.

50   Paper commissioned for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, Inclusion and education, p. 9

51   UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, 2017, p. 12, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254.

52   UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, 2017, p.13.

53   UNESCO IIEP, UNICEF (2019), On the road to inclusion, p. 6.

54   UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, 2017, p. 13, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254.

2.3   Summary of the Reconstructed Theory of Change[55]

37.   Existing major global challenges related to inclusion in education are further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. While UNESCO's work on inclusion in education aims to contribute to overcoming identified challenges, this does not qualify as the specific problem statement against which UNESCO's work on inclusion in education can be assessed.

38.   As inclusion in education is recognised as a process, it requires a delicate exercise, balancing idealism and pragmatism and building upon dialogue, openness, and hence the meaningful participation of all key stakeholders (including government institutions, policy makers, teachers, parents, learners, civil society organisations including organisations of and for persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups).

39.   In the Theory of Change developed for this evaluation, the **problem statement** that underlies the UNESCO Education sector's work on inclusion in education has therefore been defined as follows: *'Countries, organisations and stakeholders are in need of expertise and support to continuously reflect on the whole education systems to support the development of an ever more inclusive education system through a meaningful engagement of stakeholders in education and society[56] and constructive and evidence-based dialogue.'*

40.   Linked to the problem statement, the **overall goal** of the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education is defined as *'fostering and/or upholding a conducive environment for countries, international organisations, stakeholders, to work together on the multi-faceted approach of inclusion in education contributing to SDG 4 and the 2030 Agenda. For this purpose, UNESCO is offering intellectual leadership; conceptual clarification; agenda setting/ advocacy; providing guidelines and tools; improving data collection and analysis, and supporting practical implementation (including capacity development).*

41.   While the ultimate goal of working on inclusion in education is to contribute to countries progressing towards the SDGs (in particular SDG 4) by 2030, this is not the target for which UNESCO can be directly held accountable. Realistically, UNESCO can be held accountable for the appropriateness and quality of its support to foster and enable the

progress of countries in changing policies systems, norms and practices, beliefs, values and mindsets and establishing conducive environments.[57]

42.   Inclusion in education is equally seen as a transversal topic. The input is therefore not limited to the budget of a single unit, or a set of projects of the Education Sector, but refers to the whole of UNESCO Education Sector's work, at UNESCO HQ, its regional and national level Field Offices and in Category 1 and 2 institutes. Stimulating and developing inclusion in education requires meaningful engagement with stakeholders at all levels. UNESCO needs to work together closely with international development partners within the UN family (ILO, UNICEF, etc.) and outside the UN (Global Partnership for Education - GPE, bilateral agencies, private sector), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), governments, schools, academia, research institutes and civil society as a whole.

2.4   Description of UNESCO Education sector's work on inclusion in education (2016-2021)

2.4.1 Inclusion in Education in UNESCO's strategic and planning documents (2016-21)

43.   While 'leaving no one behind' was enshrined across the UNESCO 37 C/4 Medium-term Strategy 2014-2021 and despite inclusion in education being a transversal topic throughout UNESCO Education Sector's work, it can – to various degrees - also be linked to specific Expected Results in the relevant C/5 Programme and Budget documents.

44.   **In the 38 C/5 for the 2016/17 biennium** inclusion was explicitly mainstreamed across the ERs of *MLA1: Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all.*

45.   While the RP HQ envelope for inclusion in ED (i.e. for 'Enhancing the knowledge and evidence base for promoting inclusive, gender-responsive and equitable education') was embedded under **ER 11:**' Coordination and monitoring mechanisms established and evidence from research generated in support of sustained political commitment for Education 2030', several other ERs[58] demonstrated indicators with a strong relevance for inclusion in ED, such as under ER2 National capacities strengthened to scale up inclusive

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55   see Annex 3: Detailed reconstruction of the Theory of Change.

56   To build more inclusive education systems requires collaboration from other line ministries such as health and social protection, for example.

57   Inspired by Global Education Monitoring Team, *Inclusion and Education: All Means All*, 2020, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718, p. 23.

58   Examples of such indicators: ER 1 (SWPP): Number of crisis-affected countries benefiting from emergency or reconstruction support; ER 2 (Literacy) : Number of countries supported by UNESCO which have developed quality literacy programmes for out-of-school children and youth; ER 5 (teachers): Number of countries which have initiated reform and/or review of teacher policies and systems, paying strong attention to equity and gender issues; ER 6 (learning): Number of countries supported which developed comprehensive and inclusive curriculum in view of competency-based learning

and gender-responsive quality literacy programmes (budget: roughly USD 36 Million), or ER5 National capacities strengthened, including through regional cooperation, to develop and implement teacher policies and strategies so as to enhance the quality of education and promote gender equality.

46.   **UNESCO's 39 C/5 (2018/19 biennium) and 40 C/5 (2020/21 biennium)** define for the first time a specific Expected Result that is dedicated to inclusion in ED, i.e. under the respective **Main Line of Action (MLA1)** 'Support Member States in the implementation of SDG 4'

47.   **39 C/5 Expected Result ER8** referred explicitly to inclusion of specific vulnerable groups as an area of focus '*Improved policies, plans and learning opportunities to expand inclusion in education for vulnerable populations, with particular attention to persons with learning challenges, including disabilities, and to crisis-affected populations (contributing to SDG targets 4.5 and 4.a*). (39 C/5 roughly USD 24 Million);

48.   **40 C/5 Expected Result ER8,** continues this emphasis on inclusion and reads as '*Increased learning opportunities for persons in vulnerable situations, with particular attention given to crisis-affected populations, including refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, as well as persons with learning challenges, including disabilities* (40 C/5: roughly USD 35 Million).[59]

49.   **Mainstreaming inclusion** in education however is supposed to continue contributing to all Expected Results across all thematic areas of the Education Sector programme, as well as where relevant of other Programme Sectors. In previous C5s Inclusive education was reflected in several expected results of the Education Sector, in particular after Salamanca and after the adoption of the EFA Goals.

50.   The new **UNESCO Medium–term Strategy 41 C/4 for 2022-29 -** for the first time formulated around issues and reflecting an intersectoral results framework [60] - **and the respective Programme and Budget 41 C/5** present a promising and more comprehensive approach. These strategic documents demonstrate that significant progress has been achieved in the reflection of the concept of "inclusion" or "inclusiveness" in the new Medium-Term Strategy for UNESCO which has been adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in November 2021 after a comprehensive and participatory preparatory process. Two out of four Strategic Objectives in the 41 C/4, refer explicitly to inclusive education i.e. Strategic Objective 1 (SO1) to "Ensure quality equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in order, inter

alia, to reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies, particularly in the digital age", and Strategic Objective 3 (SO3) aiming at creating inclusive, just and peaceful societies (SO 3).

51.   While concrete operationalization and putting the concept of inclusion as reflected in the new Medium-Term Strategy is yet to be put in action, UNESCO's work planning encourages intersectoral collaboration, synergies, and alignment with the key principle of 'Leave No One Behind" through the identification of vulnerable and marginalized groups and disaggregated planning, monitoring and reporting. The C/4 and C/5 also place an increased emphasis on partnership and participation – with the aim to accelerate the meaningful and direct involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

2.4.2 Resources for inclusion in education

52.   In terms of infrastructure and human resources, UNESCO's Education Sector is the largest UNESCO programme sector with some 400 staff working at the Paris headquarters and spread across a global network of 53 field offices and specialized institutes and centres.

53.   Inclusion in education runs through the work of all the divisions and sections of UNESCO's Education Sector. However, specifically dedicated staff includes five regular programme staff in the Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality (IGE), three regular programme staff in the Section of Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education (EME), both located in the Division for Education 2030, and one regular programme staff working on the Right to Education programme. Work around inclusion is also supported by several project appointments in the IGE and EME sections, the Education in Emergencies Geneva Hub and in IIEP.

54.   In addition, there are several Field Offices (in particular regional offices such as Bangkok, Santiago or the office in Amman) and several Education Category 1 institutes among which, in particular, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), and the International Institute for Technologies in Education (IITE) who are conducting inclusion specific work, as well as the International Bureau for Education (IBE), which is a driving force of the inclusion agenda, promoting a broadened understanding of the theory and practice of inclusive education in its work that focuses on curriculum. Finally, the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) collaborate in monitoring

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59   While work under MLA1 ER 7 National capacities strengthened to address gender equality holistically in national education systems (39: USD 27 Million; 40: USD 30 Million) also represents high relevance to inclusion in ED this will not be a thematic focus of this evaluation. Gender equality will be assessed under the mainstreaming component as well as from an intersectional perspective across inclusion specific interventions.

60   As approved during the 41st General Conference in November 2021, while the evaluation was being finalized.

inclusion and equity. Most notable is the 2020 GEM Report on "Inclusion and Education".[61] UNESCO also mobilises additional resources for inclusion in education when it works through other organizational networks, such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs, and the UNEVOC network on TVET, which also aim to mainstream inclusion in education.[62] Finally, UNESCO cooperates with many partners on various topics, both within and outside the UN family, such as GPE, UNICEF, the ILO, and the European Commission.

55.   In terms of budgetary resources, UNESCO ED sector estimations for interventions during the period 2016/17 – to 2020/21 refer to a total budget of **roughly 78 million USD as dedicated resources to inclusion specific activities** (see figure 1). 4.3 million USD is allocated from the regular programme (RP)[63] budget and roughly 74 million USD is constituted by extrabudgetary resources/ voluntary contributions (XB)[64]. Most of these funds are for inclusion specific programmes and projects and are primarily managed and implemented in the field leaving relatively limited dedicated budgets for inclusion related normative work, agenda setting and knowledge development mainly steered and implemented by the dedicated sections at UNESCO HQ. For example, the dedicated inclusion in education programme at HQ (in the IGE Section) has a regular budget of merely USD 100,000 per biennium.

56.   Nonetheless, the relatively slim budget distribution to the overall work on inclusion cannot be interpreted as a lack of prioritisation, considering that inclusion is, or should, as an underlying principle be mainstreamed across most, if not all, of the UNESCO Education Sector's work. It can therefore be estimated that the actual resources broadly dedicated to inclusion in education is much larger.

Figure 1. Regular programme resources dedicated to inclusion-specific activities are rather limited compared to voluntary contributions
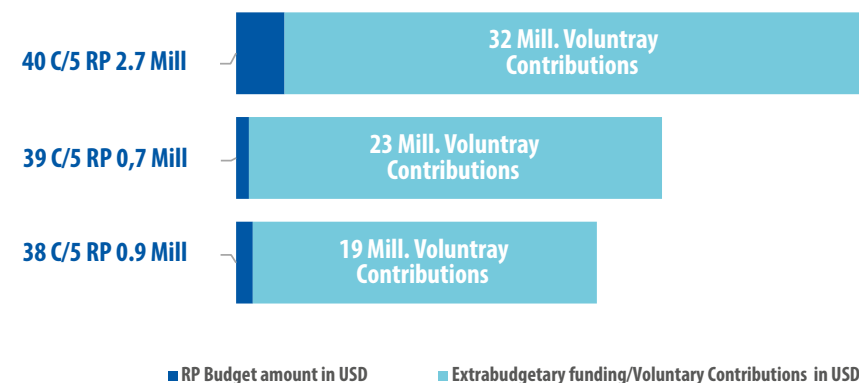
Source: ED sector budgetary resources dedicated to inclusion specific activities 38/C5, 39 C/5 and 40 C/5.

57.   Furthermore, budget allocations during the period 2016-2021 demonstrate a focus on Education in Emergencies compared to those of 'inclusion of other specific vulnerable groups.' For example, approximately 70% of the regular programme budget allocated to inclusion specific work in the 40C/5 at Headquarters is dedicated to the programme on education for crisis-affected people on the move. The bulk of resources from voluntary contributions is also mostly directed towards inclusion specific programming on education in emergencies and most of this funding in the current and previous biennia is managed and implemented in the field. These estimations however do not include projects that address inclusion in education issues as one element within a wider focus such as for instance the Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) Project[65] which defines one of the four project outcomes as mainstreaming inclusion.[66]

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61   Global Education Monitoring Team, *Inclusion and Education: All Means All*, 2020, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718.

62   See full overview: https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/about-us

63   UNESCO's Regular programme budget is constituted by assessed contributions from Member States.,

64   As of the 39 C/5 Programme and budget (2018/19) UNESCO presents an integrated budget framework encompassing both assessed contributions (regular budget (RP) and voluntary contributions. Earlier C/5 Programme and Budget documents presented donor funded contributions as extrabudgetary resources (XB), separately from the regular budget (RP) stemming from Member States' assessed contributions.

65   https://bangkok.unesco.org/stem-programme-myanmar ; https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/strengthening-pre-service-teacher-education-myanmar-stem-project-final-evaluation-report

66   See Final Evaluation, p. 7: "STEM Phase II has defined inclusiveness in a broad way, which includes not only inclusiveness from the perspective of gender, disability, ethnolinguistic background, or any other characteristic, but also brings together various areas of UNESCO's global priorities, such as human rights, peace education, and education on HIV/AIDS. The project seeks to ensure the integration of the concept of inclusive education in all its activities" ICON Institut (2020), Final Evaluation of Phase II of the Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) Project: final-evaluation-report-stem-ii-myanmar.pdf (unesco.org)

2.4.3 Portfolio of the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion

58.   In terms of concrete actions, UNESCO, together with the Category 1 institutes and partners focuses its work on *knowledge development, normative and policy guidance, including capacity development on inclusion in ED,* which is key in ensuring that equity and inclusion are overarching principles in programme planning, implementation, and monitoring, as well as for resource protocols (tools and best practices) for *inclusion mainstreaming* (in relation to ability, gender, language, etc.); and on *inclusion-specific*

programming, which encompasses a focus on the inclusion of specific groups of disadvantaged learners into inclusive learning settings.

59.   UNESCO's inclusion-specific programming (in HQ units, Category 1 institutes and in the field) demonstrates a focus on refugees and migrants, learners with disabilities, as well as indigenous people (as part of the SDG 4 Framework for Action). The following table provides a summary description of UNESCO's work on inclusion in education. Annex 4 provides a detailed description of the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education.

Table 2. Summary description of the UNESCO Education Sector's specific work on inclusion

Resources	
UNESCO Programme Sector	Education Sector
Total dedicated budget allocated 2016/17 – 2020/21	Roughly 78 million USD (including regular budget and voluntary contributions/extrabudgetary resources)
Human resources dedicated to inclusion specific work at UNESCO	Five regular programme staff in the Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality (IGE), three regular programme staff in the Section of Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education (EME), both located in the Division for Education 2030, and one regular programme staff working on the Right to Education programme. Work around inclusion is also supported by several project appointments in the IGE and EME sections, the Education in Emergencies Geneva Hub and in IIEP. As inclusion in education runs through the work of all the divisions and sections of UNESCO's Education Sector, additional human resources are deployed but not labelled as such nor exclusively dedicated for inclusion specific projects at regional and national level across the field network (in particular at regional offices such as Bangkok, Santiago) and Category 1 Institutes, as well as across UNESCO's existing inclusion architecture (e.g. Gender focal points of the ED sector, the Intersectoral Task Team of the International Decade of Indigenous languages (DIL), Intersectoral Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, Intersectoral Task Team on Disability Rights and Inclusion).

Concise description of UNESCO's work	
Research, knowledge development and dissemination	Research and publications serve the UNESCO key function of laboratory of ideas and generating data and knowledge to feed into innovative proposals and policy advice; and of developing and reinforcing the global agenda in its fields of competence through policy analysis, monitoring and benchmarking. • More than 20 key UNESCO publications • GEM report and databases • Specific research projects (e.g. on COVID-19 and education)
Normative work and policy guidance	This supports UNESCO's key function of setting norms and standards in its fields of competence and supporting and monitoring their implementation. This area includes all the norms- and standard setting and follow-up actions. • key normative standards and policy guidance which UNESCO played a key role (e.g. the 1960 Convention against discrimination in education, Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education (2019); Los Pinos Declaration [Chapoltepek] –Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages (2020))
Capacity building and supporting implementing inclusion in education	Specific interventions and projects serve UNESCO's key function of providing advice for policy development and implementation, and developing institutional and human capacities. A portfolio of inclusion specific interventions has been identified for this evaluation, however, as also stated in the limitations to this evaluation, inclusion in education is present in most, if not all of UNESCO's interventions and projects, as a dimension that in the absence of a dedicated marker is more difficult to capture. (see chapter 1.4 Methodology).[67] • 95 projects (counting those labelled as 'inclusion' and 'Education in Emergencies') • Total budget allocated to these 95 projects: roughly 78 million in the period between 2016 and 2021

67   The identified portfolio of projects may not fully represent the wealth of interventions pertaining to aspects of inclusion, such as intersectional work in education of indigenous girl learner, other work to support safe, inclusive learning environments. In order to identify all of the UNESCO Education Sector's work pertaining to inclusion, including other relevant intersectional work, a Sector-wide comprehensive stocktaking exercise and analysis would be required. However, this is beyond the Terms of Reference for this evaluation.

3. Main findings

60.   This Chapter presents the main evaluation findings. The evaluation questions are answered through analysis and triangulation of the information gathered on a number of key dimensions. In relation to each key dimension a summative assessment is provided making use of temperature scales ranging between low (limited progress) and high (extensive progress). The tables provide a summary assessment for each key dimension and in relation to the OECD-DAC criteria. A detailed SWOT analysis identifying emerging Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats is presented in Annex 7.

3.1   Key Dimension 1: Relevance and UNESCO's comparative strengths

61.   This key dimension focuses on a comparison between UNESCO's broader institutional approach in relation to the challenges in the area of inclusion in education (including its link to the 2030 Agenda) within the broader landscape of development challenges. Specific attention is paid to the way in which UNESCO has positioned its work on inclusion in education for two distinct concrete policy areas, i.e. inclusion of people with disabilities and of crisis-affected people on the move. The assessment allows a critical review of the relevance of UNESCO's work in light of the specific challenges identified for inclusion in education. It also focused on the alignment of these activities to the objectives defined by UNESCO's broader institutional framework, including priorities for Gender Equality and Africa as well as coherence with the broader global context as set by the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. This assessment covers the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance and external coherence.

Table 3. Assessments related to Relevance and comparative strengths

Judgment criteria assessing the extent to which		Assessment
➢ UNESCO's work is well aligned with the 2030 Agenda and there is a plausible line of reasoning on how UNESCO's work contributes to the 2030 Agenda that is supported by evidence of (intermediary) results.		**High** UNESCO unpacks what 'inclusion' as the underlying concept of the 2030 Agenda means and with its global position pushes for a more holistic approach to inclusion, moving away from removing specific barriers for inclusion one by one, but focusing on the inclusivity of the whole education system. There are opportunities for UNESCO to focus on the *process* of making systems more inclusive more than on the elements that constitute an inclusive system per se.
➢ UNESCO's work is developed and implemented taking into account the UNESCO global priorities.		**Slightly high** Although implicit in the priorities themselves, both global priorities and related action plans 2014-21 echo inclusion and equity to a somehow limited extent and resonate only to some extent in UNESCO's work on inclusion. While Africa as a region faces many inclusion-related challenges, the portfolio of inclusion specific initiatives did not demonstrate a clear priority to the region, neither in terms of number of initiatives, nor in number of countries served or in terms of budgetary allocations. Priority gender equality is more clearly reflected, in particular through initiatives that target women and girls as a specific target group and through intersectional dimensions for inclusion in education[68]. The inclusion in education perspective is however much wider than expressed in the two global priorities. Nonetheless, the new UNESCO 41 C/4 Medium-term strategy for 2022-29 sets more promising conditions for effective operationalization of the concept across the Global Priorities Africa and Gender Equality as well as priority groups Youth and SIDS.

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68   It is to be noted that UNECO has recently conducted a separate evaluation on Priority Gender equality and gender has therefore purposefully not been the main focus of this evaluation. Gender equality, is considered to the extent it intersects with other vulnerabilities and reasons for inclusion,

Judgment criteria assessing the extent to which	Assessment
➢ UNESCO is able to capitalise on its unique position to address Member States challenges.	**Slightly low** as stakeholders consulted clearly associate UNESCO's unique position with the holistic approach for inclusion in education perspective but slightly less with leading of specific approaches for specific vulnerable groups. As such, the topic of inclusion in education remains a complex issue to operationalise at national level. UNESCO's normative work is contributing to conceptual development and political awareness at Member State level, but when brought down to the practical level, the Organization still lacks adequate resources, tools and mechanisms for operationalisation (how to advance on inclusion in education). UNESCO is addressing Member States' challenges related to specific target groups and contextualised reasons for exclusion. With respect to capacity development at grassroots level, other organisations are considered as better positioned and better resourced to practically work on specific reasons for exclusion. At times these organisations are lacking thorough understanding of the holistic perspective of inclusion in education, which can create inconsistencies between UNESCO's international role and national agendas supported by other organizations.[69]
➢ UNESCO's work is addressing most relevant topics and target groups as evidenced by the engagement and reflections from stakeholders representing beneficiaries.	**Slightly high** as UNESCO provides a holistic perspective on inclusion and identifies and addresses all reasons for exclusion. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing situations of exclusion and drawn more attention to the challenges of inclusion in education. This makes UNESCO's work on inclusion in education all the more relevant, most visibly through working together with main stakeholders and interest groups (also representing marginalised groups) at global and regional level which are specialised in specific reasons for exclusion. In the face of disastrous consequences related to COVID-19 school closures, UNESCO finds itself well placed to raise awareness more than ever on the importance of inclusion of education. In doing so however, specific causes for exclusion were highlighted as not receiving sufficient attention (such as related to ethnic minorities and adults). As underlined by interviewees from UNESCO, the cultural and social dimensions of causes for exclusion are not yet sufficiently highlighted, embedded and operationalised. Cooperation between the Education Sector and other UNESCO sectors on such dimensions, including the social and human sciences and culture sectors is still incipient.

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69   It is to be noted that UNESCO has recently created an intersectoral task team on disability and is currently undertaking a mapping exercise of its disability-related initiatives aimed at exploring the need for an institution-wide disability strategy that may be advocating for a more decentralized focus and support in building local implementation capacities.

To what extent is UNESCO's work on inclusion in education contributing to the 2030 Agenda and reflecting global international and UNESCO priorities (e.g. Gender Equality and Africa)?

UNESCO's work and the 2030 Agenda

62.   As the main contributor to the formulation of SDG 4, UNESCO's work is intrinsically linked to the SDGs. Inclusion is one the key concepts underlying the 2030 Agenda (see also Section 2.1). Furthermore, as the lead agency and coordinator of SDG 4, UNESCO puts inclusion at the core of its Education Sector mandate. While the emphasis on inclusion increased significantly as an underlying paradigm of the SDGs towards a global priority, and is present in all of UNESCO's work, translating the Organization's contributions into actual systemic change at country level takes time and cannot be easily measured (see also Chapter 3.4 on results)[70]. What can mostly be assessed is the extent to which UNESCO's activities pushed the inclusion-agenda at global level and whether the approach taken to foster and/or uphold a conducive environment in countries is successful.

63.   UNESCO played a significant role in driving the inclusion agenda at the origins of SDG 4, deriving from its push towards inclusion not only in recent years, but already for decades. In recent years, UNESCO has been playing a leading role through landmark publications and initiatives that put inclusion in the spotlight. Most notably, these concern firstly the 2019 Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education[71], calling upon all governments and other stakeholders to accelerate efforts and actions on the areas also addressed by the Global Education Monitoring Report 2020 on inclusion and education.[72] Secondly, this concerns the 2020 GEM report on inclusion and education and related publications providing the country-level information to address inclusion in education. Another key landmark publication is the 2017 Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education[73] providing guidance on what building blocks constitute an inclusive education system. A final key landmark is the *2020 Towards inclusion in education: Status, trends and challenges: The UNESCO Salamanca Statement 25 years on.*[74] These landmark publications and other related activities (conferences, consultations, data collection etc.) are confirmed by many stakeholders as the main drivers that steer the discussions on inclusion in education and offer conceptual clarification and guidance for governments and organisations to advance on working on inclusion. Other organisations also promote UNESCO's publications, for example the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, which provides access to a number of UNESCO publications as well as to practical examples of inclusion in education in practice on its website.

64.   However, several interviewees also underlined that it is critical for UNESCO and its partners to keep alive the momentum of the Agenda 2030 global inclusion agenda and following these landmark publications and events ensure that the attention to inclusion does not fade when it comes to developing and renewing policies and education practices.

Mainstreaming inclusion in education

65.   The mainstreaming of 'inclusion' as the key concept in the 2030 Agenda was prepared by decades of global advocacy to move away from considering only specific barriers for inclusion of accepting a certain percentage of out-of-school children to 'all means all'. However, operationalising the paradigm of 'all means all' is not yet fully unpacked, firstly, in terms of what this holistic paradigm on inclusion means for developing education systems and practices concretely; and secondly, how to assure and measure that by 2030 education systems and practices are based on this paradigm of 'all means all'.

66.   One core issue of ongoing discussions in terms of conceptual clarification is widening the concept of 'inclusion' from 'disability inclusion' to any possible reason for exclusion. While this wider concept underlies the SDGs and UNESCO's work, a majority of Member States and global, regional and national organisations working on inclusion-related issues still identify inclusion to a great extent as disability inclusion.[75] In these discussions, UNESCO voices the humanistic and human-rights-based perspective looking at the whole human being and equal opportunities to succeed as a human being, confronted with a variety of reasons and related intersections for exclusion.[76]

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70   An example from a recent assessment is the external outcome harvesting evaluation of an intensive training directed at technical staff within MoEs (jointly organized by UNESCO-IIEP and UNICEF as part of a 'Partnership for capacity development for disability-inclusive education, which shed some light on concrete positive outcomes of the training that by Dec 2021 has been successfully completed by 210 technical staff from 40 ministries of education in 4 geographic regions. http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/eswatini-inclusive-education-turns-page-14040.

71   UNESCO (2019), Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370910

72   https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/

73   UNESCO (2017), A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254

74   UNESCO (2020), Towards inclusion in education: Status, trends and challenges: The UNESCO Salamanca Statement 25 years on: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374246

75   This is for instance reflected in the responses to the survey, where 18% of respondents work with disabled persons, while organisations mention specific attention to other target groups less often.

76   A recent evaluation of the CapED programme on teacher development in Lao PDR also indicates that while gender equality and gender-sensitive teaching have improved over the past decade, there is ample evidence that other aspects of inclusion are lagging far behind. This is particularly the case for inclusion of more remote and rural ethnic minorities in education and for children with disabilities. While increased attention is given to inclusion of these groups, these efforts are more recent and may require decades to achieve a similar break-through to what was achieved in gender equality and the inclusion of women and girls in education.

67.   Other organisations tend to be more utilitarian in their approach to inclusion, departing from the idea that actions are right if they are useful or for the benefit of a majority of those potentially excluded and focussing more on efficiency and value for money. UNESCO is recognised for its unique global position on mainstreaming 'inclusion in education' and offering conceptual clarification, by not focussing on a specific group, but on inclusion as a whole. Furthermore, UNESCO works, as the only UN organisation, at all educational levels from early childhood education and care to basic and higher education and adult learning, allowing it to mainstream inclusion aspects across the entire education system and across all levels of education, which is clearly among its global comparative strengths.

Focus Box 1 Insights from inclusion mainstreaming in education sector planning and policy work (Mozambique)

UNESCO has a long history of leading the efforts related to inclusion in education in Mozambique. UNESCO is seen as the standard-bearer for inclusion in education and normative and policy work as well as the driver behind inclusion-related events. UNESCO supports the government to pay continuous attention to inclusion in education, including on adult and non-formal education.

UNESCO's technical expertise and its role as facilitator, bringing partners and networks together (including international organisations, bilateral donors, civil society organisations), to share lessons and experiences, is recognised for strengthening priorities and enriching policy development. Based on these strengths, UNESCO has been selected to coordinate the elaboration of the Education Sector Plan 2020-2029 in Mozambique.

Nonetheless, intra-sectoral and intersectoral collaboration remained more limited among other, due to the language barrier and the absence of an SHS programme specialist in the Maputo Office.

Knowledge management such as extracting lessons learnt on mainstreaming inclusion during the policy development process, and systematic knowledge exchange could be strengthened to enhance visibility and learning.

Inclusion specific interventions in education

68.   In initiatives on inclusion with a focus on specific target groups, such as persons with a disability and crisis-affected people on the move, UNESCO plays a slightly different role. While still being heavily involved in projects and conceptual clarification, there are other organisations that have gained more of a leadership position in terms of practical work, mostly on specific target groups and specific reasons for exclusion. For instance, in the field of inclusion of persons with disability the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE) and UNICEF are considered to be taking the lead. Nonetheless, inspired by UNESCO, the Agency has moved from a focus on persons with disabilities to a broader inclusive approach. Regarding crisis-affected people on the move, UNHCR, UNICEF and Education Cannot Wait (ECW) are considered as the global key players. On the migration issue, UNESCO's importance is globally increasing as shown by the growing resource allocation to education in emergencies and the cooperation with lead organisations such as UNICEF on this topic (see also Section 2.4). Furthermore, the survey and interviews also pointed to several other organisations and partners making reference to UNESCO's definition/tools/guidelines on inclusion, and in particular over the last two years, UNESCO has been strengthening its cooperation with key partners (among other UNESCO Bangkok with UNICEF and HQ with EASNIE) which demonstrates a positive development concerning UNESCO's relevance in particular given UNESCO's overall still rather limited resources.

69.   Besides persons with disabilities and crisis-affected people on the move, UNESCO is addressing many other reasons for exclusion that represent a lesser focus for other organisations, such as ethnic minorities, linguistic minorities, and indigenous people. Hence, while there are other organisations that show comparative strengths in areas of work on specific target groups, no other organisation has the broad and in-depth perspective on all groups, making UNESCO's position unique and of clear added value.

UNESCO's approach to facilitating a conducive environment

70.   UNESCO's work focuses on what constitutes inclusion in education, what the building blocks of an inclusive education system are, and what needs to be in place for working towards inclusion in education. This perspective is present in the 2019 Cali commitment, listing actions to be taken (for instance "Legislative planning and policy frameworks should adopt a cross-sectoral approach" or "Learning environments that are safe, welcoming, free of all forms of violence should be structured to ensure high levels of motivation, engagement and learning outcomes for everyone").[77] In addition, the 2017 guide lists key features of inclusive education systems (for instance, "schools and other learning centres have strategies for encouraging the presence, participation and achievement of all learners

77   UNESCO (2019), Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370910

from their local community", or "there is high-quality support for vulnerable learners") that are confirmed as very useful and inspiring by a number of interview respondents.[78]

71.   This focus on the content and determining what constitutes inclusion in education has its challenges. This is firmly recognised in the 2020 publication on the Salamanca Statement: "The central message is therefore clear and simple: every learner matters and matters equally. The complexity arises, *however, when stakeholders try to put this message into practice*. This will likely require changes in thinking, values and beliefs as well as changes in practice at every level of an education system: from classroom teachers and others who provide educational experiences directly, through to those responsible for national policy and the wider community."[79] It is not just about changing a policy, or adjusting a curriculum, but inclusion in education is much more a transformative process requiring a rethinking of the process leading up to quality education policies and adjustments of curricula and school environments.

72.   In line with the discussions on the Theory of Change, and as emerging in interviews, questions are raised whether UNESCO's focus on defining what inclusion in education is and what constitutes inclusion in education is sufficient and remains the most appropriate way forward to support countries in making steps towards truly inclusive systems.

73.   The actual process of developing inclusive education systems is considered as requiring increasing attention: what are the enabling conditions (including who has to be involved within and beyond the ED sector) for education policies, curricula and school environments to become more inclusive? Hence, according to a number of interviewees UNESCO's work on inclusion in education may be too much centred on the concept and comparably too little on the *process of developing inclusion in education systems*. The holistic *concept* of inclusion in education (what it means; how to contextualise it; what is needed for it; how to demarcate it) remains largely intangible, ambitious and often challenging to pursue in specific national contexts.

Alignment of Inclusion at the UNESCO strategic and planning documents

74.   While 'leaving no one behind' is enshrined across the UNESCO 37 C/4 Medium-term Strategy 2014-2021, the recently approved Medium Term Strategy 2022-29 more explicitly refers to the concept of leaving no one behind at the highest conceptual and strategic level of the Organization. This is attesting to Member States' and the Secretariat's strong commitment to the concept of inclusion as a priority issue, to guide UNESCO's

work over the next eight years, and thus creating favorable conditions for an effective operationalisation across both specific programmes and intersectoral actions.

75.   Emphasis on inclusion and inclusiveness is also reflected in programming commitments by Sectors through the next level of results - the 41 C/4 outcomes, with two out of nine outcomes referring to inclusion specifically (namely outcomes 1 and 7), whereas several others refer to the concept implicitly or in terms of interrelated concepts. Furthermore, several Programme Sectors are expected to contribute to each outcome creating entry points for a more intersectoral and holistic action. The new features of Intersectoral programmes and Africa flagships show that two out of five intersectoral programmes (ISPs) refer to inclusion (ISP 1 on "inclusive, sustainable and resilient societies" and ISP 3 on "promoting indigenous knowledge, culture and languages as pathways to inclusion" – involving 2 or 4 Sectors respectively).

76.   In line with SDG 4 intrinsically enshrined in 41 C/4 Strategic Objective 1 inclusion in education is more specifically addressed in: OUTPUT 1.ED1 '*Education systems are equipped to promote inclusion, address marginalization and advance rights, including in crisis-affected contexts* (roughly USD: 47 million). However, inclusion is also reflected across most of the other 41 C/5 Outputs defined for Education, including both specific interventions focusing on a sub-area of inclusion in education as well as mainstreaming inclusion in education throughout the whole education sector and UNESCO's work.

Reflection of Inclusion in ED in UNESCO's global priorities

77.   As the underlying paradigm of SDG 4, inclusion is relevant across all of the UNESCO Education Sector's work, which is also committed to granting specific priority to gender equality considerations and to putting a geographic focus on the African region. The UNESCO global priorities Gender Equality and Africa, and the respective Action Plans for 2014-2021, are an expression of attention to inclusivity and, as such, implicitly reflect the 2030 Agenda inclusion paradigm.

78.   Nonetheless, so far, both global priorities and related action plans 2014-2021 echo inclusive education only to a limited extent. For example, the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2014-2021) identifies 'Strengthening education systems for sustainable development in Africa: *improving equity*, quality and relevance' as one of its Flagship initiatives. However, the related objective 'to improve the quality and relevance of education', as well as the main actions defined for its achievement, are not explicitly

78   UNESCO (2017), A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254
79   UNESCO (2020), Towards inclusion in education: Status, trends and challenges: The UNESCO Salamanca Statement 25 years on: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374246, p. 25.

referring to aspects of inclusion.[80] Likewise, while Africa is a continent where major inclusion-related challenges persist, Priority Africa only resonates to some extent in UNESCO's work on inclusion. In terms of the number of interventions, the portfolio of roughly 95 inclusion-specific initiatives at country level[81] assessed in this evaluation reflects only a relative priority for Africa compared to other regions. While 20 interventions are targeting African countries[82] compared to 14 targeting countries in the Asia Pacific region and 18 targeting countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, a large majority (i.e. 34 interventions) target countries in the Arab region. Similar proportions are reflected in the budgetary allocations for the African region. Noting that, out of 20 initiatives with budget allocations greater than USD 1 million, only five are implemented in the African region, compared to 12 in the Arab States (not least as a result of increasing investment in education in emergencies), but only one in Asia Pacific and two in Latin America and the Caribbean.

79.   'Making education systems more inclusive' is better reflected through Global Priority Gender Equality, in particular through education initiatives that target women and girls as a specific target group and through intersectional dimensions for inclusion in education.[83] In the UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and through education (2019-2025), intersectional disadvantages are mentioned and are meant to be taken into account in the provision of gender equal education. While women's and girls' empowerment through education is prioritised, the strategy also focuses on system strengthening for gender-transformative education. In addition, the strategy has a main intersectional pillar to promote safe, inclusive and healthy learning environments. Notably, specific mention of intersecting forms of discrimination are meant to be considered, e.g. due to ethnicity, disability or migratory or indigenous status. Further, costed, gender-responsive ESPs

should take into account intersecting disadvantages linked to gender, poverty, location, ethnicity, ability, and other measures.

80.   While the *UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality Action Plan (2014-2021)* mentions inclusion as complementary to gender equality, it does not appear to cover the wide spectrum of inclusion and all reasons for exclusion across UNESCO Sectors and thus does not explicitly reflect the more holistic inclusive approach to education as promoted by the Education sector.[84] However, a recently conducted organization-wide evaluation of the UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality 'From Ambition to Action: Evaluation of the UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality' (2020) mentions some good practices in terms of an intersectional analysis to gender equality and inclusion such as in relation to the African diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean (also linked to Global Priority Africa). Among its findings, the evaluation also underlined that increased advocacy and guidance for more attention across UNESCO to intersectional issues for inclusion within GE (such as masculinities, LGBTI) was required.[85]

81.   The new UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy sets more promising conditions for effective operationalization of the Global Priorities Africa and Gender Equality as well as priority groups Youth and SIDS. Differently from other "global priorities" which are explicitly presented and negotiated as such among Member States, i.e. the Global Priorities Africa and Gender Equality as well as priority groups Youth and SIDS, '*inclusion*' is presented as the underlying paradigm of the new Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029, demonstrating the stronger emphasis by UNESCO Member States on the concept.

80   See: Operational Strategy for Priority Africa, page 10.

81   Those as targeted in a specific country or region represented in the portfolio of Inclusion specific projects and interventions initiated or ongoing between 2016 and 2021 considered in the context of this evolution, those interventions targeted at global level are not included.

82   Including countries in Northern Africa that are also part of the UNESCO region Arab States.

83   It is to be noted that UNESCO has recently conducted a separate evaluation on Priority Gender equality and gender has therefore purposefully not been the main focus of this evaluation. Gender equality, is considered to the extent it intersects with other vulnerabilities and reasons for inclusion.

84   For example the GEAP mentions GE to be included in policies for social inclusion and social transformation; GE and inclusion in international science cooperation and careers in the sciences and engineering, and GE and inclusion in AI.

85   It is to be recognised that UNESCO's Education Sector has already put strong attention to LGBTI persons particularly in the context of school-related gender-based violence, and has done a lot of work around bullying on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (these initiatives are however outside the scope of this evaluation)

To what extent is UNESCO making use of its comparative strengths and opportunities in the field of inclusion in education (at global, regional and national level)?

82.   The survey highlights that in several areas of work UNESCO is considered to be better positioned than other organisations in inclusion in education.

Figure 2. UNESCO is mainly recognised for its comparative strengths in research, normative and policy work

Collect / disseminate research	64%	24%	6% 5%
Normative guidance	60%	30%	6% 5%
Policy advice	57%	29%	9% 5%
Facilitate exchange of expertise	57%	29%	7% 7%
Grassroots capacity development	32%	34%	30% 5%

■ UNESCO is best/slightly better positioned than UNESCO
■ UNESCO / other organizations are both in a good position
■ Other organizations are best positioned/slightly better positioned than UNESCO
■ Do not know

Source: Survey (Comparative advantages of UNESCO, n=130)

Source: Survey

83.   While UNESCO's comparative strengths are clearly recognised in its global research, and normative work, and the Organization's convening power around the topic, with respect to grassroots capacity development, respondents are more likely to consider that other organisations are in a better position than UNESCO (30%, against less than 10% for the other areas). Respondents point, for instance, to the importance of involving local education authorities at the grassroots level, as well as local civil society organisations, such as those that work with teachers, principals and students directly. This is further confirmed in the various interviews conducted.

- **Collection and dissemination of research:** UNESCO uses its position to bring people together at global, regional and national level on topics related to inclusion in education. At global level, examples include the International forum on inclusion and equity in education (Cali) in 2019.[86] Further, the interviews often mentioned the 2008 IBE conference on "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future".[87] At regional level, in 2020, the various (online) conferences aimed at supporting the launch of the regional GEM reports focused on inclusion and education. The High-Level Policy Forum on Multilingual Education in 2019 that convened senior policymakers from relevant ministries in 16 Asian and Pacific countries as well as experts and observers constitutes another salient example at regional level. This conference resulted in the Bangkok Statement on Language and Inclusion.[88] By bringing people and stakeholders together, a more holistic perspective on inclusion in education, in line with the SDGs, is communicated and discussed at different levels and UNESCO is steering the discourse on inclusion. As also shown by the results of the survey and confirmed in numerous interviews, participation in these events steered discussions and shifted priorities at the national level.

- **Normative guidance**: UNESCO's normative work and publications are considered key milestones for conceptual clarification and operationalisation of inclusion for many stakeholders working on the topic. However, reaching all Member States and engaging them in applying the normative guidance on inclusion in education in policy development and implementation remains challenging, despite the targeted UNESCO support (for instance, in terms of capacity building and technical support). Furthermore, while UNESCO makes use of its unique global position to push for a holistic approach to inclusion in education, how UNESCO

86   https://en.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-in-education/international-forum-2019
87   http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/international-conference-education/48th-session-2008
88   https://bangkok.unesco.org/index.php/content/bangkok-statement-language-and-inclusion

can contribute to the process that leads to the desired change of mindset at national level remains still largely unmeasured (see also Section 2.3 Summary of the Reconstructed Theory of Change).

- **Exchange of expertise**: Several interviewees, both internal and external to UNESCO, pointed out that UNESCO is not yet fully capitalising upon the wide academic network of UNESCO Chairs that work on inclusion-related issues. As the lead agency in conceptual clarification, being informed by academia is a strong asset. This appears however to be happening at a still limited and more ad hoc extent. For example, several UNESCO Chairs have been involved in the Cali Conference[89] and the HQ IGE section is seeking to involve them on a more regular basis. An example is a recent UNESCO publication on inclusive early childhood care and education[90] which was developed in cooperation with a UNESCO Chair in Canada.

To what extent is UNESCO's work covering the most relevant topics and targeting the most vulnerable disadvantaged groups?

84.   Overall, interviewees underlined how UNESCO is the only global organisation that covers the whole education system from pre-primary education to adult learning. While this is a key strength, which puts the Organization in a good position to exchanging expertise, and ensure normative work, it also creates a challenge as inclusion in education related to the formal education system (pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education) is different from discussions on the inclusivity of informal and adult education. For the latter, national governments feel less responsible, mainly focusing on basic skills training of second chance education.

85.   Across its work, UNESCO also addresses a large variety of reasons for exclusion, with some vulnerabilities being better addressed than others across the inclusion related portfolio of activities (see Annex 4: Detailed description of the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education). While gender equality and girls' education are most visibly high on the UNESCO agenda, other areas such as inclusion of people with disabilities, linguistic and ethnic minorities, the lack of accessible ICT tools and others are addressed as well, but at a more incipient level.

86.   Crisis-affected people on the move form a particular target group for UNESCO as a target group that increasingly attracts voluntary contributions. However, as also underlined in the evaluation of education in emergencies,[91] this is a challenging area as there are many stakeholders involved and oftentimes projects do not lead to sustainable

solutions which would require including these learners into national education systems. Here, the inclusion in education perspective leads to (national level) debates about how to integrate or include refugees and for how long.

Focus Box 2. Insights from Inclusion-specific work (Jordan)

UNESCO, as the SDG4 lead organization, is recognised as the lead driver on inclusion and diversity in education among partners in Jordan (in its broader definition). Development partners expressed confidence in having UNESCO "in the room" to guide various development partners on the broad concept provide technical support to the national institutions for system strengthening, as well as engage in the inclusive-specific areas and thematic education experience.

UNESCO has the coordinating capacity (both global and in national office) to bring actors together on inclusion and diversity in education as a holistic approach to a country pathway to a desirable inclusive society.

UNESCO has experience and active programmes in complementary sectors and intersectional approaches to inclusive-specific engagement with Jordanian government, supported by development partners.

UNESCO has a long-term view in engaging with government and partners which is essential for sustainability and leveraging of results from short-term interventions. For example, refugees are included in the ESP and the Jordan education system, which is an illustration of a longer-term achievement.

One of the key objectives is to support capacity development for system strengthening, empowering national institutions to lead in the progress towards greater inclusion and diversity in education.

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89   Such as relevant chairs from the US, Canada, Spain, and Chile.

90   UNESCO (2021), Inclusive early childhood care and education: From commitment to action: Inclusive early childhood care and education: from commitment to action - UNESCO Digital Library

91   UNESCO IOS (2016), Evaluation of UNESCO's Role in Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246095

87.   UNESCO covers other areas such as inclusion of linguistic minorities and indigenous languages and cultures in education. While addressing these (as one of the few organisations working on these issues), UNESCO's potential for enhanced inter-sectoral work by forging a stronger link between the Education Sector and for example the Culture Sector within UNESCO is considered a comparative strength to be further explored. This also relates to other education topics that bring to the fore the diversity in backgrounds and perspective of people (through peace education, combatting racism and xenophobia), an area that is also within the mandate of the Social and Human Sciences Sector.

88.   Another area on which UNESCO is particularly strong compared to other organisations is the inclusion of adult learners. UNESCO focuses on adults, for instance through its literacy section, and has a specialised institute devoted to the learning of adults (UIL). Awareness-raising for adult learning, to provide tools, guidelines, and capacity building, as well as to regularly monitor and report on adult learning systems and policies is carried out by these entities.[92] Nonetheless, within the inclusion in education context, as indicated by interviewees inside and outside UNESCO, the reference point remains the initial formal education system. Discussions usually concern the inclusion of children in education systems and the provision of quality education. In mainstreaming inclusion in education and related policy development, adult learners and adults in need of skills development to be better included in the labour market and society are often not sufficiently considered.

89.   **The COVID-19 pandemic** has exacerbated existing situations of exclusion and drawn more attention to the challenges of inclusion in education. In theory, this increases the stakes for UNESCO's work on inclusion in education: it makes it all the more relevant, most visibly through working together with main stakeholders and interest groups. When asked about possible consequences of COVID-19 for (global) attention to inclusion in education, 84% of survey respondents recognize the negative impacts that the pandemic has had on inclusion in education while 91% underline negative impacts on specific groups (see figure 3 below).

90.   It is understood that the pandemic does not only create new challenges for inclusion, but also exacerbates existing limitations and challenges, for the education sector as a whole, and for specific groups in particular. While 47% of respondents are convinced that the pandemic helped raise (policy) attention and concrete policy action to such issues of inclusion, a bigger majority feels that the negative impacts of COVID-19

outweigh the positive effects of increased policy attention to inclusion. Nonetheless, faced with disastrous consequences related to COVID-19 school closures, awareness needs to be raised more than ever about the importance of inclusion of education. A large number of respondents (i.e. 82%) recognize that, despite the current disruptive effects, the higher visibility of issues of inclusion in education can offer momentum to do so, and for advocating more convincingly for inclusion in education at the global and national level.

Figure 3. Despite its negative impacts, the COVID-19 pandemic brought more policy attention to inclusion in education
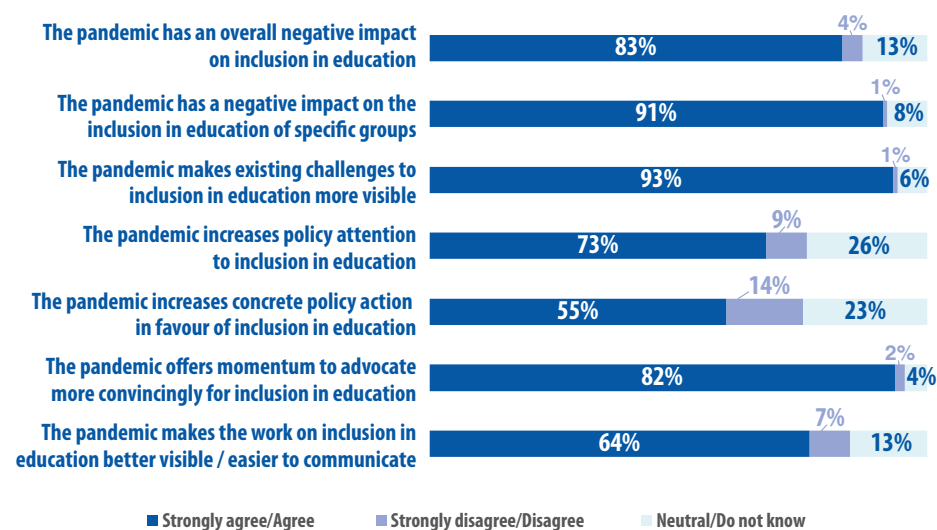
Source: Survey (Perceived threats and opportunities of COVID-19 for Inclusion in education)

92   See for instance the Global CONFINTEA conferences and associated reports. The next, seventh, International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII) will be hosted by Morocco in 2022: https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/confintea/seventh-international-conference-adult-education-confintea-vii

3.2 Key dimension 2: Partnerships, cooperation and fundraising

91. UNESCO activities in the area of inclusion in education do not take place in a vacuum but can only deliver optimal results if these are coordinated and/or achieved together with external partners. Under the key dimension of partnerships[93], the evaluation looked at the extent to which UNESCO has been able to engage in relevant partnerships, capitalize on existing cooperation opportunities, as well as to gather and mobilise other partners around its holistic approach to inclusion in education. The assessment allows a critical review of partnerships, cooperation and fundraising within the specific context of inclusion in education. This assessment covers the OECD-DAC criteria of external coherence, relevance and (financial) sustainability.

Table 4. Assessment related to partnerships, cooperation and fundraising

Judgment criteria assessing the extent to which		Assessment
➤ UNESCO's work is complementary and well-coordinated with other initiatives as judged by external actors.		**Slightly high** as UNESCO is well recognised as a global hub on the topic of inclusion in education. UNESCO works complementary to other organisations, brings relevant stakeholders together and often provides the coordination role. In specific areas (disabilities, refugees), the position of UNESCO is less strong and some coordination issues occur; especially when it comes to working at regional and especially national level, where other stronger, better visible and more specialised organisations take the lead.
➤ UNESCO's position allows sufficient resource mobilisation as judged by internal and external actors.		**Low**, although not necessarily all UNESCO's work in inclusion (e.g. as is the case for policy work[94]) requires a large funding it remains difficult to mobilise funding for the holistic perspective on inclusion in education with the aim to emphasise inclusion issues in broader programmes and projects. Existing resource mobilisation efforts target more specific issues (labelled as education in emergencies and disability-inclusive education).

To what extent is UNESCO's work and position complementary and well-coordinated with other actors and initiatives, avoiding duplication and ensuring that UNESCO is adding value?

92. At global level, UNESCO is well placed and connected to all the main players related to inclusion in education and the work in relation to specific education sectors, specific target groups, and reasons for exclusion. The obvious partners are those within the UN family and other multilateral organisations, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNICEF, the World Bank, GPE, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, UNHCR, ECW (Education Cannot Wait), UNGEI, European Commission, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

93. The links with those organisations are often not primarily on inclusion in education, but within the context of cooperating on other topics (for instance sectoral work on TVET, higher education, teacher education, etc.), inclusion and equity are also touched upon.

94. In addition, in the area of education in emergencies, UNESCO does not have a clear global standing and other organisations, notably UNICEF and UNHCR, are seen as global agenda setters compared to UNESCO. This becomes visible in the role of those organisations and the limited UNESCO involvement in the Global Compact on Refugees[95],

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93   By external partners, we understand both possible donors and otherwise relevant stakeholders active at the international level, including the UN family, as well as the large number of relevant partners.

94   The development of a policy for inclusion in and through education – which addresses the holistic perspective – does not require substantive budgetary resources but can easily be undertaken with approximately 200,000 USD (as estimated by UNESCO HQ) in a relatively complex operational environment such as Kenya that has multiple issues to be addressed, including IDPs and refugees.

95   UN (2020), The Global Compact on Refugees: Global compact on refugees EN.pdf (globalcompactrefugees.org)

the Global Refugee Forum,[96] and the Blueprint for Joint Action - A Fair Deal for Refugee Children.[97] Furthermore, UNESCO is not a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for humanitarian assistance.[98]

95.   Other specialised organisations with whom UNESCO closely cooperates include the EASNIE (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education)[99], EENET (Enabling Education Network), INEE (Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies), Humanity & Inclusion (HI) and Open Society Foundations (OSF). UNESCO closely collaborates with those organisations on joint publications, projects, the organisation of events and the development of tools and guidelines. Focus Box 2 provides some examples.

Focus Box 3. Good practice examples of UNESCO projects with partners

The **UNESCO-EASNIE** Inclusive Education in Action Online Resource Base (IEA) is gathering case studies from across the globe on policy initiatives, curriculum development, learning environments and professional development.[100] The IEA initiative began in 2009 with the UNESCO Policy Guidelines for Inclusion in Education to support policymakers' work on inclusive education. With UNESCO's support, it developed into a comprehensive resource base.

INEE, an open global network of individuals and representatives from various organisations and individuals working on education in emergencies and post-crisis recovery. UNESCO IIEP played a pivotal role in the development of INEE and supported the formation of internationally recognized minimum standards for coordinating education interventions prior to, during, and after emergencies. IIEP integrated these standards in training courses on education in emergencies and reconstruction.[101] For

these organisations, UNESCO plays an important role: it provides resources in terms of knowledge and experience, access to a global network, (limited) financial resources to conduct joint projects or work on a joint publication/conference and, finally, UNESCO provides recognition and a quality seal for their work. It is beneficial for those organisations to be associated with UNESCO as this allows them to attract a wider and bigger audience. It allows UNESCO as well to broaden its expertise as, oftentimes, these organisations have a more specialised expertise on specific reasons for exclusion, on specific regions, or higher involvement in grassroots level initiatives.

UNESCO implements a UN-funded, **Education Cannot Wait project** (ECW) - Strengthening Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and Data for Increased Resilience to Crises. The project will strengthen the resilience of education systems by ensuring improved management and use of data and information in Chad, Ethiopia, Palestine, South Sudan, Syria and Uganda. In particular, the project will strengthen Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and support national capacities. It will allow national authorities and education in emergencies (EiE) actors to jointly assess educational needs and provide proper preparedness and response plans. As such, the proposed project will contribute to bridging the humanitarian-development divide. UNESCO-IIEP, IITE, UIS, the Section for Education Policy as well as concerned Field Offices have been closely involved in the development of the project and contribute to the implementation. In addition, a partnership with Norwegian Capacity (NORCAP)[102] is part of the project.

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96   The Global Refugee Forum | The Global Compact on Refugees | Digital platform (globalcompactrefugees.org)
97   UNHCR-UNICEF Blueprint for Joint Action for Refugee Children | UNICEF
98   https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc
99   https://www.european-agency.org/
100 https://www.inclusive-education-in-action.org
101 http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/our-expertise/inee; Planning for disability-inclusive education: Training course expands to new regions | IIEP-UNESCO
102 https://www.nrc.no/expert-deployment/aboutnorcap/

96.   At country level the evaluation identified a number of relevant partnerships, as also demonstrated by evidence across the country level case studies and interviews. In Jordan, since 2020, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) and UNESCO engage with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to support system strengthening and capacity development, two key components of the 'Promoting quality in inclusive education in Jordan' or "PROMISE" programme. Overall, the programme aims at improving equal access to education and the quality of primary and secondary public schools in Jordan.[103] UNESCO advises the MoE, as well as the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on strategy, policy planning and capacity development across the different levels (MoE, field directorates, education supervisors, teachers) for greater inclusion and diversity in education. UNESCO also supports the mainstreaming of inclusion and diversity in education through its support to EMIS and the Education Strategic Plan in Jordan.

97.   The interviews and desk review in Mozambique also demonstrated that UNESCO works successfully in partnership with others. The work on the preparation and elaboration of the Education Sector plan involved the coordination of a broad variety of national and international stakeholders, by working directly with the members of the local education group (LEG), which consists of international cooperating partners and national civil society organisations. By involving the members of the LEG all relevant national and international stakeholders were engaged, covering in addition to central national stakeholders (government, and the federation of national civil society), international organisations such as UNICEF, the World Bank, the World Food Programme (WFP), bilateral donors (Finland, Canada, Ireland, Germany, Portugal, Italy, US, France), and the EU. The specific process of preparing the ESP put UNESCO in the role of coordinator, convening the various partners in the LEG.

98.   Stakeholders are positive about the experience and indicate that a similar setup could be repeated, provided that staffing is sufficient. Development partners highlight that the work on the ESP was clearly considered a priority by the UNESCO Field Office, which helped to effectively resolve challenges at various moments. Partners are positive about working with UNESCO throughout the process, though bottlenecks in staffing are mentioned as a reason for some of the delays throughout the process. Stakeholders are convinced about the added value of the Organisation in the preparation and recognize its

important contribution towards the end product. It is noted that, throughout the process of preparing the ESP, UNESCO's role is mostly that of a facilitator.

99.   For NGOs working in countries, partnering with UNESCO is attractive. This not only because of the available knowledge and expertise, but also because UNESCO works closely with Ministries of Education, and this offers an entry point to work with national authorities. Having UNESCO on board allows projects to get better recognised by the governments. While it is attractive for those NGOs to be associated with UNESCO, it is often challenging for UNESCO to closely engage with those organisations, partly due to limited human resources in working at the grassroots level, and as many smaller organisations demonstrate capacity gaps for engaging and working with donors and international development partners, such as UNESCO.

100.   At all levels (global, regional and national), UNESCO's role and comparative strengths are clear. As expressed in interviews, development partners have a clear idea about what UNESCO can, cannot and should not do. It is clear that UNESCO is perceived as the only valuable global hub that is able to mobilise various groups of stakeholders, covers all levels and thematic strands across education and works on the wide range of reasons for exclusion. Interviewees also underlined their understanding that UNESCO's role differs from organisations such as UNICEF that have larger budgets to be involved in implementation of projects and offer direct budget support to countries.

101.   The evaluation concludes that UNESCO's cooperation approach works well in terms of avoiding duplications and assuring synergies between organisations working on inclusion and inclusion-related topics, as shown in particular by the cooperation in Jordan and in Mozambique as well as the overall cooperation with UN organisations (UNHCR and UNICEF mainly) and the cooperation with specific partners such as EASNIE, INEE, and EENET. UNESCO is well linked to these organisations, and well respected as an organisation leading on the topic of inclusion in education, as indicated during several interviews and also reflected in the survey results. Nonetheless, some partners perceived their relationship relying on cooperation at an individual level with UNESCO staff. Some interviewees referred to examples where they noted differences in the Organization's engagement and approach when people moved, which may demonstrate that partnerships are not always perceived as institutionalised and systematised.

103 The programme focuses on schoolchildren from Kindergarten2 to Grade 10 with particular focus on children living with disabilities. https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/86767.html

To what extent is UNESCO's position beneficial for mobilising external partnerships and additional resources for inclusive education?

102. While a more holistic inclusion in education concept underpins the 2030 Agenda, the project funding is not flowing towards this more holistic approach, but to projects solving specific inclusion in education challenges. This makes it also challenging for UNESCO to capitalise on its core competitive strength, namely its overarching view on inclusion in education. This also becomes visible in the portfolio analysis: the funding raised is predominantly labelled as 'education in emergencies'[104] and some as 'inclusion', focussing mainly on people with disabilities. Hence, in terms of funding, UNESCO seems to insufficiently capitalise on its specific position related to the holistic concept of inclusion in education.

103. This, however, does not mean that UNESCO is not successful in raising resources and working in partnership with other organisations. The figure below provides an overview of the main partners mentioned in relation to the projects labelled under 'inclusion' and 'education in emergencies'. Within these 95 projects, 81 are funded externally (Extra budgetary funding/voluntary contributions). The below figure provides an overview of the main (known) donors, showing a focus on working with UNICEF and bilateral patners.

104. In the implementation of these projects, national level partners play a key role. Of the 95 projects (at least) 42 indicate national government organisations (e.g. Ministries of Education) and 10 national NGOs. Besides these national partners, UN organisations form the most important implementation partners as is shown by the following figure.

Figure 5. Main partners of UNESCO for projects in the period 2016-2021 on Inclusion and Education in Emergencies

UNICEF	26
UNHCR	8
GPE	5
UNFPA	4
WHO	2
Save the Children	2
INEE	1
World Bank	1
WFP	1
UNRWA	1
UNRC	1
Plan	1

Source: Authors, based on data provided by UNESCO

Figure 4. Main donors/development partners of projects in the period 2016-2021 on Inclusion and Education in Emergencies (n=95)

UNICEF	18
Bilateral (govt)	17
Private fund	12
Other UN	8
Foundations	7
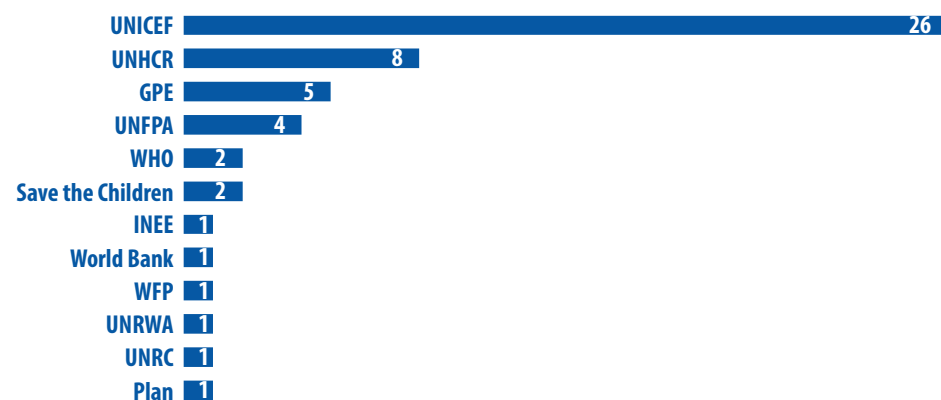
Source: Authors, based on data provided by UNESCO

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104 See: UNESCO IOS (2016), UNESCO's Role in Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises, p. 18. "UNESCO receives more resources for crisis-related interventions than for its regular development work, which at times diverts its focus away from areas where it holds true comparative advantage."

3.3   Key dimension 3: Internal coherence and cooperation

105. This section consists of an assessment of the organisational coherence of UNESCO-led activities across the Organization both for inclusion specific work and in particular for mainstreaming in the area of inclusion in education. This concerns how initiatives are developed and how work is organised within the UNESCO Education Sector and within UNESCO, through cooperation and coordination between HQ and Field Offices, as well as the extent to which UNESCO mobilises relevant knowledge partners from within the UNESCO family including Category 1 Institutes and other Programme Sectors, and associated networks.

106. When assessing the organisational structure and entities involved, synergies developed and resources allocated to activities in the area of inclusion in education in relation to the results achieved, the evaluation is able to form a summative judgment in line with the respective OECD-DAC criteria internal coherence and efficiency.

Table 5. Assessment related to internal coherence and cooperation

Judgment criteria assessing the extent to which		Assessment
➤ UNESCO's organisational arrangements, structures and processes are in place that support reaching the envisaged objectives in a coherent way as judged by internal and external stakeholders.		**Slightly low** considering that UNESCO's work on inclusion in education is perceived as being fragmented and scattered across different organisational entities, units and institutions that appear to often work in silos. While there are dedicated units, and despite the recognised importance of the topic, there is not a single organisation-wide coordination mechanism for mainstreaming inclusion across the Education Sector and beyond. This mainly relates to the organisational capacity to take stock, coordinate and monitor who is contributing what to an envisaged change process. Both internal and external stakeholders raise some concerns about the fragmentation and lack of clarity of direction, coordination and role division. The new UNESCO C/4 and C/5 strategic and programme planning approach, identifying overarching strategic objectives to which relevant entities across the Organization contribute, seems promising in bringing more structure on which different entities and sectors contribute to the overall strategic objectives, but practical details on how this will be operationalised and adequate systems and processes are still in development.
➤ UNESCO's is able to secure synergies within the Organization and with associated networks as judged by involved stakeholders.		**Slightly low** as, despite established strong collaboration on inclusion among some entities, there is not a systematic approach to work on inclusion in education across the Organization (all the Category 1 Institutes, Field Offices) and with associated networks (Chairs, National Commissions, ASPnet). Lack of coordination capacity, and limited operational clarity and capacity are factors that prevent a more systematic and coordinated approach.

To what extent is the organisational structure, managerial support, coordination mechanism, infrastructure, and financial allocation adequate for mainstreaming inclusion in education and supporting inclusion-specific activities?

107. As indicated in section 2.4, there are many entities within UNESCO working on inclusion in education. When reflecting on the internal structure, the coordination and allocation of financial resources, the interviewees indicated that there are good examples of effective coordination and cooperation, but that there are also a number of issues that hamper creating a conducive environment within UNESCO to support inclusion in education. There are many examples in which the Category 1 institutes, UNESCO HQ, and Field Offices jointly work on projects, publications, conferences. For instance, IITE, in collaboration with the IIEP, carried out a research project on COVID-19 and Inclusive Open and Distance Learning Solutions: Rapid Assessment of the Development and Implementation of Inclusive Open and Distance Learning Solutions for Students with Disabilities Served by Inclusive, Special Schools and Resource Centers in Rwanda and Mauritius. IIEP typically closely cooperates with Regional or Field Offices in the countries it supports educational planning.

108. Stakeholders pointed to several critical issues:

- **UNESCO entities tend to work in silos**: while there is a sufficient level of coordination and communication between different entities on a variety of subjects, a number of interviewees underlined that organisational entities and staff involved work rather in silos when working on inclusion, not always being sufficiently aware and making use of the expertise, experience and capacities in other parts of UNESCO.

- **High reliance on persons, instead of institutional arrangements**: the staff and resources to work on inclusion in education are spread thin across the different organisational entities. This means that this area of work is, to a certain extent, individually driven, both between UNESCO entities and towards external partners. While the area of work benefits and relies on a high level of commitment by individual staff, there are also risks deriving from a high reliance on a limited number of individuals in implementing activities and achieving results, if not supported by institutionally driven arrangements. Longer term effectiveness and

sustainability may therefore be called into question, as reflected in the views of a number of respondents.

- **Ensuring a UNESCO-wide approach to inclusion in education**: At the organisational level, the common approach to mainstreaming inclusion in education is seen as challenging. When working on specific reasons for exclusion (refugees, disabilities, languages etc.), the inclusion in education lens is taken on board. However, when inclusion in education is not the main focus of an initiative, there is no specific guidance or markers, requirements or agreed indicators to make sure that an inclusion perspective is adequately embedded. Measuring the level of inclusion in education remains therefore equally challenging. Furthermore, a current lack of organisational guidelines on inclusivity coupled with a number of competing priorities and heavy workload makes mainstreaming inclusion not tangible, which is not solely the case for the Education Sector.

- **Practice what you preach**: Inclusion is considered as the programmatic paradigm for all of UNESCO's work and UNESCO is an active member of UN wide networks and initiatives, such as the Gender and Human rights network or the UN Disability inclusion strategy (UNDIS) working group. Nonetheless, hierarchical structures, limited resources and heavy administrative processes at times hamper the Organization in adjusting its approaches and processes and consistently applying a more inclusive lens. This is illustrated by examples mentioned in several interviews. For instance, ensuring inclusive representation, such as systematic arrangements for involvement of organizations for and of persons with disabilities or other concerned or underrepresented groups when organising conferences or events appears not yet part of current practice. Arranging logistics and access to people with disabilities appears to be an issue in many Field Offices. Other UNESCO policies and processes such as encouraging qualified people with disabilities to apply for positions or making publications accessible to people with disabilities and offering more translations are also considered as indicators for UNESCO's inclusiveness as an Organization.

109. **Challenges to work intersectorally remain**: Relevant initiatives of other Programme Sectors were highlighted by interviewees as examples of good cooperation. For instance, SHS put in place the Inclusive Policy Lab (IPL),[105] which supports the design and delivery of more inclusive, equity-weighted, and SDG-oriented policies. For this purpose, it has developed inclusive policy markers; provides expert advice; and provides

105 https://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab/

knowledge sharing opportunities. The CI Sector's normative work on Open Educational Resources, the launch of guidelines for Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Open and Distance Learning and the Mobile learning week,[106] or the Culture Sector's work on links between education and intangible cultural heritage[107] are other relevant examples.

110. Despite these good examples, administrative structures and Sector-based programme planning and budgeting continue to be seen as obstacles to intersectoral collaboration, and a more structured approach to working intersectorally on inclusion in education is still lacking. The 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 approved at the 41st General Conference for the period 2022-2029 provide a promising framework for a new approach to organisational planning and implementation from a thematic lens and in a truly intersectoral and multidisciplinary fashion. Strategic Objective 1: '*Ensure quality equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in order, inter alia, to reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies, particularly in the digital era*' establishes the mandate for work on inclusion in education to be addressed in an intersectoral manner. The new intersectoral programme 'Promoting Indigenous Knowledge, Culture and Languages as a Pathway to Inclusion' as defined in the 41 C/5 is another promising opportunity for intersectoral cooperation to which the ED sector will contribute. The effectiveness of this new approach is still be assessed, and a key question for realising this potential of increased intersectoral work remains if budgets remain allocated to organisational structures rather than to areas of work.

111. UNESCO also still lacks a systematic and coherent approach to inclusion as a holistic concept (some might still see 'inclusion' as 'inclusion of people with disability'), and the institutional arrangements may hamper mobilising expertise internally from other UNESCO entities. While there is no structure or single entity in the ED sector to coordinate the work on inclusion across the different UNESCO entities and to guarantee cooperation, mobilisation of resources, and synergies to arise, other modalities for stimulating intersectoral work are emerging. The UNESCO Intersectoral Task Team on Disability Rights and Inclusion demonstrates an example of good practice. Through this task team, under the leadership and coordination of the Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences (ADG/SHS), all UNESCO Programme Sectors work together on disability inclusion issues "to ensure impactful interventions for persons with disabilities at the national level, facilitate the upscaling of promising initiatives, and better position the Organisation within the UN system".108 Other existing structures related to inclusion such

as the gender focal points of the ED sector, the Intersectoral Task Team of the International Decade of Indigenous languages (DIL), the Intersectoral Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, are also seen as opportunities to support efforts towards mainstreaming inclusion in education.

To what extent are synergies within the Organization (between, for instance, HQ and field offices) as well as with its associated networks effectively explored and materialised?

112. The relationship and cooperation between UNESCO HQ, Field Offices and other associated networks (Chairs and National Commissions) is a critical element for the efficiency and effectiveness of UNESCO.

113. Concerning the relationship between UNESCO HQ and the **Field Offices** in working on inclusion in education, several interviewees voiced concerns. A critical point regarding the organisational capacity of UNESCO is that the key expertise on inclusion in education predominantly lies with a small group of persons at UNESCO HQ, in some regional offices and the Category 1 institutes, while specific projects are implemented through the Field Offices where staff might only have limited specialised expertise on inclusion in education. Hence, UNESCO is not taking full advantage of its in-house expertise and standing which, in turn, may jeopardise results and UNESCO's esteem among partners and Member States.

114. The **National Commissions** play an important role as liaison between UNESCO and Member States. However, both the survey and interviews did not identify a structural level of involvement of National Commissions towards defining the meaning of inclusion in education in a national context. National Commissions predominantly referred to the general influence of SDG 4 on their work, and referred to concrete events, such as national roundtables, workshops and other types of physical events in which inclusion in education is directly or indirectly the topic. When asked how cooperation with other UNESCO entities (HQ, Field Offices) can be improved, National Commissions most often pointed to training, technical support and more specific guidelines that can be used to structure the work by the National Commissions.

115. As emerging from the survey and interviews with **UNESCO Chairs**, the cooperation is mainly through personal links and, so far, no systematic involvement is taking place between UNESCO and the Chairs. UNESCO Chairs also pointed to various ways for

106 https://en.unesco.org/mlw
107 See for instance: UNESCO (2015), Learning with Intangible Heritage for a Sustainable Future: Guidelines for Educators in the Asia-Pacific Region: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232381
108 https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/eoi_call_strategic_mapping_of_unesco_disability_work_2021_clean.pdf

strengthening potential synergies, ranging from the support in networking with likeminded researchers, to the provision of global statistics on inclusion and education and finally the provision of educational toolkits, guidelines and insights in global best practices providing a basis for further research.

116.   Working on inclusion in education requires interactions both inside the Organization and outside. Confirming a pattern also shown in the interviews, around one third of respondents in national ministries of Education and development organisations revealed that they mostly engage and interact with UNESCO HQ and regional offices whereas they engage with national Field Offices, Category 1 institutes and other entities to a lesser extent (see also Figure 6).

117. In conclusion, UNESCO HQ's cooperation with Field Offices and partnering with associated networks on inclusion in education is considered as incipient. This is partly due to limited human resources and coordination capacities, as well as the limited dissemination of broad, updated concepts related to inclusion in education, with guidance for translating them into practice considered as insufficient to support these entities and networks in operationalising inclusion in education at the national level.

Figure 6. UNESCO HQ and regional offices are the main points of engagement

	Government	Other
ED Sector (HQ)	32%	28%
Regional office	32%	25%
Field office	12%	12%
Cat. I Institute	9%	7%
Other Sector	5%	8%
UNESCO Chair	5%	9%
ASPnet schools	5%	4%
Other	12%	18%

■ Government   ■ Other
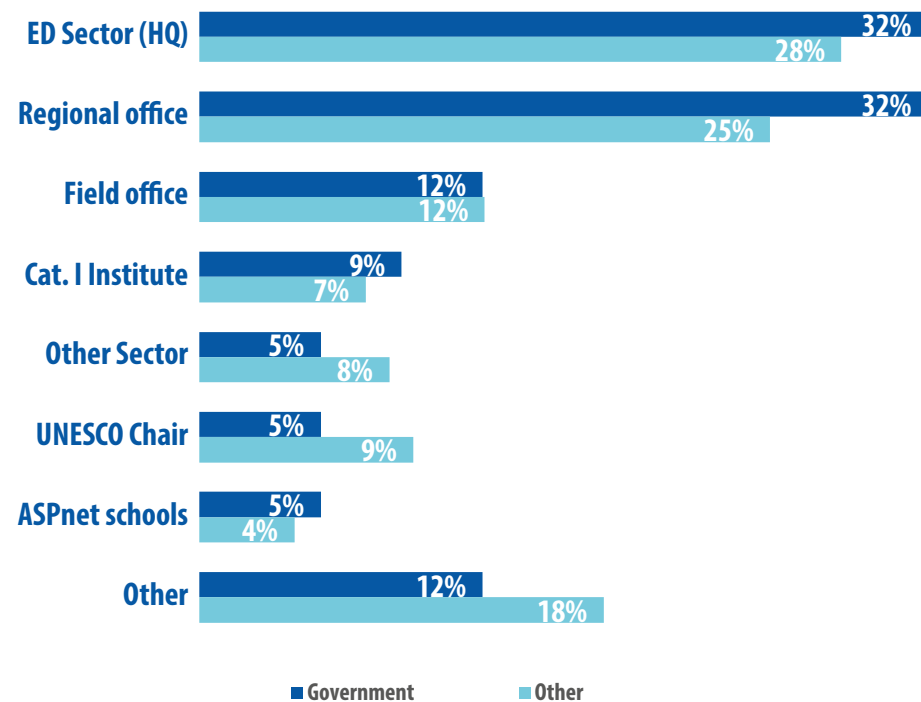
Source: Survey (Percentage of respondents who had at least one interaction with UNESCO entities, n=154)

3.4   Key dimension 4: Results achieved, signs of impact and sustainability

118.   The assessment of the results and sustainability are key benchmarks against which the success of activities should be measured. The extent to which the expected results are achieved as a result of the activities undertaken and outputs produced is the core question of an assessment of effectiveness. Subsequently the extent to which these results have any potential to lead to longer term impact and to be sustained once the interventions ended is verified by evaluation questions probing sustainability and exploring pathways towards impact.[109] This assessment covers the OECD-DAC criteria of effectiveness, (signs of) impact and sustainability.

Table 6. Assessment related to results and sustainability

Judgment criteria assessing the extent to which	Assessment
➢ UNESCO reached its outcomes, results and impact as specified in the programming documents and evidenced by monitoring reports and stakeholder assessments.	**Slightly high** as UNESCO supported progress in conceptual clarification; global awareness (e.g. Cali); data and oversight (e.g. GEM reports); policy and system strengthening support; policy dialogue; and strategic planning support. (e.g. Jordan); and enhanced inclusion of specific marginalised learners. Changes can be seen in relation to the identified change markers, most notably concerning supporting knowledge development, exchange and learning. While the evaluation finds evidence for a visible contribution of UNESCO's work towards creating a conducive environment which has resulted in visibly higher levels of awareness for inclusion in education in Member States (as also reflected in the new 41 C/4) and policy development in some contexts, but there is still little evidence that it has resulted in advances in inclusive education in many countries (see also next item). While this is not an outcome necessarily within the control of UNESCO, it highlights the continued necessity to keep working to foster the ingredients that contribute to a conducive environment.
➢ Member States express a high level of engagement with the inclusion in education agenda and UNESCO's work.	**Slightly low** as the Member States' orientations towards inclusion in education are not yet visible in actual changes in education systems and practices, given that actual systemic change at country level takes time and cannot be easily measured as a result of UNESCO's work. While the political commitment to inclusion is there, taking meaningful and long-term action – as an expression of engagement – is still limited. At the moment of evaluation for instance, the immediate challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic for education are prioritised for logical reasons. The necessary next step will be to capitalise on the policy attention for access and quality education spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic and transform this into sustainable attention for inclusion in education in the years to come.

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109 One evaluation question that was included in the key dimension is discussed under 'weaknesses' in the SWOT analysis (see Annex 7), namely: What are factors that prevent UNESCO from reaching its envisaged outcomes or target groups?

Judgment criteria assessing the extent to which	Assessment
➤ UNESCO's systems are able to provide a detailed overview of the progress and developments related to UNESCO activities on inclusion in education, assessed by the evaluators based on the planning and monitoring data.	**Low** as the systems are not in place to track inclusion in education results systematically across the key entities, including different UNESCO ED sections, UNESCO sectors, and UNESCO Category 1 institutes.[110] In addition, evaluations of inclusion-related projects are not always of sufficient quality and yield limited information about their effectiveness and potential lessons learned, not least as their findings do not systematically feed into an organisational knowledge base to stimulate such learning. Furthermore, as also underlined in the 2021 UNESCO Synthetic review of evaluations, most evaluations on other thematic areas provide few substantial references to inclusion, which suggests that there is no sharp focus on inclusion and that inclusion has not been systematically mainstreamed across UNESCO's interventions. On the programmatic side, the new C/4 and C/5 approach is promising (all Programme Sectors contribute to the same strategic objectives), but this is not yet further operationalised in reporting lines.

To what extent are Member States engaged in the inclusive education agenda and UNESCO's work?

119. UNESCO's Member States are engaged with progressing towards the SDGs and generally support the development of more inclusive education systems by removing specific barriers for learners in general terms. This is not only reflected in the formal normative commitments and interactions in events hosted by UNESCO but is also confirmed by the survey conducted in this evaluation among National Commissions, other national representatives and representatives from civil society organisations.[111] Figure 7 shows how a majority of respondents is positive about recent developments in inclusion in their area of work. This is particularly the case of respondents in Arab States and those working for international organisations. Respondents identified efforts to expand access to education to new groups of students, through policies, studies, changes to curricula, infrastructural improvements and increased budgets. An analysis of the open responses suggests that progress on inclusion is often linked to that of specific priority groups and challenges such as access for girls, people with disabilities and, to a lesser extent, refugees and (internally displaced) migrants and ethic/linguistic minorities. A more holistic approach to inclusion in education (mainstreaming) appears to be not as well developed at Member State level. Few examples offered in the survey in this direction highlight attention for the involvement of a diversity of stakeholders.

Figure 7. Some progress towards Inclusion in education is noted across all regions

Region	Inclusion in education has improved	Inclusion in education has not changed substantially	No, inclusion in education has worsened	Do not know
International organizations	88%	13%		
Arab States	85%	15%		
Latin America and the Caribbean	71%	21%		7%
Asia and the Pacific	61%	28%		11%
Region not specified	59%	24%		18%
Africa	58%	42%		
Europe and North America	51%	38%		10%

- ■ Inclusion in education has improved
- ■ Inclusion in education has not changed substantially
- ■ No, inclusion in education has worsened
- ■ Do not know

Source: Survey (Perceived developments in relation to inclusion in education per region, N=121)

110 The available list of projects extracted for the purpose of the evaluation only includes projects labelled as 'inclusion' and 'education in emergencies'.

111 No major difference was observed between these groups, hence the results of the survey are presented here by geographical region.

120. A majority of respondents (51% - 88%) noted improvements inclusion in education while fewer indicated that there was no substantial progress (21%-42%). However, no respondent noted a worsening of the situation. For instance, these respondents highlight how the effects of the COVID-19 health crises halted or even reversed the progress their country had made. Other respondents highlighted that action on inclusion in education remains often limited to policy rhetoric, or – to the other end of the scale – that change remains limited by slow policy processes that prevent visible change at the operational level. The inclusion in education agenda is for Member States, on the one hand, not concrete enough, or – when it becomes concrete – not feasible as implementation requires deeper reforms for which Member States often still lack the capacities and resources.

121. While actual progress is found in some places, the difficulties of measuring progress in inclusion in education means that it is sometimes hard to measure meaningful progress towards inclusive education over a longer timeframe, compared to more superficial advances, such as that of merely renaming certain policy departments, or policy staff. In interviews, civil society organisations, for instance, indicate that the ambition of UNESCO's work in countries remains too often confined to the scope defined by national governments. This means that if governments do not drive the agenda on inclusion, little progress is possible, particularly on more politically sensitive issues (i.e. multilingualism or the provision of education to people on the move), UNESCO is not always sufficiently visible, which represents a gap which civil society needs to fill. In these contexts, UNESCO often functions as a coordinator of networks rather than an actual contributor towards inclusion in education policies. While this represents an influential role, the Organization at the national level is not always perceived as living up to the high standard it sets to ensure access and quality education for all learners.

Focus Box 4. Insights from inclusion in education policy work (Lao PDR)

The positive impact of the 8th International Conference on Education (ICE, 2008) "Inclusive Education: The Way to the Future"[112] and the events leading up to and following up the conference, such as the regional conference "Inclusive Education: Major Policy Issues in the Asia Pacific Region»[113] on the awareness of the Lao PDR Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES) concerning issues of inclusive education is recognised and clearly felt up to present.

UNESCO's convening power has been a crucial element for the inclusive education policy development in 2010 and enhanced engagement by national level stakeholders. The UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok has brought together relevant stakeholders in a working group[114] to design the 2010 inclusive education policy in Lao PDR.

While the policy established a basis for the MoES-led formulation of subsequent 5-year National Strategies and Plans of Action on Inclusive Education[115], over the longer term, other factors that are outside the control of UNESCO, such as structural changes, limited resources and other evolving priorities in a country can put obstacles for upholding the commitment for implementation, follow up and for updating of a developed policy.

In the absence of a national UNESCO presence, UNESCO is part of the National Education Development Partners Working Group (IEDWG) and continuously supports the IE related policy. Nonetheless it proves more challenging for UNESCO to ensure the required continuous support and dialogue with all relevant stakeholders for upholding a conducive environment and continued engagement of the national level stakeholders to the ambitions defined in a policy document.

Establishing a data collection system that provides an overview of the number of vulnerable populations including of persons with disabilities and their functional limitations is considered among the most pressing issues.

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112 UNESCO (2009), INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION 48th session Geneva, Switzerland, 25-28 November 2008 FINAL REPORT "INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE WAY OF THE FUTURE" - FINAL REPORT, Link

113 Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO (2008), Report Regional Preparatory Conference on "Inclusive Education: Major Policy Issues in the Asia Pacific Region», Bali, 29-31 May 2008, Link

114 Including local civil society organisations, MOES, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Social Welfare, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

115 I.e. the National Strategy and Plan of Action on Inclusive Education" for 2011-2015 driven by MOES and CSOs and endorsed, for 2016 -20 though not formally endorsed, and the National Strategy and Action Plan for 2021 until 2025 (in development at the time of the evaluation).

To what extent did UNESCO reach its expected outcomes, results and (sustainable) impact, in consideration of evolving circumstances, in particular during the recent COVID-19 health crises?

122. The ultimate goal of UNESCO's work on inclusion in education is to contribute to countries progressing towards the SDGs (in particular SDG 4) by 2030. While the question of direct attribution of such results to the work of UNESCO is particularly challenging, a large majority of respondents across all regions indicated that the work of UNESCO had made a positive contribution, as illustrated below in figure 8. While respondents working with international organisations appeared as the most critical, only 14 percent within this group did not identify any positive contribution. Respondents appreciated for instance the contributions of UNESCO in developing education policies, but also more broadly contribution through capacity building among policymakers and teachers alike, or UNESCO's events and advocacy campaigns on themes related to inclusion in education.

Figure 8. UNESCO's contribution towards inclusion in education is strongly recognised across all regions
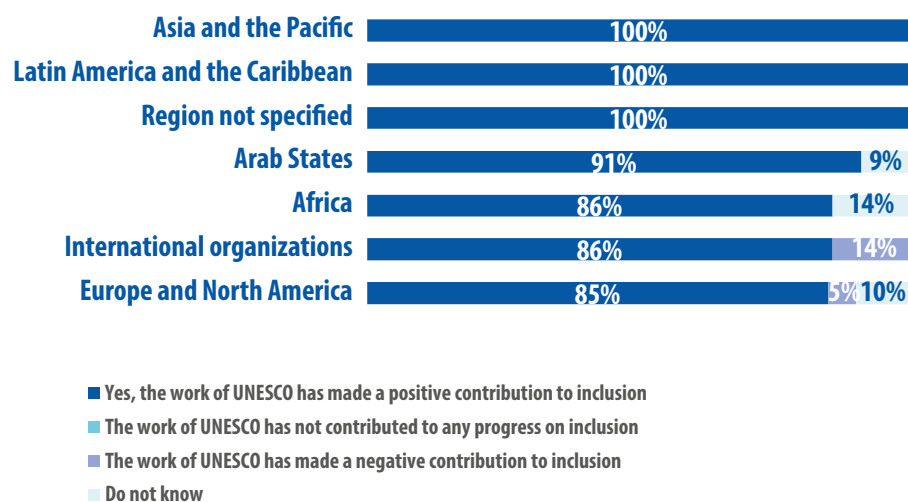
Source: Survey (Contribution of UNESCO's work to inclusion in education, N=73)

123. These areas of perceived positive contribution to inclusion in education are unpacked in more detail in line with the Theory of Change[116] and reviewed across the following change markers that are associated with changing mindsets and establishing conducive environments with the aim to explore the extent to which change can be associated with UNESCO's work: [117]

- Supporting knowledge development, exchange and learning
- Securing a conducive environment in terms of partnerships at national levels
- Support capacity development for education providers and policy makers
- Improving inclusion in education of final beneficiaries through concrete projects.

Supporting knowledge development, exchange and learning

Table 7. Results and signs of impact: knowledge development

Detailed change marker	Assessment (low/high) and explanation to what extent change can be associated with UNESCO's work
Widening the understanding of inclusion in education	**Slightly high:** UNESCO's normative work and publications widened the understanding (survey results, interviews)
Sharing expertise, resources and developing policy advice	**Slightly high:** UNESCO expertise is valued, and tools are disseminated and used in policy advice (survey, interviews, case studies)
Collecting disaggregated data on and for inclusion	**High:** The GEM report and associated publications/ activities (e.g. UIS/GEM partnership for PEER and WIDE) are highly appreciated for their role in improving the knowledge base (survey, interviews)
Supporting peer learning (South-South)	**Slightly low:** The evaluation did not find sufficient evidence that this is strongly developed. The Cali conference in 2019 supported the exchange of experiences between countries. Further, the GEM report and associated publications/activities/databases are available for learning about practices in other countries. However, the country-level interviews and the surveys did not provide indications of substantive peer learning between countries (in the global South).

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116 The ToC established that UNESCO's main objective is to contribute to a conducive environment for countries, international organisations and stakeholders to work together on inclusion (see Annex 3: detailed Theory of Change).
117 Inspired by the GEM 2020, p. 23.

124. Almost all respondents to the survey point to the collection and dissemination of research as a relevant area where UNESCO's work contributes to inclusion in education. Respondents identified a substantial contribution of UNESCO's work to supporting knowledge development to achieving progress in inclusion. Government representatives more often reported larger contributions whereas other respondents (academics and civil society) see UNESCO's work pertaining to the facilitation of exchange of expertise as the most substantial contribution to inclusion in education.

Figure 9. Government stakeholders largely recognise UNESCO's knowledge activities contributing towards inclusion
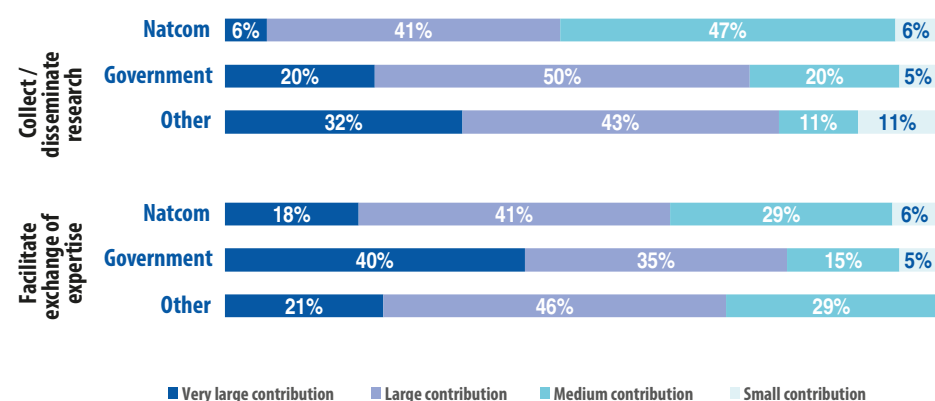
Source: Survey (Contribution of UNESCO knowledge development activities to progress on inclusion in education, N=65)

125. UNESCO's work on supporting knowledge development and exchange of practices combines the publication of relevant sources and insights with a networking function through which various partners can learn from each other. The 2020 GEM report on inclusion and education is one of the most visible (and influential) examples of UNESCO's work in this area and is also mentioned frequently by respondents in the survey. As a follow-up product to this seminal publication, the Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER) were launched to map countries' laws and policies on inclusion in education. These reviews aim to offer insights through peer reviews of country's policies and use these reviews to help improve policies in education.[118] Since its launch in 2020, over 1,000 users have registered and over 200 individuals participated in webinars on PEER.[119]

126. The inclusion in education workstream comprises an important normative aspect, and UNESCO has a key voice in such debates. Through attention to and rethinking inclusion issues at international conferences, declarations and more specific follow-up through inclusion projects, UNESCO is often associated to issues of inclusion. A majority of respondents to the survey also highlighted how UNESCO largely contributes to the creation of a conducive environment for inclusion in education through its normative work. Particularly respondents from national ministries (80%) see a large contribution of UNESCO to this area. Such normative guidance takes place through UNESCO's work in promoting tools and bringing stakeholders together to work on the subject, particularly those active in civil society.

Figure 10. Normative guidance provided to Member States strongly contributes to progress in inclusion
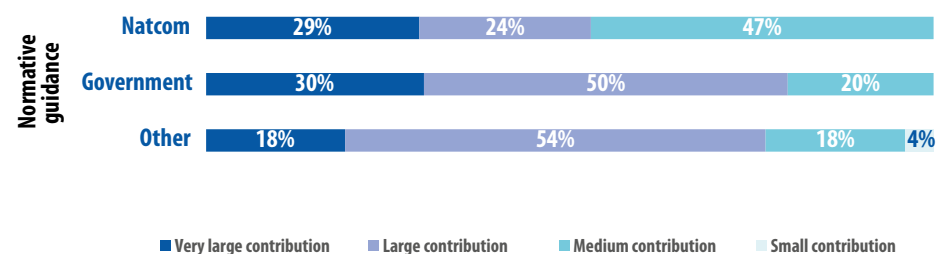
Source: Survey (Contribution of UNESCO normative work towards progress on inclusion in education, N= 65)

Securing a conducive environment in terms of partnerships at national level

Table 8. Results and signs of impact: partnerships at national level

Detailed change marker	Assessment (low/high) and explanation to what extent change can be associated with UNESCO's work.
➢ Ensuring cooperation across government departments (e.g. MoEs and other line ministries), sectors and tiers	**Slightly low:** The evaluation found that at country level, inclusion in education is still very much perceived as an education issue, not closely linked to the work of other line ministries. The evaluation did not find significant evidence that UNESCO did make substantial contributions to changing this.
➢ Making space for non-government actors to challenge and fill gaps ➢ Engaging in meaningful consultation with communities and parents	**Slightly low:** The evaluation found that non-governmental organisations (especially representing marginalised groups), communities and parents play an important role in fostering and stimulating inclusion in education. UNESCO works with them, but the evaluation also found that these organisations need to be more involved and better supported to contribute sustainably to change. UNESCO is predominantly seen as working together with *government* and less reaching out to non-governmental actors, communities, and parent associations. (case studies and interviews)
➢ Targeting financing for those left behind	**Not directly covered in the assessment:** While this cannot be fully assessed in the context of the evaluation, UNESCO does contribute to making countries aware about providing funding for those left behind. In addition, other development partners might provide specific funding to work with specific groups and inclusion challenges. It remains difficult to assess whether targeted funding is sustained over time in countries.

127. The convening power of UNESCO at global and regional level is considered strong but is considered weaker in certain contexts at national level due, in part, to UNESCO's often limited field presence. Interviewees consistently underlined that in countries, UNESCO tends to work closely with government and development organisations but

128. has difficulties and lacks capacities to engage with the organisations that often matter most when it comes to driving inclusion in education in practical terms, namely teachers, non-governmental organisations, communities and, within these, parents, and specific experts.

Support capacity development for education providers and policy makers

Table 9. results and signs of impact: capacity development

Detailed change marker	Assessment (low/high) and explanation to what extent change can be associated with UNESCO's work.
Applying accessibility standards and universal design for educational institutions	**Not covered in the assessment:** UNESCO usually does not work directly with schools (unless in a specific project or through ASPnet). When working with educational institutions, however UNESCO does apply general principles and guidelines concerning equity and inclusion.
Preparing, empowering and motivating the education workforce	**Slightly high:** UNESCO is more commonly associated with facilitating capacity development in the education sector and with training those involved in policy processes. In this, UNESCO's Category 1 institutes play an important role. However, teachers are also an important target group for UNESCO as evidenced by the work done for instance through the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, bringing together organisations representing and working with teachers and teacher training institutions. In this context also inclusion-related topics are in the focus.[120]

129. Providing support for capacity development is another core area that the UNESCO Education Sector works towards in the field of inclusion in education. The work of IIEP in this respect to support educational policy, planning and management is central to its ambitions aimed at raising the profile of inclusion in education and is a key partner in this line of work. Further, given the focus on inclusion in education in educational planning, IIEP and the UNESCO Education Sector's work on the same issues and priorities as regards the focus on inclusion in education. However, IIEP's work on sectoral and institutional strengthening, which includes attention to inclusion in education, is not always explicitly linked the programmatic and project work conducted by the ED Sector.

130. The IIEP is an important actor and supports Member States jn developing Education Sector Plans, for instance in Ethiopia and South Sudan. IIEP's three offices in Buenos Aires, Dakar and Paris are recognised for the Institute's longstanding mandate as a major training provider to build the planning and management capacities of technical staff within ministries of education in UNESCO Member States. The IIEP's flagship training programme on Education Sector Planning and its specialised courses also focus on issues of inclusion, i.e. foundations of disability-inclusive education sector planning, data for crisis-sensitive planning, and gender responsive educational planning.[121]

131. A recently conducted external outcome harvesting evaluation of an intensive training directed at technical staff within MoEs (jointly organised by UNESCO-IIEP and UNICEF as part of a 'Partnership for capacity development for disability-inclusive education') also shed light on a range of concrete positive outcomes of the training activities.[122] For example, in Eswatini, the conceptualised framework to advance inclusion, a key tool promoted during the course, has accompanied a complete planning cycle, from a comprehensive education sector analysis, to a new ten-year sector plan, and an implementation plan, with stakeholders confirming transformational change at both the individual and institutional level.[123]

132. When leading on capacity development of education sector planners, IIEP's internal expertise is regularly mobilised,[124] such as through IIEP's current work on the integration of gender into the education sector plan of Liberia, where IIEP plays a key role in the 'Gender at the Centre' initiative which is supporting gender-responsive ESPs in 8 countries in Africa. However, the evaluation notes that in other contexts UNESCO's involvement

120 See: https://teachertaskforce.org/; https://teachertaskforce.org/what-we-do/knowledge-sharing-and-creation/thematic-groups

121 http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/our-expertise/training-iiep-unesco

122 The training which was successfully completed by 210 technical staff from 40 ministries of education in 4 geographic regions in March 2020

123 Identified results included increased awareness, shift in attitudes and increased understanding of participants' own role in disability-inclusive education; as well as development of learning support and materials; enhanced data collection and data management as well as teachers' guidance and policy. See http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/eswatini-inclusive-education-turns-page-14040

124 IIEPs three offices' longstanding mandate as a major training provider to build the planning and management capacities of technical staff within ministries of education in UNESCO Member States, notably with its flagship training programme on Education Sector Planning and its specialized courses focusing on issues of inclusion: Foundations of disability-inclusive education sector planning, Data for crisis-sensitive planning and Gender responsive educational planning. http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/our-expertise/training-iiep-unesco

does not always offer technical expertise or capacity building itself, i.e. when its role is rather to facilitate the provision of such expertise. In addition to mobilising available internal expertise, UNESCO more often recruits various knowledge partners for concrete workshops within the scope of a project. Senior management in the Education sector describes this as "passing the torch to organisations that are stronger at the operational level".

133. After mobilising partners that can offer technical expertise, UNESCO's added value is seen as engaging the policymakers that are to be trained, but this does not happen sustainably, as was, for example, observed in Mozambique country-level interviews. UNESCO led the efforts to formulate a new national Education Sector Plan for 2020-2029 by coordinating the inputs from national government, and the multiple agencies and organisations active in this area, into a common strategic document. However, as underlined in several interviews, there are factors to some extent outside the control of UNESCO, such as structural changes, limited resources and evolving priorities in a country that can put obstacles and risks to the implementation of a developed plan or policy. The main question is how UNESCO can ensure a conducive environment for continued engagement of the national government stakeholders to the ambitions defined in a policy document.

134. The need for a balance between facilitating capacity development (for instance through contracting third-party experts and consultants) and providing technical expertise from within the Organization is reflected in the responses to the survey. While National Commissions did not indicate a 'very large contribution' of UNESCO to the provision of policy advice, 45% of other representatives from national governments did so. National Commissions are often involved in organising such projects and see more of the facilitator-side of UNESCO's work. Possibly, the discrepancy lies in the fact that government representatives tend to be participants in the organised workshops and are therefore more likely to associate the expertise they gain in workshops with UNESCO.

Figure 11. Government stakeholders strongly recognise UNESCO's capacity development contributions
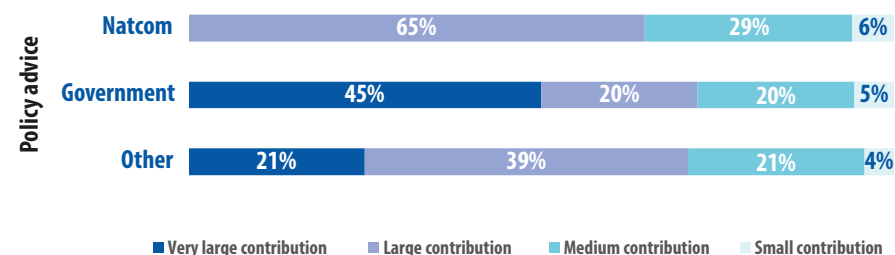
Source: Survey (Contribution of UNESCO Capacity development/Policy advice activities to progress on inclusion in education, N= 65)

Inclusion of disadvantaged learners in education through concrete projects

Table 10. Results and signs of impact: Operationalising inclusion through projects

Detailed change marker	Assessment (low/high) and explanation to what extent change can be associated with UNESCO's work.
Increasing access for learners who are not learning	**Slightly high:** The evaluation found that within projects and grassroots initiatives UNESCO managed to work on increasing access for learners. UNESCO's role does not aim directly at reaching all learners, but to create a conducive environment for others to work with specific groups.
Reducing drop-out rates	**Impact level not sufficiently covered in the assessment:** Evidence of UNESCO playing a direct role on this is too limited.
Removing barriers to learning, participation and achievement for all	**Impact level not sufficiently covered in the assessment:** The evaluation did not find sufficient evidence of UNESCO playing a direct role on this.
Supporting the achievement of minimum proficiency levels for all learners	**Impact level not covered in the assessment:** Evidence of UNESCO playing a direct role on this is too limited.

135. The work of UNESCO towards inclusion in education can also be identified through its role in working with final beneficiaries through concrete projects on the ground. This work with final beneficiaries takes place at the grassroots level and can involve teachers, school leaders and students in a variety of contexts. The information about whether UNESCO projects contributed to increased access, reducing drop-out rates and removing barriers is limited. Of the project evaluations identified, only few provide information about the impact on learners. One example is the 'Strengthening Education System for Out of School Children' project aimed to eradicate barriers for access to primary education in Southeast Asia, both in policy and practice, through research, policy advocacy, capacity development and the scaling up of flexible learning strategies to provide out-of-school children (OOSC) with more and better learning opportunities. Through the project, a total of 54,501 OOSC in Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand were enrolled in schools or learning centres.

136. Respondents to the survey see a slightly lower contribution of UNESCO to such grassroots initiatives than through the other abovementioned workstreams. Nonetheless, roughly half of the respondents to the survey see some large contribution of UNESCO in this area (without major differences between the three different types of respondents).

Figure 12. UNESCO's contributions at grassroots level are less evident

Source: Survey (Contribution of UNESCO to inclusion of disadvantaged learners in education, N= 65)

137. The whole-school approach to inclusion, as promoted by UNESCO through UNESCO's Associated Schools (ASP) network is an example of how inclusion in education can translate into practice. It focuses on addressing the needs of learners, staff and the wider community, not only within the curriculum, but across the whole-school and learning environment.[125] Another example is a pilot project on qualification passports, in which UNESCO supported UNHCR in the recognition of prior qualifications/equivalencies of refugees.[126] The project, piloted in Zambia and Iraq, reviewed in detail where refugees come from, and worked with universities to recognise refugees' and migrants' education qualifications to enable them to enter higher education or continue their studies in their host countries.

To what extent are planning, monitoring and reporting systems adequate to plan interventions and monitor progress and developments in inclusive education?

138. At the country level, monitoring inclusion in education is supported by the 2020 GEM report on inclusion in education, and follow-up products associated to this seminal publication, such as the Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER)[127] or the UIS/GEM partnership for the development of the UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE).[128]

139. These resources combine multiple sources and datasets and offer an extensive overview of the current state of play and trends in education around the world. While this does not offer a longer-term and structured monitoring system, it offers tools and insights that policymakers may need to plan interventions. However, translating such broader insights into concrete policy advice, support for implementation and follow up remains a challenge. These are crucial aspects that also have a bearing on the utility of the data and monitoring information produced. Member States indicated that they could benefit from additional support to use the data for operationalising inclusion in education. Field Offices do not always have the capacity to provide the specialised technical expertise from which Ministries of Education would benefit. As underlined by several interviewees, this means that despite the relevance of this publication and its products, it is not yet clear to what extent the insights and analysis support actual developments at country level,

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125 See definition at IBE: http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology/w/whole-school-approach
126 See for instance https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-emergencies/qualifications-passport
127 See https://education-profiles.org/ Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER) launched to map countries' laws and policies on inclusion in education. These reviews offer insights through peer reviews of country's policies and aim to help improve policies in education
128 The UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) takes an intersectional approach at education disadvantage, providing data for considering inclusion from various specific angles.

given that translating such contributions into actual systemic change at country level takes time and cannot be easily measured.

140. Concerning the monitoring of UNESCO's inclusion in education related work, UNESCO tracks, monitors and reports information in its internal corporate System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and Evaluation of Results (SISTER). This system does not include systematic information on inclusion in education, across thematic areas, different UNESCO sections, UNESCO sectors, and UNESCO Category 1 institutes. Admittedly, the broad scope of possible contributions to inclusion in education makes it difficult to apply reporting tools like SISTER for that purpose.[129] On the programmatic side, while the new C/4 / C/5 approach is promising), this is not yet further operationalised in reporting tools.

3.5   Key dimension 5: Visibility, innovation and communication

141. In addition to the efforts dedicated to planning, programming and execution, the evaluation also considered how final results are communicated within the Organisation and to external partners. Visibility, innovation and communication are a crucial feature to ensure broader donor attention to the area of inclusion in education. This assessment covers the OECD-DAC criteria of effectiveness and sustainability.

Table 11. Assessment related to visibility, innovation and communication

Judgment criteria assessing the extent to which		Assessment
➤ UNESCO's achievements are communicated and internally visible as judged by internal stakeholders.		**Low** as There is no systematic aggregated tracking of UNESCO's achievements in the area of inclusion in education. Given the scope and breadth of possible actions and results of inclusion in education across all areas in the Education Sector (TVET policies, developed by HQ, regional offices; stimulating the development of learning cities (UIL); conducting Education Strategic Sector Plans (IIEP). Without a systematic tracking, aggregating and synthesising of achievements of this variety of work, it remains difficult to get an overarching perspective of what UNESCO contributes to in the field of inclusion in education.
➤ UNESCO's achievements are communicated and externally visible as judged by external stakeholders.		**Slightly low** as the achievements of UNESCO's work are not systematically communicated and are not embedded in a systematic approach to feed into guidance to change mindsets. Communication is mostly supply-driven, with each UNESCO entity/institute communicating about their own initiatives with limited cross-links and joint communication. It is to a limited extent tailored to specific target groups. Its visibility around more specific contextualised reasons for exclusion (for instance for ethnic minorities; indigenous languages and girls' education) is higher than the visibility on inclusion in education as a holistic concept. While the GEM report provides a very powerful and effective set of publications for agenda-setting purposes, there is room for improvement to maintain the momentum created by the report, such as through more regular updates; broadening the data; and further facilitating peer learning and capacity building.

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129 Compare for instance how SISTER is used to track UNESCO's work on horizontal priorities gender equality and Africa. Inclusion in education is not so much a priority or objective, but a process that permeates all activities. Singling out individual projects in SISTER that work in inclusion in education would therefore run contrary to its own logic.

To what extent have UNESCO's achievements in the area of inclusion been visible internally?

142.   UNESCO lacks an adequate platform for systematically reporting on its achievements in the area of inclusion. Nonetheless, UNESCO advocates for inclusivity under the umbrella of other areas of work, such as when developing TVET policies (HQ, regional offices), stimulating the development of learning cities (UIL), or when supporting the development of Education Sector Strategic Plans (IIEP). However, the results of work on inclusion are not systematically reported on and therefore are not visible enough across the Organization. Interviewees point to the new C/4 and C/5 approach as a promising framework but raise concerns that it does not yet guarantee improvements in implementation and reporting as long as UNESCO's monitoring, reporting and communication systems and processes are not fully reflecting the new strategic paradigms.

To what extent have UNESCO's achievements in the area of inclusion been visible to external stakeholders?

143.   Except for the high-level global pledge for inclusion through SDG 4, the current communication on inclusion in education is perceived as fragmented, supply driven (i.e. each institute/entity communicates about its own initiatives with limited cross-links and joint communication), and mainly tailored to specific target groups. More specific work on inclusion of people with disability and crises-affected people on the move has an enhanced visibility per se as these beneficiaries are considered priority groups globally.

144.   In the area of work with refugees and migrants, UNESCO's visibility is however overshadowed by the work of other partners, such as UNHCR, IOM, or UNICEF. On other more contextualised reasons for exclusion, UNESCO's work is more visible, also because other partners focus less on these such as ethnic minorities, indigenous languages and girls' education. The GEM report is a very powerful set of publications but, to maintain momentum, more efforts are required to provide regular updates and more continuous monitoring building on the GEM data with policy and process related information from Member States, and facilitating peer learning and capacity building. Further, additional efforts are required to make the collected information available and accessible in different forms for different users.

145. The survey explored how various stakeholders (representatives from national ministries and other development organisations) informed themselves about UNESCO activities in the area of inclusion and where they obtained relevant information. The

result is shown below and shows the importance of featuring information on websites and newsletters, mainly that of the Education Sector, and, to a lesser extent, that of Field Offices. Additional frequently mentioned means of information are general policy documents, specific events as well as publications and research in the area of inclusion. In terms of messages being communicated by UNESCO, several stakeholders interviewed underlined that, compared to other organisations working in this field, UNESCO Is not sufficiently communicating on its comparative strengths, what the Organization can offer and what it has achieved in the field of inclusion across the Organization.

Figure 13. Webpages, policy documents and events are among the most effective information sources

Information source	Government	Other
UNESCO ED webpage / newsletters	49%	53%
Policy documents	44%	34%
Other events	40%	25%
UNESCO projects / programmes	39%	25%
Publications and research	37%	32%
UNESCO FO webpages / newsletters	26%	13%
UNESCO advocacy events	23%	26%
Global/regional coordination group	23%	16%
My Organization's staff	23%	14%
Thematic Education Networks	21%	14%
Press	12%	10%
Academic / policy networks	7%	14%

■ Government   ■ Other

Source: Survey (Information sources on UNESCO Education Sector's work on Inclusion in Education, n=57)

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

1. Based on the analysis of evidence across key dimensions and the SWOT analysis, this chapter brings the main findings together into a number of conclusions and suggests some broader reflections on inclusion in education.

Reflection 1: Inclusion in education gained in significance in the context of the SDGs as an underlying principle for most, if not all, SDGs. The underlying ambitions of leaving no-one behind are laudable and an important inspiration for education policy but remain too general and dependent on other policy areas to guide concrete work. Attention to inclusion in education is therefore best understood as participating in a never completed, reflective, collective and constructive process.

2. The evaluation acknowledges that inclusion in education is a broad and holistic principle that cannot be addressed only through education policy and reforms. Inclusion in education also depends on policies in other areas (infrastructure, economic, social protection, legal, culture, etc.), and also supports broader societal developments related to inclusive societies and economies. This systemic dependence on an entire range of public policy questions makes inclusion in education more of an ideal-like guiding ambition. Despite progress, working towards inclusion is never completed, i.e. inclusion can never be fully reached. Rather than a final goal, inclusion in education is approached as a continuous reflection process that can inspire developments in terms of legislations, policies and implementation plans across different policy areas with attention to inclusion. It requires a continuous reflection on the inclusivity of society as a whole as well as specific policies. It can only be brought about through meaningful engagement of stakeholders[130] in education and society,[131] as well as an ongoing constructive- and evidence-based dialogue.

Reflection 2: Inclusion in education is often still linked to disability education and not yet regarded as a holistic and systemic approach to education addressing the diversity and vulnerabilities of learners.

3. While considered an underlying principle, 'inclusion in education' at national and sub-national level is often still associated with inclusion of persons with disabilities in the education system. A majority of countries have not yet taken on board the more holistic concept of inclusion in education and reflected upon the implications of the holistic perspective of inclusion for their education system. This reflects a disconnect between high-level policy development and pledges and the implementation at the national level, when increased awareness and attention paid to inclusion in education is not matched with actual engagement and commitment.

4. While the holistic and systemic approach to inclusion provides the rationale and framework to effectively tackle and overcome specific barriers of exclusion, pursuing a holistic approach to inclusion in education should go hand in hand with solving concrete and specific barriers for inclusion.

Conclusion 1: UNESCO played a key role and is recognised for developing and promoting the holistic approach to inclusion in education, by integrating inclusion as a key concept underlying the SDGs (particularly SDG 4 and framework for action) and by keeping inclusion in education on the global, regional and national agendas.

5. Already for decades UNESCO has been a main driving force behind global discussion on inclusion in education, both in terms of mainstreaming and widening the concept and in terms of addressing specific target groups and reasons for exclusion. These efforts culminated in formulating inclusion as a key concept and overall principle underlying the SDGs and reflected in UNESCO's latest Medium-Term Strategy and programming. UNESCO is able to continue keeping inclusion in education on the global, regional and national agendas. The COVID-19 pandemic even more increased the awareness that more efforts are needed to make education systems more inclusive.

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130 This includes government institutions, teacher unions, parents' groups, originations representing those who are excluded such as organizations of persons with disabilities, development partners and local civil society organizations.
131 To build more inclusive education systems requires collaboration from other line ministries such as health, social protection and infrastructure, for example.

Conclusion 2: **As the lead agency and coordinator of SDG 4, UNESCO is perceived as the global leader on inclusion in education, able to facilitate conceptual clarification covering the whole spectrum of level and themes across education, convening national governments and other high-level stakeholders as well as setting normative standards.**

6.   Based on UNESCO's comparative strengths and the SWOT analysis, UNESCO has a strong position compared to other organisations. It leads the discussions on inclusion in education globally and has the mandate to work on all levels and thematic strands across education (together with UN organisations that have a narrower scope in education). UNESCO's key strengths include its role in broadened conceptual understanding, its convening power with national governments and other high-level stakeholders and setting normative standards.

Conclusion 3: **The UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education and more targeted approaches (e.g. on disability, girls' education, mother tongue-based multilingual education) contributes to achieving impact in specific contexts but the Organization's contribution to systemic change in education systems and practices, especially from a holistic inclusion perspective, is less evident.**

7.   UNESCO's work in specific countries is most effective when it targets specific barriers for exclusion within a broadened understanding of inclusion. In addition, enhanced awareness for gender equality as a global priority, for girls' education, mother tongue-based multilingual education, and indigenous language education has the potential to contribute to impact in specific contexts. On the other hand, the evaluation does not have strong evidence that UNESCO's emphasis on the more holistic approach to inclusion in education has as of yet led to major reforms and actual changes in education systems and practices, not least as translating the Organization's contributions into actual systemic change at country level takes time and cannot be easily measured.

Conclusion 4: **Some critical factors for UNESCO's effectiveness in stimulating inclusion in education at national and sub-national level are currently insufficient or require strengthening. These include i) a clear support approach (targeting change mechanisms towards inclusive education policies and practices); ii) a critical mass of specialised staff in inclusion; iii) links with organisations representing disadvantaged and/or marginalised groups; iv) a knowledge management system that systematically and continually collects quantitative and qualitative data to find out what works for whom in which conditions.**

8.   The evaluation identified a number of critical elements required for the creation of a conducive environment that can support impact of UNESCO's work on inclusion in education at national level, but which are currently insufficient or require strengthening:

- *a clear organisational approach* on how the Organization as a whole supports countries and partners to develop inclusion in education and tackle the change mechanisms towards inclusive education policies and practices;

- *a critical mass of expertise on inclusion* across its field network to push for inclusion in education at national level working with governments and partners and link national developments to global issues;

- *inclusive processes in developing policies,* both at national, regional, and institutional level and involvement of organisations representing disadvantaged and/or marginalised groups[132]

- *availability and increased use of existing knowledge development and management systems (such as WIDE or PEER)* that systematically collect quantitative and qualitative data on vulnerable/marginalised groups and barriers for inclusion and allows exchange of information on what works for whom in which conditions. Insights about more qualitative aspects of inclusive policy development, including the process of setting up more inclusive education policies are crucial elements.

Conclusion 5: **UNESCO also faces internal challenges on how to operationalise and mainstream inclusion which may also prevent impact at a greater scale and longer term.**

9.   Internal challenges that can reduce UNESCO's ability to drive the implementation of the inclusion in education agenda include:

(i)   a perception, by both internal and external stakeholders, of UNESCO's work on inclusion in education as fragmented and scattered across different organisational entities, units and institutions, often working in silos;

(ii)   the lack of a single visibility and coordination mechanism of UNESCO's work on inclusion in education and the results of its work[133] limiting organisational capacity to divide roles, take stock, coordinate and monitor contributions to this process;

(iii)   limited systemic cooperation between Sectors;

(iv)   a perception that UNESCO is not sufficiently leading by example on inclusion as an Organization. While underlined by several stakeholders, this is an issue

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132 For example promoted by the inclusive policy lab https://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab/about-lab
133 For example those established to support Priority Africa and Priority Gender Equality.

beyond the scope of this evaluation and beyond the work of the Education Sector, as linked to wider organizational policies and processes including infrastructure, HR policies and other institutional/ administrative aspects of the Organization.

Conclusion 6: There is momentum for UNESCO to sharpen its focus and strengthen its work at global level (normative work), at organisational level (mainstreaming), at regional level (knowledge sharing, convening) and national level (contextualising inclusion approaches).

5.   The recent enhanced challenges for 'equal access and quality education for all' as spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic created a momentum for a necessary next step to capitalise on the policy attention and achieve a more sustainable practice and continuous implementation towards inclusion in education in the years to come, and support countries in working towards progress on SDG 4. UNESCO needs to fully assume its role as the steward of the SDG 4 inclusion paradigm by further building on its research and strengthening visibility and use of data available on vulnerable and marginalised learners and barriers for inclusion and by promoting and mainstreaming inclusion in education more explicitly and more consistently across all of the thematic areas of the Education Sector's work. This will require building on and adapting the existing organizational architecture, systems and processes to operationalise the enhanced focus for inclusion in education within the new C/4 and C/5 which is offering a framework for a more holistic and intersectoral approach.

4.2   Recommendations

6.   A set of strategic and operational level recommendations are drawn from the findings and conclusions resulting from the evaluation. The recommendations have been developed by the evaluation team and have been discussed, streamlined and validated through several iterations of reviews with key stakeholders and during a validation workshop with the evaluation reference group. The aim of the recommendations is to help strengthening the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion along the pathways towards fostering and/or upholding a conducive environment for countries, international organisations, stakeholders, to work together on the multi-faceted approach of inclusion in education contributing to SDG 4.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the inclusion and equity dimension in the monitoring and reporting process of UNESCO's education-related normative instruments, particularly for the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education.

Addressed to

UNESCO Education sector, in particular the Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, Division for Education 2030, Division for Peace and Sustainable Development and relevant Category 1 Institutes

By December 2024

Suggested action:

- The experiences with the 2019 Cali conference, the 2030 agenda, and the recent GEM reports, but also the 2008 IBE conference on "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future" show that inclusion in education is a topic that can convene a global audience. Sensitisation at global and regional level contributes to fostering a conducive environment for developing more inclusive education policies, systems, and practices. As UNESCO has a unique role as custodian of global normative instruments that relate to inclusion in education, it can consider reviewing, renewing, revising, and modernising relevant normative instruments and install adequate reporting and monitoring mechanisms to track their implementation and make them more impactful. UNESCO can particularly focus on Strengthening the inclusion and equity dimension in the monitoring and reporting processes of education-related normative instruments, such as the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education, as well as in UNESCO's overall policy guidance on inclusion and the Right to Education.

Recommendation 2: Systematically use UNESCO's normative instruments and tools for policy guidance on inclusion for all of the Education Sector's programme and project planning and implementation.

Addressed to:

UNESCO Education Sector Divisions, field offices and Category 1 Institutes in cooperation with UNESCO ED Executive Office.

By June 2024

Suggested Actions:

- To support Member States in fully integrating inclusion in their education plans and policies, UNESCO should capitalize on its rich array of resources and provide more operational guidance on how to make education systems as a whole more inclusive. This can be in the form of applying already developed tools and instruments in providing policy guidance and through updating guidance materials, such as the 2012 report on Addressing exclusion in education: a guide to assessing education systems towards more inclusive and just societies.

- Education sector-specific normative guidance in other thematic areas (TVET, HE, adult learning) could be reviewed and updated from an inclusion in ED perspective.[134]

- Specific aspects in the operationalisation of inclusion in education could be strengthened, such as by Indicating what principles underpin the development of an ever-more inclusive education system: the inclusive policy markers as developed in the context of the inclusive policy lab[135] could be taken as inspiration.

- Provide, in collaboration with other partners, locally contextualised, concrete and practical steps and tools on how to remove specific and multifaceted barriers for inclusion. These solutions and tools are not only 'educational' but can relate to many other policy-areas (social protection, infrastructure, health care, economic, security, etc.).

Recommendation 3: Operationalize the mainstreaming of inclusion in education by building on UNESCO's existing inclusion networks and structures, i.e. the Gender focal points of the ED sector, the Intersectoral Task Team of the International Decade of Indigenous languages (IDIL), the Intersectoral Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, the Intersectoral Task Team on Disability Rights and Inclusion, in order to further systematize inclusion in UNESCO's operations through training, leveraging champions, or through an organization-wide network or community of practice on inclusion.

Addressed to:

UNESCO Education Sector in collaboration with other Programme sectors, BSP, PAX and Gender Equality Division

By December 2024

Suggested Actions:

- Promote synergies across existing inclusion structures and networks, to mainstream and support inclusion in education in programming and communication for example through the work of the Gender focal points of the ED sector, the Intersectoral Task Team of the IDIL, Intersectoral Working Group on Indigenous Peoples Intersectoral Task Team on Disability Rights and Inclusion) or of other UNESCO networks (such as UNEVOC, ASPnet, Cities networks, Chairs, etc.).

- Train and sensitise UNESCO staff about how inclusion in general and inclusion in education more specifically can be reflected in their work, (at UNESCO HQ, Field Offices and category 1 institutes.) to become the responsibility of all. Making steps in inclusion in education does not always require high-level specialised knowledge, or resources, but requires a general attention and attitude to seeing opportunities for inclusivity, in all of UNESCO's work, such as consultations and when organising events.

- Seek opportunities to expand specialised human resources devoted to inclusion in education and to specific targeted approaches, including as crosscutting competences and/or through secondments. A critical mass of dedicated staff within UNESCO (across HQ, FO, and category 1 institutes) would help to facilitate the different actions; develop training materials; work on normative

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134 For instance: Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments (ILFE)" published by UNESCO Bangkok in 2004. The generic English language version consisting of seven core booklets and four specialized booklets has been translated and adapted into many local contexts. The toolkit is in need of updating as it does not reflect the UNCRPD of 2006 and other developments. "Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education Series" published by UNESCO Bangkok in 2013 consists of five booklets promoting awareness creation about inclusion in education in teacher education. The booklets should be reviewed and updated.

135 Inclusive policy lab https://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab/about-lab

instruments and assure the institutional embedding and gathering of insights in implementation.

- Explore opportunities for intersectoral and inter-institutional cooperation on inclusion in education. The cooperation, sharing of knowledge and good practices and tools can be further improved through leveraging champions and/or setting up an organisational- wide network or community of practice on inclusion, among other based on the experience of already existing intersectoral task teams. .

Recommendation 4: Increase the availability, use, and dissemination of data on inclusion to learn what works for whom under which circumstances.

Addressed to:

UNESCO Education sector

By June 2023

Suggested Actions:

- Support countries in systematic and sustainable monitoring on inclusion in education to support peer learning and trigger policy developments, among other through enhanced use of the WIDE and PEER database. Monitoring should not only cover quantitative overviews of which characteristics lead to exclusion, but also about the inclusivity of the process to arrive at education policies and practices:

- Further enhance the communication and dissemination strategy on all available information and insights on inclusion in education and tailoring the information to specific envisaged change processes by considering what the message should be; how to reach the target audience; how to mobilise stakeholders; whether accompanying actions are needed to enhance the use of data and information.

Recommendation 5: Focus on engagement and strategic partnerships with marginalised/vulnerable groups and their representatives

Addressed to:

UNESCO Education Sector Divisions, field offices and Category 1 Institutes in cooperation with the ED Executive Office.

By December 2024

Suggested Actions:

- Closely engage with organisations of, and/or representing marginalised and vulnerable groups to allow them to link up to UNESCO's global agenda and knowledge base; learn from peer organisations and help develop their capacities.

- Closely engage with development partners at global, regional, and national level.

- Closely engage with teachers, teachers' associations and practitioners in education. Listening to the experience of teachers puts UNESCO in a position to enhance tools to better include individuals from specific vulnerable groups and solve specific challenges, allows peer learning and exchange of good practices. The ASPnet could play a role in this.

- Bring different stakeholders at national level together to discuss together the inclusivity of the education system and society. This can involve government representatives, parent associations, students, (representatives of) marginalised groups, specialised support professionals, academics.

Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the UNESCO Education sector's work on Inclusion in Education (2016-2021)

1.   Background

Situating 'Inclusion in Education' within the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the International Education Policy context

1.   'Inclusion', as the paradigm of the Agenda 2030 of 'leaving no one behind', is articulated strongly in SDG 4: 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' as well as in the Education 2030 Framework for Action.

2.   Several SDG 4 targets also refer explicitly to aspects of inclusion in education:

- **Target 4.5: Equity.** Eliminate all discrimination in education. **"**By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access at all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations."

- **Target 4.a: Education facilities and learning environments.** "Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all."

3.   The concept of inclusion in education however, began much earlier, with the acknowledgement that education is a human right, as enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948, and consequently in the *Convention against Discrimination in Education* (1960) which gave for the first time a definition of discrimination in education in its Article 1.[136] The concept started to evolve and to be integrated more explicitly in the joint commitments of the international community to ensure Education for All, with the World Conference on Education for All (1990), the adoption of the six Dakar goals and the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000, which recognized the learning needs of the poorest and most marginalized, including children with disabilities, and the post 2015 agenda.

4.   The concept of inclusion in education allows for different interpretations. It embraces on the one hand the literal meaning of the term inclusion as a means to celebrate diversity and build inclusive societies which encompasses inclusion of all learners[137], but also evokes inclusion for specific vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, crisis-affected people on the move (including people displaced by conflicts or natural disasters), and indigenous people.

5.   As part of the latter inclusion-specific approach for vulnerable groups, the right to education for every person regardless of individual differences in background and ability was reaffirmed at the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca. The necessity and urgency of providing education for children, youth and adults with special educational needs within the regular system was made prominent in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. The Framework laid out some key principles for inclusive education, such as the 'principle of the inclusive school' where all children should learn together. In 2006, the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) enshrined for the first time the right to

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136 "The term discrimination includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education and in particular: (a) of depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level; (b) of limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard; (c) subject to the provisions of Article 2 of this Convention, of establishing or maintaining separate educational systems or institutions for persons or groups of persons; or (d) of inflicting on any person or group of persons conditions which are incompatible with the dignity of man." See UNESCO, Background paper written as a background information to the 2020 Global Monitoring Report: Inclusion and education, pp.8-11.

137 The concept encompasses all learners and, in this way, also and especially those that are at risk of exclusion. See also the discussion in the 2020 GEM Report about inclusion in learning inside and outside the classroom, concerning those excluded because they are out of schools as well as those that alienated and segregated within and through the classrooms.

inclusive education (Art. 24) in a binding instrument.[138] The concept also encompasses i**ndigenous people** who continue to experience exclusion from and discrimination in education. Article 14 of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) stipulates that 'indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.'[139] The concept of inclusion equally relates to equal education opportunities among sexes, since the 1960 Convention recognized sex as one of the discriminatory factors impeding on the right to education.

6.   Throughout the years, UNESCO has made efforts to provide a normative framework and guidance on inclusion in education, by advocating for an all-inclusive broad definition[140]. For the purposes of this evaluation, **inclusion in education is therefore defined as 'a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners.'**[141]

7.   This definition is to be anchored in and refined through the following more comprehensive explanation: '*Inclusive education* refers to securing and guaranteeing the right of all children to access, presence, participation and success in their local regular school. Inclusive education calls upon neighborhood schools to build their capacity to eliminate barriers to access, presence, participation, and achievement in order to be able to provide excellent educational experiences and outcomes for all children and young people.'[142]

8.   Within this framework, inclusion is correlated to *equity in education* as both principles constitute the basis for ensuring access of all learners to quality education. Equity in education 'is about ensuring that there is a concern with fairness, such that the education of all learners is seen as having equal importance.'[143] In this sense, equity is a process whose objective is to initiate activities and effect policy change in order to reach equality in education.[144]

9.   Furthermore, the issue of intersectionality in education and its implication for the design and implementation of education policies becomes increasingly important. Intersectionality is key to understanding and addressing the diversity of learners' needs based on a holistic approach. Policy and legislative frameworks as the foundations to the structure of inclusive education.as well as practical guides have been developed to address intersectionality issues that impede learners' right to education, such as UNGEI's *Still Left Behind report*.[145]

10.   In addition, a number of international instruments and milestones have contributed to developing and refining the concept of inclusion in education:

- Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)

- Convention on the Rights of the child (1989)

- UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993)

- Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education (1994)

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006)

- International Conference on Education. 48th session "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future" (ICE) (2008)

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138 The *General comment no. 4* to Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities (CPRD) 2016 further broadened the scope of inclusion in education: inclusive education focuses on "the full and effective participation, accessibility, attendance and achievement of all students, especially those who, for different reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized". The interpretation of inclusive education evolved to be one of a fundamental human right of all learners, and not only of persons with disabilities, regardless their gender, location, wealth, ethnicity, language, migration, displacement, sexual orientation, incarceration, religion and other beliefs." See UNESCO, Background paper written as a background information to the 2020 Global Monitoring Report: Inclusion and education, p.12.

139 United Nations, *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 2007, Article 14, p.6, available at: https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf.

140 The UNESCO CI Sector has also been working on the access to information and knowledge for socially marginalized groups by using ICT.

141 UNESCO, *A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education*, 2017, p. 13, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254.

142 Roger Slee, *Defining the scope of inclusive education: think piece prepared for the 2020 Global education monitoring report, Inclusion and education*, 2018, p. 8, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265773?posInSet=1&queryId=bc0b9fdc-9c88-4c33-8d5e-1bee4770a218.

143 UNESCO, *A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education*, 2017, p. 13, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254.

144 Global Education Monitoring Team, *Inclusion and Education: All Means All*, 2020, p. 11, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718.

145 United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), *Still left behind: Pathways to inclusive education for girls with disabilities*, 2017, available at: http://www.ungei.org/Still_Left_Behind_Full_Report.PDF.

- International Conference on Education. 48th session "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future": Conclusions and recommendations (2008)

- UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009)

- Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (2015)

- General comment no. 4, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016)

- A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education (2017)

- The Global Compact on Refugees (2018)

- International Forum on inclusion and equity in education (2019)

- Los Pinos Declaration [Chapoltepek] –Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages (2020)

- Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and Education - All Means All (2020)

2.   UNESCO's work on inclusion in education

11.   Inclusive education as a broad concept not limited to scope in terms of beneficiary groups, is meant to secure the conditions that can advance the right to education for all vulnerable and marginalized groups who are being excluded from equal education opportunities on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, ability and socio-economic status.

12.   UNESCO, as the designated lead agency for coordinating EFA Goals and SDG 4, has been working on inclusion in education for several decades and has been steering evolving priorities for inclusion in education among other through the Organization's research feeding into normative instruments and policy work, as well as through capacity development activities and the implementation of beneficiary group specific and country level interventions in its Member States.

13.   Inclusion in UNESCO's Education Sector and Category 1 institutes' work relies on a dual approach:

(i)   **Normative and policy guidance, including capacity development on inclusion**, which is key in ensuring that equity and inclusion are overarching principles in programme planning, implementation, and monitoring, as well as for resource protocols (tools and best practices) for inclusion mainstreaming (in relation to ability, gender, language, etc.).

(ii)   **Inclusion-specific programming**, which encompasses a focus on the inclusion of specific groups of disadvantaged learners into inclusive learning settings. UNESCO's inclusion-specific programming (in HQ units, category 1 institutes and in the field) demonstrates an increased focus on learners with disabilities, refugees and migrants as well as indigenous people (as part of the SDG 4 Framework for Action).

14.   While the Organization has progressively developed a set of specific interventions and projects with a focus on inclusion, mainstreaming inclusion has always been at the heart of all UNESCO's Education Sector work and has become an even more explicit priority within the context the SDG 4 - Education 2030 Agenda. As a broad topic, the interpretation of inclusion in education has evolved over time, from an initial more narrow focus on persons with disabilities, to a broader scope, with a focus on disadvantaged or marginalized groups as a whole within the context of Agenda 2030, including indigenous people or crisis-affected people on the move, as reflected in examples of UNESCO's Education Sector work:

15.   The inclusive education debate within UNESCO's Education Sector has included the question around the **right to education for persons with disabilities** in particular, by looking at the barriers that keep excluding children with disabilities from benefitting from access to quality education at all levels. This central question of ensuring equal access to education for people with disabilities has been reaffirmed by the United Nations on numerous occasions since 1993 within the wider framework of the inclusion agenda.[146] In 2020, building on the 2019 forum in Cali on inclusion and equity in education, UNESCO further zoomed in on the **right to inclusive education for learners with disabilities** as well as other integral elements to the inclusion agenda such as ensuring linguistic diversity[147]. More recently, with a focus on specific vulnerable groups, the Education Sector contributed to the UNESCO policy on **e**ngaging with indigenous peoples, developed in 2018.[148].

16.   **Crisis-affected people on the move**, considered among the most vulnerable groups in terms of access to inclusive and quality education, have also become a focus of UNESCO's more recent inclusion in education work, as exemplified by its education strategy for crisis-affected people on the move 2020-2025. UNESCO submitted a pledge to the Global Refugee Forum held in Geneva in December 2019 to "Support Member States to achieve inclusion of refugees into national education systems" within the framework of the Global Compact on Refugees. Supported by a number of partners and Member States, and with financial support from Sweden, UNESCO is now in the process of implementing initiatives aimed at fulfilling this pledge, including recognition of prior learning achievements and qualifications of refugees, planning education for people on the move, strengthening data and analysis for resilience in education in emergencies, documenting good practices of inclusion of refugees in national education systems, elaborating guidance notes on inclusion of refugees in national education systems and research/guidance on education for people on the move in the context of climate change.

17.   Furthermore, inclusion in education cuts across the entire work of the Education Sector, including on topics such as **teachers and inclusive teaming and learning,** the Education sector's work with a focus **gender equality,** as well as across a number of topics

within the mandate of other UNESCO Programme Sectors, such as the longstanding work of the UNESCO Communication and Information (CI) Sector to **support learners with disabilities and facilitate their access to information and knowledge using ICTs, and all Programme Sectors' work focusing on indigenous people.** While these may be to some extent covered through the inclusion mainstreaming component across the ED and other Sectors' mandate, these topics will not be the focus of this evaluation, in particular as separate specific evaluations have been or will be conducted.[149]

Situating inclusion in education across UNESCO's Education sector mandate and cross-sectorally

18.   Compared to other international partners working in the field of education, the comparative strength of UNESCO, at the level of its Secretariat, field offices and specialized institutes, lies primarily within its broad global education mandate covering all sub-sectors of education from early childhood to higher education and lifelong learning, and on the focus on transition between different levels and forms of education beyond formal and basic education. Furthermore, the Organization can provide crosscutting and comprehensive solutions from a more holistic and interdisciplinary perspective relying on the expertise from other Programme Sectors within the Organization's broad mandate.

19.   While all thematic areas and specialized Institutes working within UNESCO's Education mandate are expected to mainstream inclusion in its work streams, programmes and projects, within the Education Sector there are two key entities in the Division for Education 2030 with a focus on conducting inclusion-specific work in Education, i.e. the Section of Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education (EME) and the Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality (IGE).

20.   Furthermore, some sections in the Education Sector's Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, and several Education (ED) Category 1 Institutes, i.e. the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), and UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) are conducting inclusion specific work. For example, UNESCO's International Institute

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146 The *UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* (1993), both in integral and general school settings, and the *1994 Salamanca Statement*; in 2006, the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) enshrined for the first time the right to inclusive education (Art. 24) in a binding instrument.

147 Among other, an International Virtual Symposium on ensuring the right to quality inclusive education for persons with disabilities, in partnership with the Ministry of Education of Portugal and Leonard Cheshire took place on the occasion of the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3rd December 2020.

148 The Communication and Information Sector is also involved in the implementation of Recommendation 2003 and coordinated the organization of the International Year of Indigenous Languages (2019). See https://en.iyil2019.org/.

149 Such as the Evaluation of UNESCO's Global Priority Gender Equality (2020), Evaluation of UNESCO's work in information and communication technologies (ICT) in education (2019); the Evaluation of UNESCO's programme interventions on girls' and women's education (2017), the currently ongoing intersectoral evaluation of UNESCO's work on indigenous languages, and the evaluation on Teacher Capacity Building envisaged for 2021/22.

for Educational Planning (IIEP) supports disability-inclusive education planning and is currently developing a training course for education planners on inclusive education. Further, IIEP is contributing to this work through education planning for forcibly displaced populations, which has been ongoing since 2015.[150] IIEP is also generating policy guidance based on research on teacher management in refugee settings in Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya and Uganda. UIL focuses on inclusion in the context of lifelong learning (LLL), including through its flagship programme UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) and its innovative project on literacy learning and education for refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons.[151]

21. IBE, the International Bureau for Education, is a driving force of the inclusion agenda. IBE promotes a broadened understanding of the theory and practice of inclusive education, grounded on the conclusions and recommendations of the 48th International Conference on Education (ICE) in 2008, and mainstreamed in its curriculum work worldwide. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is also a key reference when it comes to inclusion as it develops methodologies to produce data for monitoring all the targets of the SDG 4 – Education 2030 agenda. Notably, UIS strengthens the availability of data on gender equality in education, on equity and on out-of-school children and youth and works directly with countries to help them produce such data and use them for policy-making.

22. In addition, the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) and the UIS jointly maintain the World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) which provides comparable education outcomes between countries, and between groups within countries, according to factors associated with inequality, including wealth, gender, and ethnicity and location. The GEM report, which is mandated by the international community to regularly monitor progress on SDG 4, launched its 2020 Report on "Inclusion and Education".[152] It also launched a complementary new online platform, Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER)[153],

which documents countries' laws and policies on inclusion and education and aims to foster policy dialogue and peer learning.[154]

23. Increasingly, efforts have been made across the Organization to strengthen cooperation between its Programme Sectors and different entities. Intersectional or interdisciplinary approach are envisaged as the new paradigm of the Organization for its next Medium-term Strategy to allow for working more holistically towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. With inclusion being transversal by nature, the Education Sector recognizes the need and importance of working with other UNESCO Programme Sectors as well as the Division for Gender Equality in the field of inclusion in education. Several working groups have been established, such as the intersectoral working group on disability, led by the Communication and Information Sector, or the intersectoral working group on Indigenous people with the participation of all sectors.

24. The Communication and Information Sector was leading the work on the inclusion of socially marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities and the speakers and signers of dominant, lesser-used, indigenous and in danger languages. A comprehensive approach to the inclusion of persons with disabilities was developed by the CI sector, which include a wide range of thematic aspects and partnerships with other international organizations as well as with governmental, public, academia, public and private partners.[155]

25. Furthermore, UNESCO is involved in the UN system wide response including on the inclusive COVID-19 response, the UN partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) and the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network, a coordination body of bilateral and multilateral donors and agencies, the private sector and foundations working to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in international development and humanitarian action.

150 This included, inter alia, joint planning with refugee and host communities in Ethiopia, supporting the Ministry of Education in Kenya to develop a costed action plan for refugee education, and supporting the Ministry of Education in Burkina Faso to develop a strategy for internally displaced people in zones of insecurity.

151 The theme of the 4th conference of the GNLC in 2019 was 'Inclusion – A principle for lifelong learning and sustainable cities', and member cities pledged to boost inclusion through their actions at the local level.

152 Global Education Monitoring Team, Inclusion and Education: All Means All, 2020, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718.

153 The PEER platform is accessible at: https://education-profiles.org/

154 A recent GEM policy paper focused on inclusive teaching is available at https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/2020teachers

155 See: Digital empowerment: access to information and knowledge suing ICTs for persons with disabilities https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244543_eng

Situating the thematic area within UNESCO Education Sector's Programme and Budget[156]

26.   In UNESCO's Programme and Budget for the 2020-2021 biennium (40 C/5), the ED sector's work on inclusion in education contributes to the ED's Main Line of Action (MLA) 1, in particular the Expected Result (ER) 8, which reads as follows:

MLA 1:	Support Member States in the implementation of SDG 4
ER 8:	Increased learning opportunities for persons in vulnerable situations, with particular attention given to crisis-affected populations, including refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, as well as persons with learning challenges, including disabilities

27.   Mainstreaming inclusion in education however is supposed to continue contributing to all Expected Results across all thematic areas of the Education Sector programme, as well as where relevant of other Programme Sectors.

28.   In previous C5s Inclusive education was reflected in several expected results of the Education Sector, in particular after Salamanca and after the adoption of the EFA Goals.[157]

Resources for UNESCO Education sector's work on inclusion in education

29.   In terms of Human resources for inclusion specific work in the ED sector, there are three regular programme staff dedicated to global normative work related to inclusion, including gender mainstreaming, and two programme staff on inclusion-specific programming related to the education for crisis-affected people on the move.

30.   The Education Sector budgetary resources[158] dedicated to inclusion specific activities over the last biennia are as follows:

Period	RP Budget amount in USD	Extrabudgetary/voluntary resources in USD
2016/17	944,000	19,125,000
2018/19	714,000	22,984,000
2020/21	2,707,000	32,236,000

31.   It should be noted that the amounts presented in the table above, from the regular ED sector programme budget and from voluntary contributions are mainly supporting inclusion-specific programming. For example, approximately 70% of the regular programme budget in the 40C/5 at Headquarters is dedicated to the programme on education for crisis-affected people on the move. The bulk of resources from voluntary contributions is also mostly directed towards inclusion specific programming on education in emergencies - most of this funding in the current and previous biennia is managed and implemented in the field. Therefore, the resources available for broad normative work on inclusion remain limited.

Rationale for the Evaluation

32.   The UNESCO Internal Oversight Service (IOS) Evaluation Office, at the request of the Education Sector, is conducting an evaluation on the work of the Education Sector as it relates to inclusion as part of IOS's corporate biannual evaluation plan.

33.   While the role and work of UNESCO as the lead agency and coordinator of SDG 4 in relation to inclusion appears overall well defined, the Education Sector is seeking to **further improve and strengthen the focus of its work in inclusion as well as** ensure that inclusion is mainstreamed and becomes a guiding principle in all education normative, monitoring and policy guidance efforts, as well as capacity development efforts undertaken by different education sector entities and field offices.

34.   Furthermore, the evaluation shall seek to provide programmatic and strategic level recommendations for integrating inclusion across the work of different units and field offices.

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156 As the focus of the evaluation is on the work of the ED sector's work on inclusion in education, this does not include programmes and resources from other Sector's units outside the ED sector or entities such as category 1 Institutes.

157 For example, in the 39 C/5 for 2018/19 ER8 read: Improved policies, plans and learning opportunities to expand inclusion in education for vulnerable populations, with particular attention to persons with learning challenges, including disabilities, and to crisis-affected populations (contributing to SDG targets 4.5 and 4.a). In the 38 C/5 for the 2016/17 biennium inclusion was explicitly mainstreamed across the ERs of MLA1: Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all.

158 Extrabudgetary amounts consists of year 1 actual expenditure for the relevant biennium and the 'allotment current year' in year 2 as a dedicated ER did not exists in the biennium. Whereas the regular programme is an estimation of activities linked to Inclusion in Education.

3.   Purpose and Scope

Objectives

35.   The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess and generate findings, lessons learned, and recommendations regarding the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the UNESCO Education Sector's work pertaining to the field of inclusion in education. The overall aim is to confirm **what has been achieved so far**, **whether UNESCO is on the right track as a standard-setting organization** towards achieving the inclusion agenda and to **reconfirm the Organization's comparative strengths and optimal positioning** in this area of work, in particular in view of the Organization's limited resources compared to its vast mandate and in light of current developments as well as future opportunities from a holistic and interdisciplinary perspective.

Use of the Evaluation

36.   The evaluation shall therefore **feed into the formulation of future strategic directions for the Organization's work in inclusion in education** and inform the way forward for recently developed and new initiatives.

37.   While the evaluation will be mainly formative in its orientation - in line with the above purpose – it will include summative elements as it is essential to learn what has been achieved so far, what worked, why and under what circumstances, and what the challenges have been, in order to identify possible ways to strengthen UNESCO's action in this thematic area in line with the Agenda 2030 and with Member States' demands.

38.   The evaluation aims to help UNESCO and its Member States strengthen and prioritize the Organization's work in the field of inclusion in education. It also aims to serve as a reference for stakeholders working on inclusion in education, as well as for other Programme Sectors at HQ and field offices in planning and implementing relevant interdisciplinary activities and programmes.

39.   Furthermore, the evaluation shall feed into the development of guidance for UNESCO staff and Member States in mainstreaming and measuring inclusion in education related project design, implementation and monitoring.

40.   The primary intended users of the evaluation are UNESCO's senior management, in particular the Assistant Director General (ADG) for ED, Directors of Divisions in HQ, as well

as UNESCO Category 1 Institutes and Education Regional offices, senior management of other relevant Programme Sectors, the Bureau for Strategic Planning (BSP), the Division for Gender Equality (GEN), the Sector for External Relations and Priority Africa (PAX), as well as relevant managers and programme staff at Headquarters, and Field Offices. Member States, and UNESCO's constituencies, other UNESCO partners and networks are considered as secondary users of the evaluation. The final evaluation report will be submitted to the UNESCO ED Sector, will be presented to the UNESCO Executive Board, and be made publicly available.

Scope and Evaluation Questions

41.   The evaluation will assess the work of the UNESCO Education Sector on inclusion in education at global, regional and national levels within the framework of programmes and activities conducted through both the Regular Programme and Extrabudgetary resources with a focus on the last three biennia, 2016/17 to the present 2020/21. The geographical scope of the evaluation will be global.

42.   Given that inclusion permeates all workstreams in education programming, and in line with priorities identified by both UNESCO and the global development community, the present evaluation shall assess the Education Sector's efforts towards mainstreaming inclusion in education on the one hand but also zoom in on the Sector's inclusion specific work and will particularly focus on its work aimed at ensuring inclusion and equity in education for two vulnerable groups, namely people with disabilities, and crisis-affected people on the move. Among other, the evaluation will also assess the contribution of the increasing focus of inclusion specific programming to building the nexus between the humanitarian and the development fields, at the global, regional and at the national level.

43.   It shall also include an assessment of the alignment and complementarity with UNESCO's global priorities Africa and Gender Equality, and its coherence and continued relevance in the framework of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda of 'leaving no one behind'

44.   The evaluation shall assist in decision-making and help strengthening the thematic area by making evidence-based and future-oriented recommendations concerning the following six key dimensions. These shall include considerations in relation to the revised OECD/DAC evaluation criteria[159], namely relevance, coherence, efficiency and effectiveness and sustainability of the UNESCO Education Sector's work in inclusion in education. To the extent possible, the evaluation shall also help establish and validate pathways towards impact of inclusion mainstreaming and inclusion specific activities

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159 OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation (2019). *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation. Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use.* DCD/DAC (2019) 58/FINAL, p.8, accessible at: http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf.

through the development of a Theory of Change for the thematic area. An indicative list of specific evaluation questions is proposed in Annex 1.

45.   Key dimensions for the evaluation:

1.   **UNESCO's comparative strengths and opportunities in the field of inclusion in education in contributing to the 2030 Agenda through inclusion mainstreaming and inclusion specific interventions**

2.   **Partnerships, cooperation and fundraising in particular for inclusion specific programming**

3.   **Internal Coherence throughout the Organization and Interdisciplinary Cooperation**

4.   **Results Achieved and Signs of Impact**

5.   **Sustainability**

6.   **Visibility, Knowledge management and Communication**

46.   The evaluation will be guided by the above overarching key dimensions, and the set of detailed evaluation questions (see Annex 1) which will be agreed and further refined, prioritized and validated during the inception phase. A set of further sub-questions may be identified for each of these key dimensions.

4.   Methodology

47.   The evaluation will require a combination of multiple and complementary evaluative methods and strategies in order to answer the evaluation questions and meet the evaluation purpose. It is expected that the evaluation team uses a mixed method approach and collects, analyses and triangulate quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources in order to provide information that is credible and reliable. These Terms of Reference contain a set of key evaluation questions based on the key dimensions to be assessed and evaluation criteria defined above. It is expected that the evaluation team, following exchanges with the Evaluation Reference Group, will further elaborate the methodology, including the full list of evaluation questions, in the Inception Report.

48.   It is expected that the evaluation team will (re)construct and refine a Theory of Change (TOC) during the evaluation, and measure contributions to the overall

development goals. The Theory of Change shall also provide a basis and relevant inputs for the development of relevant output, process, and outcome indicators for designing, monitoring, and implementing future inclusion specific activities and projects, as well as for developing guidance on inclusion mainstreaming.

49.   **Suggested key elements for the methodology** include:

- **Desk-based review:** The evaluator(s) will review all relevant documents by undertaking: Literature review of topical issues and global trends; mapping and review of UNESCO Programme and Budget (C/5), UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy (C/4) project progress and monitoring reports, Regular Programme and Extrabudgetary funds in connection with past and ongoing inclusion specific projects, SISTER materials , self-assessment reports/ evaluations, UNESCO publications, training courses and communication materials related to inclusion, review and analysis of relevant national policy documents, advocacy materials, events, statistics and trends.

- **Validation and refinement of an overall Theory of Change** for UNESCO's work in inclusion in education including the results pathways and its underlying assumptions.

- **Structured and semi-structured interviews** (face-to-face and via Skype) with stakeholders within and outside UNESCO following a purposeful sampling strategy of key stakeholders to be consulted.

- **Field-based data collection using a well-constructed case study approach, for thematic and regional/national case studies**. The topics for case studies and locations for two to three field visits will be discussed and agreed upon with the reference group during the inception phase, at least one case study /field visit will take place in the African region.[160]

- **Questionnaire(s) and/or survey(s**) of UNESCO Member States and UNESCO's partners.

- **Two to three visits to UNESCO Headquarters in Paris** will be expected: once during the inception phase, once during the data collection phase to meet and interview relevant UNESCO management and staff, and once for the stakeholder workshop for presenting preliminary findings and recommendations.[161]

- **Data analysis and formulation of preliminary findings as well as evaluation recommendations.**

160 However, given the current sanitary restrictions due to the COVID 19 pandemic, no consultant or evaluation team member will be expected to travel unless travel is a safe option and fully authorized by the relevant authorities. As an alternative, all data collection can be conducted remotely, and/or with the help of local consultants considering necessary adaptions to the overall methodological approach (as indicated in paragraph 54 below).

161 Idem: See footnote 25 above.

- **Participatory workshop** to be held in UNESCO Headquarters in Paris or remotely to validate the findings and discuss the preliminary recommendations and lessons learned.

50.   Approaches and methods for data collection, sampling and analysis must incorporate a **gender equality perspective,** be based on a **human rights-based approach**, and take into consideration the **diverse cultural and social contexts** in which the activities are being implemented.

5.   Roles and Responsibilities

51.   The evaluation will be managed by UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) Evaluation Office and conducted with the support of and input from a team of two to three external consultants. The consultants are expected to contribute specific expertise in topics related to inclusion in education in order to strengthen the technical quality of the data collection. They are further expected to contribute senior evaluation expertise to the evaluation design, approach and analysis. The external consultants will be responsible for developing the methodology framework, the collection of data and analysis, including fieldwork, as well as for drafting the evaluation report in English and for producing other communication deliverables (as specified below). The exact distribution of roles and responsibilities of the team members will be further specified and agreed in the Inception Report once the external consultants have been selected.

52.   An Evaluation Reference Group will be established to guide the evaluation process and ensure the quality of associated deliverables, including the Terms of Reference, the Inception Report, the methodology and the draft evaluation report. The group will be composed of the evaluation manager and an evaluation assistant from the Evaluation Office and may include representatives from the following entities: the ED Section of Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education (EME) and the ED Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality (IGE), the Executive Office of the Education Sector, relevant UNESCO national and/or regional field Offices at least one from Africa; the GEM Report team; Category 1 Institutes such as IIEP and/or IBE; from other Programme Sectors as relevant to intersectoral activities, such as the Communication and Information, the Culture Sector, or the Social and Human Sciences Sector, as well as possibly from the Bureau for Strategic Planning and the Division for Gender Equality. The Reference Group shall liaise electronically and/or meet periodically during the evaluation. As necessary, a wider advisory group including additional representatives from UNESCO and from entities external to UNESCO who are working on the inclusion agenda may also be consulted on a more occasional basis.

Logistics /field work

53.   The external evaluation team will commonly be responsible for their own logistics: office space, administrative and secretarial support, telecommunications, printing of documentation, travel, etc. Suitable office space will be provided for the consultants when working from UNESCO premises. The team will also be responsible for administering and disseminating all methodological tools such as surveys, and logistics related to travel. The ED Sector, as well as other Programme sectors as appropriate and the relevant field units will provide access to all relevant documentation and contact details of all relevant stakeholders and distribution lists. They will also facilitate access to UNESCO staff from Headquarters, regional and field offices and institutes engaged in project delivery.

6.   Minimum content of the technical proposal

54.   The technical proposal should as a minimum be structured as follows:

1.   Description of the Firm /Entity

2.   Context and thematic background including understanding of the purpose and scope of the evaluation

3.   Proposed approach, methodology and workplan

4.   Evaluation timeframe, deliverables & schedule

5.   Roles and responsibilities (including logistics, access to data, support services and facilities

6.   Evaluation standards and quality assurance

7.   Proposed Personnel

- Evaluation team profile and evidence of evaluation work & references

- Complete CVs of each proposed team member to support qualification requirements as listed under Qualification/Experience requirement including evidence of evaluation work and reference of the individuals

8.   Proposal submission form and vendor information form

55.   As part of the proposed approach, methodology and workplan the technical proposal should in particular elaborate on the following aspects

- The Firm/Entity's understanding of the task in relation to the objectives and requirements set out in TOR and description on how the illustrative questions in the TOR could be addressed and / or elaborated

- Description of proposed methodology (including limitations and risks of each tool)

- Description of a realistic workplan with specific reference to key deliverables and priorities and repartition of tasks amongst team members including a description of the sequence of activities and the submission of deliverables?

- Description of the relevance and quality of previous samples of work in relation to the subject and requirements of the current evaluation

Note: *While the proposal should be formulated on the assumption that travel and face to face data collection and workshops will be possible,[162] a description of identified risks and relevant prevention and mitigation measures to minimize the direct effects of the current COVID-19 crises on the evaluation resources and approach, as well as a description of the impact on the contractors' performance in terms of time management, logistics shall be provided. Among the alternative options, consideration of remote data collection and/or the possibility of data collection with the help of local consultants are highly recommended.*

7.2   Deliverables and Schedule

56.   The timeframe for the evaluation is limited. The evaluation will take place between February 2021 and July 2021. The indicative timetable of key activities and deliverables is shown below.

Schedule

Activity / Deliverable	Date
Call for Proposals and Selection of Consultants	By January 2021
Launch of Evaluation – Kick Off meeting	Mid-February 2021
Inception Phase - Inception Report	Second half of February 2021
Data Collection and Analysis	February 2021– end May 2021
Stakeholder Workshop for Presentation and Validation of Preliminary Findings and Recommendations	June 2021
Short Summary Paper (2-3 pages)	June 2021
Draft Evaluation Report	End June 2021
Final Evaluation Report and relevant other Communication Outputs (such as infographics and evaluation briefs to be agreed in the inception phase)	End July 2021

Deliverables

57.   Inception report: An inception report containing the (initial) Theory of Change of UNESCO's work in inclusion in education (based on the desk study and preliminary interviews), an evaluation plan with a timeline, detailed methodology including an evaluation matrix (with a full list of evaluation questions and subsequent methods for data collection), a stakeholder analysis, and a list of documents. The inception report should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following elements: introduction and relevant background information; purpose of the evaluation; evaluation framework that

162 However, given the current sanitary restrictions due to the COVID 19 pandemic, no consultant or evaluation team member will be expected to travel unless travel is a safe option and fully authorized by the relevant authorities.

systemizes the methodology, identifying the issues to be addressed, further elaborated sub-questions, and the performance indicators (variables to be considered), sources of information and method of information collection for each question; work schedule; and draft data collection instruments. It is advisable to use an evaluation matrix that connects questions to data collection methods/sources).

58.   Draft evaluation report: The draft evaluation report should be written in English, the main body of the report be comprised of no more than 30 pages (excluding annexes) and follow the UNESCO IOS guidelines and quality requirements as well as the template for evaluation reports (which will be made available). The UNESCO Style Manual shall be applied with regards to grammar, spelling, punctuation, abbreviations, referencing and country names.

- The structure of the draft report should include:

- Executive Summary

- Introduction

- Chapter(s) for each key evaluation dimension or question

- Conclusions and Recommendations

- Annexes to include the Terms of Reference, detailed methodology and limitations to the methodology, interview list, data collection instruments, key documents consulted and case study /field visit reports.

59.   Communication outputs: The evaluation team will prepare and/or contribute to communication products targeting different users: a 2-page synthesis of the main findings from the evaluation; a PowerPoint presentation for the Stakeholder Workshop; infographics for dissemination and social media use, and any other products to be agreed during the Inception Phase.

60.   Summary Paper with Key Findings for UNESCO's Strategic Results Report: This summary paper will present the key findings from the evaluation in a succinct manner to enable for them to feed into the Organization's Strategic Programming and Reporting, such as to inform the next quadrennial programme and budget (2022-2025) as well as the Organization's future Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029, and the Strategic Results Report, which is to be presented to the UNESCO Executive Board in spring 2024.

61.   Final evaluation report: The final evaluation report should incorporate comments provided by the Evaluation Reference Group without exceeding 30 pages as per the template provided by IOS (excluding Annexes). It should also include an Executive Summary and Annexes. The final report must comply with the UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards and its quality must comply with the criteria contained in the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports. The evaluation is expected to reflect the requirements UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation and the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.

62.   Basic Outline/Framework for guidance on assessment of inclusion: Based on the UNESCO main inclusion related resources, and the ToC developed during this exercise the evaluation should make suggestions for the development of guidance on assessing inclusion mainstreaming and targeted inclusion interventions, to assess outputs, process, and outcomes against suitable indicators, when designing, monitoring, implementing, and evaluating inclusion mainstreaming and inclusion specific projects and initiatives.

63.   The final evaluation report will follow the aforementioned structure. As part of the UNESCO IOS quality assurance processes, all evaluation reports are subject to review by an external expert to ensure compliance with UNEG quality standards for evaluation reports. The recommended actions from the quality assurance process will be required to be addressed prior to finalization of the report.

8.   Qualifications of the Firm/Entity

64.   The firm/entity should possess the following mandatory qualifications and experience:

- It is mandatory for a Firm/Entity to have a minimum of seven years of global/international experience in programme / project evaluation.

- It is mandatory for the Firm/Entity to have successfully implemented a minimum of three international evaluation projects in the field of education and development

Furthermore, the following qualifications of the Firm/Entity are considered an advantage

- It is desirable for a Firm/Entity to have successfully provided evaluation services for at least two international organizations or companies. References for similar evaluations undertaken with at least two international organizations/companies shall be submitted.

- It is desirable for a Firm/Entity to have at least three work products that demonstrate familiarity with the field of education and in particular with inclusion related evaluations

9.   Qualifications of the Evaluation Team

65.   The recommended composition of the evaluation team includes two to three core members, i.e. one team leader and/or one senior evaluator and a junior level evaluator/researcher. Note that alternative team compositions will also be considered.

66.   The consultant(s) should possess the following mandatory qualifications and experience. Not meeting these mandatory criteria will disqualify a proposal:

67.   Team Leader and/or Senior evaluator

- University degree at master's level or equivalent in areas relevant to the evaluation such as education, social sciences, political sciences, economics, or any related field

- At least 10 years of working experience acquired at the international level or in an international setting

- Senior experience of at least 10 years in project and/or programme evaluation, including applying qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques and RBM principles

- At least three evaluation experiences relevant to the field of inclusion in education

- Excellent communication, analytical and demonstrated excellent drafting skills in English

- No previous involvement in the implementation of the activities under review.

68.   Other team members (junior evaluator/researcher)

- An advanced university degree in education, social sciences, political sciences, economics, or any related field or other related field

- At least 5 years of professional experience in conducting programme and policy evaluations, including applying qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques and RBM principles

- Excellent oral communication and demonstrated excellent report writing skills in English

- No previous involvement in the implementation of the activities under review.

69.   The proposed team members should collectively have the following mandatory qualifications:

- At least two examples of work demonstrating understanding and application of UN mandates in Human Rights and Gender Equality and/or of gender and culturally sensitive approaches in evaluation

- At least two examples of work experience in the UN or experience with assignments for the UN in the framework of the Sustainable Development Agenda, in particular relevant to SDG4 – Education 2030.

- Demonstrated working knowledge of French.

70.   *The following qualifications collectively across all team members will be considered an advantage:*

- At least two examples of professional work experience in developing countries or in a national/regional/global development context

- At least three experiences in analyzing and synthesizing research as well as policy and legal documents

- At least three examples of work demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the needs of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups

- At least three examples of work demonstrating familiarity with the Theory of Change approach and/or experience of developing ToCs in fields related to Education

- Other UN language skills at working level will be considered an advantage (Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese).

71.   Preference will be given to evaluation teams that are gender-balanced and of geographically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

72.   Verification of these qualifications will be based on the provided curriculum vitae. Moreover, references, web links or electronic copies of two or three examples of recently completed evaluation reports should be provided together with the technical proposal. Candidates are also encouraged to submit other references such as research papers or articles that demonstrate their familiarity with the subject under review, as well as demonstrate their analytical and writing skills.

73.   The evaluation assignment is estimated to require approximately 75 to 80 professional working days, including two to three visits to UNESCO Headquarters in Paris by the Team Leader and/or the Senior Evaluator and three country visits to be conducted by the Team Leader/Senior Evaluator. It is estimated that each country visit will require three to five working days.

74.   However, given the current sanitary restrictions due to the COVID 19 pandemic, no consultant or evaluation team member will be expected to travel unless travel is a safe option and fully authorized by the relevant authorities. As an alternative, data collection can be conducted remotely, and/or with the help of local consultants. Necessary adaptations and mitigation of risks linked to the impact of the COVID-19 crises on the evaluation's resources and methodology should be included in the overall methodological approach (as indicated in paragraph 54 above).

75.   The evaluation shall be conducted with consideration for gender equality, human rights and culturally-sensitive approaches for evaluation and in line with the UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards, the UNEG Guidelines for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations and the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation to ensure that gender equality, inclusion, diversity and respect for human rights are mainstreamed throughout the data collection and analysis processes.Furthermore, UNESCO shall have the right, at its own expense, to have the Contractor's books and records pertaining to

the project bank account and project execution reviewed (and, if desired, copied) upon prior written notice at any reasonable time agreeable to the Contractor by the UNESCO's, internal/external auditor, auditors as UNESCO may appoint or the Contractor's own auditor.

76.   UNESCO may conduct, or arrange for, a periodic evaluation of the contractor's implementation of the project. To this end, the contractor will upon UNESCO's request, enable representatives or designees of UNECO to visit the project site(s) and facilities, inspect property and review books and records related to the project."

10.   References

77.   As the global lead for SDG 4, UNESCO has organized numerous events and issued publications to promote inclusion in education for policymakers and educational practitioners. A sample of these includes:

- 2003 Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace

- 2009 UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education

- 2016 IBE Training Tools for Curriculum Development. Reaching Out to All Learners: a Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education

- 2016 IIEP E-Forum Report. Planning for the Inclusion of Displaced Populations in the Education Sector: Preliminary Reflections.

- 2016 Digital Empowerment: Access to Information and Knowledge Using ICTs for Persons with Disabilities

- 2017 UNESCO Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education

- 2018 UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous People

- 2018 UIS Handbook on Measuring Inclusion in Education

- 2019 International Forum on Inclusion and Equity in Education in Cali, Colombia

- 2019 The Bangkok Statement on Language and Inclusion

- 2020 UNESCO's Education Strategy for Crisis-Affected People on the Move 2020-2025

- 2020 IIEP training course on disability-inclusive education planning, in collaboration with UNICEF

- 2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report: Inclusion and Education

- 2020 Regional Report for Latin America and the Caribbean on Inclusion and education

- 2020 GEM Report. A New Generation: 25 Years of Efforts for Gender Equality in Education

- 2020 Background papers prepared for the 2020 GEM Report

- 2020 Los Pinos Declaration [Chapoltepek] –Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages

- 2020 IIEP publication: Crisis-sensitive educational planning for refugees and host communities: lessons from EthiopiaKey documentation issued by key actors in the field of inclusion in education for consultation:

78.   Key documentation issued by key actors in the field of inclusion in education for consultation:

- OECD, Policy Brief: Ten Steps to Equity in Education, 2008, available at: http://www.oecd.org/education/school/39989494.pdf.

- United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979, Article 10, available at: https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx.

- United Nations, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007, Article 14, available at: https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf.

- United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), Still left behind: Pathways to inclusive education for girls with disabilities, 2017, available at: http://www.ungei.org/Still_Left_Behind_Full_Report.PDF.

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Annex: Indicative evaluation questions for each Key dimension.

These questions will be further prioritized and refined during the inception phase of the evaluation:

1) UNESCO's comparative strengths and opportunities in the field of inclusion in education in contributing to the 2030 Agenda through inclusion mainstreaming and inclusion specific interventions:

- **Indicative evaluation questions:** What are UNESCO's comparative strengths and how can these be best mobilized to address Member States' challenges in this area? What thematic areas or intersections offer the most adequate opportunities and entry points for UNESCO's inclusion specific work during a crisis, such as the recent COVID-19 crisis? Has inclusion in education been adequately considered a priority for UNESCO's Education Sector in contributing to the Agenda 2030 of leaving no one behind'? Is it in line with priorities identified by both UNESCO and the global development community, particularly regarding the focus of its work on people with disabilities and crisis-affected people on the move? To what extent is the focus of inclusion specific programming on the nexus between the humanitarian and the development fields, both at the global and at the national level adequate? Are the two Global priorities Gender Equality and Africa effectively mainstreamed in the implementation of inclusion specific education interventions, and vice versa is inclusion effectively mainstreamed in education related Gender equality and Priority Africa initiatives? To what extent are inclusion-specific education interventions targeting the most vulnerable or disadvantaged groups? What is the level of involvement of beneficiaries in particular youth as actors, leaders, and partners in inclusion specific projects? What future opportunities are emerging and how can UNESCO best capitalize on these? What is the optimal balance of investment into mainstreaming inclusion vs inclusion-specific interventions?

2) Partnerships, cooperation and fundraising in particular for inclusion specific programming:

- **Indicative evaluation questions:** How shall UNESCO strategically position itself within the UN family and towards external stakeholders, considering the evolving expectations and new opportunities to expand the scope and quality of the work in this field? To what extent does UNESCO's work ensure complementarity, harmonization and co-ordination with other actors in particular national level stakeholders working in the field of inclusion in education? To what extent does UNESCO engage in UN-wide coordination efforts such as the UNPRPD (UN Partnership on the Rights for People with Disabilities with other key players in this field and establish strategic partnerships to ensure UNESCO's work adds value while avoiding duplication of efforts? In what way could advocacy for inclusion be more strategically and effectively pursued with donors and relevant stakeholders to mobilize external partnerships and additional resources, in particular with a view to the relatively limited resources compared to the broad

mandate of the Organization? Have networks been utilized and networking efforts been effectively pursued to mobilize contributions for inclusion interventions globally?

3) Coherence throughout the Organization and Interdisciplinary Cooperation:

Indicative evaluation questions: Have UNESCO's organizational structure, working methods, managerial support, role distribution, infrastructure and coordination mechanisms adequately assisted in the delivery of its inclusion mainstreaming and inclusion-specific initiatives in Education in an efficient and effective way? Are resources allocated adequate? How can the Organization best strengthen the work in this area, in the future, in particular regarding the respective capacity of ED as well as other Sectors, at HQ and the field, and by best utilizing Category 1 Institutes? What further synergies have and could be gained through cooperation among the different UNESCO entities? To what extent and how has the interaction between HQ and field offices lead to greater synergies and facilitated impact of UNESCO inclusion work? Which are the interdisciplinary dimensions of inclusion in education and to what extent can these be approached from a more holistic and inter or cross sectoral perspective? How can UNESCO further capitalize on its outreach entities and networks such as Category 2 Institutes, UNESCO Chairs, and ASPnet schools?

4) Results Achieved and Signs of Impact

- **Indicative evaluation questions:** What progress has been made in the achievement of the expected outcomes defined for inclusion in particular since the 39 C/5 Programme and Budget, through inclusion specific interventions as well as through mainstreaming inclusion across the ED sector mandate? What are other unexpected / unintended effects of these interventions, and how have these been captured? What are the challenges and what factors have been influencing the achievement or non-achievement of outcomes? To what extent have UNESCO's interventions reached the intended disadvantaged and marginalized target groups? Which potential target groups have not /not yet been reached? Are the organizational tools and processes, including for planning and implementation following an RBM approach? What are potential challenges and bottlenecks for the achievement of longer-term results? To what extent do the interventions in the thematic area dedicate resources to ensure a robust monitoring and evaluation framework? Does the M&E framework for inclusion-specific projects and initiatives include considerations of the pathways towards impact on key beneficiaries?

- To what extent have UNESCO's interventions on inclusion in education had an impact at the policy level? What resources and types of partners shall be envisaged to strengthen the implementation of policy changes to further enhance the impact on most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including learners with disabilities, those in remote areas, those displaced as well as girls and women and in particular in consideration of overlapping vulnerabilities of learners, such as gender and disability? What has been UNESCO's response and possible adjusted programming in the field of inclusion in education due to the Covid-19 crisis?

5) Sustainability:

- **Indicative evaluation questions:** What provisions have been and could be made to ensure longer term sustainability of results? What conditions can be put in place to enhance the potential for financial, institutional and political sustainability of the thematic area? How comprehensive, balanced and holistic is the portfolio of work in the thematic area in the support it provides to Member States (policy advocacy, resource development; capacity building, interdisciplinarity)? To what extent are UNESCO Member States engaged in the inclusion agenda area? What is their level of ownership? What are concrete examples of programmes and activities that have contributed to longer-term changes?

6) Visibility, Knowledge management and Communication:

- **Indicative evaluation questions:** To what extent have UNESCO's achievements in the area of inclusion been visible internally and to external stakeholders? To what extent have the related projects and initiatives been implemented and communicated in a culturally sensitive manner? Are the current UNESCO planning, programming, monitoring and reporting systems, processes and knowledge management tools adequate to provide the required visibility and recognition of UNESCO's work in this field? Is the way in which the thematic area is presented in the C/5 Programme and Budget adequate and does it have an impact on its visibility, communication and possibly, its funding and longer-term impact? To what extent have other UNESCO networks and partners been involved in contributing to the wider communication?

Annex 2: The concept of inclusion in education: eliminate barriers to access, presence, participation, and achievement in education

Academic literature acknowledges that inclusive education is a multi-faceted policy area requiring a broad range of actions in different areas (curriculum, assessment, teaching, support, access, resources, leadership, vision etc.) in order to improve inclusive education culture.[130] Within UNESCO's own work, for instance on the 2020 GEM report, there is acknowledgement that inclusive education is attached with a range of meanings and purposes.[131]

There are different approaches to conceptually approach inclusive education. While it can refer to securing at least a minimal right to some basis of education for specific vulnerable groups (a narrow interpretation of inclusive education); it can also refer to holistic approaches seeing inclusivity and diversity as core characteristics for any education system and as a prerequisite for an education in and for democracy[132]. In the latter, "inclusive education is secured by principles and actions of fairness, justice and equity. It is a political aspiration and an educational methodology."[133] This is sententiously described as "**every learner matters and matters equally.**"[134] In this perspective, individual differences are not seen as problems to be fixed, but as opportunities for democratizing and enriching learning (idem, p. 13). The GEM 2020 report indicates that "inclusive education is commonly associated with the needs of people with disabilities and the relationship between special and mainstream education."[135] Also, it argues that exclusive education is

based on a system and context that do not take diversity and multiplicity of needs into account, that it is a society and culture that determine rules, define normality and perceive difference as deviance. As such, "the concept of **barriers to participation and learning** should replace the concept of special needs."[136] In the same line of reasoning, Roger Slee in his think piece on defining the scope of inclusive education indicates that "Over time an uneasy merging of the languages of inclusive education and special education has persisted as if they are one and the same. It is too simplistic to say that special educators have hijacked the language of inclusive education."[137] Hence, as a working definition, "inclusive education refers to securing and guaranteeing the right of all children to access, presence, participation and success in their local regular school. Inclusive education calls upon neighbourhood schools to build their capacity to **eliminate barriers to access, presence, participation, and achievement** in order to be able to provide excellent educational experiences and outcomes for all children and young people."[138]

As mentioned by UNESCO IIEP and UNICEF "In order for inclusive education to become a reality, governments must think holistically, improving education sector planning and taking a systems approach to create cultural change."[139] **Inclusive education** is different from **segregated education**, where students learn in separate environments, designed or used to respond to their particular needs or impairment, in isolation from other students;

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130 See for instance: Mitchell, D. (2015). Inclusive education is a multi-faceted concept. Published in Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal, 5(1), 9-30.

131 Slee, R., (2018), Defining the scope of inclusive education: Think piece prepared for the 20 20 Global Education Monitoring Report Inclusion and education, p. 5.

132 Bernstein, B. B. (1996). Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity : theory, research, critique. London, Taylor & Francis; Knight, T. (1985). An Apprenticeship in Democracy. The Australian Teacher, 11(1), 5 – 7; Pearl, A. and Knight, T. (1998). The democratic classroom: theory to inform practice. Cresskill, N.J., Hampton Press.

133 Paper commissioned for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, Inclusion and education, p. 9

134 UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, 2017, p. 12, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254.

135 GEM 2020, p. 11.

136 GEM 2020, p. 12.

137 Slee, R., (2018), Defining the scope of inclusive education: Think piece prepared for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report Inclusion and education, p. 7.

138 Slee, R., (2018), Defining the scope of inclusive education: Think piece prepared for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report Inclusion and education, p. 8.

139 UNESCO IIEP, UNICEF (2019), On the road to inclusion, p. 6.

or **integrated education**, where students are placed in schools or educational settings with peers of a similar age but students are required to adjust to the mainstream.[140] In this sense, the inclusive education approach lies closely to the capability approach as put forward by Amartya Sen seeing disabilities and vulnerabilities as a social-relational model that emphasizes the relational mechanism of a disability and vulnerability between internal and external arrangements; balancing intrinsic and extrinsic goods of education; and a justice claim for additional educational provisions in inclusive education for vulnerable individuals.[141]

For the purposes of this evaluation, **inclusion in education is a political aspiration and an educational methodology sententiously described as "every learner matters and matters equally."**[142] **It is furthermore defined as 'a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners.'**[143] Furthermore, "inclusive education is a **process** contributing to achievement of the goal of social inclusion."[144] While maintaining that inclusion should be embedded firmly within education systems, it points to a mechanism to overcome barriers in a sustainable manner instead of finding solutions for barriers in an ad hoc way. In this it focuses on inclusion for specific vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, crisis-affected people on the move (including people displaced by conflicts or natural disasters), and indigenous people. While inclusive education received impetus from the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities "its scope goes far beyond learners with disabilities and has now been extended to cover all learners with special educational needs, whatever their origins. It also extends beyond the mere placement of such learners in regular classes to include consideration of multiple facets of education."[145]

Putting to practice inclusive education (**every learner matters and matters equally**) "require changes in thinking and practice at every level of an education system, from classroom teachers and others who provide educational experiences directly, to those responsible for national policy."[146] At an **operational level** inclusive education is a multi-faceted concept, referring to educating learners with all kind of needs in regular education settings. This process involves the transformation of schools to cater for all learners which requires vision, placement, adapted curriculum, adapted assessment, adapted teaching, acceptance, access, support, resources, and leadership.[147] At a **policy level**, four overlapping dimension can be identified as keys to establishing inclusive and equitable education systems.[148]

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140 UNESCO IIEP, UNICEF (2019), On the road to inclusion, p. 6.

141 See: Sumin Lim (2020) The Capabilities Approach to Inclusive Education: re-envisioning the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's Least Restrictive Environment, Disability & Society, 35:4, 570-588, DOI: 10.1080/09687599.2019.1649119

142 UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, 2017, p. 12, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254.

143 UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, 2017, p. 13, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254.

144 GEM 2020, p. 12.

145 Mitchell, D. (2015). Inclusive education is a multi-faceted concept. Published in Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal , 5(1), p. 9.

146 UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, 2017, p. 12, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254.

147 Mitchell, D. (2015). Inclusive education is a multi-faceted concept. Published in Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal , 5(1), p. 11.

148 As presented in UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, 2017, p. 16, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254; based on UNESCO International Bureau of Education. 2016. Reaching Out to All Learners: A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education. Geneva, UNESCO IBE

Figure 1. Dimensions of a policy review framework

CONCEPTS

Inclusion and equity are overarching principles that guide all educational policies, plans and practices.

The national curriculum and its associated assessment systems are designed to respond effectively to all learners.

All partners who work with learners and their families understand and support the national policy goals for promoting inclusion and equity in education.

Systèmes are in place to monitor the presence, participation and achievement of all learners within the education system.

PRACTICES

Schools and other learning centres have strategies for encouraging the presence, participation and achievement of all learners from their local community.

Schools and other learning centres provide support for learners who are at risk of underachievement, marginalization and exclusion.

Teachers and support staff are prepared to respond to learner diversity during their initial training.

Teachers and support staff have opportunities to take part in continuing professional devlopment regarding inclusive and equitable practices.

INCLUSION AND EQUITY AS A PROCESS

STRUCTURE SAND SYSTEMS

There is high-quality support for vulnerable learners.

All services and institutions involved with learners and their families work together in coordinating inclusive and equitable educational policies and practices.

Resources, both human and financial, are distributed in ways that benefit potentially vulnerable learners.

There is a clear role for special provision, such as special schools and units, in promotiing inclusion and equity in education.

POLICY STATEMENTS

The important national education policy documents strongly emphasize inclusion and equity.

Senior staff at the national, district and school levels provide leadership on inclusion and equity in education.

Leaders at all levels articulate consistent policy goals to develop inclusive and equitable educational practices.

Leaders at all levels challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory and inequitable educational practices.

Source: Adapted from UNESCO-IBE, 2016

On each of the dimensions included in the presented figures, further details can be provided and criteria can be given to measure inclusiveness. A specific aspect to mention in the context of this proposal is the use of digital tools in education. While the potential of digital tools for inclusiveness is huge, in practical terms digital tools also hamper inclusiveness as often tools are lacking for specific vulnerable groups or may further alienate some learners (uneven distance education).[149] Furthermore, studies show that the **COVID-19** crisis hits vulnerable groups even harder.[150]

While inclusion in education is seen as a process, the elements as described in the above figure need to be interpreted as aspects on which countries and schools can continuously reflect and advance instead of a final end-point of developing an inclusive education system.

To conclude, in this evaluation, **inclusion in education has been defined as 'a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners.'**[151] This definition focuses less on the operational aspects concerning *how* countries and education systems solve specific issues related to learners with specific disadvantaged backgrounds or that are in a specific vulnerable situation. What matters is that the stakeholders are actively engaging on inclusion. This can mean that within concrete educational settings and policies, the segregation of groups comes to be defined as part of this process to reach inclusion in education (consider grouping young children by their mother tongues).

149 See Broek, S.D, Buiskool, B. (2020), Research for CULT Committee - Shaping digital education policy Concomitant expertise for INI report: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_IDA(2020)652209

150 See for instance: http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-student-equity-and-inclusion-supporting-vulnerable-students-during-school-closures-and-school-re-openings-d593b5c8/; https://www.edge.co.uk/sites/default/files/documents/covid-19_report_final_-_web.pdf ; European Commission (2020), Adult Learning and COVID-19: challenges and opportunities: A REPORT FROM THE ET2020 WORKING GROUP ON ADULT LEARNING: https://www.andras.ee/sites/default/files/taiskasvanud_ja_covid_raport.pdf

151 UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, 2017, p. 13, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254.

Annex 3: Detailed reconstruction of the Theory of Change

The table below lists the essential elements for a comprehensive Theory of Change (ToC) approach. It follows the logic that, to fully understand the change process, it is necessary for each element in the project implementation to identify the 'why, what, who, when, and how'.

Table 1. Required elements for a comprehensive ToC approach

Cluster	Elements of ToC	Questions for mapping ToC
Line of reasoning towards achieving results (mechanism and expected outcomes)	Problem Statement	What challenge does the UNESCO' Education Sector's work in inclusive education seek to overcome? What are the underlying causes of the challenge?
	Overall Goal	What are the objectives of the UNESCO Education Sector's work in inclusive education and related interventions? How do such objectives relate to the challenge(s)? How can successes of the UNESCO Education Sector's work in inclusive education be measured?
	Change Process	What actions / activities are planned in order to achieve the objectives? What is the mechanism of change linking the inputs to short-term output/outcomes and long-term goal (How are the project activities envisaged to lead to the expected results)?
	Change Markers	What are the milestones, indicators or other tools to assess/measure extent of change?
	Meta-Theory	What is the underpinning theory that justifies the chosen change process?
Implementation (planned interventions)	Inputs	What is the (financial and human resource) input related to the UNESCO Education Sector's work in inclusive education? What is the timeline associated with reaching the objectives?
	Institutional / organisational	What coordination mechanisms are put in place? What institutional rules and requirements have a likely effect on project implementation?
	Actors	What actors are involved in the change process, what is their role and relationship to UNESCO's Education Sector work in inclusive education? Differentiate between: - End-users / Intended beneficiaries - Implementing actors - Points of collaboration with partners/other agencies
Practical implementation (Outcomes and context)	Assumptions	What are the beliefs, values, and unquestioned elements for each step of the change process?

Cluster	Elements of ToC	Questions for mapping ToC
	Internal Risks	What are the potential modalities of the activities that may undermine its success?
	External Risks	What are external risks to the activities with the potential to undermine its success and outline plans to overcome these?
	Obstacles to Success	What are obstacles likely to threaten the change process? What plans are outlined to overcome them?
	Knock-On Effects	What are the potential unintended consequences UNESCO's Education Sector work in inclusive education, both positive and negative?

Source: Stein, D., Valters, C., (2012), Understanding 'Theory of Change' in international development: a review of existing knowledge (LSE), adjusted and elaborated by authors.

Problem Statement

Overall problem statement related to inclusion in education

The actual reasons for exclusion or barriers to inclusion in education in terms of participation, learning and achievement can be multiple and diverse and result from economic, political, cultural, social, societal or health related vulnerabilities, Major challenges related to inclusive education are mentioned in the GEM 2020 report as key messages from global research and work on the topic[152]:

- Identity, background and ability still dictate education opportunities.

- Discrimination, stereotyping and stigmatization mechanisms are similar for all learners at risk of exclusion.

- Despite progress, many countries still do not collect, report or use data on those left behind.

- Millions are missing out on the opportunity to learn.

- A key barrier to inclusion in education is the lack of belief that it is possible and desirable.

- While some countries are transitioning towards inclusion, segregation is still prevalent.

- Financing needs to target those most in need.

- Teachers, teaching materials and learning environments often ignore the benefits of embracing diversity.

As illustrated by 2020 GEM report, there are many learners' characteristics and situations that might require additional efforts to include them in education. While all these different learners might require a different approach to mitigate the challenges they face; specific challenges are posed for displaced learners in terms of ensuring access; quality; and management.[153]

While UNESCO's work on inclusion in education would like to contribute to overcoming the challenges identified, this cannot function as the specific problem statement by which UNESCO's work on inclusion in education can be assessed. Here below, we explore a more specific problem statement for UNESCO education sector work on inclusion in education.

Problem statement underlying the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education

While at policy level and within UNESCO's agenda setting work the broad, holistic concept of inclusive education as a whole-education system and a transformative concept is dominant, this is mostly not how inclusion in education is operationalised in specific projects and country approaches.

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152 GEM 2020, p. 10.
153 See UNESCO IIEP (2016), E-forum report: planning for the inclusion of displaced populations in the education sector: preliminary reflections November 2016, p. 15.

As indicated in the GEM 2020 report, "while universal access to education is a prerequisite for inclusion, there is less consensus on what else it means to achieve inclusion in education for learners with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups at risk of exclusion."[154] The GEM report "recognizes the different contexts and challenges facing countries in providing inclusive education; the various groups at risk of being excluded from education and the barriers individual learners face, especially when characteristics intersect; and the fact that exclusion can be physical, social (in interpersonal and group relations, psychological and systemic."[155] Particularly interesting in the GEM report is the finding that working on inclusive education might come with opposition by those invested in preserving segregated delivery; that including children with disabilities in mainstream schools that are not prepared, supported or accountable for achieving inclusion can intensify experiences of exclusion and provoke backlash against making schools and systems more inclusive; and finally, that there can be downsides to full inclusion in some contexts. This can result in that countries, while striving to inclusive education, implement policies that are characterised as separate or integrated education. **Stimulating inclusion in education is therefore a delicate exercise, balancing idealism and pragmatism and building upon dialogue, openness; and hence the meaningful participation of key stakeholders**.[156]

As indicated, inclusion in education should be seen as a process; as a continuous collective reflection on the own education system to see what can be a next step to make the system more inclusive. In this process, it can be that approaches are adopted in specific contexts that are not directly reflecting the transformative ideas associated in inclusive education, but that on the long run might be a steppingstone towards a more inclusive system and making inclusive education (every learner matters and matters equally) a reality.

It is important in the problem statement to differentiate the challenges related to inclusion in education and what UNESCO can be held accountable for. There are major global challenges related to inclusion in education (GEM report). While UNESCO's work on inclusion in education would like to contribute to overcoming the challenges identified, this cannot function as the specific problem statement by which UNESCOs work on inclusion in education can be assessed. Given the idea that inclusion in education is seen as a process, this requires a delicate exercise, balancing idealism and pragmatism and building upon dialogue, openness, and hence the meaningful participation of key stakeholders

(including government institutions, policy makers, teachers, parents, learners, civil society organisations including organisations of persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups). The problem statement that underlies UNESCO education sectors' work on inclusion in education can therefore be defined as follows; **'Countries, organisations and stakeholders are in need of expertise and support to continuously reflect on the whole education systems to support the development of an ever more inclusive education system through a meaningful engagement of stakeholders in education and society and constructive- and evidence-based dialogue.'**

Overall Goal of the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education

Inclusion in education is both directly and indirectly referred to in the **UNESCO medium-term strategy** (**objective 1:** Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all)[157] and specific expected results of the UNESCO programme and budget documents (C/5).

More operational, UNESCO has decades of experience in working on inclusion in education and as designated lead organisation for coordinating prior EFA Goals and now SDG 4 is pushing inclusiveness in all its policies and interventions. UNESCO Education Sector's work in inclusive education covers a variety of interventions ranging from agenda setting; development of guidelines and tools; capacity building (e.g. of teachers and policy makers); to facilitation of international cooperation; supporting countries to develop policies; starting (global) initiatives and finally, includes providing countries with assessment frameworks for inclusive education. This is generally in line with the five functions of UNESCO for reaching impact in inclusive education at member state level, as defined by the Executive Board in the most recent Medium-Term Strategy:

- serving as laboratory of ideas and generating innovative proposals and policy advice in its fields of competence,

- developing and reinforcing the global agenda in its field of competence through policy analysis, monitoring and benchmarking,

- settings norms and standards in its fields of competence and supporting and monitoring their implementation;

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154 GEM 2020, p. 13.
155 GEM 2020, p. 14.
156 GEM 2020, p. 14.
157 UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021, 37C/4, page 17.

- strengthening international and regional cooperation in its fields of competence and fostering alliances, intellectual cooperation, knowledge sharing and operational partnerships; and

- providing advice for policy development and implementation, and developing institutional and human capacities.[158]

In this context, and linked to the problem statement, **the overall goal of the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education is to establish a conducive environment for countries, international organisations, stakeholders, to work together on the multi-faceted approach of inclusion in education towards contributing to the achievement of SDG 4 ('Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'). UNESCO is doing this by offering intellectual leadership; conceptual clarification; agenda setting/ advocacy; establishing partnerships providing guidelines and tools; improving data situation; and developing capacities and supporting practical implementation.**

Change process, change markers and meta-theory

The **change process** that is central to UNESCO's work is related to **changing mind-sets** of those concerned towards seeing inclusion as an education system core characteristic instead of an add-on to the system. Through changing mind-sets, more conducive environments and policies will emerge to collectively work towards inclusion.

The 2020 GEM report provided the following recommendations which "take into account the deep roots of barriers and the wide scope of issues related to inclusion, which threaten the world's chance to achieve the 2030 targets"[159]. While these recommendations are primarily addressed to governments and national level stakeholders, they can also be interpreted as **'change markers'** for the work of international organisations in stimulating inclusive education, including the UNESCO Education Sector.

- Widen the understanding of inclusive education: It should include all learners, regardless of identity, background or ability.

- Target financing to those left behind: There is no inclusion while millions lack access to education.

- Share expertise and resources: This is the only way to sustain a transition to inclusion.

- Engage in meaningful consultation with communities and parents: Inclusion cannot be enforced from above.

- Ensure cooperation across government departments, sectors and tiers: Inclusion in education is but a subset of social inclusion.

- Make space for non-government actors to challenge and fill gaps: They must also make sure they work towards the same inclusion goal.

- Apply universal design: Ensure inclusive systems fulfil every learner's potential.

- Prepare, empower and motivate the education workforce: All teachers should be prepared to teach all students.

- Collect data on and for inclusion with attention and respect: Avoid labelling that stigmatises.

- Learn from peers: A shift to inclusion is not easy.

Another set of recommendations to governments derives from the UNESCO report on 25 years of the Salamanca Statement:[160]

- Action 1: Establish clear definitions of what is meant by inclusion and equity in education

- Action 2: Use evidence to identify contextual barriers to the participation and progress of learners

- Action 3: Ensure that teachers are supported in promoting inclusion and equity

- Action 4: Design the curriculum and assessment procedures with all learners in mind

- Action 5: Structure and manage education systems in ways that engage all learners

- Action 6: Involve communities in the development and implementation of policies that promote inclusion and equity in education

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158 UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021, 37C/4, page 15.
159 GEM 2020, p. 23.
160   UNESCO (2020), Towards inclusion in education: Status, trends and challenges: The UNESCO Salamanca Statement 25 years on

While the ultimate goal of working on inclusion in education is to reach the SDG4 goal by 2030, this is not the target that UNESCO can be held accountable for. **Realistically, UNESCO can only be held accountable for supporting Member States towards progress related to the following change markers associated with changing mind-sets and establishing conducive environments:**

1. Supporting knowledge development, exchange and learning

    (i)   Defining norms and widening the understanding of inclusion in education

    (ii)   Sharing expertise, resources and developing policy advice

    (iii) **Collecting disaggregated data on and for inclusion**

    (iv)   Supporting peer learning (South-South)

2. Securing a conducive environment in terms of partnerships at national levels

    (i)   Ensuring cooperation across government departments (e.g. Ministries of Education and other ministries), sectors and tiers

    (ii)   Making space for non-government actors to challenge and fill gaps

    (iii) Engaging in meaningful consultation with communities and parents

    (iv)   Targeting financing for those left behind

3. Support capacity development for education providers and policy makers

    (i)   Applying norms and accessibility standards and universal design for educational institutions

    (ii)   Preparing, empowering and motivating the education workforce

4. Improving inclusion in education of final beneficiaries through concrete projects:

    (i)   Increasing access for learners who are not learning

    (ii)   Reducing drop-out rates

    (iii) Removing barriers to quality learning, participation and achievement for all

    (iv)   Supporting the achievement of minimum proficiency levels for all learners

The meta-theory that fits best UNESCO's approach and would provide the theoretical basis of how UNESCO's work, focusing on changing mind-sets and providing a conducive environment, can result in developments related to the above-mentioned change markers and contribute to solving the above-mentioned problem, is the global theory of 'Policy window'.[161] The **Policy Windows** theory is John Kingdon's classic theory of agenda-setting, which attempts to clarify why some issues get attention in the policy process and others do not.[162] Kingdon sees effective agenda-setting as a joint occurrence of at least two of the three following 'streams', which are slightly adjusted to fit the UNESCO context:[163]

1.   Problem stream—attention lurches to a policy problem. Only a tiny fraction of problems receives policymaker attention. Getting attention is a major achievement which must be acted on quickly, before attention shifts elsewhere. Within the UNESCO context, there are different ways in which problems can get attention by national policy makers. This can be caused by normative instruments; high-level conferences; UNESCO publications; benchmarks; and peer pressure among Member States.

2.   Policy stream—a solution to the problem is available. While attention lurches quickly from issue to issue, viable solutions take time to develop. Within the UNESCO context, solutions can be offered through guidelines; peer learning; capacity building approaches; specific project interventions; but also support by other organisations, informed by UNESCO information and insights on inclusion in education.

3.   Politics stream—policymakers have the motive and opportunity to turn a solution into policy. Policymakers have to pay attention to the problem and be receptive to the proposed solution. They consider many factors, including their beliefs, the "national mood," and the feedback they receive from different governmental and non-governmental interest groups, media, civil society etc. In the UNESCO context, this requires the mobilisation and engagement of different stakeholders to maintain momentum working on inclusion in education.

When two of the streams converge at critical moments, **'policy windows'** emerge that allow policy change. "Policy can be changed during a window of opportunity when advocates can successfully connect two or more components of the policy process (e.g., the way a problem is defined, the policy solution to the problem, and/or the political

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161 See for an overview of theories: Center for Evaluation Innovation (2009), PATHWAYS TO CHANGE: 10 Theories to Inform Advocacy and Policy Change Efforts

162 Kingdon, J. (1984), Agendas, alternatives, and public policies

163 Description of the streams taken from: Cairney, P., Jones, M.D., (2016), Kingdon's Multiple Streams Approach: What Is the Empirical Impact of this Universal Theory? In: The Policy Studies Journal, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2016, p. 40.

climate of their issue)."[164] Success is most likely when all three components (problems, policies, and politics) come together during a policy window. Promising strategies include:[165]

- impacting problem definition (i.e., framing the issue, monitoring indicators that assess the existence and magnitude of issues, initiating special studies of an issue, promoting constituent feedback);

- developing policy options (e.g., through research, publications, and the like), and;

- influencing the political climate (e.g., coalition building, demonstrations, and media advocacy).

Applied to the issue of inclusion in education, in most countries there is an awareness of the problem (this awareness has recently increased due to COVID-19) and UNESCO's role is to provide support in developing the policy stream and politics stream through its agenda-setting; capacity building; and other activities linked to its core functions. For making a change in countries and educational settings, UNESCO will have to maintain awareness of the problems associated with non-inclusive education; will provide, in a timely way, solutions and guidance on how the problem can be approached; and secure, at the right time, political support in working on the solution.

The question – from this meta-theory perspective – the evaluation asks is to what extent UNESCO is able to sufficiently and in a timely manner create awareness and make the problems of inclusion in education visible; provide possible policy options and solutions; and secure political support for solving the problems.

Inputs, UNESCO actors and partnerships

While mainstreaming inclusive education is at the heart of all of UNESCO's Education Sector work, UNESCO, together with the Category 1 institutes, focuses its work on **normative and policy guidance, including capacity development on inclusion in education**, which is key to ensuring that equity and inclusion are overarching principles in programme planning, implementation, and monitoring, as well as for resource protocols (tools and best practices) for inclusion mainstreaming (in relation to ability, gender, language, etc.);

and on **inclusion-specific programming**, which encompasses a focus on the inclusion of specific groups of disadvantaged learners into inclusive learning settings. UNESCO's inclusion-specific programming (in HQ units, Category 1 institutes and in the field) demonstrates an increased focus on learners with disabilities, refugees and migrants as well as indigenous people (as part of the SDG 4 Framework for Action).[166]

An example of **agenda setting** is UNESCO's leading and coordinating role in SDG4. An example of **programmatic work and mainstreaming inclusive education** is UNESCO's support to the Teacher Education Reform in Myanmar (Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar' (STEM)), or education policy reviews aiming at implementing a new competency-based curriculum in line with international standards, human rights, gender equality and teacher rights. Other examples can be found in the Communication and Information Sector, supporting learners with disabilities in accessing education through digital means. Another example is UNESCO's education strategy for crisis-affected people on the move (2020-2025) which aims to ensure that national education systems provide inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels for refugees, IDPs (internally displaced people) and migrants affected by crises, and their host communities.[167]

In the current biennium (2020-2021), the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education is **programmatically positioned** under the ED Sectors's Main Line of Action (MLA) 1 (Support Member States in the implementation of SDG 4) and Expected Result (ER) 8:[168]

> **ER 8:** Increased learning opportunities for persons in vulnerable situations, with particular attention given to crisis-affected populations, including refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, as well as persons with learning challenges, including disabilities

In terms of **infrastructure**, UNESCO's Education Sector is the largest UNESCO sector with some 400 staff working at the Paris headquarters and spread across a global network of 53 field offices and specialized institutes and centres. Inclusion in education runs through the work of all the divisions and sections of UNESCO's Education Sector, but has a dedicated

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164 Center for Evaluation Innovation (2009), PATHWAYS TO CHANGE: 10 Theories to Inform Advocacy and Policy Change Efforts, p. 3.

165 Center for Evaluation Innovation (2009), PATHWAYS TO CHANGE: 10 Theories to Inform Advocacy and Policy Change Efforts, p. 8.

166 See ToR, p. 14.

167 UNESCO (2020), UNESCO's education strategy for crisis-affected people on the move 2020-2025, p. 3.

168 UNESCO (2019), 40 C/5 Approved, PROGRAMME AND BUDGET Second biennium of the 2018-2021 quadrennium

place in two sections, namely, the Section of Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education (EME) and the Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality (IGE).[169]

In addition, there are seven Education Category 1 institutes among which in particular the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), and UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) are conducting inclusion-specific work, as well as IBE, the International Bureau for Education, is a driving force of the inclusion agenda, promoting a broadened understanding of the theory and practice of inclusive education in its work that focuses on curriculum. Finally, the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) and UIS jointly monitor inclusion and equity. Most notable is the 2020 GEM Report on "Inclusion and Education".[170] UNESCO also works through other organisational networks, such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Network – ASPnet; UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs; and the UNEVOC network on TVET, which also aim to mainstream inclusion in education.[171] Finally, UNESCO cooperates with many partners on various topics, both within and outside the UN family (such as GPE, UNICEF, the ILO, and the European Commission.

In terms of **budget**, UNESCO estimations (included in the ToR) are that for the period 2016/17 – to 2020/21 a total budget was specifically dedicated to inclusion specific activities of roughly 78 million USD. 4.3 million USD is allocated from the regular programme budget and 74 million USD is constituted by extrabudgetary resources/voluntary contributions. Most of these budgets are for specific programmes and projects and are managed and implemented in the field leaving limited budgets for normative work, agenda setting and knowledge development.

Hence, inclusion in education is seen as a transversal topic for the Education Sector and financial and human resources are not limited to the budget of a single unit, or a set of projects, but refer to the whole of the UNESCO Education Sector's work, at UNESCO HQ; its institutes; the Regional and Field offices. Stimulating and developing inclusion in education also requires meaningful engagement with stakeholders. UNESCO needs to work together closely with international development partners within the UN family (ILO, UNICEF, etc.); and outside the UN (GPE, bilateral agencies, private sector); NGOs; governments; schools; academia and research institutes.

Assumptions and obstacles

The UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education operates in a challenging policy environment. Inclusion in education does not only relate to education policies, but it touches upon economic and social challenges as well. While one can see inclusion in education as a precondition for inclusive societies, one can also argue the opposite: inclusion in education is only fully possible in inclusive societies. Given this positioning of UNESCO's work, there are many assumptions and risks that relate to how and whether UNESCO's actions lead to the envisaged change. These assumptions and risks are briefly discussed below:

There is a UNESCO **shared understanding** of inclusion in education, or at least the activities UNESCO undertakes in support of MS moving towards more inclusion in education (which can also mean that actions deviate from a strict 'inclusion in education' framework). Not having a shared understanding could harm the understanding at Member State level and the institutional credibility of UNESCO in this area.

UNESCO's work is **sufficiently linked, coordinated** and duplications and/or gaps are avoided. Furthermore, efficiencies are sought between different UNESCO units, offices, and institutes.

UNESCO's work is **sufficiently resourced** in both the specific approaches to target groups and the mainstreaming inclusion in all the Education Sector's work. Not allocating sufficient resources could create a disconnect between the priority level as presented by UNESCO and the proportion of available budgets; also sending the signal that the topic might be less important as officially stated.

UNESCO's is able to **gather and mobilise other partners** around its unique and comprehensive approach to inclusion in education and to mobilise voluntary contributions among other though its active collaboration and contributions to the UNSDCF.

The concept of inclusion in education allows the development of **sufficiently concrete and tailored solutions** and mainstreaming inclusion to be applied in a national context. While inclusion in education clearly has idealistic and system-wide implications, in order to be applied at Member State level and by different stakeholders, the concept needs to feed into practical applications and solutions. Not having sufficiently concrete and tailored solutions, hampers the take-up of UNESCO's insights and holistic concept of inclusion in education in Member States reforms, policies and projects.

UNESCO has the **infrastructure and capacity to support the mainstreaming** of inclusion in education among (internal) stakeholders and in Member States.

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169 See: https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/about-us/hq-staff

170 Global Education Monitoring Team, *Inclusion and Education: All Means All*, 2020, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718.

171 See full overview: https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/about-us

Mainstreaming requires a continuous sensitisation and building of capacities of UNESCO staff members and external partners. For this some infrastructure needs to be in place together with sufficient capacity to support this mainstreaming process. Not having this in place reduces UNESCO's ability to address inclusion in education as a transversal topic and to establish links between the work across different education sector thematic areas and entities.

UNESCO has the **infrastructure and capacity to support specific approaches** on education needs of specific vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities and crisis-affected people on the move. Supporting specific vulnerable groups requires a suitable infrastructure and capacity to engage with stakeholders and support specific interventions and approaches. Not having this hampers UNESCO's ability to reach results and lowers UNESCO presence and credibility in a specific area.

UNESCO has the **convening power** to engage relevant partners and global, national and local level stakeholders to adopt a vision on inclusion in education. As the custodian for SDG 4, UNESCO should have the power to engage Member States with the objectives and targets and call for action on adopting actions increasing inclusion in education. Not having this convening power, or UNESCO not being recognised as having this convening power may hamper UNESCO's ability to mobilise stakeholders to take action.

Obstacles that could hamper developments could entail the risk that, within UNESCO, inclusion in education is not sufficiently mainstreamed and emphasised in the work of different Education Sector units. If this is the case, work on inclusion in education remains isolated and conducted in a silo-approach within individual entities of UNESCO.

Graphical representation of the Theory of Change

Countries, organisations and stakeholders are in need of expertise and support to continuously reflect on the whole education systems to support the development of an ever more inclusive education system through a meaningful engagement of stakeholders in education and society and constructive- and evidence-based dialogue.

Problem statement underlying the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education

The overall goal of UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education is to establish a conducive environment for countries, international organisations, stakeholders, to work together on the multi-faceted approach of inclusion in education towards contributing to the achievement of SDG 4 ('Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'). UNESCO is doing this by offering intellectual leadership; conceptual clarification; agenda setting/ advocacy; establishing partnerships providing guidelines and tools;, improving data situation; and developing capacities and supporting practical implementation.

· There is a UNESCO shared understanding of inclusion in education, or at least the activities UNESCO engages in support MS moving towards more inclusion in education

·UNESCO's work is sufficiently resourced in both the specific approaches to target groups and the mainstreaming inclusion in all the Education Sector's work.

·The concept of inclusion in education allows the development and mainstreaming of sufficiently concrete and tailored solutions to be applied in national context.

·UNESCO has the infrastructure and capacity to support the mainstreaming of inclusion in education among (internal) stakeholders and in Member States.

·UNESCO has the infrastructure and capacity to support specific approaches on special education needs, disabilities and refugees.

· UNESCO has the convening power to engage relevant partners and national level stakeholders to adopt a vision on inclusion in education.

Assumptions and obstacles

Overall problem statement related to inclusion in education

· Identity, background and ability still dictate education opportunities.
· Discrimination, stereotyping and stigmatization mechanisms are similar for all learners at risk of exclusion.
· Despite progress, many countries still do not collect, report or use data on those left behind.
· Millions are missing out on the opportunity to learn.
· A key barrier to inclusion in education is the lack of belief that it is possible and desirable.
· While some countries are transitioning towards inclusion, segregation is still prevalent.
· Financing needs to target those most in need.
· Teachers, teaching materials and learning environments often ignore the benefits of embracing diversity.

Overall goal of the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education

Realistically, UNESCO can only be held accountable for supporting Member States towards progress related to the following change markers associated with changing mind-sets and establishing conducive environments:

1) Supporting knowledge development, exchange and learning
   a. Widening the understanding of inclusion in education
   b. Sharing expertise, resources and developing policy advice
   c. Collecting disaggregated data on and for inclusion
   d. Supporting peer learning (South-South)
2) Securing a conducive environment in terms of partnerships
   a. Ensuring cooperation across government departments, sectors and tiers
   b. Making space for non-government actors to challenge and fill gaps
   c. Engaging in meaningful consultation with communities and parents
   d. Targeting financing for those left behind
3) Support capacity development for education providers
   a. Applying accessibility standards and universal design
   b. Preparing, empowering and motivating the education workforce
4) Improving inclusion in education of final beneficiaries through concrete projects:
   a. Increasing access for learners who are not learning
   b. Reducing drop-out rates
   c. Removing barriers to learning, participation and achievement for all
   d. Supporting the achievement of minimum proficiency levels for all learners

Inputs, UNESCO actors and partnerships

· Programmatical positioning of inclusion in education
· UNESCO infrastructure
· Partnerships
· Financial resources

Change process, change markers

Annex 4: Detailed description of the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education

The following section shall provide a broad overview of key activities in relation to the different types of UNESCO interventions based on the information collected in the framework of this evaluation. However, it is not intended as an exhaustive list of all activities across the Organization that relate to inclusion in education.

1. Research, knowledge development and dissemination

Research and publications serve the UNESCO key functions of serving as a laboratory of ideas and generating innovative proposals and policy advice; and developing and reinforcing the global agenda in its fields of competence through policy analysis, monitoring and benchmarking. In this area, all publications of UNESCO on the topic of inclusion and reasons for exclusion can be mentioned.

UNESCO publications, tools, guidance, and communication materials related to inclusion in education, review and analysis of relevant national policy documents, such as[172]:

- UNESCO HQ section for gender equality and inclusion and UNESCO-IIEP:
- Welcoming learners with disabilities in quality learning environments: A tool to support countries in moving towards inclusive education (2021).
- UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education 2017
- UNESCO's education strategy for crisis-affected people on the move 2020-2025
- Artificial Intelligence and Inclusion Compendium of Promising Initiatives 2020
- International Guidelines for the Education of Learners with Down Syndrome 2020
- Approaches to Language in Education for Migrants and Refugees in the Asia-Pacific Region 2020
- Towards inclusion in education: status, trends and challenges: the UNESCO Salamanca Statement 25 years on 2020

- Addressing exclusion in education: a guide to assessing education systems towards more inclusive and just societies 2012
- Mother tongue-based multilingual education: the key to unlocking SDG 4: quality Education for All 2017
- Training tools for curriculum development: reaching out to all learners: a resource pack for supporting inclusive education 2016
- Embracing diversity: toolkit for creating inclusive, learning-friendly environments 2015
- UNESCO global report: opening new avenues for empowerment: ICTs to access information and knowledge for persons with disabilities 2013
- Artificial intelligence in education, compendium of promising initiatives: Mobile Learning Week 2020, UNESCO, 2020
- The use of UIS data and Education Management Information Systems to monitor Inclusive education, UNESCO-UIS, 2019
- On the road to inclusion: highlights from the UNICEF and IIEP Technical Round Tables on Disability-inclusive Education Sector Planning, UNESCO, UNICEF, 2019
- School for all: experiences of municipal public schools with inclusion of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness, UNESCO Brasilia, 2017
- Still left behind: Pathways to inclusive education for girls with disabilities, United Nations Girls' Education (UNGEI), Leonard Cheshire Disability, 2017
- Designing inclusive digital solutions and developing digital skills: guidelines, 2018
- Inclusive in action: empowering teachers, empowering learners, UNESCO/European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education Website
- 5 things to know about Inclusive Education, IIEP Learning portal, Blog
- Publications of UNESCO and the Global Education Coalition on COVID-19 and impact on education: https://en.unesco.org/covid19

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172 This list is not exhaustive and there are many other resources available on the UNESCO publications portal: https://en.unesco.org/themes/269784/publications/all. Furthermore, in addition there are regional level Publications from UNESCO Field Offices, for instance the Bangkok office: https://bangkok.unesco.org/theme/inclusion-and-gender-equality-education

UNESCO's work on the SDG and specific analysis and monitoring activities can be mentioned such as the various GEM reports and associated databases and country overviews on inclusion and inclusion related topics:

- GEM Report 2019 Migration, displacement & education: Building bridges, not walls
- GEM Report 2020 Inclusion and education + regional reports:
- 2021 Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia Report - Inclusion and Education: All means all
- 2020 Latin America and the Caribbean Report - Inclusion and Education: All means all
- 2019 Arab States Report: Migration, displacement and education
- Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER): https://education-profiles.org/
- World Inequality Database on Education: https://www.education-inequalities.org/
- Global Resource Base on Inclusive Education: http://inclusive-education-in-action.org/
- Observatory on the Right to Education: http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/index.php?action=&lng=en

Some research projects were conducted with a specific focus on inclusion and the impact of COVID-19 on education:

1. The UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) carried out a joint research project on *COVID-19 and Inclusive Open and Distance Learning Solutions*. Research studies were carried out in Bangladesh, Rwanda, Mauritius and Colombia, to contribute to the achievement of the goals of *the Global Programme Supporting Disability Inclusive COVID-19 Response and Recovery at National Level funded by the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) and coordinated by the CI sector*.

The major objective of this research project was to increase understanding of the range and reach of current disability-inclusive open and distance learning (ODL) solutions and the barriers to their development and implementation to inform and facilitate upcoming national education recovery initiatives. For the success of the project in the target regions, IIEP and IITE conducted case studies and rapid assessments that included an analysis of inclusive ODL solutions, applied by inclusive, special schools, and resource centres to address the COVID-19 negative effects on learning for students with disabilities. In Mauritius and Colombia, IIEP and IITE pursued case studies to present identified best practices in inclusive ODL at inclusive and special schools for learners with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside the potential of inclusive ODL solutions to mitigate COVID-19 negative impacts on student learning. In Bangladesh, the study assessed the role of the Accessible Reading Materials (ARM) initiative and how this has contributed to ensuring disability-inclusive and accessible education during the COVID-19 pandemic. To support the national initiatives on education response and recovery amidst and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, IIEP and IITE developed recommendations for educators, parents, and school communities on improving the actual status of inclusive ODL solutions used for students with disabilities.

2. IITE and the Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality jointly developed an insightful Policy brief *'Ensuring the right to inclusive education for learners with disabilities in the context of COVID-19: Risks and potential of distance learning'* with a view to informing education policy makers, practitioners, alongside UN Country Teams on the main lessons learnt and on the key recommendations related to the right to inclusive education for learners with disabilities in the context of COVID-19, including the use of distance learning solutions which cater to the needs of learners with disabilities.

Dissemination does not only occur through publications, but is also related to conferences, workshops and seminars, including those listed below under normative work. UNESCO organised many of these, including on the occasion of International Days such as the International Day of People with Disabilities (3 December) and International Migrants Day (18 December). The recent webinar organised in 2021 about *Ensuring inclusive teaching and learning for educational recovery: Practical ways forward* is another notable example.[173]

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173   https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ensuring-inclusive-teaching-learning-for-educational-recovery-2021-cn-en.pdf

2. Normative work

This supports UNESCO's key function of setting norms and standards in its fields of competence and supporting and monitoring their implementation. This area includes all the norms- and standard setting and follow-up actions. The box provides an overview of the standards and norm setting work.

Prior to 2016:

- Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- Convention on the Rights of the child (1989)
- UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993)
- Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education (1994)
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006)
- International Conference on Education. 48th session "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future" (ICE) (2008)
- UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009)
- International Conference on Language Sushou 2014[174]
- Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (2015)
- The New Delhi Declaration on Inclusive ICTs for Persons with Disabilities: Making Empowerment a Reality UNESCO. General Conference, 38th, 2015

Period of the evaluation (2016 - current)

- General comment no. 4, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016)
- A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education (2017)
- United Nations Global Compact on Refugees (2018)

- Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education (2019)
- International Forum on inclusion and equity in education (2019)
- United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy 2019
- Los Pinos Declaration [Chapoltepek] – Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages (2020)

The most prominent example of **agenda setting** is UNESCO's leading and coordinating role in SDG4, recognising inclusion as a key concept across all SDGs. Linking Salamanca to the SDGs, a key agenda-setting UNESCO activity was the *2019 International forum on inclusion and equity in education*[175], leading to the Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education[176]. Another example is the *2020 UNESCO's education strategy for crisis-affected people on the move (2020-2025)*, which aims to ensure that national education systems provide inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels for refugees, IDPs (internally displaced people) and migrants affected by crisis, and their host communities.[177]

UNESCO also filled its pledge to the *2018 Global Compact on Refugees*[178], indicating that it will support better data gathering on education systems; support capacity building for educational planning; support the alignment of curricula, languages of instruction, teaching and learning modalities; and support for the recognition of prior learning and qualifications

3. Capacity building and supporting implementing inclusion in education

Specific interventions and projects serve UNESCO's key function of providing advice for policy development and implementation, and developing institutional and human capacities. As previously stated, inclusion in education is present in most, if not all, of UNESCO's interventions and projects. An example of programmatic work and mainstreaming inclusive education is UNESCO's support to the Teacher Education Reform in Myanmar (Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar' (STEM)), or education policy reviews aiming at implementing a new competency-based curriculum in line with international standards, human rights, gender equality and teacher rights in a

174 Suzhou-conclusions-0611.pdf (unesco.org)
175 https://en.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-in-education/international-forum-2019
176 https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370910
177 UNESCO (2020), UNESCO's education strategy for crisis-affected people on the move 2020-2025, p. 3.
178 https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-pledges-its-renewed-support-refugees-education-global-refugee-forum

number of countries. Examples can also be found in joint work with the Communication and Information Sector, such as supporting learners with disabilities in accessing education through digital means.

UNESCO HQ and field offices projects with a focus on inclusion

As also illustrated in chapter 2 the topic of education in emergencies increasingly attracted voluntary contributions, and appears as a larger priority in UNESCO since 2018/19, while in comparison, funds for other inclusion specific work has slightly diminished since 2014. A large part of projects labelled as inclusion specific deals with emergency situations, i.e. out of overall portfolio of 95 projects, more than half i.e. 52 projects are dedicated to EiE covering about 70 % of the overall budget. Examples of these are the 'Catch Up Program for Children Affected by the Crisis in Yemen: Education is My Right' (2.5 Million USD); 'Quality Universal Education for Syrian Students and Teachers (QUESST)' (5 Million USD); projects in Iraq such as 'access to inclusive quality primary and secondary education for IDPs and Refugees in crisis-affected areas in Iraq' (14 Million USD); and 'Improving access to quality and inclusive education with gender equality for out-of-school children in Iraq' (13 Million USD). A smaller part of the projects (43 projects with a total value of about 21 Million USD) is labelled as 'inclusion'. This mainly includes projects focusing on out of school children such as 'Strengthening Education System for Out of School Children in South-East Asia' (2.6 Million USD); the Brazilian project 'UNESCO and the Programme School of Tomorrow: right to quality education for youth and children of vulnerable communities in the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro' (3.2 Million USD); or the South Sudan project 'Reaching Out of School Children and Youth in South Sudan: Support to Out of School Children (OOSC)' (1.1 Million USD). Projects focussing on specific reasons for exclusion are still rare. Specific examples are:

- Enhancing the capacity of the Sudanese Ministry of Education staff to scale up inclusive and gender education, focussing on disabilities (44,000 USD);
- Promotion of Mother Tongue Education and Capacity Building of NFE Personnel in Bangladesh (40,000 USD);
- Promoting Access to Education and Health for Children with Disabilities in Peru (117,000 USD);
- SAQUILAJ B'E: A clear path to assert the Rights of Indigenous Adolescent Girls in Guatemala, Year III (139,000 USD);
- Making Schools Inclusive: Promoting Access to Education and Health for Children with Disabilities Phase 2 in Sudan (130,000 USD);

- Advancing regional cooperation towards promoting the right to education of people with disabilities in Latin America (244,000 USD).
- UNESCO Malala Centers for the Education of Adolescent Girls and Indigenous Young Women of Guatemala, 01/2019-ongoing (USD 410,000).
- "We are ABLE" Project on Promoting Gender Equality and Girls' Education in the Ethnic Minorities Areas of Viet Nam, 2/2019-ongoing USD500,000).

Examples of projects and activities of UNESCO Category 1 institutes

UNESCO institutes conduct their own projects, but also work in partnership with each other. The box below provides examples of projects conducted by the UNESCO institutes.

- UNESCO-IIEP in collaboration with UNICEF launched a 9-week online training course on the **Foundations of disability-inclusive education sector planning**. In recognition of the importance of disability-inclusive planning for reaching SDG 4, the course is directed at technical teams within different departments of ministries of education in UNESCO Member States. The course curriculum in module 1 introduces the concept and principles of inclusion while providing foundational skills in planning for disability-inclusive education as part of national education sector planning processes. The course design provides participants with a range of opportunities for peer and situated learning, reflective practice and hands-on individual and group work activities applying tools to map policies and practices for the inclusion of learners with disabilities in education. Module 3 focuses on strategy selection introducing key planning tools to target the inclusion of learners with disabilities as part of education sector planning processes.

- IITE - UNESCO – Chengdu Project on **Integrating Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovations to strengthen Inclusion and Equity of Education in Africa**, launched and implemented jointly by IITE and the Chengdu Culture and Tourism Development Group LLC (China), with extensive support from the UNESCO Nairobi Office, National Commissions for UNESCO, and Ministries of Education in the target countries. The project supports and facilitates bridging the digital divide in the target countries, particularly amidst the pandemic, with a priority consideration of the pre-existing and emerging educational needs and technological requirements of the least affluent and most vulnerable learners. The project aspires to promote feasible and sufficient opportunities to leverage the

potential of AI and digital innovations in the target region for encouraging and strengthening inclusion and equity in teaching and lifelong learning.

- UNESCO HQ and UNESCO IBE jointly worked on the resource pack and associated training "**Reaching Out to All Learners: a resource pack for supporting inclusion and equity in education**". It focuses on how schools, classrooms become more inclusive and how schools can better engage with families, partner schools and the wider community. An earlier version of the resource pack had been used in many countries since it was first introduced in 2016[179]. This new version has been developed in the light of lessons from these experiences. In particular, more specific guidance is provided as to how the resource materials should be used to facilitate developments in the field. The materials are designed to encourage collaborative forms of professional learning. Regional launch events are foreseen that will introduce the resource pack and how it is intended to be used. Plans will also be presented to create a series of regional hubs that will support the introduction of the materials in different parts of the world.

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179   http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/document/training-tools-curriculum-development-reaching-out-all-learners-resource-pack-supporting

Annex 5: Stakeholder mapping in the field of inclusion in education[180]

UNESCO HQ:

- Education Sector (all sections and thematic areas)
  - In particular Division for Education 2030
    - Section of Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education (EME)
    - Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality (IGE)
- Bureau for Strategic Planning (BSP)
- Division for Gender Equality (GEN)
- Social and Human Sciences Sector

UNESCO Field Offices:

- Regional offices (e.g. UNESCO Bangkok office)
- Field offices

UNESCO Category 1 Institutes:

- UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)
- UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)
- UNESCO International Institute for Technologies in Education (IITE)
- UNESCO International Bureau for Education (IBE)
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

UNESCO associated networks:

- UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)
- UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs
- UNEVOC network on TVET

UN family:

- United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- International Organization for Migration Interest groups (IOM)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD)

- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
- Worldbank

Member States:

- National Commissions
- Ministries of Education / authorities related to inclusion
- Local Education Group (LEG)
- Teacher Unions

Development partners

- European Commission (EC)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Global Partnership for Education (GPE)
- Bilateral agencies (e.g.)
  - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
  - Norwegian Capacity (NORCAP)
- Private sector
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
- Education Cannot Wait (ECW)

Other stakeholders:

- International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030
- Organisations representing disadvantaged and/or marginalised groups (e.g. CBM)
- Schools
- Academia
- Research institutes
- Civil society organisations
- European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE)
- Enabling Education Network (EENET)
- Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)

180 This list is indicative and not intended as an exhaustive list

Annex 6: Summary of evaluation findings: Assessment against the evaluation criteria

This Annex provides a summary of the evaluation findings presented in Chapter 3. The evaluation questions are answered based on the analysis and triangulation of the information gathered via the various data collection methods applied throughout the evaluation on five key dimensions and in relation to the assessment criteria as included in the evaluation matrix. In relation to each key dimension a summative assessment is provided and presented as a temperature scale ranging from **low (limited progress)** to **high (extensive progress)**. A detailed SWOT analysis identifying emerging Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) is presented in Annex 7.

Key Dimension 1: Relevance and UNESCO's comparative strengths

This key dimension focuses on a comparison between UNESCO's broader institutional approach in relation to the challenges in the area of inclusion in education (including its link to the 2030 Agenda) within the broader landscape of development challenges. Specific attention is paid to the way in which UNESCO has positioned its work on inclusion in education for two distinct concrete policy areas, i.e. inclusion of people with disabilities and of crisis-affected people on the move. The assessment allows a critical review of the relevance of UNESCO's work in light of the specific challenges identified for inclusion in education. It also focused on the alignment of these activities to the objectives defined by UNESCO's broader institutional framework, including priorities for Gender Equality and Africa as well as coherence with the broader global context as set by the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. This assessment covers the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance and external coherence.

Alignment and contribution to the 2030 Agenda:

High: The contribution of UNESCO's work on inclusion in education to the 2030 Agenda is clearly aligned with many examples of how the Organization works to unpack the meaning of 'inclusion' within the framework of the 2030 Agenda. The resulting line of reasoning depends on a more holistic approach to inclusion, which requires moving away from removing specific barriers for inclusion one by one, and instead on focusing on the inclusivity of the whole education system. This offers opportunities for UNESCO to focus more on the *process* of making systems more inclusive, as opposed to primarily working on the elements that constitute an inclusive system per se.

Link to UNESCO's global priorities:

Slightly high Although implicit in the priorities themselves, both global priorities and related action plans 2014-21 echo inclusion and equity to a somehow limited extent and resonate only to some extent in UNESCO's work on inclusion. While Africa as a region faces many inclusion-related challenges, the portfolio of inclusion specific initiatives did not demonstrate a clear priority to the region, neither in terms of number of initiatives, nor in number of countries served or in terms of budgetary allocations. Priority gender equality is more clearly reflected, in particular through initiatives that target women and girls as a specific target group and through intersectional dimensions for inclusion in education[181]. The inclusion in education perspective is however much wider than expressed in the two global priorities. Nonetheless, the new UNESCO 41 C/4 Medium-term strategy for 2022-29 sets more promising conditions for effective operationalization of the concept across the Global Priorities Africa and Gender Equality as well as priority groups Youth and SIDS.

Ability to capitalise on UNESCO's unique position to address Member States challenges:

Slightly low: Stakeholders consulted clearly associate UNESCO's unique position with the holistic approach for inclusion in education perspective but slightly less with leading of specific approaches for specific vulnerable groups. As such, the topic of inclusion in education remains a complex issue to operationalise at national level. UNESCO's normative work is contributing to conceptual development and political awareness at Member State level, but when brought down to the practical level, the Organization still lacks adequate resources, tools and mechanisms for operationalisation (how to advance on inclusion in education). UNESCO is addressing

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181 It is to be noted that UNECO has recently conducted a separate evaluation on Priority Gender equality and gender has therefore purposefully not been the main focus of this evaluation. Gender equality, is considered to the extent it intersects with other vulnerabilities and reasons for inclusion,

Member States' challenges related to specific target groups and contextualised reasons for exclusion, with respect to capacity development at grassroots level, other organisations are considered as better positioned and better resourced to practically work on specific reasons for exclusion. At times these organisations are lacking thorough understanding of the holistic perspective of inclusion in education, which can create inconsistencies between UNESCO's international role and national agendas supported by other organizations.[182]

Relevance of topics addressed and target groups mobilised:
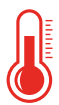
Slightly high: UNESCO provides a holistic perspective on inclusion and identifies and addresses all reasons for exclusion. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing situations of exclusion and drawn more attention to the challenges of inclusion in education. This makes UNESCO's work on inclusion in education all the more relevant, most visibly through working together with main stakeholders and interest groups (also representing marginalised groups) at global and regional level which are specialised in specific reasons for exclusion. In the face of disastrous consequences related to COVID-19 school closures, UNESCO finds itself well placed to raise awareness more than ever on the importance of inclusion of education. In doing so however, specific causes for exclusion were highlighted as not receiving sufficient attention (such as related to ethnic minorities and adults). As underlined by interviewees from UNESCO, the cultural and social dimensions of causes for exclusion are not yet sufficiently highlighted, embedded and operationalised. Cooperation between the Education Sector and other UNESCO sectors on such dimensions, including the social and human sciences and culture sectors is still incipient

Key dimension 2: Partnerships, cooperation and fundraising

UNESCO activities in the area of inclusion in education do not take place in a vacuum but can only deliver optimal results if these are coordinated and/or achieved together with external partners. Under the key dimension of partnerships[183], the evaluation looked at the extent to which UNESCO has been able to engage in relevant partnerships, capitalize on existing cooperation opportunities, as well as to gather and mobilise other partners around its holistic approach to inclusion in education. The assessment allows a critical review of partnerships, cooperation and fundraising within the specific context

of inclusion in education. This assessment covers the OECD-DAC criteria of external coherence, relevance and (financial) sustainability.

Complementarity to other initiatives:
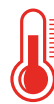
Slightly high: Survey results and interviews clearly show that UNESCO is well recognised as a global hub on the topic of inclusion in education. UNESCO works complementary to other organisations, brings relevant stakeholders together and often provides the coordination role. In specific areas (disabilities, refugees), the position of UNESCO is less strong and some coordination issues occur; especially when it comes to working at regional and especially national level, where other stronger, better visible and more specialised organisations take the lead, and where coordination issues and visibility challenges become apparent.

Ability to mobilise resources:

Low: Partnering with UNESCO is particularly attractive for non-governmental organisations, not only because of the available knowledge and expertise, Although not necessarily all UNESCO's work in inclusion (e.g. as is the case for policy work[184]) requires a large funding it remains difficult to mobilise funding for the holistic perspective on inclusion in education with the aim to emphasise inclusion issues in broader programmes and projects. Existing resource mobilisation efforts target more specific issues (labelled as education in emergencies and disability-inclusive education).but also because UNESCO works closely with Ministries of Education.

Key dimension 3: Internal coherence and cooperation

This section consists of an assessment of the organisational coherence of UNESCO-led activities across the Organization both for inclusion specific work and in particular for mainstreaming in the area of inclusion in education. This concerns how initiatives are developed and how work is organised within the UNESCO Education Sector and within UNESCO, through cooperation and coordination between HQ and Field Offices, as well as the extent to which UNESCO mobilises relevant knowledge partners from within the UNESCO family including Category 1 Institutes and other Programme Sectors, and associated networks. When assessing the organisational structure and entities involved, synergies developed and resources allocated to activities in the area of inclusion in

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182 It is to be noted that UNESCO has recently created an intersectoral task team on disability and is currently undertaking a mapping exercise of its disability-related initiatives aimed at exploring the need for an institution-wide disability strategy that may be advocating for a more decentralized focus and support in building local implementation capacities.

183 By external partners, we understand both possible donors and otherwise relevant stakeholders active at the international level, including the UN family, as well as the large number of relevant partners.

184 The development of a policy for inclusion in and through education – which addresses the holistic perspective – does not require substantive budgetary resources but can easily be undertaken with approximately 200,000 USD (as estimated by UNESCO HQ) in a relatively complex operational environment such as Kenya that has multiple issues to be addressed, including IDPs and refugees.

education in relation to the results achieved, the evaluation is able to form a summative judgment in line with the respective OECD-DAC criteria internal coherence and efficiency.

Capacity (organisational arrangements, structures and processes) to reaching the envisaged objectives in a coherent way

Slightly low considering that UNESCO's work on inclusion in education is perceived as being fragmented and scattered across different organisational entities, units and institutions that appear to often work in silos. While there are dedicated units, and despite the recognised importance of the topic, there is not a single organisation-wide coordination mechanism for mainstreaming inclusion across the Education Sector and beyond. This mainly relates to the organisational capacity to take stock, coordinate and monitor who is contributing what to an envisaged change process. Both internal and external stakeholders raise some concerns about the fragmentation and lack of clarity of direction, coordination and role division. The new UNESCO C/4 and C/5 strategic and programme planning approach, identifying overarching strategic objectives to which relevant entities across the Organization contribute, seems promising in bringing more structure on which different entities and sectors contribute to the overall strategic objectives, but practical details on how this will be operationalised and adequate systems and processes are still in development.

Synergies with the work of internal and external stakeholders:
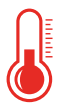
Slightly low: Despite established strong collaboration on inclusion among some entities, there is not a systematic approach to work on inclusion in education across the Organization (all the Category 1 Institutes, Field Offices) and with associated networks (Chairs, National Commissions, ASPnet). Lack of a single coordination unit and limited capacity are factors that prevent a more systematic and coordinated approach. The key expertise on inclusion in education is predominantly found among a small group of persons at UNESCO HQ and the Category 1 institutes, while specific projects are being implemented also elsewhere. On certain occasions, this prevents UNESCO from fully capitalising on its expertise and standing and, in some cases, has even influenced its perception among partners and Member States as was confirmed by some country level stakeholders.

Key dimension 4: Results achieved, signs of impact and sustainability

The assessment of the results and sustainability are key benchmarks against which the success of activities should be measured. The extent to which the expected results are achieved as a result of the activities undertaken and outputs produced is the core question of an assessment of effectiveness. Subsequently the extent to which these results have any potential to lead to longer term impact and to be sustained once the interventions ended is verified by evaluation questions probing sustainability and exploring pathways towards impact.[185] This assessment covers the OECD-DAC criteria of effectiveness, (signs of) impact and sustainability.

Outcomes, results and impact reached:

Slightly high: As recognised across the majority of stakeholders UNESCO supported progress in conceptual clarification; global awareness (e.g. Cali); data and oversight (e.g. GEM reports); policy and system strengthening support; policy dialogue; and strategic planning suppor (e.g. Jordan); and enhanced inclusion of specific marginalised learners. Changes can be seen in relation to the identified change markers, most notably concerning supporting knowledge development, exchange and learning. While the evaluation finds evidence for a visible contribution of UNESCO's work towards creating a conducive environment, which has resulted in visibly higher levels of awareness for inclusion in education in Member States (as also reflected in the new 41 C/4) and policy development in some contexts, but there is still little evidence that it has resulted in advances in inclusive education in many countries (see also next item). While this is not an outcome necessarily within the control of UNESCO, it highlights the continued necessity to keep working to foster the ingredients that contribute to a conducive environment.

Level of engagement with the agenda for inclusion in education:

Slighly low: Stronger orientations towards inclusion in education are not yet visible in actual changes in education systems and practices, given that actual systemic change at country level takes time and cannot be easily measured as a result of UNESCO's work. While the political commitment to inclusion is there, taking meaningful and long-term action – as an expression of engagement – is still limited. At the moment of evaluation for instance, the immediate challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic for education are prioritised for logical reasons. The necessary next

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185 One evaluation question that was included in the key dimension is discussed under 'weaknesses' in the SWOT analysis, (see Annex 7) namely: What are factors that prevent UNESCO from reaching its envisaged outcomes or target groups?

step will be to capitalise on the policy attention for access and quality education spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic and transform this into sustainable attention for inclusion in education in the years to come.

Approach to monitoring and knowledge management:
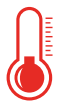
Low: Systems are not in place to track inclusion in education results systematically across the key entities, including different UNESCO ED sections, UNESCO sectors, and UNESCO Category 1 institutes.[186] In addition, evaluations of inclusion-related projects are not always of sufficient quality and yield limited information about their effectiveness and potential lessons learned, not least as their findings do not systematically feed into an organisational knowledge base to stimulate such learning. Furthermore, as also underlined in the 2021 UNESCO Synthetic review of evaluations, most evaluations on other thematic areas provide few substantial references to inclusion, which suggests that there is no sharp focus on inclusion and that inclusion has not been systematically mainstreamed across UNESCO's interventions. On the programmatic side, the new C/4 and C/5 approach is promising (all Programme Sectors contribute to the same strategic objectives), but this is not yet further operationalised in reporting lines.

Key dimension 5: Visibility, innovation and communication

In addition to the efforts dedicated to planning, programming and execution, the evaluation also considered how final results are communicated within the Organisation and to external partners. Visibility, innovation and communication are a crucial feature to ensure broader donor attention to the area of inclusion in education. This assessment covers the OECD-DAC criteria of effectiveness and sustainability.

Internal communication and visibility of results:
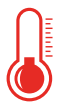
Low: There is no systematic aggregated tracking of UNESCO's achievements in the area of inclusion in education. Given the scope and breadth of possible actions and results of inclusion in education across all areas in the Education Sector (TVET policies, developed by HQ, regional offices; stimulating the development of learning cities (UIL); conducting Education Strategic Sector Plans (IIEP). Without a systematic tracking, aggregating and synthesising of achievements of this variety of work, it remains difficult to get an overarching perspective of what UNESCO contributes to in the field of inclusion in education.

External visibility of results:

Slightly low: The achievements of UNESCO's work are not systematically communicated and are not embedded in a systematic approach to feed into guidance to change mindsets. Communication is mostly supply-driven, with each UNESCO entity/institute communicating about their own initiatives with limited cross-links and joint communication. It is to a limited extent tailored to specific target groups. Its visibility around more specific contextualised reasons for exclusion (for instance for ethnic minorities; indigenous languages and girls' education) is higher than the visibility on inclusion in education as a holistic concept. While the GEM report provides a very powerful and effective set of publications for agenda-setting purposes, there is room for improvement to maintain the momentum created by the report, such as through more regular updates; broadening the data; and further facilitating peer learning and capacity building.

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186 The available list of projects extracted for the purpose of the evaluation only includes projects labelled as 'inclusion' and 'education in emergencies'.

Annex 7: Detailed Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Based on the previous assessments and analysis of the data collected, the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats emerged. Strengths and weaknesses relate to what worked well and what are areas that require improvements; opportunities and threats relate to the future work of UNESCO.

STRENGTH 1: UNESCO has a comparative strength in normative work, convening power, and conceptual clarification as well as knowledge sharing on the holistic concept of inclusion in education for high-level stakeholders

Given the long history of work of UNESCO on working inclusion in education and associated topics, and the role UNESCO plays in the 2030 Agenda (leading agency on SDG 4), UNESCO has a core comparative strength in showing leadership on the topic of inclusion in education. The need for a leadership role on this topic increased with the 2030 Agenda and the positioning of inclusion as one of the fundamentals of the agenda. In this context, UNESCO's leadership role is most visible in the normative work and convening power (e.g. 2019 Cali commitment), bringing various high-level stakeholders, interest groups together to commit to inclusion in education; conceptual clarification and knowledge sharing, further unpacking 'inclusion in education' and the dimensions related to it. For the latter, the GEM report of 2020 (and related publications) is a key milestone. This leadership role is most visible in that UNESCO is not only summarising what exists, but rather points where to go with working on inclusion from a holistic perspective (leaving no-one behind) and not broken down to inclusion of specific target groups.

STRENGTH 2: UNESCO is the go-to institution for high-level partners that work on inclusion in education

As a global leader on the topic of inclusion in education, UNESCO is the go-to institution for national government representatives; development organisations; and interest groups / NGOs for advocacy; information; conceptual clarification and tools. For national policy makers, engagement with UNESCO can provide additional impetus and momentum to work on inclusion; for development partners and interest groups / NGOs, engaging with UNESCO allows them to connect with the global discussions and provides links to national governments and policy makers.

STRENGTH 3: UNESCO has the global presence and perspective on the wider spectrum of inclusion in education

As an organization that operates at a global level, UNESCO is the only organization that covers the whole education system, from early childhood education and care to higher education and adult learning. Given that 'inclusion in education' perspective is radically different from the primary school enrolment objective in the Millennium Development Goals (goal 2), this requires a more system-wide approach to understanding where and for what reasons people are excluded from accessing and making successful use of quality educational opportunities

WEAKNESS 1: UNESCO does not have a clear organisational approach on how the Organization as a whole supports countries and partners to develop inclusion in education in line with the SDGs

Inclusion in education is a thematic area that concerns all entities and staff within UNESCO within but also beyond the ED sector; also those outside the smaller circle of people that more directly work on inclusion in education at UNESCO HQ, the Field Offices, and the UNESCO institutes. However, there is no consistent and coherent organisational approach that fosters a conducive environment for Member States and partners to work on this holistic inclusion in education approach that underlies the SDGs. As mentioned by interviewees, "UNESCO is trying to do a bit of everything", but it is unclear how UNESCO's collective work adds up and how the work of the different organisational parts (HQ, Field Office, IBE, IIEP, UIL, UIS) mutually enforce each other towards a common objective.

WEAKNESS 2: UNESCO lacks sufficient specialised capacities in inclusion across its field network to push for inclusion in education at the national level (working with governments and partners such as those representing marginalised groups) and help link national developments to global issues

As a whole, there are quite a number of people in the different organisational entities and institutes of UNESCO working on inclusion in education. However, the available workforce and capacities are not sufficient to sustainably support Member States (both governments and other partners) and to make strong linkages between UNESCO's global (normative, advocacy) work and what happens in the countries and regions. Several interviewees

indicated that technical expertise and capacity about inclusion in education is present at HQ and Category 1 institute level. However, rather limited capacity is present in the field offices where technical expertise and especially practical capacity are mandatory to support Member States in moving towards an inclusive education system and inclusive practices. This results in a disconnect between national and global levels, exacerbated by limited knowledge sharing and knowledge development within the Organization.

WEAKNESS 3: UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education is seen as still insufficiently addressing the change mechanism in countries towards developing inclusive education policies and translating these into practices which includes fostering a long-term inclusive process in developing policies both at national, regional and institutional level. Lack of a conducive environment may discourage Member States to work on the topic

As indicated in the Reconstruction of the Theory of Change, inclusion in education is a reflective process without a predefined end-point. Every country and organization will continuously have to reflect on its path towards inclusivity. This stance is best secured if the process to arrive at policies and practices is inclusive in itself. At the moment, the work of UNESCO's education sector is not particularly strong on this dimension, focussing more on the end-result of programmes and projects and less on the long-term process of arriving at those results. Inspiration could be taken from the in-house Inclusive Policy Lab initiatives (to which the Education Sector contributed in the past).

WEAKNESS 4: UNESCO lacks a mechanism to strengthen visibility of its own work on inclusion in education and the results of this work

For the UNESCO Education Sector, inclusion in education is embedded in most of its programmes and operations. However, this work is not appropriately labelled. The portfolio analysis on projects conducted within UNESCO HQ and with the involvement of the Field Offices (so not covering the Category 1 institutes) could only focus on those projects labelled as 'Education in Emergency' and 'inclusion' under specific Expected Results. This provides a quite narrow scope of UNESCO's work on inclusion, not reflective of the actual work. On one hand, this results in less visibility of UNESCO's achievements and on the other, limits the sharing of the lessons learned from projects and programmes useful for internal use, for Member States and other organizations.

WEAKNESS 5: Despite major work on clarifying inclusion in education, how to apply the concept of inclusion in education, both by UNESCO-internally (all means all across all thematic areas) and externally (not only focus on disability) still needs support; Particular focus concerns the widening to adult and non-formal learning

Despite major work on clarifying inclusion in education, the wide scope of the concept (all means all) is not always and easily captured in implementation. Also externally, inclusion in education is still widely perceived as working with people with a disability, and often identified with special education needs. Furthermore, UNESCO's current conceptual clarification on inclusion in education is very much focused on initial or basic education, and primarily focused on the formal education-system perspective. As such, it does not (yet) reflect what inclusion in education means when widening the concept to adults and non-formal learning, i.e. the learning taking place outside the formal education system. This narrow focus is challenged by the clear evidence that the inclusion of adults in learning is both severely challenging (especially during COVID-19 pandemic) and extremely valuable for the individual, families, society and the economy.[187]

WEAKNESS 6: While inclusion in education is highly related to UNESCO's work on communication and information, culture, and social and human sciences, the cross-sectoral or cross-disciplinary linkages within UNESCO are to be further explored to reach more impact

As described in the Reconstruction of the Theory of Change, inclusion in education is both a means to develop a better and more inclusive society and an end in itself, securing equal opportunities for all. In this, inclusion in education is closely linked to other domains such as culture, communication, and social and human sciences. There are many reasons for exclusion related to culture, but culture also offers opportunities to solve these inclusion challenges. It is therefore important to work on inclusion in education not in a siloed approach, only looking at the education sector, but to broaden the perspective and include insights and perspectives from other sectors as well. While UNESCO's mandate is covering these other sectors is considered an opportunity in the context of the 2030 Agenda, it still insufficiently secures the holistic perspective and cross-links between the different sectors to enhance impact; both on inclusion in education and on other themes. For example Intersectoral task teams' such as those working on persons with disability and mother tongue learners can offer opportunities to do so.

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187 See: OECD (2021), OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19): Adult Learning and COVID-19: How much informal and non-formal learning are workers missing? 25 March 2021: https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/adult-learning-and-covid-19-how-much-informal-and-non-formal-learning-are-workers-missing-56a96569/ ; UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2020), UNESCO COVID-19 Education Response – Education Sector issue notes – Adult learning and education and COVID-19: https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/issue-note-no-26-adult-learning-and-education-and-covid-19

OPPORTUNITY 1: Inclusion in education as a topic and paradigm underlying the 2030 Agenda would deserve to be highlighted more explicitly as a global priority, even more so in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is an opportunity to transform the increased attention spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic to access and quality in education into a broader effort to increase attention for inclusion in education and translate it into practice

Given the emphasis on inclusion in the 2030 Agenda and the net impact on education experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is clear momentum to increase the focus on inclusion in education. The pandemic showed that while there are obvious, and long-standing reasons for exclusion, a change in the context (such as a pandemic) can easily produce new challenges and reasons for exclusion. As such, it seems plausible that a more holistic approach towards inclusion and addressing exclusion that has the flexibility to adapt to change in the context of a crisis, a natural disaster or a global pandemic can provide a more conducive environment to challenge emerging reasons for exclusion and more sustainably addressing the existing reasons.

OPPORTUNITY 2: Increased cooperation with associated networks, organisations within the UN family and other organisations (e.g. those representing marginalised groups) strengthens UNESCO's role in fostering a conducive environment to work on inclusion in education

UNESCO engages with others as inclusion in education is a multisectoral and multi-stakeholder challenge, with many organisations better positioned to work on specific issues and at specific operational levels. There is potential, coupled with better coordination efforts from UNESCO's side, to be explored in cooperating with the UNESCO Chairs, the ASPnet schools, other UN organisations and other organisations such as donors, development partners, interest groups (representing disadvantaged and marginalised groups), civil society, academic institutions and education practitioners (teachers, head teachers, school committees, etc). In particular, a key opportunity for UNESCO lies in providing those organisations at the grass root level and those who are excluded, a voice and enable them to participate in the global exchange about inclusion in education. This opportunity can lead to exchange of lessons learned, case studies, evaluation reports, monitoring data and success stories. Additionally, there is potential to explore cooperation with private sector partners, especially in the technology sector to support initiatives that combat specific inclusion challenges. However, engagement with the private sector requires clear understanding and parameters to derive needed benefits towards inclusion in education objectives and avoid innovative solutions that may disrupt education systems.

As the lead agency of SDG 4, UNESCO has the potential to step in and facilitate exchange of stakeholders on global and national level. Extending its outreach and seeking quality cooperation would in turn strengthen UNESCO's role as lead agency on inclusion in education. Further, this would support UNESCO's agenda on establishing a conducive environment to work on inclusion in education.

OPPORTUNITY 3: Work with teachers on several levels: include teachers in policy design and evaluations; include teachers in designing and developing long term capacity building programmes (from material development until programme roll out) and finally strengthen link between teachers and teacher educators

Studies[188] on quality teaching and learning in classroom settings show that teacher quality is responsible for the largest part (75 per cent) of quality of learning in the classroom. While inclusion in education relates to many more aspects (infrastructure, support structures, safety, transportation, etc.), the role of teachers is key in making education inclusive for all learners. As stated in the 2020 GEM report on *Inclusive teaching: preparing all teachers to teach all students*, an important element of inclusive education involves ensuring that all teachers are prepared to teach all students. Inclusion cannot be realized unless teachers are empowered agents of change, with values, knowledge and attitudes that permit every student to succeed. Despite their differences in teacher standards and qualifications, education systems are increasingly moving away from identifying problems with learners and towards identifying barriers to learning."[189] Having teachers on board in setting strategies on inclusion in education and changing their mind-set towards being more inclusive by becoming critical thinkers and problem solvers opens the opportunity to make education more inclusive from the bottom-up.

A stronger linkage between grass root practitioners and teacher educators has strong potential to boost inclusion in education. Traditionally, this exchange exists in form of universities, teacher colleges and teacher associations where knowledge is transferred from academics to students (pre-service) or teachers (in-service). UNESCO could use its linkages (for instance in the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030) with teacher educators and academics to convince them that knowledge exchange must go both ways. In addition to the traditional knowledge flow, academics can listen to field practitioners to document and share successful and promising approaches with others.

188 Rivkin, Steven G., Hanushek, Eric A., Kain. John F, (2005), Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement, in: Econometrica, Vol. 73, No. 2. (Mar., 2005), pp. 417-458.
189 UNESCO GEM report (2020), Policy paper 43: Inclusive teaching: Preparing all teachers to teach all students, p. 1: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374447

OPPORTUNITY 4: Building on the GEM report to establish a systematic monitoring on inclusion in education, both looking at implementation and the process of setting up more inclusive education policies and practices

There are many different databases that relate to inclusion in education (e.g. GEM reports, CONFINTEA on adult learning, PEER, WIDE, Global Resource Base on Inclusive Education, UNESCO Observatory on the Right to Education). In addition, UIS is the specialised agency to support data generation and monitoring. Still, the global monitoring function on inclusion in education within UNESCO is slightly fragmented and there is an opportunity to use the momentum of the 2020 GEM report to promote a regular and systematic monitoring on inclusion in education. It would not only look at the very important aspect of data on exclusion of specific vulnerable groups, but also explore the process of setting up more inclusive education policies and practices. The latter refers to whether Member States work on the fundamentals of inclusive policy making, offering a better guarantee that policies that improve inclusion in education are not ad hoc and one-off policies, but that there is an ongoing process of making education policies and practices more inclusive.

THREAT 1: Inclusion in education as a holistic package remains challenging to work with at Member State level

Inclusion in education is a long-term system change approach. Furthermore, for Member States and national-level policy makers, inclusion in education remains fairly abstract and challenging to grasp what it entails at an operational level, i.e. what needs to happen to make education systems inclusive and who needs to do what at which level (macro-, meso-, micro-level). In addition, operationalising inclusion in education adds competing demands to organizations and/or countries, which are already faced with limited resources for their priorities. In other words, while inclusion in education requires a long-term system change, there are imminent inclusion-related challenges that Member States and supporting organisations need to solve, diverting their attention to the long-term goals of inclusion.

THREAT 2: UNESCO's contribution to long-term change on inclusion in education at Member State level is hampered by the lack of strategic cooperation with other organisations and Member States long term commitment for implementation

UNESCO does not have the capacity and financial resources to enable long-term contextualised support for individual Member States. It will have to work with other organizations on all levels (inside and outside the UN system) to establish the conducive environment for Member States to work on inclusion in education. Lacking the close connections (and support), engagement and cooperation with those organisations may hamper UNESCO's ability to pursue its desired change process. While UNESCO is the global leader on inclusion in education, to support inclusion of specific target groups (e.g. people on the move), other (UN) organisations have the mandate, presence, resources and a stronger coordinating position and work more strategically with Member States and other specialised organisations. In those areas, for instance Education in Emergencies, UNESCO needs to clarify its role within the global cooperation context and explore creative ways to engage with its niche expertise at the local level, as SDG 4 lead.

THREAT 3: UNESCO may be seen as not fully leading by example in terms of the inclusivity of its processes and of the Organization as a whole

Some stakeholders see UNESCO as not fully leading by example, in terms of the inclusivity of its processes and of the Organization as a whole. While this is beyond the scope of this evaluation and goes beyond the ED sector's purview, there is a risk that this can be perceived as contradictory or negatively impact the credibility of the Organization's efforts towards promoting inclusion in education. The Organization as a whole, should therefore reflect on its own level of inclusivity and communicate the lessons learned and good practices from across the UN to its Member States.

THREAT 4: UNESCO cannot 'impose on' Member States to be more inclusive in their education system as this lowers the intrinsic commitment to the topic

A strength of UNESCO is that it has solid entry points into national governments and, through its normative work, convening power and knowledge sharing, can directly support Member States in adopting new ideas and approaches. However, UNESCO has to acknowledge that Member States may have approaches towards excluding some learners. In certain contexts, exclusion on the basis of gender, immigration, ethnic minority, cultural heritage, mother tongue remains difficult to address given the social and cultural constructs that underpin public policies and norms. In such sensitive contexts where the need to work on inclusion in education may not have matured, UNESCO can focus on facilitating peer learning, exchange of good practices and South-South cooperation to stimulate discussions and debates between and from within countries.

Annex 8: Overview of key findings, SWOT analysis, conclusions, and recommendations

The figure below provides a concise overview of how the assessments on the judgement criteria relate to the identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and how these feed the identification of conclusions and recommendations.

FINDINGS RELATED TO JUDGEMENT CRITERIA

HIGH: UNESCO's work is well aligned with the 2030 Agenda and there is a plausible line of reasoning on how UNESCO's work contributes to the 2030 Agenda that is supported by evidence of (intermediary) results.

SLIGHTLY HIGH: UNESCO's work is developed and implemented taking into account the UNESCO global priorities.

SLIGHTLY LOW: UNESCO is able to capitalise its unique position to address Member States challenges.

SLIGHTLY HIGH: UNESCO's work is addressing most relevant topics and target groups as evidenced by the engagement and reflections from stakeholders representing beneficiaries.

SLIGHTLY HIGH: UNESCO's work is complementary and well-coordinated with other initiatives as judged by external actors.

LOW: UNESCO's position sufficiently allows resource mobilisation as judged by internal and external actors.

SLIGHTLY LOW: UNESCO's organisational arrangements are in place, but somewhat fragmented, to support reaching the envisaged objectives as judged by internal and external stakeholders.

SLIGHTLY LOW: UNESCO is challenged in securing synergies within and with associated networks as judged by involved stakeholders.

SLIGHTLY HIGH: UNESCO reached its outcomes, results and impact as specified in the programming documents and evidenced by monitoring reports and stakeholders assessments.

SLIGHLY LOW: Member States express a high level of engagement with the inclusion in education agenda and UNESCO's work, but changes are not (yet) visible.

LOW: UNESCO's systems are not yet capable to provide a detailed overview of the progress and developments related to UNESCO activities on inclusion in education, assessed by the evaluators based on the planning and monitoring data.

LOW: UNESCO's achievements are not systematically internally and externally visible as judged by internal and external stakeholders.

FINDINGS SWOT ANALYSIS

Strength 1: UNESCO has a comparative strength in normative work, convening power, and conceptual clarification as well as knowledge sharing on the holistic concept of inclusion in education for high-level stakeholders

Strength 2: UNESCO is the go-to institution for high-level partners that work on inclusion in education

Strength 3: UNESCO has the global presence and perspective on the wider spectrum of inclusion in education

Weakness 1: UNESCO does not have a clear organisational approach on how the Organization as a whole supports countries and partners to develop inclusion in education in line with the SDGs

Weakness 2: UNESCO lacks sufficient specialised capacities in inclusion across its field network to push for inclusion in education at the national level (working with governments and partners such as those representing marginalised groups) and help link national developments to global issues

Weakness 3: UNESCO ED Sector's work on inclusion in education is seen as still insufficiently addressing the change mechanism in countries towards developing inclusive education policies and translating these into practice which includes fostering a long-term inclusive process in developing policies both at national, regional and institutional level. Lack of a conducive environment may discourage Member States to work on the topic

Weakness 4: UNESCO lacks a mechanism to strengthen visibility of its own work on inclusion in education and its results

Weakness 5: Despite major work on clarifying inclusion in education, how to apply the concept, both by UNESCO-internally (all means all across all thematic areas) and externally (not only focus on disability) still needs support; Particular focus concerns the widening to adult and non-formal learning

Weakness 6: While inclusion in education is highly related to UNESCO's work on communication and information, culture, and social and human sciences, the cross-sectoral or cross-disciplinary linkages within UNESCO are to be further explored to reach more impact

Opportunity 1: Inclusion in education as a topic and paradigm underlying the 2030 Agenda would deserve to be highlighted more explicitly as a global priority, even more so in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is an opportunity to transform the increased attention spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic to access and quality in education into a broader effort to increase attention for inclusion in education and translate it into practice

Opportunity 2: Increased cooperation with associated networks, organisations within the UN family and other organisations (e.g. those representing marginalised groups) strengthens UNESCO's role in fostering a conducive environment to work on inclusion in education

Opportunity 3: Work with teachers on several levels: include teachers in policy design and evaluations; include teachers in designing and developing long term capacity building programmes (from material development until programme roll out) and finally strengthen link between teachers and teacher educators

Opportunity 4: Building on the GEM report and to establish a systematic monitoring on inclusion in education, both looking at implementation and the process of setting up more inclusive education policies and practices

Threat 1: Inclusion in education as a holistic package remains challenging to work with at Member State level

Threat 2: UNESCO's contribution to long-term change on inclusion in education at Member State level is hampered by the lack of strategic cooperation with other organisations and Member States long term commitment for implementation

Threat 3: UNESCO may be seen as not fully leading by example in terms of the inclusivity of its processes and of the Organization as a whole

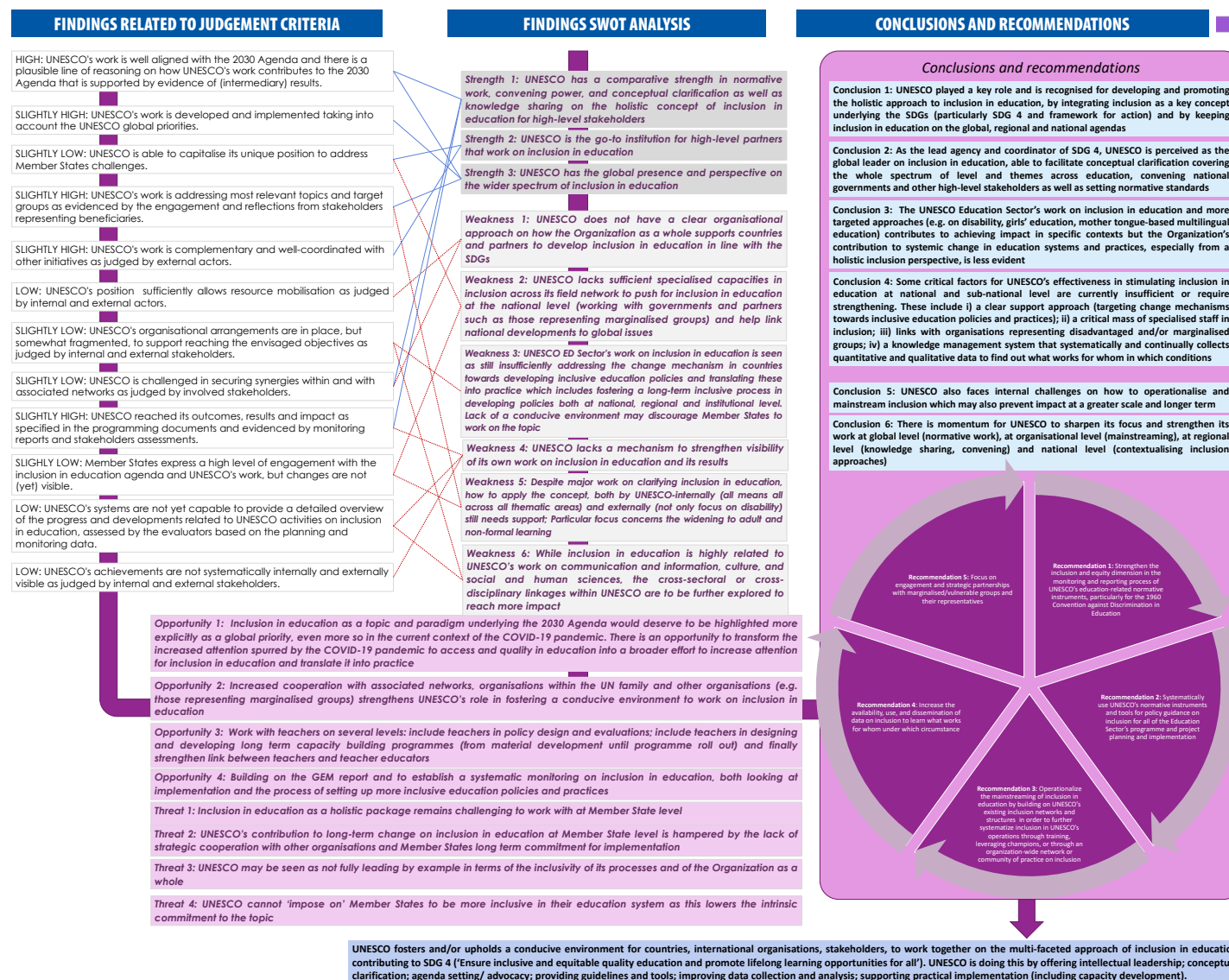Threat 4: UNESCO cannot 'impose on' Member States to be more inclusive in their education system as this lowers the intrinsic commitment to the topic

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion 1: UNESCO played a key role and is recognised for developing and promoting the holistic approach to inclusion in education, by integrating inclusion as a key concept underlying the SDGs (particularly SDG 4 and framework for action) and by keeping inclusion in education on the global, regional and national agendas

Conclusion 2: As the lead agency and coordinator of SDG 4, UNESCO is perceived as the global leader on inclusion in education, able to facilitate conceptual clarification covering the whole spectrum of level and themes across education, convening national governments and other high-level stakeholders as well as setting normative standards

Conclusion 3: The UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education and more targeted approaches (e.g. on disability, girls' education, mother tongue-based multilingual education) contributes to achieving impact in specific contexts but the Organization's contribution to systemic change in education systems and practices, especially from a holistic inclusion perspective, is less evident

Conclusion 4: Some critical factors for UNESCO's effectiveness in stimulating inclusion in education at national and sub-national level are currently insufficient or require strengthening. These include i) a clear support approach (targeting change mechanisms towards inclusive education policies and practices; ii) a critical mass of specialised staff in inclusion; iii) links with organisations representing disadvantaged and/or marginalised groups; iv) a knowledge management system that systematically and continually collects quantitative and qualitative data to find out what works for whom in which conditions

Conclusion 5: UNESCO also faces internal challenges on how to operationalise and mainstream inclusion which may also prevent impact at a greater scale and longer term

Conclusion 6: There is momentum for UNESCO to sharpen its focus and strengthen its work at global level (normative work), at organisational level (mainstreaming), at regional level (knowledge sharing, convening) and national level (contextualising inclusion approaches)

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the inclusion and equity dimension in the monitoring and reporting process of UNESCO's education-related normative instruments, particularly for the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education

Recommendation 2: Systematically use UNESCO's normative instruments and tools for policy guidance on inclusion for all of the Education Sector's programme and project planning and implementation

Recommendation 3: Operationalize the mainstreaming of inclusion in education by building on UNESCO's existing inclusion networks and structures in order to further systematize inclusion in UNESCO's operations through training, leveraging champions, or through an organization-wide network or community of practice on inclusion

Recommendation 4: Increase the availability, use, and dissemination of data on inclusion to learn what works for whom under which circumstance

Recommendation 5: Focus on engagement and strategic partnerships with marginalised/vulnerable groups and their representatives

UNESCO fosters and/or upholds a conducive environment for countries, international organisations, stakeholders, to work together on the multi-faceted approach of inclusion in education contributing to SDG 4 ('Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'). UNESCO is doing this by offering intellectual leadership; conceptual clarification; agenda setting/ advocacy; providing guidelines and tools; improving data collection and analysis; supporting practical implementation (including capacity development).

Source: Authors

Annex 9: Methodological approach (detailed)

This section presents in detail the methodology of the evaluation. This evaluation proposed a mixed method approach, consisting of desk review, interviews, two surveys and focus groups conducted during field missions. These various methods were tailored to provide answers to the evaluation questions. In all our evaluation approaches and methods for data collection, we **incorporate a gender equality perspective, apply a human rights-based approach, and take into consideration the diverse cultural and social contexts in which the activities are being implemented. Specific attention has been given to assess relevant dimensions of UNESCO's work in the field of inclusion in ED from the perspective of UNESCO's global priorities: Priority Africa, and Global Priority Gender Equality, as well as other priority groups, such as LDCs, Youth.** This relates to the questions asked; how data was analysed; but also who was consulted to provide input. Especially for the interviews, focus groups and the surveys a gender balanced, and geographically diverse population ensuring representation of the diversity of cultural and social contexts in which the respondents live and work.

The evaluation was conducted in line with UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards and reflects the requirements outlined in the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation, as well as in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.

An evaluation reference group with representatives from relevant UNESCO entities from HQ, Category 1 Institutes and the field across all regions was established to ensure the quality of the evaluation process and its deliverables. The ERG met for a kick off, an inception meeting, a Theory of Change workshop and a final validation workshop, Furthermore, individual members were interviewed and provided comments and inputs on the deliverables throughout the process.

Desk review to reconstruct the Theory of Change

The **first part** of the desk review was conducted during the inception phase and concentrated mainly on **reconstruction (refinement and validation) of the theory of change**. The desk review focused on the intervention logic developed for UNESCO's Education Sector work on inclusive education and to reconstruct it, in light of MLA 1 (Expected result 8) in the management documents. Particularly in this phase of the evaluation we drew heavily on the specific expertise mobilised in our team on inclusive education. The results of this initial review was included in the inception report, in the

form of a draft reconstruction of the theory of change. As such, it served as the backbone for evaluation, guiding evaluation questions and allowing to test more theoretical considerations of results and impact. During the evaluation, this reconstruction was further adjusted, based on additional insights collected through interviews.

Desk review: portfolio analysis

Besides the desk review aimed to better understand UNESCO approach to inclusion in education, after the inception phase a more comprehensive analyses was conducted on the whole portfolio of UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education. This analysis started with a mapping of what UNESCO activities, programmes and projects relate to inclusion in education and then for all those mapped initiatives, describe them in terms of some key characteristics, such as:

1.   Type of initiative (in line with change markers discussed in the ToC)
2.   Main UNESCO unit/sector responsible
3.   Coverage of inclusion in education (mainstreaming; disability; refugees; other)
4.   Main objective
5.   Associated budget
6.   Indication of outcomes and results

The analysis of the portfolio tried to seek an answer to questions related to how UNESCO interventions are positioned within a wider ED Sector/organisational/global context and to what extent the interventions are within the UNESCO mandate and priorities and in line with the comparative strengths of UNESCO.

The members of the reference group were requested to provide any information on initiatives, activities, programmes and projects associated with inclusion in education that can be included in the mapping exercise.

Answering the evaluation questions in line with the evaluation framework also required studying a broader set of documents. Even though in the evaluation matrices there are relatively few instances where desk review is explicitly mentioned, it is a core activity for the evaluation process, which often feeds a crucial starting point for most of the evaluation questions. In practice, for every evaluation question, the evaluation start with desk review to map existing evidence. In most cases the contribution of desk review to answering the

evaluation questions is implicit and mainly serves to verify and triangulate findings from interviews or the survey. The desk review started with an analysis of the following seminal documents, after which through additional snowballing and interactions with UNESCO staff additional documents were added.

Overview of sources consulted – desk review[190]
UNESCO documents relevant for inclusion in education

- UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021 (37 C/4)
- UNESCO's Programme and Budget for 2016-2017 (38 C/5)
- UNESCO's Programme and Budget for 2018-2019 (39 C/5)
- UNESCO's Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 (40 C/5)
- (Draft) UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2022-29 (41 C/4)
- (Draft) UNESCO's Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 (41C/5)
- Regular Programme and Extrabudgetary funds/voluntary contributions in connection with past and ongoing projects focusing on inclusion in Education (SISTER reports, final narrative reports and external evaluations)
- Websites of UNESCO (incl. Field Offices) and Category 1 institutes (e.g. IIEP, IBE, UIL, UIS) as well as of relevant partners

Relevant UNESCO and international normative frameworks and key policy documents

- Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- Convention on the Rights of the child (1989)
- UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993)

- Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education (1994)
- Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education (2019)
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006)
- International Conference on Education. 48th session "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future" (ICE) (2008)
- UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009)
- Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (2015)
- The New Delhi Declaration on Inclusive ICTs for Persons with Disabilities: Making Empowerment a Reality UNESCO. General Conference, 38th, 2015
- General comment no. 4, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016)
- A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education (2017)
- The Global Compact on Refugees (2018)
- International Forum on inclusion and equity in education (2019)
- Los Pinos Declaration [Chapoltepek] – Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages (2020)
- Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and Education - All Means All (2020)
- International Conference on Language Sushou 2014[191]
- United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy 2019
- UNSDCF Guidance (2019)

Other UNESCO publications, tools, guidance, and communication materials related to inclusion in education, review and analysis of relevant national policy documents, such as:

- UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education 2017

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190 This list is indicative and additional sources and documents will be explored during the data collection phase.
191 Suzhou-conclusions-0611.pdf (unesco.org)

- UNESCO's education strategy for crisis-affected people on the move 2020-2025

- Artificial Intelligence and Inclusion Compendium of Promising Initiatives 2020

- International Guidelines for the Education of Learners with Down Syndrome 2020

- Approaches to Language in Education for Migrants and Refugees in the Asia-Pacific Region 2020

- IDA Inclusive Education Report 2020

- Towards inclusion in education: status, trends and challenges: the UNESCO Salamanca Statement 25 years on 2020

- Addressing exclusion in education: a guide to assessing education systems towards more inclusive and just societies 2012

- Mother tongue-based multilingual education: the key to unlocking SDG 4: quality Education for All 2017

- Training tools for curriculum development: reaching out to all learners: a resource pack for supporting inclusive education 2016

- Embracing diversity: toolkit for creating inclusive, learning-friendly environments 2015

- UNESCO global report: opening new avenues for empowerment: ICTs to access information and knowledge for persons with disabilities 2013

- Artificial intelligence in education, compendium of promising initiatives: Mobile Learning Week 2020, UNESCO, 2020

- The use of UIS data and Education Management Information Systems to monitor Inclusive education, UNESCO-UIS, 2019

- On the road to inclusion: highlights from the UNICEF and IIEP Technical Round Tables on Disability-inclusive Education Sector Planning, UNESCO, UNICEF, 2019

- School for all: experiences of municipal public schools with inclusion of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness, UNESCO Brasilia, 2017

- Still left behind: Pathways to inclusive education for girls with disabilities, UNGEI, Leonard Cheshire Disability, 2017

- Designing inclusive digital solutions and developing digital skills: guidelines, 2018

- Inclusive in action: empowering teachers, empowering learners, UNESCO/European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education Website

- 5 things to know about Inclusive Education, IIEP Learning portal, Blog

- GEM Report 2019 Migration, displacement & education: Building bridges, not walls

- GEM REPORT 2020 Inclusion and education + regional reports:

  - 2021 Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia Report - Inclusion and Education: All means all

  - 2020 Latin America and the Caribbean Report - Inclusion and Education: All means all

  - 2019 Arab States Report: Migration, displacement and education

- Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER): https://education-profiles.org/

- World Inequality Database on Education: https://www.education-inequalities.org/

- Publications of UNESCO and the Global Education Coalition on COVID-19 and impact on education: https://en.unesco.org/covid19

- Publications from UNESCO Field Office, for instance the Bangkok office.

Relevant third-party sources (see here for a longlist of literature papers commissioned for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, Inclusion and education). Other sources concern:

- OECD, Policy Brief: Ten Steps to Equity in Education, 2008, available at: http://www.oecd.org/education/school/39989494.pdf.

- United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979, Article 10, available at: https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx.

- United Nations, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007, Article 14, available at: https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf.

- United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), Still left behind: Pathways to inclusive education for girls with disabilities, 2017, available at: http://www.ungei.org/Still_Left_Behind_Full_Report.PDF.

- The bedrock of inclusion: why investing in the education workforce is critical to the delivery of SDG4: Lessons from Five African Countries October 2020[192]

- UNICEF (2020), Education for Every Ability: A Review and Roadmap of Disability-Inclusive Education in East Asia and Pacific[193]

- EENET website

- European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education website

Interviews at global, regional and Member State level

In addition to document analysis, a significant share of information needed to answer the evaluation questions came from interviews with a variety of internal and external stakeholders. Criteria for selecting interviewees included geographic, gender balance as well as a balanced contribution of the different types and levels of UNESCO internal and external global, regional, national of stakeholders

In the inception phase, 8 interviews were conducted[194] with UNESCO HQ staff members and Category 1 Institutes. These interviews were used to gather additional information related to the Theory of Change. This served to better understand the broader context for inclusive education initiatives, their implications and how the different strands of this area of work evolved over the last few years as well as what are the intentions behind the respective policy and strategic decisions.

During the data collection phase, interviews were conducted with a broad range of stakeholders. For each of the following groups of stakeholders, a specific interview checklist was developed, based on the evaluation matrix agreed in the inception report. Below we present the main categories of respondents that were involved, in view of the developed evaluation matrix. In the inception phase, and in close collaboration with the Evaluation Reference Group, the selection criteria were further developed. The following interviews to take place:

Interviews with UNESCO stakeholders at HQ (in addition to the interviews conducted in the inception phase). These interviews served primarily to map the activities undertaken, discuss the results achieved, and focus on possible improvements and recommendations for the coming years.

- Interviews with UNESCO staff in field offices. This included both regional and national offices in addition to those offices that will be consulted for the field-based interviews.

- Interviews with UNESCO Education Category 1 institutes (such as IIEP, IBE, UIL and UIS) and network partners, such as UNESCO Chairs. These respondents were identified in collaboration with UNESCO to ensure the selection of staff and partners who are or have been involved in inclusive education initiatives.

- Interview with external partners, including other relevant international, regional and local education development partners, including UN, multi/bilateral development partners, NGOs and civil society organisations active in the areas of inclusive education. In addition to these development partners, the team also interviewed a sample of academics that are not formally associated with the UNESCO network, but who are also active in the area of inclusive education.

The list of interviewees and the interview protocols /checklists are annexed to this report. (see annex 11 and annex 15)

In addition to interviews at global level, interventions in **several Member States** were selected as case studies to collect more in-depth information at country level. Criteria for selection included coverage of different type of interventions, coverage of country level work in different regions, coverage of interventions targeting different types of vulnerabilities (such as disability, crises-affected people on the move). This country-specific focus allowed interaction with the various categories of stakeholders at the national level (programme specialists, project coordinators, development partners, experts, policymakers) to better assess broader outcomes and provide meaningful illustrations of broader findings. In consultation with the evaluation reference group, country-level case studies and/or interviews were conducted on the following topics:

1. **inclusion specific work with some focus on crisis-affected people on the move (Jordan, Arab States)** to assess inclusive education in migration situations, i.e. on how UNESCO in cooperation with national authorities and other partners operationalised inclusion in education for crisis-affected people on the move through its work in Jordan (evidence based and crisis sensitive planning, support at policy level and strengthening institutional capacities on inclusion and diversity

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192 Global_report final.pdf (actionaid.org)

193 Education for Every Ability | UNICEF East Asia and Pacific

194 Anne Coupez, Chief of Unit, Education Sector, Executive Office, Unit for Strategic Planning, Monitoring, Institute and Field Coordination; Mariana Kitsiona, Programme Specialist, Education Sector, Executive Office, Unit for Strategic Planning, Monitoring, Institute and Field Coordination; Florence Migeon, Programme Specialist, Education Sector, Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality; Jennifer Pye, Programme Specialist, International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Paris; Leonora Mac Ewen, Programme Specialist, International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Paris; Renato Opertti, Consultant (retired Programme Specialist IBE), International Bureau of Education (IBE); Claude Akpabie, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), Montreal; Kerstin Holst, Programme Coordinator, Section of Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education.

more broadly). It also looked at how UNESCO has been supporting the Ministry of Education in developing its education management information system (EMIS), and at UNESCO /IIEP's crisis-sensitive planning work, at the role and positioning of UNESCO in the transition from humanitarian support to development work when it comes to inclusion in education; the experience during COVID-19 with planning support to the ESP but also other national plans such as the Jordan Response Plan; as well as the broader leading of UNESCO for SDG4 and how it is used to mainstream inclusion in education.

2. **inclusion mainstreaming in sector planning and policy development work (through policy reviews; sector-wide planning; and CapED policy support) (Lao PDR, Asia and the Pacific: Mozambique, Africa)** to assess how UNESCO in cooperation with national authorities and other partners set the foundations and operationalised inclusion in education from the perspective of its inclusion mainstreaming objective. The process and results of developing the National Policy on Inclusive Education and subsequent National Strategy and Action Plan were the focus in Lao PDR, and UNESCO's involvement in the process of developing the Education sector plan, and the resulting attention to inclusion in education was the focus in Mozambique.

In total, 67 respondents from a broad range of stakeholder groups were interviewed in the course of the evaluation.

Survey: UNESCO Member States / UNESCO partners

The data gathered in the desk review and semi-structured interviews was complemented and triangulated with data obtained by a survey that targets key stakeholders. Based on the data collection requirement as formulated in the evaluation matrix, a first broad topic list for surveys formed the basis for the further development of the questionnaires. The core objective of the survey in terms of gathering information was:

1. To assess the UNESCO Education Sector's position and visibility in the field of inclusion in education compared to or complementary to other partners (UN and external partners).

2. To assess expectations towards the UNESCO Education Sector's in the field of inclusion in education among other through intersectoral work.

3. To assess the UNESCO Education Sector's work strengths and weaknesses in the field of inclusion in education.

4. To assess results deriving from the UNESCO Education Sector's work on inclusion in education and where relevant from intersectoral work.

5. To identify past and future challenges for UNESCO's work on inclusion in education and recommendations for UNESCO in view of the focus and strategic positioning of its work on inclusion in education and for possible improvements to further strengthen its support in inclusion specific work and inclusion mainstreaming.

6. The impact of the unfolding COVID 19 crises on the position of IE (deteriorated attention, increased attention/momentum) will be addressed as relevant across the above areas of assessment.

In the annex 16 the aggregated survey questionnaire/results are included.

This survey had two broad respondent groups:

1. **UNESCO Member States**: The National Commissions and/or Permanent Delegations from all 204 Member States and Associated Member States were approached to complete the survey and distributed it further in their country among the relevant stakeholders.

2. **UNESCO partners**: this includes international level and country level key partners working on inclusion in education, but also partners that work on sectoral education developments (e.g. in primary education, TVET, teacher education) that touch upon inclusion in education from a mainstreaming perspective. The survey was distributed to UNESCO contacts at HQ and field office level. With the request to share and further disseminate the survey to other relevant national, regional and international stakeholders in a snowball approach, the survey was open from mid-June to mid-September 2021 and was available in English, Spanish and French. Two reminders were sent before the final closure of the survey. In total, 188 people responded to the survey, of whom 91 from UNESCO Member States and 97 from UNESCO partners (see details in annex 15 Aggregated Survey Results).

3. The targeted population is wide-ranging and global. It includes formal representatives of the UNESCO Member States (which are known and easily approachable); but it was considered as interesting to receive inputs also from stakeholders in particular at the country level and also in countries where UNESCO is not present or less active in the field on inclusion in education. For this purpose, the survey included a specific tailoring to the specific characteristics of the respondent, only asking the questions, the respondent can provide an answer to. According to the type of stakeholder/entity and their level of involvement with UNESCOs work the survey has been rooted

to a relevant set of questions. Furthermore, **in terms of outreach,** a **snowballing approach** was implemented whereby receivers of the survey-invitation were asked to forward it to other potentially interested stakeholders within their country or education sector working on inclusion in education. UNESCO education sector staff also distributed the survey link within their networks on specific fields of work / educational sectors.

The survey was open from mid-June to mid-September and was available in English, Spanish and French. In total, 188 people responded to the survey, of whom 91 from UNESCO Member States and 97 from UNESCO partners (see annex 15). Attention was paid to careful gender neutral and culturally sensitive wording of the survey request and survey questions with the respective target audiences in mind and ensuring that each question has a well-defined purpose and a clear meaning.

Analysis of the data collected and reporting

All data collected was analysed based on the agreed approach laid down by the evaluation framework. By continuously checking information obtained through desk review and interviews with different stakeholders against the structure of the evaluation report, the evaluation team ensured that no key insights are lost. Furthermore, regular informal feedback sessions with the relevant stakeholders were used as a sounding board and quality control mechanism. After the data collection phase, the evaluators investigated the body of evidence gathered as a whole and made an **overall assessment** in line with the evaluation questions. Because different sources of data collection were used, the assessment phase consisted of critical triangulation of evidence found.

Applying the judgement criteria (based on the evaluation matrix) the evaluators analysed and interpreted the findings and formulated answers for each evaluation question. The **conclusions** were based on the evidence gathered. Based on the conclusions, the evaluation team developed recommendations and detailed lessons learned on UNESCO's positioning and strategic focus and what elements could be improved for further strengthening and developing UNESCO initiatives in the area of inclusive education in the future.

These recommendations specifying **specific strategic and practical recommendations addressed to relevant stakeholders** were developed, discussed and refined in a tailored and consultative manner. Upon delivery of the final evaluation report, the evaluation team presented the major findings, conclusions and preliminary recommendations of the evaluation **during** an online validation workshop with the Evaluation Reference group**.** Following the discussion reference group members were invited to provide written comments on the draft evaluation report, which were closely considered in the final revision process and the refining of recommendation to enhance their relevance and use. The recommendations and detailed action points have been further discussed and validated, and the ED sector provided a management response to the evaluation overall and the individual recommendations.

Finally, the evaluation proposed a **basic outline/framework for guidance on assessment of inclusion in education**, taking into account existing assessment frameworks and the outcomes of the evaluation. (see Annex 12: Basic framework for guidance on assessment of inclusion in education)

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Annex 11: List of stakeholders interviewed

General list

Name	Function and Sector/Unit	Organisation
Anne Coupez	Chief of Unit, Education Sector, Executive Office, Unit for Strategic Planning, Monitoring, Institute and Field Coordination	UNESCO HQ
Mariana Kitsiona	Programme Specialist, Education Sector, Executive Office, Unit for Strategic Planning, Monitoring, Institute and Field Coordination	UNESCO HQ
Florence Migeon	Programme Specialist, Education Sector, Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality	UNESCO HQ
Kerstin Holst	Programme Coordinator, Education Sector, Section of Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education	UNESCO HQ
Caroline Siebold	Executive Officer/Strategic Coordination Officer, BSP	UNESCO HQ
Carlos Vargas Tamez	Head of Teachers Section	UNESCO HQ
Rolla Moumne Beulque	Assistant Programme Specialist	UNESCO HQ
Cecilia Barbieri	Chief of Section - Global Citizenship and Peace Education	UNESCO HQ
Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg	Advisor for the Communication and Information Sector (CI)	UNESCO HQ
Anna Cristina D'Addio	Senior Policy Analyst (Thematic Lead), GEM report	UNESCO HQ
Maki Katsuno-Hayashikawa	Director	UNESCO HQ
Iulia Sevciuc	Programme Specialist (SHS)	UNESCO HQ
Phinith Chanthalangsy	Head of Unit, Programme Specialist (SHS)	UNESCO Harare Office
Tap Raj Pant	Programme Specialist (ED)	UNESCO Juba Office
Shahbaz Khan	Director	UNESCO Beijing Office
Jennifer Pye	Programme Specialist	International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Paris
Leonora Mac Ewen	Programme Specialist	International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Paris

Name	Function and Sector/Unit	Organisation
Renato Opertti	Consultant	International Bureau of Education (IBE)
Claude Akpabie	Programme Specialist	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), Montreal
Rakhat Zholdoshalieva	Project leader	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)
Tao Zhan	Director	Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE)
Christian Stoff	Chief, Monitoring, Evaluation and Global Reporting	ECW (hosted by UNICEF)
Moritz Bilagher	Acting Director - Education	UNRWA Headquarters
Frosse Dabit	Education Specialist	UNRWA Headquarters
Akiko Ito	Chief of the Secretariat of the CRPD	UN DESA
Rebecca Telford	Head of Education	UNHCR (Denmark)
Koumbou Boly Barry	United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education	OHCHR
Ingrid Lewis	Managing Director	EENET
Mel Ainscow	Expert on IE; Emeritus Professor of Education	University of Manchester
Dean Brooks	Director	INEE
David Rodrigues	National Counselor for Education & ex-President of the NGO Pró-Inclusão and editor of the journal "Inclusive Education"	Portuguese National Education Council
Anna Robinson-Pant	Professor of Education, UNESCO Chair in Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation	University of East Anglia
Amanda Watkins	Assistant Director	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
Julia McGeown	Global Inclusive Education Specialist	Humanity & Inclusion
Dorodi Sharma	Inclusive Development Officer	International Disability Alliance
Sian Tesni	Global Advisor for Education · Community Based Inclusive Development Initiative	CBM

Country-level interviewees

Jordan

Name	Function and Sector/Unit	Organisation
Marina Patrier	Head of Education, Programme Specialist	UNESCO JordanOffice
Leonora Mac Ewen	IIEP	IIEP
Anna Seeger	IIEP	IIEP
Lynne Bethke	Interworks (Consultant with IIEP)	Interworks (Consultant with IIEP)
Kafa Akroush	MoE, Gender Division	MoE, Gender Division
Camille Bouillon Bégin	Canadian Embassy to Jordan	Canadian Embassy to Jordan
Dr Oroba Almousa	UNRWA Jordan Country Office	UNRWA Jordan Country Office
Dr Kawther Moadi	UNRWA Jordan Country Office	UNRWA Jordan Country Office
Maisa al-Qaisi	UNHCR Jordan Office	UNHCR Jordan Office
Jan Beise	UNICEF HQ	UNICEF HQ
Gemma Wilson-Clark	UNICEF Jordan	UNICEF Jordan
David Debattista	GIZ Jordan	GIZ Jordan
aten Al Najar	GIZ Jordan	GIZ Jordan
Terje Watterdal	UNESCO expert, UNESCO Jordan Education Team	
Fabio Mancini	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)Jordan	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
Zein Soufan	Independent	Independent Consultant
Rima Al Qaisi	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

Mozambique

Name	Function and Sector/Unit	Organisation
Paul Gomis	Representative	Director, Maputo Office
Dulce Domingo Mungoi	Education Sector Coordinator	UNESCO Maputo Office
Kenji Ohira	Education manager	UNICEF Maputo Office
André Tutui	Director of Directorate of Educational Planning (DIPLAC)	MoE, DIPLAC
Mario Armando	Policy officer – Directorate of Teacher Training (DNFP)	MoE, DNFP
Elizabeth Sequeira	Executive director	Progresso
Mamade Abdala	External Consultant	MoE
Mariana Kujala Garcia	Counsellor Education and Development	Embassy of Finland to Mozambique

Lao PDR

Name	Function and Sector/Unit	Organisation
Kyungah (Kristy) Bang	Programme officer	UNESCO Bangkok Office
Nantawan (Gade) Hinds	Programme officer	UNESCO Bangkok Office
Dara Khiemthammakhoune	Acting director	Inclusive Education Promotion Centre (IEPC), Ministry of Education and Sports
Mr Houmphanh Keo-Ounkham	Deputy Director	Inclusive Education Promotion Centre (IEPC), Ministry of Education and Sports
Kiran Dattani Pitt	Gender and Social inclusion Advisor	Humanity and Inclusion / USAID
Mr. Sithong	Vice Director General	Ministry of Education Lao PDR

Annex 12: Basic framework for guidance on assessment of inclusion in education

Following the 1994 Salamanca Statement, a lot of research is published about inclusion in education. Scholars however indicate that there is a sense of lack of progress. As evidenced by Nilholm (2020) "there seems to be a lack of theories that have empirically been shown to be successful tools in the development of more inclusive school systems, schools and classrooms."[195] It can be argued that policies related to inclusion in education are too often top-down, improving the provision for vulnerable groups, but doing so without those groups. It keeps inclusion in education in the realm of something that can be solved by add-ons (a policy framework; more budget, better trained teachers), instead of a continuous reflection on the inclusivity of the education system that can result in some disruptions of that system.

In this evaluation, **inclusion in education is defined as 'a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners.'**[196] This definition focuses less on the operational aspects concerning *how* countries and education systems solve specific issues related to learners with specific disadvantaged backgrounds or that are in a specific vulnerable situation. What matters is that the stakeholders are actively engaging on inclusion.

A framework for guidance on assessment should be based on this idea of inclusion in education as a process, meaning that the framework should not assess progress against a defined (ideal-type) end-point for policy development (a fixed normative framework), but it should allow that a continuous reflection process is put in place in countries that brings about positive change related to the inclusivity of education systems, also given ever-changing circumstances.

The development of a basic framework could therefore consider three key aspects:

1. **Key aspect 1: Preconditions** for any inclusive development of education policies and practices. This provides the assurance that work on the dimensions related to inclusive policies (see 2) is not done in a one-off and ad hoc manner, but that this

is based on a sustainable and long-term perspective to continuously make the education system more inclusive.

2. **Key aspect 2: Dimensions** to assess existing education policies for their attention to equity and inclusion. This provides indications on what aspects policies should work on for being more inclusive.

3. **Key aspect 3: Data** on participation and educational opportunities and success of persons at risk of exclusion. This provides the signalling function (who are at risk?) and allows (potentially) to see progress in increasing the inclusivity of the education system.

Together these three key aspects allow UNESCO to assess inclusion in education within countries, not only looking at where data is available, or at potential short-term (policy) development linked to a one-off project, or a support initiative, but looking holistically at different aspects that together assure consistent attention to inclusion in education. Following this broader discussion concerning frameworks and theories, an approach for UNESCO to assess inclusion in education in countries could be to apply a maturity-model of inclusion in education. The basic idea is that it only makes sense to assess countries' inclusivity at specific dimensions (structures, policies, teachers etc.) once a certain set of preconditions are put in place.

Key aspect 1: Preconditions

One perspective to pursue is to consider inclusion in education from a **community-building and engagement perspective**. It sees inclusion in education as no different from any other social policy that is in need of being more inclusive. Therefore, the analytical framework of the Inclusive Policy Lab can be used for assessing whether education policies put in place preconditions for inclusion that can through this, be further operationalised into concepts, policy statement, practices, structures and systems.[197]

195 Claes Nilholm (2020): Research about inclusive education in 2020 – How can we improve our theories in order to change practice?, European Journal of Special Needs Education, DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2020.1754547
196 UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, 2017, p. 13, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254.
197 UNESCO International Bureau of Education. 2016. Reaching Out to All Learners: A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education. Geneva, UNESCO IBE

Inspired by the following Inclusive Policy Lab change markers, the following indicators could be proposed that assess whether preconditions for sustainably working on inclusion are in place. These are selected over others as these are of a more overarching nature and less directly linked to the developed intervention or policy.

Table A. Preconditions – outline assessment framework key aspect 1

Criterion to assess preconditions being in place	Assessment
Inclusion is considered as an explicit and overarching/ transversal goal that cuts across sectoral policies. [Multidimensional, 1]	• Not in place at all • Somewhat in place • To a large extent in place • Fully in place
The availability and use of integrated and policy-sensitive evidence is boosted. [Multidimensional, 4]	
Public expenditure is redistributed towards the excluded and exclusion-prone groups and individuals. [Relational, 3]	
Relations between mainstream population and the excluded and meaningful dialogue between groups are fostered. [Relational, 4]	
Institutionalised drivers of exclusion are detected and removed. [Intersecting risks and drivers, 2]	
Deep and meaningful procedural improvements of policy processes with transformative participation as a normative goal and throughout the policy cycle. [Participatory, 1 and 2]	

Key aspect 2: Dimensions: mapping inclusion in education

Regarding the mapping of inclusion in education in countries, the IBE 2016 report can be used as reference point. At **operational level,** inclusive education is a multi-faceted concept, referring to educating learners with diverse types of needs in regular education settings. This process involves the transformation of schools to cater for all learners which requires vision, placement, adapted curriculum, adapted assessment, adapted teaching, acceptance, access, support, resources, and leadership.[198] At **policy level**, four overlapping dimensions can be identified as keys to establishing inclusive and equitable education systems.[199] This policy review framework looks at dimensions that need to be in place for education systems to become more inclusive and equitable. For each dimension a qualitative assessment could be carried out. The table below provides an indicative way of how to operationalise this.

Table B. Dimensions of a policy review framework for inclusion in education – outline assessment framework key aspect 2

Criterion to assess policy dimensions	Assessment
Concept	
1.1 Inclusion and equity are overarching principles that guide all educational policies, plans and practices	No action taken (Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet) Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible) Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
1.2 The national curriculum and its associated assessment systems are designed to respond effectively to all learners	
1.3 All partners who work with learners and their families understand and support the national policy goals for promoting inclusion and equity in education	
1.4 Systems are in place to monitor the presence, participation and achievement of all learners within the education system	

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198 Mitchell, D. (2015). Inclusive education is a multi-faceted concept. Published in Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal , 5(1), p. 11.

199 As presented in UNESCO, A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, 2017, p. 16, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254; based on UNESCO International Bureau of Education. 2016. Reaching Out to All Learners: A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education. Geneva, UNESCO IBE

Criterion to assess policy dimensions	Assessment
Policy statements	
2.1 The important national education policy documents strongly emphasize inclusion and equity	
2.2 Senior staff at the national, district and school levels provide leadership on inclusion and equity in education	
2.3 Leaders at all levels articulate consistent policy goals to develop inclusive and equitable educational practices	
2.4 Leaders at all levels challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory and inequitable educational practices	
Structures and systems	
3.1 There is high-quality support for vulnerable learners	
3.2 All services and institutions involved with learners and their families work together in coordinating inclusive and equitable educational policies and practices	
3.3 Resources, both human and financial, are distributed in ways that benefit potentially vulnerable learners	
3.4 There is a clear role for special provision, such as special schools and units, in promoting inclusion and equity in education	
Practices	
4.1 Schools and other learning centres have strategies for encouraging the presence, participation and achievement of all learners from their local community	

Criterion to assess policy dimensions	Assessment
4.2 Schools and other learning centres provide support for learners who are at risk of underachievement, marginalization and exclusion	
4.3 Teachers and support staff are prepared to respond to learner diversity during their initial training	
4.4 Teachers and support staff have opportunities to take part in continuing professional development regarding inclusive and equitable practices	

Source: Adapted from UNESCO-IBE, 2016

Key aspect 3: Data

Existing data in countries/regions can help to set benchmarks and targets to track developments over time. The Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER) which map countries' laws and policies on inclusion in education and offer insights through peer reviews with the aim to help improve country's policies in education, the *Worldwide Inequality Database on Education* (WIDE) which takes an intersectional approach at education disadvantage, and provides data for considering inclusion from various specific angles; and the online monitoring tool, *Scoping Progress in Education* (SCOPE), developed in context of the Global Education Monitoring report 2020 on Inclusion and Education, offer rich insights on country inclusion related data and profiles and can be consulted for this purpose.

Annex 13: Biodata of evaluators

Simon Broek (Team leader / Evaluation expert): Simon has over 15 years' work experience and conducted more than 100 research and evaluation projects. In these projects, he is often the lead researcher or project manager. He worked for the EC, EP, Cedefop, ETF, Eurofound, UNESCO, ILO, DAAD, OECD, Dutch ministries and agencies. For UNESCO, he was the team leader and evaluator for over 10 evaluations, such as the evaluation of the UNESCO – HNA project supporting gender-responsive teaching and learning in Asia and Africa, the evaluation of the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education, the evaluation of the TVET strategy, the JFIT-GAP ESD project, the KFIT ICT in education project, BEAR I and BEAR II, the mid-term review of the TVET strategy, ASPnet (UNESCO schools), Global Task Force on teachers, project on Local Education groups, the UNESCO CFIT project on ICT in teacher education in sub-Sahara Africa, and the UNESCO Myanmar STEM project evaluation. In all these projects, there is a focus on gender equality, inclusive education, and (all of) the SDGs. Specifically, on inclusive education, Simon conducted studies on reaching out to vulnerable adult learners in the Netherlands (OECD) and drafted reports on the state of play of adult learning in Europe (multiple reports for the European Commission in the period 2008-2020). Furthermore, Simon was responsible for UNESCO evaluations related to inclusive education (GWE prize, gender-responsive teaching and learning, Myanmar teacher education reform towards more inclusive education) and finally, in a high number of other evaluations in which inclusive education featured prominently (TVET, ASPnet, LEG, GAP ESD etc.). Besides this thematic expertise, Simon is a key expert in developing M&E frameworks. Data collection and analysis is applied in all evaluations and studies and include analysis of quantitative and qualitative in national and international contexts. Most studies include providing policy recommendations. Simon's work covered all EU Member States, Partner Countries and countries in Sub-Sahara Africa, Asia and (Latin) America. In addition to Simon's involvement in studies and evaluations, Simon publishes his studies in peer-reviewed journals, was member of the editorial board of ETF, thematic coordinator of the E-Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) and assessed project proposals as Erasmus+ expert and for the Comenius Prize. He has a background in philosophy and statistical research.

Gert-Jan Lindeboom (Evaluation expert): Gert-Jan has experience in international policy studies since 2010 and conducted numerous international evaluations, impact assessments and studies for a variety of clients (such as UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and various DG in the European Commission). He has a strong basis in qualitative and quantitative research methods in the social sciences and has practical evaluation experience in the area of education, through various field missions in Sub Saharan Africa over the last years. He is familiar in working with the OECD DAC evaluation criteria, as well as with applying the European Union approach to Better Regulation, which includes detailed criteria for impact assessments / ex-ante evaluation, monitoring and evaluation. He specialises in social policies, with a particular focus on education and social inclusion. Over the last years, Gert-Jan has contributed to various evaluations of projects managed by UNESCO's Education Sector in this area, including a 2020 evaluation of the UNESCO-HNA partnership for girls' and women's education, an evaluation of the UNESCO Girls' and Women's education Prize and an evaluation of the UNESCO-STEM project in Myanmar, which focuses on mainstreaming aspects of inclusion in (teacher) education. In addition, he also supported UNESCO-SHS in the evaluation of UNESCO's operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021).

Alexander Hauschild (Senior expert disability): Alexander started his professional career in 2002 as a project officer with the Norwegian-Indonesian bilateral project 'Quality Improvement of Education for Children with Visual Impairment'. In 2005, he became a partner of IDP Norway and technical Advisor for IDPN Indonesia. Alexander has been working as a freelance consultant since 2010. His work has allowed him to gather experience in project design, implementation, and evaluation. He worked with bilateral- and multilateral donors and projects, NGOs, OPDs, governments, and the private sector in Southeast Asia, South Asia, East Asia, East and West Africa, Middle East, South America, Australia and Europe. His most recent assignments include, among others, a position as a strategic advisor for employment promotion of persons with disabilities in Indonesia (GIZ 2019-2022); team leader in the implementation of studies in Cambodia and Pakistan concerning access to TVET and employment for persons with disabilities (Madiba / GIZ 2021-2022); advisor for the development of guidelines for disability-inclusive supply chains (GIZ 2021); inclusive policy expert for the review of the National Policy on HIV & AIDS for the Education Sector in Nigeria (UNESCO 2020-2021); and consultant for disability and gender-inclusive development at the ASEAN Secretariat (Gender Scope / GIZ, 2020-2021). Alexander holds a master's degree in Southeast Asian Studies from the University of Bonn in Germany.

Paddy Siyanga Knudsen (Senior expert migration): Paddy is a Zambian national and holds an MSc Financial Economics from SOAS and a BSc in Development & Economics from LSE. She is a Migration Governance Expert (a Development Economist by profession) with over 16 years of experience in various fields including governance, regional integration and specifically working on migration and financing of SDGs. She has worked for various international and multilateral organisations (including IOM and the European Union) supporting governments, regional organisations and civil society organisations in various countries such as China, Malaysia, Zambia, The Gambia, Tanzania and other countries in East and Southern Africa. Her areas of interest include migration governance, labour migration, migration and development, return and reintegration with regional focus on south-to-south migration (e.g. Africa-China, Africa-South East Asia), EU-Africa and EU-China. She is passionate about evidence-based research on migrants' role in local economic development and believes in their recognition and intentional inclusiveness as development agents both in host and home countries. As a member of the GRFDT advisory team, she provides support on projects and initiatives related to migration and development as well as diaspora engagement. She currently works as a freelance consultant and researcher taking on assignments with international organisations, foundations and consultancy firms in research, proposal development, supporting project management as well as undertaking monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects.

Technical annexes (available upon request at ios@unesco.org)

Annex 14: Evaluation matrix

Annex 15: Interview protocols (data collection)

Annex 16: Aggregated Survey results

Annex 17: Portfolio of Initiatives and projects labelled as Inclusion and Education in Emergencies (38, 39 and 40 C/5)

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