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The Bridge 47 Network brings people of various backgrounds together to learn from each other and collaborate for advancing transformative learning and SDG Target 4.7. Bridge 47 – Building Global Citizenship Education is a project co-created by 14 European and global partner organisations, co-funded by the European Union. The project mobilises civil society to take action for global justice through Global Citizenship Education.

This publication is part of a series of publications commissioned to support advocacy for more space for Target 4.7 and Agenda 2030 in European and global policies. The publications are created to encourage discussion and represent the author’s view on the topic.

Resources for SDG Target 4.7
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Summary

There is an urgent need to invest in quality and transformative education for all in order to work towards a sustainable future. This paper analyses the type and scope of the resources required for this, as well as pointing out the gaps and putting forward recommendations for policy makers.

Halfway through the implementation period, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are still not considered a priority at a political level or amongst the general public, neither globally nor at an EU level. Even in the context of such fragmentation, as well as missed opportunities for building momentum for SDG Target 4.7 in the post-COVID 19 recovery plans, there are nevertheless large numbers of resources available and ready to support a more holistic, transformative form of learning.

These include: A. Financial resources; B. Structures that need to be mobilised; C. Competences frameworks to adapt to an unpredictable future; D. Tools and materials needed to support a transformational education; E. (Human) Resources and mechanisms required to facilitate global dialogue; F. Advocacy structures and efforts for sustainability; G. A values-based transformative communication, setting ethics as a priority.

But what are the existing gaps in resources for SDG Target 4.7 and how can they be addressed? While dedicated and adequate financial funding is important, resources need to be seen more broadly, to include time, human resources, tools, appropriate technology and the development of relevant capacities for achieving Target 4.7.

The first gap to address is the lack of perspective, sometimes a denial, in face of the grim forecasts for life on our planet. It is key to acknowledge this incoherence, promoting a wider discussion and setting the scene for fundamental democratic mechanisms and coherent strategies (e.g. the new ‘Recovery and Resilience’ plans) to be put into place. This requires, in such a polarised world, bridging the social, political, economic, and even existential gaps, making the most of every window of opportunity for change.

Given that the SDGs are not an easily communicable framework, advocacy efforts need to be more rooted, more humane and more engaging. The gap in financial resources requires the dismantling of economic ‘myths’ and the mainstreaming of alternative strategies which re-centre the planet and the environment in our lives. This means decision makers at all levels need to set in place the metrics and indexes for a real economy of well-being, based on dialogue and inclusion.

Thus, public policies across sectors need to embody a holistic perspective, built on dialogue and cooperation, and coherent in their quest for sustainable development. This requires a change from business and work ethics into a ‘life ethics’, moving away from “current models of education, based on preparing individuals to seek personal fulfilment and participation in a global economy, toward education that prepares people who are able to live together with a view of sustaining life on the planet” (Shultz & Elfert, 2018:17).

Authors note: whenever the expression “education” is used in this paper, it is far from a synonym of ‘formal’ education but includes teaching, training and learning in all contexts and levels - whether formal, non-formal or informal - from early childhood education and care to adult and lifelong learning, including vocational education and training (VET) and higher education, and also education in digital environments. When using the concept of transformative education all the ‘education’s for’ mentioned in SDG Target 4.7 are included, as well as other interesting concepts such as the ‘planetary citizenship’ some Brazilian scholars and practitioners use.
Introduction

This paper is part of a series of publications commissioned to support advocacy for more space for SDG Target 4.7 of Agenda 2030 in European and global policies. In November 2019, Bridge 47 organised an event called Envision 4.7, which brought together civil society organisations, national governments, MEPs, European and global organisations, and together wrote a Roadmap for SDG Target 4.7 for Europe.

Focusing on the key themes of this Envision 4.7 Roadmap and drawing on the Envision 4.7 policy papers as key references, this paper focuses on providing a global overview and identification of the types of resources required to achieve this target. As noted in the Envision 4.7 Roadmap: “sufficient resources (...) include prioritization of target 4.7, dedicated and adequate funding, appropriate technology and the development of relevant capacities and capabilities.”

Resources are finite, whether they are human, financial or other types of resources. Agenda 2030 is a response to the acknowledgement that our planet’s resources are finite. It is an ultimate call for all UN member states to achieve sustainable development and avoid the irreparable effects that the climate crisis and injustice can have on our Planet. All scientific forecasts and trends depict the current moment as an urgent time for humanity. UNEP (2021) suggests that the current level of climate and environmental crisis may compromise the achievement of 80% of the Targets of Agenda 2030 by 2030 unless a systemwide transformation takes place.

Globally, investment in education is seen as urgent a priority for all governments and citizens. Transformative education practitioners feel that much is still to be done to urgently mobilise the policies and resources needed to achieve the SDGs. These priorities seem to have come to a stand still in face of the complex strategies, alliances, policy decisions and accountability tools required to implement the SDGs. Organisations such as UNESCO and GENE may share an optimistic view on the current plans and actions, but voices of concern can be increasingly heard from the practitioners and researchers interviewed for this publication. Both globally, and at EU level, the SDGs are not a matter of priority on the political and public agenda. EU Member countries appear to lack a common vision and approach towards Target 4.7 and investment in the sustainable, transformative ‘educations for’ related to Target 4.7 are scattered and insufficient.

The aim of this paper is to explore the role of resources in achieving SDG Target 4.7. It draws on desk research, interviews, meetings and reflections from attending workshops and conferences held between May and July 2021 (UNESCO ESD Global Conference, ANGEL Network 2021 conference, Bridge 47 Imagine 4.7 event, Sinergias Circles of Talk).

It is divided into four sections. Initially, it will tentatively sketch where we are in 2021 in terms of investment in Target 4.7. This is followed by an identification of the types of tangible and intangible resources required to strengthen transformative lifelong learning and achieve Target 4.7 globally. Global examples are presented for different types of resources. Gaps in resources are then summarised and strategies are put forward to address these gaps. Finally, a set of recommendations to policymakers and other stakeholders is proposed.
Where do we currently stand in terms of investments in SDG Target 4.7?

The inclusion of Target 4.7 in Agenda 2030 meant a lot to practitioners, academics, policy makers and learners involved in education, citizenship and sustainability. It validated the new approaches that were being developed to bring together the formal, non-formal and informal learning sectors, and recognised the vital role of transformative education in ensuring a sustainable future for our planet. The declaration drafted by participants of Envision 4.7 called precisely for this acknowledgement in Target 4.7, namely that improving the quality of, and providing access to, transformative education for all learners, can potentially lead to social transformation and be the key factor in ensuring a sustainable future.

The results of the research carried out for this publication reaffirm this assumption. Interviews and discussions during online conferences and webinars all highlighted the urgent need to prioritise a paradigm shift in education. But which resources are currently allocated globally to meet Target 4.7? Which resources are needed in order to make this Target a priority? What kind of investment and mobilisation of resources are required to change the educational paradigm towards one which prioritises “the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development” as referred to in Target 4.7.

UNESCO’s Futures of Education Progress report (2021) provides an insight into current resource commitments for Target 4.7. The report states that:

“Education across the globe today falls well short of our aspirations for ways that schools and learning broadly can support wellbeing and equity for all, and a healthy relationship with the planet (...) We must take collective and collaborative ecological responsibility for fostering sustainable life on the planet. Education must channel human capabilities in directions that improve the quality of human life while respecting supporting ecosystems.”(p.10-11)

The purpose of the report is “to build hope - especially in times of such profound health, governance, economic, and environmental crises - and show how education can be regenerative.” Drawing on extensive public and expert consultations globally, involving over 6,000 participants and a survey with more than 85,000 responses, the final report will be presented in November 2021. The report’s point of departure is the renewed commitment declared by world leaders during the UN’s 75th anniversary in September 2020, and it will complement the UN document already referred to as ‘Our Common Agenda’, expected by September 2021.
Lockdowns during the pandemic and consequent online work and schooling have made it all the more clear that transformative education needs to be made a priority. A call for change has arisen globally from overwhelmed parents and educators, communities and even policy makers. But attention has also been diverted to the immediate, pragmatic “business-as-usual” requirements in order to enable online learning to take place, such as access to IT equipment, internet bandwidth and teachers’ adaptation to online tools. The education community has had to balance simultaneous concerns and calls for quality online education that leaves no one behind, and quality transformative education.

However, aside from the community of inclusive education advocates, it appears that SDG Target 4.7 is not high on the wider public agenda. If more attention is not given to this important Target, it will be very difficult to obtain the resources necessary for a shift to transformative education.

Reflecting on the EU reality from a distance, Jose Roberto Guevara, of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) comments: “when you think of resources connected to Global Citizenship Education, Education for Sustainable Development and even Lifelong Learning, Europe tends to have both educational and funding resources available (...) The challenge is the recognition of the historical realities that have and continue to shape the perspective of looking at, and engaging with, the ‘developing world’ as the ‘other’. This is a reciprocal reality, whereby we ourselves in the ‘developing world’ need to address our own colonial lenses if we are to successfully foster a wider perspective of what Global Citizenship Education is”.

With an understanding of the basic policy context of SDG Target 4.7 globally and in the EU, what resources are required to change education from an outdated, hierarchical, one-size fits all, transmission-based model of formal education focused on teaching linear skills for the labour market, into a transformative type of education with a new lifelong learning paradigm? According to our interviewees, the resources needed to make this change “are massive” and urgent investments are required from all countries.

Solely financial investment in GCE remains far from the 3% of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) recommended by both the OECD, UNDP and the 2005 European Consensus on Development. Target 4.7 is universal and levels of investment allocated to promoting the broad transformative education agenda are not traceable, given that indicators have not been agreed upon nor operationalised. Even in most European countries, there is little evidence of Ministries of Education, Culture, Social Af airs and Foreign Af airs contributing resources to GCE or ESD.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the new European Commission priorities and respective instruments offered hope for providing adequate resources for this Target. Positive language was included in the ‘European Green Deal’, ‘Europe fit for the digital age’ and other strategic
documents. Paradoxically, the whole post-pandemic plan brought a ‘Recovery and Resilience facility’ and National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) that use the word sustainability very frequently, but in terms of the “sustainability of public finances.” The ‘no harm’ guideline has been transformed into “none of the plan’s measures will do significant harm to the environmental objectives.”

Generally, the NRRPs mention investments in education that continue to focus predominantly on preparing learners for the labour market, either as reforms, skills development or research and innovation.

Furthermore, the fragmentation of transformative education practitioners and advocates globally doesn’t make it easy to achieve Target 4.7. “Everyone was so grateful for Target 4.7” in 2015, recalls Su-ming Khoo, from the National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway, adding that its inclusion was “very integrative and affirming for people in the field, because we were fragmented, working in our silos of education for peace, human rights, GCE... But here we are now, half way [through the SDGs implementation period] and all this time we have not seen a more sustainable approach to education as a whole”, adds Khoo.

Even in the context of such fragmentation, as well as missed opportunities to build momentum for SDG Target 4.7 in the post-COVID recovery plans, and a lack of clarity in terms of global financial investment for this Target, there are nevertheless a large number of high quality initiatives, strong coalitions, and local projects being developed around transformative education. There are powerful movements and networks working towards a more holistic and transformative form of learning, some of which will be addressed in the following chapter.
Which resources have to be in place to achieve SDG Target 4.7?

This section presents a taxonomy of the tangible and intangible resources required to meet Target 4.7. Each type of resource is accompanied by concrete examples. In addition to material resources, a clear list of key enabling factors, along with less tangible valuable resources that decisively contribute towards achieving Target 4.7 are included. Citizen engagement to influence political will within a globally interdependent ecosystem is one of the key factors for change.

A  Financial resources

An important resource needed to change the educational paradigm is money. Without financial resources, many of the other resources cannot be put into place (human resources, structures with new responsibilities etc). Stakeholders, including policy makers, have suggested that financial resources are needed for:

- Training teachers and educators (formal, non-formal, informal and VET - Lifelong learning educators)
- Non-formal and formal education materials (not only their creation and production but their distribution, mainstreaming and multiplication)
- Development and implementation of curricula in support of transformative education
- Different material resources required by different kinds of education - eg. opening up schools and classrooms to the community and to nature; developing the digital tools and media literacy skills to use technology in an efficient and creative manner; or art and education that is mentioned in Target 4.7
- Supporting ‘informal learning communities’, communities of practice and other strands of transformative education that provide new educational experiences
As Jun Mohorashi, from UNESCO’s ESD section mentioned:

“This requires specific funds but in reality additional money is hard to harvest. What can change is the way it will be used and allocated to this priority. UNESCO tries to support the governments to do differently - we cannot change the amount of funding so easily, so we need a different organisation of the education system or adjusting it all the way.”

Not all funds mention the SDGs

Even for experienced fundraisers it can be hard to work out which private and public funds are able to support work on SDG Target 4.7, as many do not make direct reference to the SDGs. The diversity of funding bodies and their different priorities and frameworks for applications, project implementation, reporting and monitoring, means that applying for funding can be overwhelming. For this reason, many are expressing an urgent need to exchange best practices and develop funding ethics and minimum guidelines for grant management.

An example of a funding programme that is not explicitly related to Agenda 2030 but its outcomes are related to the achievement of the SDGs is the Active Citizens Fund – EEA Grants, which is a financial resource that contributes to the achievement of SDG Target 4.7 (in Europe). By fostering global and local citizenship education in the European countries that have weaker infrastructures, lower social cohesion and less civic participation, the EEA and Norway Grants contribute globally to the SDGs.

These EEA Grants provide funding to 15 South and Central EU countries to invest in areas such as Education, Climate Change and Low Carbon Culture, Good Governance and Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. In parallel to the funds managed directly by governmental institutions, a specific fund for Civil Society Organisations - the Active Citizens Fund- exists in each one of the beneficiary countries, with over 200 million euros allocated to supporting civil society. Such funding promotes democratic participation, supports active citizenship and protects human rights. It awards funding for projects through open calls for proposals with different thematic areas, including Education for Sustainable Development, Global Citizenship Education, Human Rights Education and other similar areas.
Financial (and other) resources need to be channelled through the existing structures. This means that the existing formal education structures, their governance structures and local infrastructure need to be mobilised, trained and given new responsibilities and tasks highlights Harm-Jan Fricke, global learning consultant. This also applies to other education structures, including state and private, academia or non-formal education, all stakeholders and all partnership structures that can fine-tune their objectives and models, cooperating to pursue the achievement of Agenda 2.

Within formal structures there are nationally agreed policies linked to Target 4.7, which are supported by formal and non-formal education stakeholders. There needs to be an increased level of coherence between these policies. Transformative education is provided by non-formal-education providers, youth, community and senior centres, as well as networks of organisations or institutions and multi-stakeholder coalitions. They need to be identified, recognised and able to acquire the funding required for any new responsibilities they take on.

In terms of informal learning, the sports and entertainment industry, social media influencers, vloggers and comedians can all be mobilised to help reach Target 4.7 and increase incidental value-based informal learning. A current example is activism amongst football players and other athletes. One such example is the citizenship education project which involves major Bundesliga football teams - opening their locker rooms and press rooms to organise quizzes and games on anti-racism and tolerance for students. Existing structures can cooperate across all sectors.

**New forms of cooperation: breaking the silos**

Fragmented, non-coordinated action at the level of international organisations - UNESCO, UNICEF, OECD, the World Bank - as well as at EU level, results in incoherent education policies and weak monitoring and reporting frameworks. One of the UNESCO strategies to address this is working towards reform of the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism.

In its General Assembly in March 2021, UNESCO discussed the organisation’s future strategic orientation to break down silos and pragmatically encourage cross-sector collaboration internally. UNESCO suggests that the ESD sector could work with Environmental Education and with Culture and Heritage, all the while maintaining strong links to the natural sciences. No possible synergies should be overlooked in working for a common agenda.

The future strategic plan - an executive board document yet to be approved after the UN Member States discussion in November 2021 - highlights “Efforts will be pursued in cooperation with relevant Sectors and Services to enhance intersectorality in programming and delivery, where appropriate, in order to enable a comprehensive perspective and to create synergies of approaches across the Organisation.”

Another interesting process bringing together separate structures is the work being done in the 16 Länder (regions or federal states) in Germany. All Länder are autonomous, have different governance structures and experience of working with the SDGs. But even with this heterogeneous background, the Länder now have a joint document that assesses the ‘global learning’ work in the 16 states. In June 2021 they published a resolution signed by all 16 minister-presidents on what the states are doing for Agenda 2030 and pointed to Education for Sustainable Development as one of the 10 key contributors to the great transition and transformation towards sustainability.
Moving from education to learning and expanding knowledge to include competences seems to be one of the emerging calls from practitioners, foresight reports and the UNESCO Futures of Education process. The tension between a more utilitarian vision of education which focuses on preparing learners for the job market, and the need for a more holistic approach to help create a better relationship between humanity and the natural world, makes skills and competences a necessary set of resources for working towards SDG Target 4.7. Furthermore, Foresight reports predict an uncertain future which cannot be responded to through a set of fixed skills. Instead, education systems need to promote in learners the skills and abilities to deal with uncertainty, and to adapt and respond to a rapidly changing, potentially challenging environment.

Already in 2007, before any pandemic made online technology essential and inescapable in the classroom, David Buckingham (media literacy and education expert) claimed that technology in education and digital skills will not be the panacea for our times, nor will having a good grasp of digital tools help you to understand better the ecosystem of media we live in. Massive deployment of technology in schools may also increase the “gap between young people’s everyday lifeworlds outside school and their experiences of schooling systems” (Buckingham, 2007) producing a new digital divide. This highlights that fixed digital skills will not be enough to help learners face the challenges of the world they live in.

In this series of Bridge 47 advocacy publications, one paper develops the complexities of competencies and competency frameworks.

What might be the competences for a changing world?

In 2017 a Portuguese Ministry of Education working group drafted a profile of what a Portuguese student leaving mandatory schooling should look like, and it included the fact that, “In the face of others and the world’s diversity, change and uncertainty, it is important to create conditions for a clear balance between knowledge, understanding, creativity and critical thinking.”

This reference document drew upon old and new documents that foresee and prepare the transition to a transformative type of education, including the European Parliament and Council’s “Lifelong Learning skills” (2006/962/CE), OECD’s “Future of Education and Skills” (2016), CoE’s “Competencies for Democratic Culture: Living Together as Equals in Culturally Diverse Democratic Societies (2016), also going back as far as the UNESCO ‘Faure’ (1972) and ‘Delors’ (1986) reports.

But in Portugal, the proposed changes in curricula are still not deeply reflected in schools. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan presented by Portugal and approved by the EU, does not mention educational investments in making these deeper changes or in teacher training.

Knowledge, competences, skills, attitudes and values are mentioned as the basis for learning, as well as removing encyclopaedic knowledge in favour of understanding the complexity of knowledge. Wales’ new curriculum is another example which is now being piloted towards full implementation in 2022.

The Welsh’s “Voluntary National Review for the SDGs” also mentions Wales’ new Curriculum as being well-positioned to deliver Target 4.7. These reforms in education are a result of Wales’ poor performance in the OECD's PISA assessment in 2009. It gained both public support and an OECD policy review of Welsh education in order to start the change, clearly stating what Wales needs to preserve (i.e. equity and inclusion, as Welsh system is already less dependent on a student’s school and socio-economic background than the OECD average).

Welsh curriculum reform mentions the Welsh Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship framework only once but as a whole seems to recognise transformative education built from the ground up, with concrete new methods and resources, teacher training and a reform of all school practices. Focuses on concrete achievements for students, consistency across settings and schools: four purposes of education, six areas of learning and experience called AoLE (Expressive Arts, Health and Well-being, Humanities, Languages, Literacy and Communication, Mathematics and Numeracy, Science and Technology), a continuum of learning and cross-curricular skills (Literacy, numeracy and digital competence).
GCE and all ‘educations for’ have a wide body of knowledge - including a high quantity and quality of materials, manuals, methods and approaches - to use with learners. There is no need to keep producing more and more resources, but rather to just update these, coordinate and promote their usage more widely. One future priority could be the benchmarking, repository, translation and mainstreaming of the available tools supporting formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Key steps to take could include the embedding of experiential learning related to all dimensions of sustainability through informal activities in informal or formal settings, and the production of adequate materials to support the acquisition of knowledge and skills within the formal school systems.

Policy-makers, local authorities, educational institutions, and funders, need to consider supporting the non-formal education sector and CSOs in bringing together and sharing the fragmented of line materials and online sites and platforms that exist. Support is needed so these resources can be updated and new ways can be found to make these widely available. CSOs, local and grassroots organisations could be supported with these tasks that add to project design and implementation. But more importantly, the involvement of academics could potentially allow for a broader perspective of how these resources could be multiplied and their impact scaled up.

Case

No need to reinvent the wheel

Formal and non-formal educators, schools and teachers, CSOs and local municipalities - today there are a multitude of tools, approaches, methods and manuals. Choosing the most appropriate tools for one’s tasks is a difficult job. The choice depends on the context, the target group and the objective you are trying to achieve. Is it to strengthen a competence, create simple awareness of a global issue or engage the school community? From the most recent group of EU Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) Programme supported projects, a handful presented their outcomes and tools at the Envision 4.7 event in 2020. One of the featured examples, ‘Get up and Goals’ project uses a whole school approach and created the tools for an assessment of the competences, with baseline and endline questionnaires to assess competencies acquired. They also developed a History and Geography material that, in graphic ways, showed a more balanced, less Euro-centric and more inclusive view of global history. Central features of transformative education.
“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”. This quote is one of the most used quotes in non-formal education materials although the authoring by anthropologist Margaret Mead was never accurate together with the shortened version of Ghandi’s quote “Be the change you want to see in the world”, as he encouraged us to embody change in ourselves. These insights highlight how human resources are key to facilitating dialogue and partnership. Thus more needs to be invested in the staff working in these fields in order to achieve Target 4.7.

Key stakeholders and institutions require human resources to coordinate and push for political, economic, social and environmental measures that can embody and support Target 4.7, both locally and globally.

These include social workers and education staff, municipal structures and environmental bodies, national Ministries of Education, Foreign Affairs and the Environment (including inter-ministerial collaboration), as well as teacher training institutes.

Reinforcing human resources by allocating sufficient staff and time to these areas of work, encouraging peer learning, and upskilling people to be facilitators so that they can disseminate their learning internally and externally is crucial in giving greater attention to Agenda 2030 and Target 4.7.

True collaboration, engaging in meaningful and concrete dialogue, and building long-lasting and influential partnerships require clear guidelines on what ‘partnership’ and ‘dialogue’ mean in practice. ‘Partnership’ means different things to different people and different areas, so it is essential to clarify that partnership involves certain levels of equality, respect, reciprocity and ownership (Gutierrez, 2008).

As J. Roberto Guevara, from ICAE, states “what we need are resources to allow this conversation, honest dialogue, to happen.” One of the resources in most demand is the training of key staff as facilitators. This is important for facilitating consensus and partnerships, learning and teaching. Change is required beyond the education system alone, and facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue, partnerships and networks is key in achieving the SDGs.
Professor Silvia Moraes addressed ESD/GCE in Brazil in a recent Sinergias Circle of Talks, and in line with Paulo Freire, mentioned that one of the “most important priorities of our work with education, is to think about this ecology of knowledge” - providing value to excluded indigenous knowledge systems, as opposed to the ‘flat’ certified knowledge that exists only in academia. Only then education systems and “universities can live up to their role.” Silvia Moraes mentions the work her students (teacher trainees) do in connection with the community, visiting villages and quilombolas. Moraes explores the interconnections between three levels of knowledge: scientific knowledge, afro-descendent knowledge and indigenous communities knowledge.

This relates to the current situations with Canada’s First Nations and Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI). In Canada, after the discovery of decades of abuse and death in residential schools (where First Nations indigenous families were forced to send their children from the age of seven), there is a need for urgent action. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), for reconciliation to happen in Canada, “there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.”

Educational institutions, especially elementary and high schools, have made some significant changes following the TRC’s Calls to Action. This includes substantial overhauls to curricula to include the history of residential schools. Other institutions, such as child welfare agencies and the health care and justice systems, have been slower to enact meaningful changes. First Nation representatives don’t feel that their rights are being respected (eg. some communities still don’t have access to clean drinking water, safety and education). Dialogue, recognition and individual and institutional efforts, which acknowledge power relations, values and diverse knowledge systems, can potentially be a first step in righting historical wrongs.

The destruction of indigenous people’s culture is also part of Australia’s history. In December 2019, Australia’s Education Council released the Alice Springs or Mpartnwe Declaration, a direct response to recent data that has revealed a worsening education gap between ATSI “learners to reach their full potential” and non-indigenous students. The Mpartnwe Declaration calls, for example, for the inclusion of ATSI history and cultural knowledge in school curriculums, engaging “in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world’s oldest continuous living culture”. “On paper we have quite a commitment” remarked education expert Karena Menzie-Ballantyne during the ANGEL Conference 2021 “Pedagogy of Hope and Social Justice” - however, teacher training has not yet been adequately adapted in order to implement these changes in practice. More resources and concrete plans for implementation are required.
Advocating for ‘Our Common Future’

There is a need to prioritise advocacy resources for sustainability and transformative education which include the voices of citizens and focus on achieving political commitments already made.

A researcher looking into EU SDG implementation on behalf of FINGO - Finnish Development NGOs states “there are measuring tools in place for the monitoring of SDGs, but no real capacity or effective mechanisms to feed the results into policy making, just guidelines and strategies”. The European Green Deal names a few strategies, such as the ‘Farm to Fork’, but seems to lack real implementation guidelines and mechanisms. The same could be said about the EU Recovery and Resilience facility and all the National Recovery and Resilience Plans. Advocacy for social justice and sustainable development is an important resource for transformative change and working towards the SDGs, in particular Target 4.7, even though it can be difficult to fund.

Success stories in worldwide advocacy

One of the first success cases that comes to mind when considering advocacy for social justice and sustainable development in the 70s and 80s is the overturning of the apartheid regime in South Africa. All over the world, citizens’ movements and organisations put pressure on policymakers. Sanctions were imposed along with sporting and cultural boycotts. In 1990 Nelson Mandela was released and a series of negotiations finally ended the South African racist regime.

Another advocacy campaign in the 80s addressed the hole in the ozone layer and CFCs. Discovered by scientists in the late 70s, it took more than a decade to ban the main contributor to the thinning of our planet’s natural protection. By 1987, an international treaty cut 50% of CFC use. Three years later the Montreal protocol established a ban on CFCs by 2000 (2010 for developing countries).

The young citizens’ movement ‘Fridays for Future’ has strengthened certain campaigns that have lasted for over a decade, such as the ban of single-use plastics. Industry lobbies invested funds to counter advocacy efforts. Some CSOs have calculated that these lobbies had at least three-times more full time staff than environmental CSOs and they invested large sums of money to counter these campaigns. This was done to avoid the “Extended Producer Responsibility” clauses and ensure that the product would be managed at the end of its life by states and citizens - and the environment. However, in January 2018, a European plastics strategy was adopted and a year later the Directive entered into force. Some measures were put on hold due to the pandemic in 2020, but on 3rd July 2021 the legislation on the ban of single-use plastics was finally in place.
Values-based transformative communication

Clearly, education systems need to change. Educators need to become facilitators of learning and the development of competences. Mechanisms for monitoring change need to be put into place. According to our interviews with transformative education practitioners, civil society, researchers and UNESCO staff, a key question remains: how do we change the mindset of decision makers so that they address what is important and urgent?

“We should advocate to, and train leaders and managers, like those in big forums such as Davos, this will be key”, reflects Jun Mohorashi, from the UNESCO ESD section. Other interviewees agree that “the problem is in adult education, how to educate adults?” in light of the urgency highlighted in even the more conservative forecasts about the state of our planet in 2030. But how do we change the values and ethics that drive the global economy and politics? Maybe we should worry more about the education of our ‘elites’ instead of focusing on the underprivileged, as “adult lifelong learning is still an underdeveloped priority”, says Brikena Xhomaqi, from the Lifelong Learning Platform.

As Su-ming Khoo states, “Ethics is a very important set of resources, relations, ethical tools and guidelines.” For example, in areas such as public procurement, the provision of practical guidelines has been very effective for local authorities. There are many possibilities to make investments in educating those in power:

- Support and design effective democratic mechanisms for dialogue with citizens. For example, ‘Have your say’, a platform where citizens and businesses can comment European legislation, could become a good tool if mainstreamed and monitored.
- Use transformative communication, discovering the values and frames behind language and contents. Mainstream sustainable business and knowledge models.
- “Make ethics great again?” A decolonised and non-authoritarian values-based ethical code of conduct could help decision-makers connect with planetary needs.

Academia and young elites go grassroots

The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) has a Youth-Led Action Research programme awarded by the Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), which is an innovative programme engaging young people in leadership. Young people are not engaged in the usual way as leaders and ambassadors in global fora and networking events or social innovation platforms, but rather well-trained leaders carry out participatory research together with local youth, supporting them in documenting their needs and advocating for solutions and resources. True dialogue is created.

There is also another interesting example in Brazil which involves a critical reading of the SDGs in order to engage other voices along the way to achieving Agenda 2030. UnB - University of Brasília and Unesp - University of São Paulo State launched a Guide for Agenda 2030 and a participatory process to create an academic certification to achieve the SDGs. The results of this partnership are three new SDGs which include “reflections from indigenous knowledge that exist, are produced but are never visible”, states Thiago Gehre from UnB. The new SDGs proposed are: 18. Racial equity; 19. Art, Culture and Communication; and 20. Native people and traditional communities. The advocacy process to raise the profile of Agenda 2030 and these new SDGs proposals in the Brazilian political context goes.

Dr. Ash Brockwell, from the London Interdisciplinary School also asks an important question on “how Indigenous worldviews and knowledges can meaningfully inspire policies and strategies at local and global levels, instead of being trivialised or tokenised (e.g. Tyson Yunkaporta, ‘Sand Talk’).” If academia leads the way, these power structures can be acknowledged and dealt with at all levels of decision-making. A research paper on embedding African perspectives in European discussions on transformative education includes a powerful quote from a representative of a CSO or minority-led organisation: “I suppose it is a recognition, as well, that the locus of the problem is largely in the northern hemisphere where we live, and the major change needs to occur here, and the structures that create poverty are largely in the rich northern hemisphere.”
Resource gaps and strategies to address these

After conducting the desk research and a set of interviews with practitioners and other stakeholders from transformative education areas, questions remained such as ‘where are these resources and how can they be mobilised?’ This section of the publication addresses resource gaps and what we need to change to address these gaps and provide the desired outcomes.

1 Lack of Perspective

Perspective is the main gap. The COVID-19 pandemic showed the problems - but I’m not sure we have realised that the solution is staring us in the face” said J. Robert Guevara, from ICAE, remembering how in the first months of the pandemic, disruption and lockdowns globally lead to a kind of collective existential assessment. The pandemic highlighted inequalities between people and countries, from underfunded national health services to the present inequality in terms of access to vaccines. As Mishra, Onyx and McCormick state, the COVID-19 pandemic “exposed inequality, prejudice and discrimination experienced by minorities, indigenous people, as well as refugees and immigrants. The poor, homeless, disabled and dispossessed were also experiencing discrimination, and a greater vulnerability to COVID-19.” But after any disruption there is always a return ‘back to normality’ and there is a significant risk of forgetting all the useful insights about the real needs in our society. In the education area, J. Robert Guevara reflects that “the policy recommendations of the World Bank Study conducted in May 2020 to ‘build back better’ only focused on addressing the ‘learning crises’ in schooling, completely ignoring the value of intergenerational learning that became evident, and therefore the on-going learning needs of parents and grandparents that the pandemic also highlighted”. Is there, still, a window of opportunity here to make changes towards more inclusive, lifelong, and transformative forms of education? This lack of perspective for the education sector mirrors the general inability to see the present and future challenges are all linked together – for e.g environmental challenges need to be addressed together, as UNEP states. Sometimes this appears to be a denial, in face of the grim forecasts for life on our planet. But it is key to acknowledge this incoherence, for example when discussing the future of education outside of an ESD/GCE perspective: in the Recovery and Resilience plans of almost all the EU Member countries, the focus is still mainly on building skills adapted to the new labour market. Policies need to have mechanisms to incorporate acknowledgement of the current challenges and treat these in a serious manner.
How can this gap be addressed?

It is urgent to build on the current momentum, as the sense of crisis lives on. Bridging the social, political, economic, and even the existential gaps highlighted by the pandemic is key in seizing our window of opportunity.

One option is to discuss policies, for example the new ‘Recovery and Resilience’ plans in Europe, in terms of how they engage citizens, invest in quality education and address inequalities, in line with the ‘leave no-one behind’ principle of Agenda 2030, reaffirmed in recent EU policies.

The fundamental changes needed to address the current challenges are not possible if adults cannot learn how to live differently. One good example of this is the experience of “Laos PDR whole government approach to Lifelong Learning” (LLL), points out J. Roberto Guevara. A national LLL policy was developed initially to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), but the realisation that LLL needed to be more holistic and addressed so many issues in the society, made the government decide to develop a transversal education system policy. This resulted in the adoption of a Prime Minister’s Decree on Lifelong Learning in 2020 with the MoES as lead agency but working in collaboration with other relevant ministries, agencies, and local authorities.

SDGs low in the public agenda

Since 2015, many communications experts have acknowledged that the SDGs are not an easily communicable framework. 17 SDGs, 47 targets and the accompanying indicators build an agenda that is hard to ‘sell’. SDG Target 4.7 recognises something as intangible as transformative education. Value-based transformative education has a central role in bridging gaps and addressing open social wounds. But how can these complex ideas be communicated to the general public?

How can this gap be addressed?

Is it effective to bring more ‘polar bear’ images to the news and start new hashtags? Communication experts say it is not. Advocacy for big causes needs to be more rooted, more humane and more engaging than continuing to show desperate polar bears or terrible images of starving people affected by climate change.

Grassroots global alliances are a potential avenue for raising the profile of the SDGs in the public agenda: all stakeholders have a role to play and CSOs can sit together with decision-makers. Experts such as J. Roberto Guevara note that coalitions of stakeholders working together on Target 4.7 can complement and provide more grassroots legitimacy to the SDGs, providing a strong public base for a push in favour of Agenda 2030. This approach has already been pursued by António Guterres for the 75th United Nations anniversary where all events were developed through public and stakeholder consultations.

A global alliance requires the time and resources to:

- include and build on existing networks and engage more local grassroots organisations and international networks in meaningful dialogue (e.g. in Europe a DEAR or 4.7 Multi-stakeholder group could be key and should be strengthened by ensuring a wider representation of organisations).
- foster cross-sectorial thinking - collaborative, interdisciplinary knowledge and action needs to be supported; ‘silos’ in all areas of knowledge and education need to be ‘bridged’.
- mainstream positive and transformative communication - examples from ‘Reframing the message’ and ‘Migration Matters’ can provide helpful insights.
3 Financial resources are not available

Resources are finite and financial resources are badly distributed and managed. The recent financial crisis made this more visible, yet better regulation has still not been achieved. The financial system, with tax havens and targeted speculation, has the potential to drain countries’ economic capabilities and take away political autonomy. Furthermore, wealth inequality is rising, with approximately 1% of the world’s population owning 50% of the world’s resources. Resources tend to be concentrated in the hands of individuals and not available for education and other public services.

How can this gap be addressed?

One of the drivers for policy change is the dismantling of economic ‘myths’ and the mainstreaming of alternative strategies. Jeffrey Sachs’ ‘Six transformations’ plan is mentioned by the FINGO advocacy strategy as a pragmatic yet holistic approach to current and future investments. Such an approach could, for example, lead the ‘Recovery and Resilience’ plans to:

- Promote tax justice - with fair taxation new financial resources for public services will be available
- Relocate resources to transformative education, to reskilling and upskilling, as well as for education at local level
- Invest more in a greener economy, where the circular economy, localisation and other alternatives are reinforced
- Address the economic growth ‘myth’ and consumerist culture by fostering alternative ways of being and measuring progress

4 Lack of connection to the Earth and to ourselves

One key resource that needs much greater attention is systemic thinking. As Jun Morohashi from UNESCO ESD section states, it is “Time to think and reframe our relations with the world and nature”, summarising all the reports, recommendations and public appeals from UN Secretary-Generals over the years. This simple statement is just as applicable to global decision makers as it is to local communities, and even to individuals.

The recent Bridge 47 publication on Foresight and Target 4.7 highlights the need to recentre the planet and the environment within our lives; an insight shared by indigenous communities from all corners of the Earth. When applied to planning and policy making, this means assessing impact, evaluating results and consequently changing policies. Governments need to mainstream mechanisms which facilitate learning from quality impact evaluation, in order to ‘stop valuing what is measurable instead of measuring what is valuable’.

How can this gap be addressed?

The entire economic paradigm needs to be reinvented. Decision makers need to put in place metrics, matrixes and indexes for a real economy of wellbeing, one which:

- Puts social and environmental impacts at the core of a new monitoring framework for our economy - creating metrics to ‘measure what is valuable’
- Encourages funders to change their ethics and their processes to better reflect this new economy, both in format and language.
**5 Change in competences: from work ethics to life ethics**

As seen above, the current formal education curricula, as well as the forecasted new investments in education, are still centered around creating skills for a changing labour market. Lifelong Learning and the non-formal and informal learning sectors are not yet recognised for the fundamental role these can have for learners in an unpredictable future.

**How can this gap be addressed?**

Investing in *universal* access to *quality* education is important. A paradigm shift in Lifelong learning, eg. civic media literacy and media ecosystem regulation, is taking form as adults that are now taking decisions on our shared world need to acknowledge the urgency of addressing the current situation. Work-family and community balance also plays a role in achieving more inclusive societies.

The EU can lead by example given that ‘upskilling and re-skilling’ or ‘adult education’ is part of the new set of initiatives to refinance education. Some of the investments could be divested from formal education (eg. vocational education and training) and the implementation strategies could include non-formal education and validation of competences as a priority. Good examples exist in Slovakia, Lithuania and Latvia, and Brikena Xhomaqi from the Lifelong Learning Platform mentioned that Estonia “has a lifelong learning strategy from a digital point of view, a strategy for digital transition. Nordic countries invest in adult education and continued education for employment but also for personal development. Germany is investing in social inclusion, offering educational opportunities to learners at all levels who did not have a formal education. According to Xhomaqi “the community of LLL there is very holistic and intergenerational, with multi-functioning teams”.

**6 Public policies and public service for our common future**

There are some hard truths on the road to self awareness, as there are some commonalities in the reasons why communities thrive. We live to serve: the planet, the others and our collective happiness – a notion which contradicts the so-called individualism of Western societies. Market driven societies that place the ‘consumer’ at the centre of the market driven by needs, have contributed to the status quo. This means that decision makers sometimes opt to put the responsibility of sustainable living entirely onto the shoulders of citizens, forgetting their own roles in implementing systemic changes (eg. in major industries).

**How can this gap be addressed?**

Public policies and transformative education have a central role in establishing social justice and re-balancing equality at all levels and decision makers cannot be exempt from this role. Decision makers need to engage with citizens and answer their needs, such as housing, health, and education, leaving no-one behind. Manuela Mesa takes a good look at this collective responsibility in a recent paper looking at “what is the role of public policies that foster GCE/ESD”, thus fighting against inequalities and for social justice. Mesa points that policies that foster such a transformative education can change “the way of learning” to overcome the mental frameworks that separate and divide societies. Reconnecting also “the way of doing and the way of being (…) putting together rationality and emotions”, Mesa calls for a different management of our “Global public goods (…) health, knowledge, biodiversity, among others”: “feeling part of a global community” with “co-responsibility”.
Conclusions and recommendations for policymakers

This last section of the paper summarises ways to address the existing gaps in resources. It is aimed predominantly at decision makers, although many of these recommendations are just as applicable to civil society and the whole community of practitioners, educators and learners.

Lynette Shultz and Maren Elfert refer to transformative education as one which promotes “a fundamental shift in relations among people and also among people and all living things on the planet. It will require teachers prepared to work with personal, cultural, and worldview differences, with controversial knowledge, and with an awareness of the interconnection of humans within the natural systems of the world, including the limits of these systems.” This implies a shift away from “current models of education, based on preparing individuals to seek personal fulfillment and participation in a global economy, toward education that prepares people who are able to live together with a view of sustaining life on the planet.”

This research proposes the following recommendations:

While dedicated and adequate financial resources are important, resources for SDG Target 4.7 need to be understood more broadly and go beyond money, to include resources such as time, human resources, tools, appropriate technology and the development of relevant capacities and capabilities.

Resources, both financial and non-financial, should be made available to ensure that the key stakeholders focused on implementing SDG Target 4.7 maintain, and can further develop, the relevant capacities (e.g. tools, human and financial resources, values, equal access, skills, knowledge, networks and materials) to carry out their work.
Policies that support the channelling of resources towards SDG Target 4.7 need to be coherent and collaborative, in order to achieve policy coherence for SDG Target 4.7 and place transformative education higher on the agenda.

Increased collaboration across different sectors of society, different components of SDG Target 4.7 and different ministries and authorities, has the potential to amplify and bring together the voices of various stakeholders working on SDG Target 4.7, thereby placing transformative education higher on the agenda. Public policies and decision making processes need to incorporate more mechanisms for dialogue with local, national and international stakeholders working on transformative learning and defining the future of education.

**Coherent and long-term funding strategies should be designed for achieving Target 4.7.**

Investments in SDG Target 4.7 require long-term commitments, as programmes engaged in transformative learning require time. Funders and institutions need to support evidence-based research on the impact of existing transformative education projects and tools and adopt the findings into their funding and education systems. With evidence of impact, educational institutions can adopt and mainstream the tested learnings in curricula, but also beyond formal education.

Investments in human resources and space (funding, time, mental space and other capacities) of decision-makers at all levels to contribute to the achievement of Target 4.7 need to be ensured, including via facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnerships with all relevant stakeholders engaged in transformative learning. This can provide a good space for discussing policy change for SDG Target 4.7.

The engagement of decision makers at all levels is fundamental to the achievement of SDG Target 4.7. The resources and space required to engage with transformative education should be ensured. Decision makers have a key role in facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue and building meaningful partnerships with those engaged in transformative learning.
Footnotes

1 “By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, prevention of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”.

2 “Our colleagues at the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) have sounded the alarm on the rapid decline of nature and what this means for Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Loss of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, together with climate change and pollution will undermine our ef orts on 80 percent of assessed SDG Targets, making it even more dif icult to report progress on poverty reduction, hunger, health, water, cities and climate.” (Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, 2021)

3 The lead-up to the adoption of the SDGs in 2015 involved diverse discussions. Namely, in the 2012 UN General Assembly, the UN Secretary-General presented the results of a questionnaire to Member States about the key elements of a sustainable development agenda. Education was ranked among the top four, af er food, water and energy (Unesco 2018).

4 Access the full-text that will be revised and presented in November’s 41st UN General Assembly at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375746 (accessed 25/06/2021)

5 Idem.

6 “The UN75 declaration calls on the Secretary-General to propose recommendations for transformative global action to address the problems identified in the text. The expert, multi-stakeholder series aims to generate proposals for consideration in this forthcoming report, which is referred to as ‘Our Common Agenda’, and is expected by September 2021.” Idem.

7 “Schooling was modelled to respond to societal demands for labour, and thus the goal of education was largely to prepare students for jobs. Teaching was also made “ef cient”: in mass education, one teacher was to teach as many students as possible with standardised content. Thus, the curriculum model that matched the demands of the labour market was static, linear and standardised.” in ‘OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030’, available at https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/about/E2030%20Introduction_FINAL_post%20WG9.pdf (accessed 11/07/2021)


13 The three donor countries are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, see https://eeagratings.org/about-us


16 The original declaration can be found here: https://ee-der-laender.de/sites/default/files/2021-06/MPK%20Beschluss/MPK_BeschlussEZLaender_20210617.pdf


18 See https://quoteinvestigator.com/2017/11/12/change-world/

19 See more at http://www.sinergiased.org

20 Quilombos are communities founded by free or run-away slaves of African origin in Brazil. See for example: https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/quilombo-brazilian-maroons-during-slavery (accessed on 30/06/2021)

21 National Center for Truth and Reconciliation at Manitoba University at https://ncr.ca accessed on 30/06/2021


24 ANGEL - Academic Network on Global Education & Learning, Development Education Research Center, University City of London, can be found at https://angel-network.net/


26 Direct quote from “Our Common Future”, also known as the Bruntland report, was published in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) - laying the ground work for sustainability world perspectives and Rio 1992 Earth Summit.
References


31 See more about this project at https://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/node/46982?language=en (accessed 30/06/2021)


33 During May 4th 2021 Bridge 47 Global Policy Working Group May meeting.


38 See more at https://www.bridge47.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/reframing_the_message.pdf

39 See more at http://migrationmatters.me/

40 See more at https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/global-inequality-rising-or-falling


42 See more at Angel Network Conference 2021 opening session (available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dS5U3OQHt_WA)


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