Information Paper 1

Proposed topics for reporting on progress in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda:
Implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education
for Sustainable Development: Progress in implementing the Strategy

Prepared by the Secretariat

Note for your attention: This questionnaire is not a formal reporting, but an intermediate informal reporting exercise to report on the current situation in your country at the beginning of the period 2021-2030, particularly regarding new policy developments with regard to progress on SDGs and impact of COVID-19.

Some questions follow the updated format for reporting which is currently in progress of finalising and the four strands of work which were discussed during the recent meetings of the ECE Steering Committee on ESD. A formal format for reporting will be finalised as soon as the new concept note for strategic planning 2021-2030 is approved and the questionnaire/format for reporting is brought further in line with the UNESCO scheme for reporting.

1.   National reporting on the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development offers a valuable opportunity for countries to learn from each other and to share newly produced resources and materials within and beyond the ECE region.

2.   In preparation for the sixteenth meeting of the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development, countries are requested to fill in the questionnaire below, informing on progress made and challenges encountered in working on priority action areas after the fourth mandatory reporting cycle carried out in 2018 and since the fourteenth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 2 and 3 May 2019).

4.   Countries are kindly requested to submit this information in writing to the secretariat via e-mail (nona.iliukhina@un.org and esd@unece.org) by **20 April 2021.**

5.   The secretariat will review the information submitted and deliver a brief synthesis presentation at the Steering Committee's sixteenth meeting. The presentation will be followed by an interactive discussion.

6.   In the below questionnaire, particular attention is be paid to: (a) the priority action areas of the proposed newly drafted concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework (quality education and ESD; whole institution approach and ESD; digital education, information and communications technology and ESD; entrepreneurship, employability, innovation and ESD); (b) the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on ESD implementation.

7.   Countries will be invited to complement the secretariat's presentation with interventions on outstanding activities and initiatives implemented since the fourteenth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 2 and 3 May 2019), in particular with regard to how the implementation of national strategies for ESD contributes to the new developments and challenges for ESD in the region. Given the limited time available, countries will only have up to three minutes each for interventions from the floor.

Questionnaire for 2021 informal country[1] reporting on the implementation of the priority action areas of the newly drafted concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework[2]

Advances made and challenges encountered since the fourteenth Steering Committee meeting in May 2019

I. Priority action area (a)

Encouraging countries to embed ESD into quality standards, frameworks and resources associated with formal quality assessments and institutional reviews

1. Are there currently any national or subnational quality assessment/enhancement systems that address ESD in your country?

Yes ✔ No ☐

- *ESD is identified as a cross-curricular theme in the National Curriculum Framework for All (NCF) published in 2012. Consequently, this has to be practiced in all licensed educational institutions in Malta catering for students up till compulsory school age. The Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) is the responsible authority to implement external reviews to monitor and evaluate how educational institutions are implementing the NCF. The DQSE evaluates educational institutions vis-à-vis established quality standards and in this case it is relevant to note Standard 2.1. Following an external review the DQSE issues a report that identifies areas of strength and areas that would need further development. With regards to the latter, a SMART action plan is drawn up through a professional dialogue to steer effective implementation and eventual improvement. This is followed by a follow-up visit by the DQSE to monitor progress.*

  Although there Learning Outcomes specific to ESD have been identified and published, to date there are no ESD learning outcomes that are specific to the different curriculum subjects available for teachers.

2. Do quality frameworks exist in your country, for integrating ESD/SDGs in teachers' professional development?

Yes ☐ No ✔

- *ESD/SDGs feature in the professional development of teachers either through seminars organised by the Education Authorities and/or by NGOs active in the field. To date, although ESD/SDGs issues feature in initial teacher education, the study units are not compulsory for all the programmes.*

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[1] Countries with a federal structure are free to provide several inputs or questionnaires from different states or entities, if appropriate.

[2] The latest draft (to be updated for the upcoming 16th meeting) is available from http://staging2.unece.org.net4all.ch/fileadmin/DAM/env/esd/15th_Meeting_SC/Doc/Informal_documents/Information_Paper_No._7_-_Draft_concept_note_post-2019_implementation.pdf

II. Priority action area (b)

Promoting the whole institution approach (WIA) in every institution of formal, non-formal and informal education

1. Has there been any significant advancement made in your country for promoting WIA in formal education?

Yes ✔ No ☐

- *Based on reports from the reviews carried out by the DGSE (see above) the only times where the WIA was witnessed was in schools following the Eco-Schools programme.*

2. Has there been any incentives in your country for integrating WIA in formal, non-formal and in-formal education?

Yes ✔ No ☐

- *These incentives are only available in the formal sector.*
- *Collaboration between the Ministry for Education and Global Education Network Europe, facilitated the GENE school-based project initiative. Through this initiative, schools were allocated European Union funding to plan, develop and implement whole-school GCED (Global Citizenship Education) programmes. The initiative took off in scholastic year 2018 and is currently in its second phase, with a total of 18 participating schools and educational entities.*
- *The adoption of a WIA is one of the criteria for a school (participating in the Eco-Schools programme) to be awarded the Green Flag (an international quality label of sustainable practice in schools).*

3. Has there been any initiatives in your country for integrating WIA in non-formal and in-formal education?

Yes ☐ No ✔

III. Priority action area (c)

Supporting ESD within ICT and digital education

1. Did COVID-19 importantly change ICT and digital education used for teaching and learning on ESD in your country?

Yes ✔ No ☐

- *ICT and digital education input in teaching and learning was surely affected by COVID-19 because schools were closed for several months and teaching/learning had to be carried out online.*

2. In your country, do there exist any programs that support educational actors (teachers, mentors, inspectors etc) to integrate ICT and digital education in ESD?

Yes ✔ No ☐

- *Support was provided by providing teachers with the training required to use digital tools to be able to conduct online lessons. A portal was also set up to assist students, parents and teachers. ESD integrated in certain curriculum areas is provided through this portal. A specific space in the portal is dedicated to the Eco-Schools programme.*

  Government also provided disadvantaged children with the support needed during school closure. NGOs who provide schools.

3.   Is any assistance provided on national level for embedding ICT and digital education on ESD/SDGs?

Yes ✔ No ☐

- *Schools participating in the GENE (Global Education Network Europe) funded school-based project are allocated funding for investment in ESD /GCED resources and organisation of whole school initiatives related to ESD / GCED. Participating schools are encouraged to utilise part of the allocated funding for subscription to online resources related to ESD / GCED embedding.*

IV.   Priority action area (d)

Enhancing entrepreneurship and employment within ESD

1.   Do you have in your country ESD programs that support students/youth entrepreneurship?

Yes ☐ No ✔

2.   Are there any mechanisms on national level that strengthen students/youth entrepreneurship competences related to ESD?

Yes ☐ No ✔

3.   Are there any incentives for ESD on national level which prepare students/youth for the sustainable entrepreneurship and green jobs?

Yes ☐ No ✔

V.   COVID-19 and ESD

1.   Has COVID-19 impacted the implementation of UNECE Strategy for ESD in your country?

Yes ✔ No ☐

- *The easy access to online communication media has managed to go truly national on certain ESD initiatives by making them more accessible to various audiences.*
- *The holistic practical approach to ESD and GCED that is synonymous with a physical presence in school setting slowed down in momentum. However, this was still an opportunity for educators to explore alternative strategies to promote sustainable lifestyles among the scholastic community.*

2.   Does your country face specific challenges for integrating ESD on the national level during COVID-19?

Yes ☐ No ✔

- *The challenges facing ESD implementation are not COVID-19 related.*

3.   What are the lessons learnt in your country from COVID-19, which, to your opinion, would strengthen the role of ESD in the national context as a vehicle for empowering youth and citizens to be more resilient in future emergencies?

Yes ✓ No ☐ • *It has also helped education institutions to get most of their taught courses online ... an opportunity to offer future courses through blended approaches.*