



# **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development**

16<sup>th</sup> meeting, 10 and 11 May 2021

## **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](mailto:nona.iliukhina@un.org) and [esd@unece.org](mailto: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 to 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<sup>1</sup> reporting on the implementation of the priority action areas of the newly drafted concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework<sup>2</sup>

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

### I. Priority action area (a)

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

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

Yes  No

*Please specify:* There are no major changes according to reporting before year 2019. In accordance with the National quality assessment and assurance framework in the field of education (MESS, 2017) the further development process of building the comprehensive quality evaluation system is underway, at the school level (as the self-evaluation) and at the system level as well, including the development of the ESD quality indicators.

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

Yes  No

*Please specify:* However we could say that a kind of progress has been made in integrating ESD/SDGs in teachers' professional development in the last few years. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MESS) publishes in-service programmes each year and co-finances them on the basis of mandatory evaluations of the programme implementation. The offered programmes are published in the *Catalogue of programmes for further education and training of professional workers in education*. It is worth mentioning that In the tender for the school year 2020/2021, the ESD is set as one of the most important criteria in the evaluation and selection of programs for publication in the above-mentioned Catalogue. It is important that the ESD is explicitly highlighted as a priority topic within in-service programmes, and the development of sustainable competencies as a part of the programmes contributes to higher evaluation and thus greater opportunities for co-financing programs. In 2021/22, as a response to the importance of the ESD area, several priority topics have been announced for the area of sustainable development: education for sustainable development and active citizenship, ensuring equal opportunities for vulnerable groups, social emotional competences and well-being in education etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Countries with a federal structure are free to provide several inputs or questionnaires from different states or entities, if appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> The latest draft (to be updated for the upcoming 16<sup>th</sup> 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](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)

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

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

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

Please specify:

**1/The project/measure “Climate goals and topics in the field of education” (2021-2023).**

During 2020 the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports and the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning started, in cooperation with Slovenian main public institutions in the field of education (e.g. National Education Institute Slovenia, Slovenian Institut for Adult Education etc.) preparing an ambitious 3-year ESD project/measure “Climate goals and topics in the field of education”, to be supported by the Slovenian Climate Fund. The levels of pre-primary, elementary, secondary and adult education will be addressed in a holistic and systemic manner.

The whole institutional school approach is put at the very center of the project, intending to change the everyday school life’s habits, emphasizing the transformational learning, therefore helping to develop the skills, values and attitudes needed to empower young people to act in the future in complex situations in a sustainable and responsible manner.

The key activity of the three-year measure/project is the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive program of awareness and education on climate change in the context of ESD, which each public institution mentioned above prepares for its level or field of education. To this end, public institutions in cooperation with both ministries are planning the following main activities: prepare a conceptual framework for the preparation of the program; prepare a program for their level or field of education and test the program on a sample of kindergartens and schools; prepare didactic kits for the implementation of the program; establish demonstration kindergartens, schools and other educational organizations (regionally balanced), which are fully transformed into a sustainable way of life and work, aiming the reduction of the ecological footprint, including the investments in the school infrastructure and appropriate equipment.

**2/Sustainable school architecture, supporting the whole institutional approach in the field of the ESD**

A specific topic in the field of ESD at all levels of education (from kindergartens to upper secondary schools) is the development of spatial literacy in terms of sustainable development, addressing school buildings in the context of sustainable construction and sustainable development. At the end of 2019, the first national conference was organized: “Modernizing the physical learning space from the point of view of modernizing pedagogical work and ESD (organized by NEIS); the development work of NEIS continued in year 2020, with a public tender “The Classroom of the Future”. The three-year research project in the field of the architecture

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and sustainable development, entitled "Situation analysis of the architecture of public kindergartens and schools in Slovenia - recording, evaluation and protection of cases of high-quality (sustainable) architectural practice" was completed at the end of 2019. The most recent R&D tender (2021) is being prepared, which includes a new development research project on the topic of supporting the whole institutional approach to ESD in kindergarten and school through the creation of a sustainable school architecture. The working title of the project (proposal) is: "Creating guidelines for the quality design of modern school architecture with the aim of supporting a comprehensive sustainable way of life and work in school".

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

Yes  No

*Please specify*

In recent years the WIA has more and more become very important part of the programme of all the main school networks in the field of the ESD in Slovenia: Eco Schools, Healthy Schools and UNESCO Schools. In addition to this non-formal networks there are many NGOs in Slovenia that also work on ESD and integrate SD values in their work processes in many ways. Let us mention some recent initiatives and projects:

Cipra Slovenija organizes a yearly event "Fire in the Alps" which aim is to draw attention to the need of a comprehensive approach to environmental and development issues in the Alps. The event is organized as a field trip, where young people under 30 have priority when applying. Fire in the Alps 2020 focused on importance of forests for the Alps through a hiking expedition and various workshops.

Youth Network No Excuse Slovenia is a safe space where young people can gain important skills and knowledge on healthy lifestyles, environment and critical thinking. As they become members at age of 14+, they are included in a holistic programme that includes trainings, workshops, project planning and active involvement. Through the programme they address issues that they see important and evolve values for a more sustainable lifestyle. The programme has been accepting new members every year since 2006.

Scout Association of Slovenia and Slovenian Catholic Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Association have been communicating and living the values of environmental protection and healthy lifestyle for many years. These are also one of the biggest Slovenian youth organizations and have a wide reach to young people all over the country.

Sustainaware is a Global Youth Partnership for Education on Sustainable Development and is an international project that has started in 2020, however it is led by Slovenian Institute for Health and Environment. The objective of the Sustainaware project is to raise awareness among young people, youth workers, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Social Business Enterprises (SBEs) on climate change, climate mitigation and sustainable development and to educate them on these topics through non-formal approaches. Besides the Sustainaware project, the Institute has in 2020 also prepared an interactive tool in Slovenian language for calculating Ecological footprint of an individual and prepared educational material to

help us lower it.

Institute for Sustainable Development has been focusing on ecological food, farming and composting. Their project "Schools' eco-gardens" supports schools and kindergartens in the design and development of school eco-gardens, which become a place for education of children on ecological farming and healthy quality food.

Association Humanitas – Centre for ESD and cooperation is Slovenian NGO focusing on supporting young people in the field of ESD and informing them about global challenges. By promoting solidarity, responsibility, justice and respect for human rights, they encourage young people to become actively involved and co-creating a society based on social and environmental justice. They are carrying out a project since 2017 (ongoing) "Global Challenges – Global Subjects" as a part of which they are developing a tool for teachers to support them in addressing global challenges in their classrooms.

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### III. Priority action area (c)

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Supporting ESD within ICT and digital education

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

Yes  No

*Please specify*

We have no specific information on ESD.

#### 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

*Please specify*

The slovenian Center for school and outdoor education (CŠOD) who has been developing into one of the major agents in the field of the implementing ESD and SDGs in recent years, develops various applications (aps), primarily using in the outdoor education activities. Let us mention one of them "CŠOD Misija" (CSOE Mission): Users are able to access more than 200 educational trails through the outdoor learning app "CŠOD Misija" - these trails were created by CŠOD elementary and secondary school teachers and already encompass over 2500 points of thematic interest and over 5000 challenges. Much of this content is in direct connection with the areas of sustainability and climate change. The app is publicly available and CŠOD has been offering free courses on creating content for it since 2016. More at: <http://misija.csod.si/si/>

Within this question we could also mention the international programme GLOBE (Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment) in which the ICT (various aps and protocols existed) in the very field of the ESD is very important tool. Slovenia joined the programme GLOBE at the end of 2020. The national coordinator of implementing the programme

in Slovenia is above mentioned CŠOD. In implementing the programme GLOBE in Slovenia the network Eco Schools will be the strong collaborator.

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

Yes  No

Please specify

We have no specific information on ESD.

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**IV. Priority action area (d)**

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*Enhancing entrepreneurship and employment within ESD*

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

Yes  No

Please specify

In recent years (2017-2022) there are two major projects running at National Education Institute Slovenia (NEIS) in which the main aims are learning about SD, new green and circular economic models and empowering students and teachers in the field of development the entrepreneurship competencies. The project “Pogum” (Courage) is implementing at the lower secondary education level (120 schools are participated) and the project “Podvig” (Feat) at the upper secondary education level (70 schools are involved).

In 2021 Slovenia was introduced with a new Slovenian branch of Social Impact Award, which runs education and incubation programs in different countries all over the world. It supports early-stage social entrepreneurs in developing and implementing innovative business solutions to tackle the most important societal challenges of our times. This initiative is run by Slovenian Youth Agency. The project has started in march 2021 and is currently in the phase of carrying out educational workshops on importance of social entrepreneurship as a way of addressing biggest challenges – in our environment and globally.

At the start of this year, Youth Network No Excuse Slovenia has launched a new programme for “No Excuse Advocates” intended for students that want to impact and resolve the challenges in our environment. The programme is 2 years old and is based on a competence model that includes workshops and trainings for skills-development and project work, where young people develop their own initiatives and carry them out.

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

Yes  No

See answers at Q1 and Q3.

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

Yes  No

*Please specify*

In 2020 the Government authorised the comprehensive strategic project of decarbonisation of Slovenia through the transition to circular economy, namely with the cooperation of the European Commission and European Institution of Innovation & Technology EIT Climate-KIC. The interdepartmental project consists of several development programs, including the "Circular Schools" program, the basic goal of which is to implement the principles of the circular economy in the curricula of primary and secondary schools.

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## V. COVID-19 and ESD

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

Yes  No

*Please specify*

Yes, in general. Otherwise we have no specific data on the implementation of the ESD. Some national analysis about the education during epidemic covid-19 have already been made, but there is no data by topics, contents, and so also regardless of the ESD. Furthermore Slovenia is participating in two international researches, IEA REDS 2021 and OECD PISA 2022 which are addressing some aspects of the education during covid-19. The results will be available in the next two years.

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

Yes  No

*Please specify*

As we mentioned above we have no specific analysis or data on the implementation of the ESD during covid-19.

However we can say that extracurricular activities which are very important form in the field of implementation the ESD have been least realized. Instead some programmes of "outdoor education" and "real-life learning" (providing by the Centre for School and outdoor Education), like "activity days" and "weekly programmes" were implemented by using the ICT (as long distance learning). Impact of the programmes was limited, due to use of the ICT.

### 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

*Please specify*

In general, we believe that ESD is becoming to the fore in the field of education and at the same time wider in the society due to COVID-19 as essentially related to the climate crisis. Finally it has become more important issue at the EU political level, in a much more explicit way

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than in similar documents once, it is embedded now in European Green Deal (2020) and the RRF 2021-2026 and so is at the national level: in the Slovenian RRF plan (proposal) the major comprehensive reform of curricula renewal (including all levels of education, from the kindergartens to higher education) is planned, highlighting two aspects: digitalisation and ESD.

In the narrow sense we could say that there is need to strengthen the development of the holistic and comprehensive approach to ESD, the development of the ESD that is based more on local learning possibilities combined with the use of ICT and to strengthen the development of the participatory approaches empowering autonomy of the student/learner. More collaborative project learning and collaborative problem solving work is need among the students/learners. And there is need to upgrade teachers' knowledge on ESD (in accordance with strong need for upgrading the curricula). These are some lessons learnt from COVID-19.

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