Economic and Social Council

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

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

Seventeenth meeting
Geneva, 30 and 31 May 2022
Item 2 (a) of the provisional agenda
Implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education
for Sustainable Development: progress in implementing the Strategy

Proposed topics for reporting on progress in the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (2022 informal country reporting)*

Note by the secretariat**

Summary

By its terms of reference, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Steering Committee for Education for Sustainable Development is charged with monitoring progress in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (CEP/AC.13/2005/4/Rev.1, annex I, para. 4 (b)). The mandate of the Steering Committee as the principal decision-making body for the activities on the Strategy in the ECE region, responsible for giving guidance and strategic directions to the implementation of the Strategy and monitoring progress in its implementation, was extended until 2030 by ministers and heads of delegation at the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries held on 8 June 2016 in Batumi, Georgia, in the framework of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.2, para 10).

In line with its renewed mandate, and according to the established practice, in addition to the mandatory national progress reporting carried out at the end of each implementation phase, countries are asked to submit informal reports to the Steering Committee on the progress achieved and the challenges encountered in implementing the Strategy. The secretariat will subsequently review all the reports submitted and prepare a presentation,

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   * This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.
 ** The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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which will identify the major themes and interesting developments with regard to the implementation of education for sustainable development in the ECE region.

To facilitate this process, the secretariat, together with the Chair of the Committee and in coordination with the Bureau, has prepared the present document — a brief questionnaire on progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Strategy since the last mandatory reporting exercise undertaken in 2018 and the informal reporting exercise undertaken in 2021. Countries are kindly requested to fill in the questionnaire and submit it to the secretariat before 13 May 2022.

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 seventeenth 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 sixteenth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 10 and 11 May 2021).

3.   In the below questionnaire, particular attention is paid to the main priority strands of the Strategy's new implementation framework (2021–2030) (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2022/3), focused on:

        (a)   quality education and ESD;

        (b)   whole institution approach and ESD;

        (c)   digital education, information and communications technology and ESD;

        (d)   entrepreneurship, employability, innovation and ESD; and youth and ESD.

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 **13 May 2022.**

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

6.   Countries will be invited to complement the secretariat's presentation with interventions on outstanding activities and initiatives implemented since the sixteenth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 10 and 11 May 2021), in particular regarding 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 2022 informal country[1] reporting on the implementation of the priority action areas of the newly drafted framework for the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030[2]

Advances made and challenges encountered since the sixteenth Steering Committee meeting in May 2021

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 ☐

- *Please specify*

  Schools are encouraged to use school quality management system (QMS) to support the concerns of ESD. QMS's paramount objective is to provide the best possible support for pupils' learning and learning outcomes. The key points for a National Quality Framework are defined. This is the basis for further specification in a participatory process within the different levels of the school system. There are two clearly defined supporting elements at and/or between all the levels of the school system: development plans and periodic (performance) reviews and discussions on target agreements. Concerning ESD, schools are encouraged to choose relevant points of interest or needs in their actual development also focusing on the topics of ESD.

  Schools within the ÖKOLOG-network write annual reports that reflect on the achievements and ESD-activities of the school and to make them visible.

  The Austrian Ecolabel for schools and for university colleges of teacher training encourages the protection of environment & climate, health care, quality of education and education for sustainable development. To gain the Ecolabel, the schools/institutions undergo an external assessment process. The assessment includes, among others, the following fields of action: Environmental management, information and social affairs, Educational quality and education for sustainable development, Energy use and saving, construction work, School's own outdoor area.

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic -> No*

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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] See framework for the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030 (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2022/3). Available from https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/ece_cep_ac.13_2022_3_adv_edited.pdf

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

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

- *Please specify*

At present new curricula for teacher education are established and there have been adopted a series of policy papers for ESD to be integrated. The Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research has commissioned a policy paper for integrating ESD in teacher education.

The detailed design of the curricula is the responsibility of the educational establishments, therefore the curricula for teacher training programmes have different emphases. The topic of ESD is present in several teacher training curricula for primary education, secondary general education and vocational education.

University colleges of teacher training offer demand-oriented courses and in-service training seminars at schools and across schools as well as specific university courses. The broad spectrum of content includes in particular human rights education and peace education, but also environmental education, globalisation and sustainability, which take into account topics such as climate change, biodiversity and consumer behaviour. A special focus is placed on the 2030 agenda. 13 of 14 university colleges of teacher education engage as ÖKOLOG school network partners. In order to initiate ÖKOLOG impulses in the university colleges of teacher education contact persons for ÖKOLOG were nominated. With these, seminars are held every six months to exchange information and experiences on the ESD activities at the university colleges of teacher education in the areas of teaching, learning, organisation and research

As an example for successful integration of ESD at university level, the University College for Agricultural and Environmental Pedagogy should be mentioned. It is the educational and research centre for teachers and advisors in the professional fields of agriculture, forestry and environment in Austria.

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic -> No*

II.   Priority action area (b)

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

1.   Has there been any significant advancement made in your country in the field of governance, curriculum, leadership, teachers' professional development, teaching methods, collaborations, facilities and infrastructure for promoting application of WSA/WIA to ESD in formal education?

Yes ☒ No ☐

- *Please specify*

A holistic approach within education is intended through the ongoing curriculum development process. A process of renewing the curricula for elementary and lower secondary school with teachers and scientists involved has been kicked off in January 2019 and is supposed to be finalized in 2022. The general part and the subject curricula are updated and key topics of the government programme such as digitalisation and entrepreneurship education are included. The new curricula will be competence-based and are to be reduced to essential educational goals. The cross-curricular educational principles are to be strengthened. ESD will be introduced as a guiding principle.

The ÖKOLOG programme is based on a whole-school-approach. More and more schools (at the moment over 660 schools) are members of the ÖKOLOG School Network. Central financial support is provided by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research. The primary goal of ÖKOLOG is to integrate ESD into school. Within ÖKOLOG schools identify the ecological, technical and social conditions of their environment and, on the basis of these, define objectives, targets and/or concrete activities and quality criteria to be implemented and evaluated. Students as well as all other actors at schools should be involved in a participatory way, and collaboration with authorities, businesses and other interested parties is encouraged.

On the level of higher education many Austrian universities, universities of applied science and university colleges of teacher education have participated in programmes supporting education for sustainable development as a whole institution (Alliance of Sustainable Universities, UniNetz, uniko-manifest for sustainability). This development is fostered by performance agreements between the Ministriy of Education, Science and Research and the respective institutions of higher education.

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic -> NO*

2.   Does your country face challenges and has particular needs in its implementation of WSA/WIA in formal and non-formal education?

Yes ☒ No ☐

- *Please specify*

In non-formal education there is a lack of guidance in regards to WIA implementation. Gradual transformation of institutions need i.e. roadmaps, toolboxes, checklists for monitoring and reflection etc. There would be a need for more knowledge sharing internationally on how to engage non-formal and informal stakeholders in i.e. WIA plans, and on possible best practice policies to better support WIA changes in the country specific context.

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic -> NO*

3.   Have there been any monitoring processes (for instance, self-assessments) in your country that support formal and non-formal institutions

and organizations when assessing their progress regarding application of WSA/WIA to ESD?

Yes ☐ No ☒

- *Not to our knowledge*
- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

III. Priority action area (c)

Supporting ESD within ICT and digital education

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

- *Please specify how*

  The Covid-19 pandemic has had major implications on the education system and on digital education; most of the teaching was moved online. New platforms, methods, materials etc.

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

- *Please specify*

  To integrate in every topic (nothing especially in ESD)

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

- *Please specify*

  Tools, materials, methods, further trainings for teacher (on every topic)

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- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

IV. Priority action area (d)

Enhancing entrepreneurship and employment within ESD

1.   Are there changes in curricula focused on developing (new) skills, aimed at increasing levels of entrepreneurship and the greening of economies (e.g. in TVET and higher education programs?)?

Yes ☒ No ☐

- *Please specify*

  The National Action Plan of Entrepreneurship Education pursues sustainable Entrepreneurship Education in accordance with the SDGs.

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

- *Please specify*

  e.e.si (Entrepreneurship Education for Innovation at School) is a school network for VET schools (schools of business administration). In an Entrepreneurship School, measures to encourage entrepreneurial thinking, personality forming and education towards responsible citizens (TRIO model) are an integral part of teaching and day-to-day school life. Entrepreneurship education and school development should move forward jointly and include all school stakeholders. The SDGs are important points of reference for e.e.si schools.

  The Entrepreneurship Summit is the main event of the annual Global Entrepreneurship Week in Austria. Recent summits had a strong focus on the SDGs.

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

- There are a multitude of programs administered by different ministries. One example is the initiative "Green Days" carried out by the Youth Environmental Platform.

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic -> NO*

V. COVID-19 and ESD

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

Yes ☐ No ☐

- *Please specify how and what challenges occurred*
- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

2.   Are there any lessons learnt in your country from COVID-19, which, in 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 ☐

Currently there is an ongoing consultation process in regards to the renewal of the Austrian Youth Strategy. As a result of COVID-19 the new strategy will include a new dimension of emphasis dealing with the phenomenon of "crisis". This is however not restricted to a traditional understanding of crisis, but rather used broadly, including i.e. aspects of mental health.

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic -> NO*