

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

19th meeting, 29, 30 and 31 May 2024

Information Paper No. 3

Draft concept note for the regional conference to be organized on 27 and 28 June 2024 under the Swiss project (2023–2025) on implementing the fourth strand on "Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development" of the implementation framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030¹

Item 11 (b) of the provisional agenda:

Update on organizing a second activity – A regional conference on implementing the fourth strand on "Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development" of the implementation framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030 (Limassol, Cyprus, 27–28 June 2024)

Prepared by the UNECE Secretariat

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¹ This information document was not formally edited

- 1. The Steering Committee will be informed about the preparation of the second activity a regional conference on implementing the fourth strand on "Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD" of the implementation framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030 (Limassol, Cyprus, 27–28 June 2024) (information paper No. 3).
- 2. The members will be encouraged to notify their respective ministries about the upcoming conference and to facilitate participation. Each country is invited to send a delegation of up to four representatives, with at least one member being a youth delegate.

Draft concept note

for the regional conference to be organized on 27 and 28 June 2024 under the Swiss project (2023–2025) on implementing the fourth strand on "Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development" of the implementation framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030)



Introduction

The future rests on the shoulders of young people and to address the multifaceted challenges ahead, we must empower them by equipping with the necessary knowledge, skills, and mindsets to navigate through the complex challenges and lead the change towards a healthier and more sustainable world for all.

This forum, hosted by the Ministry of Education, Sport, and Youth of Cyprus and organised in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), seeks to harness the potential of entrepreneurship education in empowering youth to shape a sustainable future. Moreover, it aims to explore how education for sustainable development can influence entrepreneurship education to cultivate entrepreneurs who are not only driven by profit but also committed to creating positive environmental, social, and economic impacts for a sustainable future.

Current Landscape

Europe is currently engaged in a profound debate on the transformation of economic systems, recognizing it as a crucial step towards achieving sustainability. The European Union's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan represents a proactive response aimed at tackling youth

unemployment through the promotion of entrepreneurship. Central to this strategy is the integration of entrepreneurship education throughout educational institutions, a measure endorsed by UNESCO-UNEVOC for its demonstrated capacity to stimulate sustainable economic growth and job creation, particularly within TVET systems. The UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) advocates for continued and intensified efforts towards implementing its Strategy until 2030 at the regional level. This strategy was adopted at the Third High-level meeting of Environment and Education Ministries hosted by the Cyprus government in Nicosia on October 5, 2022. The Steering Committee collaborates harmoniously with relevant initiatives at the global, subregional, and national levels. These collaborative efforts include partnerships with organizations such as UNESCO, UNEP, the European Commission, Global Education Network Europe, the Union of the Mediterranean, and other organizations working on the implementation of ESD, illustrating a coordinated approach towards fostering sustainable development through education across various spheres.

Framework for Action

The new implementation Framework of the UNECE Strategy for ESD from 2021 to 2030 (2030 Implementation Framework) represents a pivotal step towards the holistic integration of ESD across all educational levels and societal sectors. This forward-looking framework serves as a catalyst for the development of agile yet robust policies, adept at addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by poly-crisis scenarios. By prioritizing the implementation of key policy directions, including the priority strand on "Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD", the framework underscores the indispensable role of youth in shaping and implementing sustainable development policies.

In response to this imperative, the UNECE has initiated a three-year project aimed at promoting the implementation of this priority strand. The project would culminate in a comprehensive guiding framework for 21st-century competencies, tailored to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in the pursuit of sustainable and equitable economic development.

The Challenge

Numerous challenges such as climate change, social injustice, limited skills and job opportunities, the digital divide, and economic instability hinder the ability of young people to contribute to a sustainable future for themselves and their communities. These pressing issues call for urgent and innovative solutions. Entrepreneurship education plays a pivotal role in nurturing creativity, problem-solving skills, and risk-taking spirit needed to create positive change. In its turn, education for sustainable development fosters critical thinking, promotes global citizenship and deepens understanding of economic, environmental, cultural and social issues. Integrating ESD into entrepreneurship education is crucial for empowering a generation ready to build a more sustainable and equitable future. However, realising such integration requires full political and financial support.

Forum Objectives

This Forum serves as a dynamic platform to bolster the capacity of UNECE member States in adapting education systems towards sustainable development by implementing the fourth priority area of the 2030 ESD implementation framework. Specifically, it aims to encourage the member States to utilize education for sustainable development to stimulate entrepreneurial and innovative mindsets among learners, accelerating transformations towards sustainable development and enhancing youth employability. Additionally, it seeks to address disparities related to technological advances and foster partnerships among stakeholders.

Hosted in Limassol, the event will attract an international audience from the UNECE member States and beyond, aiming to showcase good practices and policies, and strengthen partnerships. The Forum will be an opportunity to provide valuable insights on and examples of how education for sustainable development contribute to integration of sustainability practices into entrepreneurship education. Furthermore, discussions will explore how to ensure that innovations and entrepreneurship contribute meaningfully to a sustainable and equitable future, particularly for future generations.

The forum outcomes will feed into the consultations and discussions in the lead up to the upcoming Summit of the Future to be held in September 2024.

➤ Join us in Limassol on 27-28 June 2024, as we embark on a transformative journey towards empowering youth for sustainable futures through entrepreneurship education.

Together, let's pave the way for a resilient, fair, and sustainable future.

Outline of thematic areas

I. ESD Policy for a Sustainable Future:

The session aims to explore the integration of ESD into national educational frameworks and how it can be anchored into curriculum at various educational levels where entrepreneurship may be taught. Both top-down and bottom-up approaches to enhancing entrepreneurship education for sustainable development will be examined. The session will give an insight into the following issues:

- Policy and regulatory frameworks (with reference to the new 2030 Implementation Framework of UNECE Strategy for ESD, EU frameworks: GreenComp, EntreComp, DigiComp, and LifeComp, and other as relevant)
- Exploring research insights: understanding the impact of ESD on entrepreneurship education
- Curricula anchoring: introducing ESD in the curriculum of entrepreneurship education at different education levels (primary, secondary, vocational, tertiary) for developing required framework of educator competences and entrepreneurial skills for learners, combining a top-down and bottom-up approaches.

II. Entrepreneurship Education for Sustainable Development: ESD Action Planning for Impact

The session will focus on discussing targeted topics aimed at elaborating an action plan for entrepreneurship education for sustainable development, complete with actionable steps and measures. Through a series of workshops and parallel sessions, participants will be prompted to explore innovative perspectives on ESD while fostering critical thinking and sustainability-driven entrepreneurship. Key areas of focus include examining tools, approaches, and experiences in entrepreneurship education that cultivate sustainable mindsets and behaviours, as well as fostering innovation for tangible impact. Additionally, emphasis will be placed on understanding the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders in achieving these objectives, with particular attention to the roles and significance of educational institutions and government bodies in promoting entrepreneurship and sustainability skills. Among other, the following topics will be explored:

- Evolving trends in entrepreneurship education: implications for educators, youth and the necessity of broader stakeholder involvement
- Integrating entrepreneurship with sustainability principles: opportunities and challenges
- Delving into various educational settings of learning entrepreneurship and sustainable development and sharing related learning experiences
- The role of political actors, educational institutions, business community and society in promoting entrepreneurship education for sustainable development.

III. Shaping Sustainable Futures: Empowering Youth through ESD

This session emphasizes the importance of ESD in empowering youth to become leaders in creating a sustainable world. It will seek answers to the following questions:

- Amplifying youth voices: How can we ensure young people have a say in shaping the future of ESD? Are there examples of good practices for countries and institutions on meaningful participation and engagement of young people?
- Bridging the gap: How can we foster intergenerational dialogue and knowledge transfer to accelerate progress?
- Building capacity: What tools, means and networks do young people need to advocate for and implement their sustainability visions?
- Multi-sectoral collaborative solutions: What partnerships and collaborative efforts are needed to drive transformative change in ESD? Reflect on the relevance of a whole-society, whole-government and whole-institution approach that puts the needs of young as the single most important priority of a country.

IV: Financing the Future: Sustained Investment in Youth

This session will look at possible actions and benchmarks to evaluate how decision-makers/governments/ business investing in young people.

It will explore:

• Starting point: How young is the nation?

- Investment: What is the percentage of national budget allocated to youth development issues?
- Job Creation: Is there an existing government policy to create job opportunities for young people?
- Representation: What is the level of youth representation in government and decision-making bodies?

Interconnected for Impact:

This forum adopts a holistic approach, fostering the cross-pollination of ideas among attendees from diverse fields, all aimed at equipping young people with the entrepreneurial skills necessary to translate solutions into tangible outcomes.

By bringing together a wide range of stakeholders, the forum creates a dynamic platform for co-creation and collaboration. With its emphasis on entrepreneurship education and ESD, the forum empowers youth to emerge as future leaders, catalysing positive change towards a sustainable world.

Draft Agenda

for

UNECE FORUM ON ESD

Empowering Youth for Sustainable Futures: Entrepreneurship Education and Youth Engagement

27 and 28 June 2024

Venue: PARKLANE Hotel, Limassol, Cyprus

Objectives:

This Forum serves as a dynamic platform to bolster the capacity of UNECE member States in adapting education systems towards sustainable development by implementing the fourth priority area of the Framework for the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) from 2021 to 2030 (UNECE ESD 2030 Framework). Specifically, it aims to encourage the member States to utilize education for sustainable development to stimulate entrepreneurial and innovative mindsets among learners, accelerating transformations towards sustainable development and enhancing youth employability. Additionally, it seeks to address disparities related to technological advances and foster partnerships among stakeholders.

Target Audience:

The forum is designed for young sustainability leaders, including entrepreneurs, educators and activists, as well as policymakers, and representatives from NGOs and businesses interested in fostering youth engagement in sustainability solutions.

Focus:

Aligned with the UNECE ESD 2030 Framework, the conference emphasizes the following key aspects:

- **Systematic Integration:** Integrating entrepreneurship education with ESD promotes a holistic approach to youth development for a sustainable future.
- **Actionable Outcomes:** The conference aims to generate tangible outputs that contribute to the goals of the UNECE ESD 2030 Framework and the Summit of the Future.
- Collaborative Networks: By facilitating connections and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders, the forum seeks to advance youth-led sustainability initiatives.

June 27, DAY 1		
09.00 - 09.30	Registration of Participants & Welcome Coffee	
Opening		
09.30 – 10:45	Cultural program from the Orchestra "Sistema"	
	Welcome speech and opening remarks by high level officials: (TBC)	
10:45-11:00	Coffee break	
ESD Policy for a Sustainable Future: High-level Panel		

11:00 - 12.15

<u>Aim:</u> To provide a platform for high-level representatives from UNECE Member States and leaders of international organizations to present and discuss key policy directions related to the implementation of the new UNECE ESD 2030 Framework. The panel will particularly focus on the framework's fourth priority area, 'Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD', which underscores the critical importance of integrating entrepreneurship through ESD. This session seeks to highlight innovative policies, showcase successful initiatives, and explore collaborative strategies that emphasize the indispensable role of youth in shaping and implementing innovative sustainable practices. Through these discussions, the panel aims to foster a deeper understanding among stakeholders about the essential integration of sustainability into educational frameworks and entrepreneurial practices, thereby contributing to the creation of a resilient, sustainable future for all.

High-level Panel (40 minutes)

The floor will open for maximum 3-minute interventions.

High-level participants and representatives from other organizations in the public and private sector, youth and NGOs may allocate their speaking time according to their preferences to emphasize specific questions for their reflections.

12:15-12:30

Coffee break

Youth Leading the Way: An Interactive Dialogue

12:30-13.45 (75 minutes)

Aim of the session: The session aims to discuss and devise actionable recommendations ensuring that youth have a meaningful voice in policymaking processes, particularly in addressing pressing global challenges such as climate change, social injustice, and economic instability. By fostering dialogue, the session seeks to identify and promote innovative approaches that empower young people to actively contribute to shaping a sustainable future, while fostering environments where their ideas and solutions are recognized and implemented.

The session emphasizes the necessity of political support and cross-sector collaboration to realize these goals, guided by the principle of 'nothing about youth, without youth'. This engagement will not only spotlight the pivotal role of youth in sustainable development, but also explore mechanisms for holding decision-makers accountable to their commitments, ultimately striving towards a more sustainable and inclusive future for all.

Panel Delegation

13:45-15:15

Lunch break

Introduction to ESD and the Role of Youth in Shaping a Sustainable Future

15:15-16:15

<u>Aim:</u> The aim of this panel discussion is to offer an introduction to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and to explore the pivotal role that youth play in leading sustainable development initiatives. The session will delve into relevant policies, regulations, and frameworks such as GreenComp and EntreComp, examining both the challenges and opportunities inherent in ESD policy implementation. Furthermore, this session will showcase exemplary cases and best practices, highlighting good practices in youth entrepreneurship and ESD strategies integrated within national plans. Through this dialogue, the panel seeks to empower and inspire youth engagement in sustainability endeavors, equipping them with the requisite knowledge and tools to influence future policy and practice effectively.

Keynotes

Each speaker will have maximum 15 minutes for presenting. Then the floor will open for a Q&A round (first through facilitator then questions from the audience)

	Aim: The aim of this session is to understand the influence of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) on entrepreneurship education and investigate the integration of ESD principles into entrepreneurship curricula. Additionally, the session seeks to explore the emergence of innovative and sustainable solutions. The panel will evaluate the effectiveness of these educational approaches and discuss the potential for scaling successful practices. Through an indepth analysis of current trends and research findings, this session seeks to identify actionable insights that can further enhance the integration of sustainability into entrepreneurial education, fostering a new generation of business leaders committed to sustainable practices.			
	 Keynotes: (30 minutes) Panel discussion (40 minutes) Young scientists from around the gloideas on how Entrepreneurship Educto become changemakers. 			
	SD in the curriculum of entrepreneurship equired framework of educator competences. Keynote and introduction to the parallel sess. Member States will engage in discussions exploring various concepts on how to introduce ESD, including youth innovation, in the primary and secondary education curricula. Panel discussion P.S. The panel session is based on an interactive dialogue with the audience. The audience will be invited to share thoughts, comments, examples and also submit questions to the panellists	s and entrepreneurial skil	Member States to will engage in discussions exploring various concepts on how to introduce ESD, including youth innovation, in Higher Education. Panel discussion P.S. The panel session is based on an interactive	
18:50-19:00	Wrap-up of the day in plenary			
	END OF DAY 1			
20:30	Conference Dinner			

June 28 DAY 2	Amplifying Voices & Driving Action (Shaping Sustainable Futures through ESD)
9:30-9:45	Brief Recap of Day 1
9:45-10:45	Aim: This session aims to explore innovative educational strategies that enhance the effectiveness of teaching entrepreneurship within the context of sustainable development (SD) and ESD. It seeks to

	discuss the intricacies of integrating ESD into entrepreneurship education. Also, it explores teaching methodologies employed in both formal and informal settings. Additionally, the session will analyze the roles played by various stakeholders in advancing towards a sustainable future. Keynote and introduction to the parallel sessions		
10:45-11:45	How to establish "a Teach the Teacher" Concept and what challenges should be considered when non-experts teach entrepreneurship. P.S. The panel session is based on an interactive dialogue with the audience. The audience will be invited to share thoughts, comments, examples and also submit questions to the panellists. Panel discussion P.S. The panel session is based on an interactive dialogue with the audience. The audience will be invited to share thoughts, comments, examples and also submit questions to the panelists	How to link entrepreneurship and SD: opportunities and dangers (e.g. social entrepreneurs cannot solve complex societal problems on their own, we also need political action). Panel discussion P.S. The panel session is based on an interactive dialogue with the audience. The audience will be invited to share thoughts, comments, examples and also submit questions to the panelists.	The different spaces of learning entrepreneurship and SD: online, outside the classroom, apprentices running their own subsidiaries. Panel discussion P.S. The panel session is based on an interactive dialogue with the audience. The audience will be invited to share thoughts, comments, examples and also submit questions to the panelists.
11:45-12:00	Coffee-break		
12:00-12:30	Redefining Education: Changing Minds for Tomorrow's Challenges		
	During this fireside chat, a high-level representative will engage in conversation with a young educator, focusing on adapting education and training programs to equip young entrepreneurs with necessary skills to address pressing global challenges such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, pollution and other contemporary challenges like social injustice, limited skills and job opportunities, the digital divide, and economic instability. Additionally, they will explore methods for fostering a mindset shift towards cultivating well-informed citizens committed to creating a more sustainable and responsible future. Participants (TbC)		
12:30-13:30	Panel Discussion: Bridging the Generational Gap for Knowledge Transfer		
	Aim: To address the need for effective knows sustainability solutions, aligning with the olfacilitating dialogue and collaboration between makers, the panel seeks to highlight success contributing to ESD. The discussion will focus on:	bjectives of the new UNEC	E ESD 2030 Framework. By young people and decision-

- a) The significance of knowledge transfer between generations in accelerating progress towards the goals of the UNECE ESD 2030 Framework.
- b) Strategies, initiatives, and programs fostering meaningful dialogue and collaboration between generations, including young people and decision-makers, as highlighted in the new UNECE ESD 2030 Framework;
- c) Successful intergenerational initiatives and programs related to ESD, aligned with the new UNECE ESD 2030 Framework.

Panel discussion

Q&A: Audience members can submit questions during the panel discussion or share additional thoughts and comments.

13:30-15:00

Lunch

15:00-16:00

World Cafe Discussion: Amplifying Youth Voices in ESD

Aim: To explore and enhance the role of young individuals in shaping sustainable development policies and practices. The discussion will focus on fostering effective multi-sectoral collaborations, ensuring sustained investment in youth initiatives, nurturing intergenerational dialogues, and positioning youth as key contributors in agile policy development. The goal is to cultivate a robust platform for sharing ideas, strategies, and actionable insights that empower youth to be active agents of change in their communities and beyond.

Participants gather at four small tables, rotating to discuss pre-defined questions about amplifying youth voices in shaping the future of ESD within the UNECE ESD 2030 Framework. Each table is led by two experts, one 'adult' one youth (15 minutes per table, 2 choices per participant).

The word café is divided in four areas:

- a. **Multi-sectoral Collaborative Solutions**: Participants delve into the intricacies of forging partnerships and collaborative efforts imperative for catalyzing transformative change in ESD. They reflect on the significance of adopting a holistic approach that encompasses entire societies, governments, and institutions, with a singular focus on prioritizing the needs of the youth as paramount for national progress.
- b. **Sustained Investment in Youth**: Emphasizing the pivotal role of youth as agents of change, the dialogue underscores the necessity of sustained investment in youth initiatives. Discussions revolve around strategies to ensure adequate resources and support are allocated to empower youth-led endeavors and harness their potential for driving sustainable development.
- c. **Fostering Intergenerational Dialogue and Knowledge Transfer**: The dialogue explores avenues for nurturing meaningful intergenerational exchanges to accelerate progress in ESD. Participants seek to identify effective mechanisms for transferring knowledge and expertise between generations, recognizing the invaluable role of collective wisdom in addressing contemporary challenges.
- d. Youth as Catalysts for Agile Policy Development: Delving into the realm of policy formulation, the dialogue scrutinizes the ways in which young people can contribute to the development of agile yet robust policies, capable of navigating the complexities of poly-crisis scenarios. Through innovative approaches and grassroots initiatives, youth are poised to play a pivotal role in shaping responsive policies at both national and international levels.

	<u>Participants:</u> Youth, stakeholders, international organizations, business, private sector etc (the word café is open for all the stakeholder groups)		
16:00-17:00	Creating Partnerships Between Educational Institutions and Other Stakeholders Aim: The session seeks to cultivate robust collaborations between educational institutions and various stakeholders, including governments, businesses, and civil society organizations. By focusing on creating synergies, the session aims to equip educational institutions with the tools and resources needed to effectively prepare young people for the challenges and opportunities in sustainable development, aligning with the objectives outlined in the new UNECE ESD 2030 Framework.		
	The role of actors and institutions Panel discussion	 Policy Advocacy Workshop: Building Your Advocacy Toolkit: 	
	P.S. The panel session is based on an interactive dialogue with the audience. The audience will be invited to share thoughts, comments, examples and also submit questions to the panellists.	P.S. The panel session is based on an interactive dialogue with the audience. The audience will be invited to share thoughts, comments, examples and also submit questions to the panellists.	
Conclusions ar	nd Closure of the Forum		
17:00-18:00	Wrap-up of the Workshops: Chair: Cyprus Minister of Education, Sport (TBC) Collaborative organizations UNECE, Swiss, Moderators from each workshop (TBC) Reflection on what we saw and heard - by moderator Recommendations for the future	t and Youth or the Permanent Secretary of the MoESY UNEP (TBC)	
	Concluding remarks		