Reviewing progress
Perspectives across countries

Education in the 2019 High Level Political Forum
with emphasis on Voluntary National Reviews and special publication

Global Education Meeting
Brussels, 5 December 2018

Manos Antoninisis
Global Education Monitoring Report
High-level Political Forum

= apex of global SDG follow-up and review process

- tracks progress
- provides political leadership
- makes recommendations on implementation
- encourages elaboration of coherent policies

Every year, the HLPF carries out progress reviews:

- **Thematic**
  - in 2019: *Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies*

- **Goal** (rotating)
  - in 2019: *SDG 4* and five other SDGs
Key inputs into the HLPF process

- Voluntary **national** reviews
- **Regional** commissions
- Intergovernmental bodies
  - e.g. SDG – Education 2030 Steering Committee
- **Major groups and stakeholders** (=civil society)
  - e.g. Education and Academia group
- **Background notes** by UN system by goal
- UNSG Annual **Progress Report** on SDGs
  (+glossy version)
HLPF schedule

**Week 1:** thematic reviews (days 1-3 pm); goal reviews SDGs (days 2-4 am):
- Inter-governmental bodies
- Papers by major groups
- UN background notes

**Week 2:** VNRs (first half) (= 2-3 minutes each!); goal-wide discussion + declaration (second half)
- Side events
- September UNGA
Voluntary National Reviews

About 40 VNRs per year

Common reporting **guidelines** and **handbook** for preparation:

- align with national frameworks
- integrate three pillars
- set goals and targets
- leave no one behind
- outline institutional mechanisms

‘Countries are encouraged to review all 17 SDGs ... to illustrate innovative **policies** ... or **examples** that could be especially interesting for **peer learning** and in an **international context**’
Analysis of VNRs

Evolution of focus

- **2016**: institutional mechanisms
- **2017**: thematic review goals
- **2018**: all goals

**Education** one of most consistently discussed topics in VNRs: *at least half* cover SDG 4 directly
Analysis of VNRs

Leave no one behind

= most consistently discussed theme in VNRs

but independent analyses question the depth

- Calls for stronger participatory processes
- Only 1 in 3 countries referred to explicit strategies in 2017

Interesting but scattered education examples:

- **Uruguay**: school retention for adolescent girls
- **Senegal**: TVET for girls
- **Australia**: rural scholarships for STEM
- **Bahrain**: strategy for people with disabilities
- **Albania**: Roma and Egyptian people
- **Canada**: Rights Framework for indigenous people
Analysis of VNRs

Inter-sectoral links

Most mentions on curriculum for environmental awareness; other examples of education with other SDGs:

- **Cabo Verde**: education centrally positioned
- **Japan**: gender equality and women’s empowerment
- **Bhutan**: education deprivation contributing to child poverty
- **Portugal**: education to overcome employment barriers
- **Armenia**: education for water and energy efficiency
- **Bahamas**: school dropout reducing measures to fight crime
Analysis of VNRs

Reflections

The VNR is a multi-stakeholder, three-tier process:
1. **Vision**: global commitments and national frameworks
2. **Coordination**: among line ministries and agencies
3. **Technical work**: government and non-state actors

Best VNRs are **analytical** rather than descriptive: they **link** analyses to policies and **reflect** on importance of education

But despite some rich material, treatment can be superficial:
- insufficient analysis to draw lessons learned
- limited information on implementation
- no assessment of programme achievements

Lesson to keep for VNRs from 2019 onwards!
Global Education Monitoring Report
Role in SDG 4 follow-up and review

“mechanism for monitoring and reporting on SDG 4 and ... the implementation of national and international strategies ... as part of the overall SDG follow-up and review”

2016    Education and the SDGs    Sep 2016
2017/8  Accountability            Oct 2017
2019    Migration and displacement Nov 2018

2020    Inclusion                 Mar 2020
2021    Non-state provision       May 2021
Special publication for 2019 HLPF

Rationale

Three reasons

➤ **Timing** of 2019 HLPF between 2019 / 2020 GEM Reports

➤ HLPF to **take stock** of SDG 4 every four years; requires different approach than annual GEM Report format

➤ **Complementary** to other SDG 4 publications in 2019 HLPF

● Not quantitative = role played by SDG Report

→ **Qualitative**: time to reflect on SDG 4

● Not report upwards = role played by SC Report

→ **Feedback to countries**: share positive examples

VNRs could have played this role but currently do not
Objectives

Understand how countries re-orient or align education policies in light of SDG 4

- Collect country perceptions about SDG 4
  - risk that SDG 4 means everything to everybody...

- Distil shared understanding about SDG 4:
  what actions have different countries prioritized?
  1. Analysis of voluntary national reviews
  2. Questionnaire on perceptions and priorities

- Present good practice policies / programs

- Share information on SDG 4 coordination
Three ways in which SDG 4 agenda is influencing education policy planning and implementation in your country?

Describe the policy or programme, which best reflects the commitment of your government to achieving SDG 4

- Overall
- Five key areas
Special publication for 2019 HLPF
Draft outline

► Framing SDG 4
  ● National perceptions: what is unique in SDG 4
  ● Shared understanding: what may constitute progress

► Implementing SDG 4
  ● Beyond averages: leave no one behind
  ● Beyond access: relevant learning outcomes
  ● Beyond basics: global citizenship or digital literacy
  ● Beyond schooling: lifelong learning
  ● Beyond education: multi-sectoral planning
  ● Beyond countries: peer learning mechanisms

► Coordinating SDG 4
  ● National mechanisms: policy and monitoring
Special publication for 2019 HLPF

Next steps

GEM Report publication

- under auspices of SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee
- with collaboration of UNESCO divisions, offices, institutes
- critical inputs from countries: national SDG 4 focal points
  = 2/3 of GEM participating countries submitted questionnaire

Timeline:

- Final questionnaires: December 2018
- First draft with best practices: February 2019
- Full draft: April 2019