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Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

# SDC Thematic Guidance on Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development





# Preface

Why is education a core enabler of sustainable development? First, it is a powerful lever for reducing poverty in that it expands our capacities and opportunities for a better life. Second, it enhances our abilities to face global challenges such as population growth, urbanisation, climate change, or violent conflict, to name just a few. Education also greatly enhances the socio-economic perspectives of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons at their new destinations or upon their return.

We know that without education there can be no development. Education is a fundamental human right and a catalyst for sustainable development, economic growth, and the creation of just and peaceful societies. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 recognise education both as a specific goal and as a means for achieving the other SDGs.

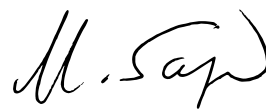
\*\* In the Federal Council's Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017–2020, education is a priority theme and comprises both basic education and vocational skills development. During this period, we will increase our commitment to education by 50% compared to the 2013–2016 dispatch period. The SDC Education Strategy sets out how we will reach this objective through our bilateral and multilateral engagement. It provides guidance to the SDC's South Cooperation, Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Global Cooperation as well as Humanitarian Aid and inspires the SDC's cooperation strategies and its global and multilateral programmes.

The SDC has extensive experience both in basic education and vocational skills development. Two independent evaluations of the SDC's performance in those areas (2015 and 2011 respectively) offer pertinent findings and recommendations. These evaluations confirmed both Switzerland's and the SDC's expertise in these areas and the value added through their work. The present strategy replaces the SDC Guidelines for Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development, published in 2010.

The SDC's Education Strategy builds on the mutually reinforcing qualities of basic education and vocational skills development and stresses their strong link to the labour market and to economic development. Many SDC partner countries are faced with rapid growth of their youth population which puts pressure on national education systems and on labour markets, and often also affects social stability.

As an important driver for social cohesion, education plays a crucial role in fragile countries. In such contexts, our efforts to improve education systems aim at a wider impact in terms of peace and state building, civic participation, and prevention of violent extremism during and after the crisis.

During the previous Education Strategy period, SDC was able to further strengthen its role as a highly recognized international actor in the areas of basic education as well as vocational training and will continue to build on this favourable reputation and the quality of its programmes and activities.



Manuel Sager  
Director General of the SDC, Ambassador

## \*\* Addendum

The SDC Education Strategy was launched in 2017, with no time limit. Until further notice, it will guide the SDC's commitment to basic education and vocational skills development.

Due to the change in terminology of the FDFA's cascade of strategic and operational guidance documents from 2021 onwards, the title of the SDC Education Strategy will be: *SDC Thematic Guidance on Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development*.

# Table of Contents

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<b>Preface</b>	<b>3</b>
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<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>6</b>
The SDC's priorities	6

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<b>1 Global context</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1. Achievements and challenges in education	10
1.2. Education a key pillar for development and peace	11

---

<b>2 The SDC and education</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1. Quality education is a right and a common good	13
2.2 Basic education (BE) and vocational skills development (VSD)	15
2.3. Approaches in BE/VSD and across sectors	17
1 The SDC ensures systems strengthening	18
2 The SDC focuses on BE and/or VSD and deepens their interconnection where relevant as a comprehensive approach to inclusivity within a permeable education system	18
3 The SDC maintains complementarity and interaction between VSD and private-sector development (PSD)/financial-sector development (FSD)	19
4 The SDC enhances synergies between education and other sectors	20

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<b>3 Vision and strategic orientations</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1. Global and regional agenda	23
3.2. Education system governance	24
3.3. Quality and relevance	26
3.4. Inclusion and equity	27
3.5. Sustainability, cohesion and resilience	29
3.6. Transition to work	31

---

<b>4 Implementation modalities</b>	<b>32</b>
4.1. Instruments of the SDC's engagement	32
4.2. Programmatic considerations	32
4.2.1. Geographical and contextual	32
4.2.2. Nexus between development and humanitarian aid	33
4.2.3. Synergies between BE and VSD, VSD and PSD/FSD programmes	33
4.2.4. Synergies between education and other thematic areas/sectors	34
4.2.5. Innovation, data and evidence	34
4.3. Collaboration and partnerships	35
4.4. Roles and responsibilities at the SDC	36
4.5. Financial and human resources	36
4.6. Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation	37

<b>ANNEX 1 – Guidance</b>	<b>40</b>
1. Orientation: Global and regional agenda	40
2. Orientation: Education system governance	40
3. Orientation: Quality and relevance	41
4. Orientation: Inclusion and equity	43
5. Orientation: Sustainability, cohesion and resilience	44
6. Orientation: Transition to work	45
<b>ANNEX 2 – The contribution of education to the other SDGs</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>ANNEX 3 – Education components in non-education programmes</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>ANNEX 4 – SWISS offices in international cooperation</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>ANNEX 5 – Glossary</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>57</b>

Box 1: Global trends and education

Box 2: Migration

Box 3: Donor Committee for dual Vocational Education and Training

Box 4: Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

Box 5: Engaging with the private sector

Box 6: Strengthening education systems in fragile and crisis contexts

Box 7: Quality in basic education

Box 8: A gender-lens in education

Box 9: Education in emergency and crisis situations is life saving and protective

Box 10: Preventing violent extremism (PVE) and education

Box 11: Labour markets in the SDC partner countries

Box 12: Digitalisation: potential for teaching and learning

### Legend

-  Basic Education (BE)
-  Vocational Skills Development (VSD)
-  Global and regional agenda
-  Education system governance
-  Quality and relevance
-  Inclusion and equity
-  Sustainability, cohesion, resilience
-  Transition to work

# Executive Summary

For the SDC, education is an essential foundation of individual, social and economic development and for fostering values such as equality, respect, tolerance and dignity.

Education develops people's abilities to lead meaningful and productive lives, to pursue sustainable development, and to enhance social cohesion and resilience.

## The SDC's priorities

- I. **The SDC concentrates on children and youth to ensure their right to quality education, participation, protection and to enhance their prospects for life and work in all situations, including during crises.** The SDC considers young people to be the critical group for breaking the cycle of poverty, but also the most exposed to harm and violence. It pays special attention to disadvantaged and marginalised groups, to the inclusion of those out of school or the labour market, including those affected by crisis, forced displacement or migration, and to opening up prospects for them.
- II. **The SDC focuses on basic education (BE) and vocational skills development (VSD) and strengthens the complementarity between the two.** By encompassing BE/VSD the SDC adopts a comprehensive approach towards education in line with sector policies and the contextual realities of the SDC's partner countries. The focus in BE is on primary and lower-secondary level formal and alternative education and on life-long learning. In VSD the focus is on non-tertiary vocational education and continuous VSD in formal and non-formal settings, as well as recognition of prior learning.
- III. **The SDC aims to achieve systemic change in education and the labour markets.** It supports national education systems in improving performance and inclusiveness, and strengthens the link between education systems and the labour market and economic development. Aligned to international agendas and national sector plans, the SDC uses its range of instruments at the policy and operational levels to foster inclusion, quality and institutional capacity. This implies measures to enhance system governance, learning outcomes for those at school or in training and targeted education-approaches for children and youth who are out of school or lack the necessary skills to enter the labour market.
- IV. **The SDC addresses education and the protection needs of children and youth during emergencies and crises, and strengthens their resilience to violence and natural disasters.** Young people are among the most vulnerable groups during crises, being exposed to a wide variety of risks. For the SDC, education is a major component of child protection; it is life-saving and provides hope and future prospects. Education is often prioritised by crisis-affected communities.
- V. **The SDC promotes education as a means of enhancing social cohesion and conflict transformation, economic empowerment, resilience, and sustainable development in general.** In view of the implementation of the different goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SDC strengthens the transformative potential of education across sectors. It sees education as a catalyst for change to enable people to address global issues, enhance their resilience to adversity, foster peaceful cohabitation, and to help reduce poverty.

In view of the above, the SDC:

- addresses education through its bilateral and multilateral engagement in development, transition and humanitarian cooperation and through its global programmes;
- engages in education in developing and transition countries and will step up its education support in fragile and crisis affected contexts;
- reinforces the nexus of development/transition and humanitarian aid;
- strengthens inter-sectoral collaboration and integrated approaches within its education programmes and in other thematic (non-education) programmes;
- strengthens strategic partnerships with relevant Swiss and international stakeholders, including the private sector, and invests in coalition building, including making available Swiss experience and expertise in BE and VSD.

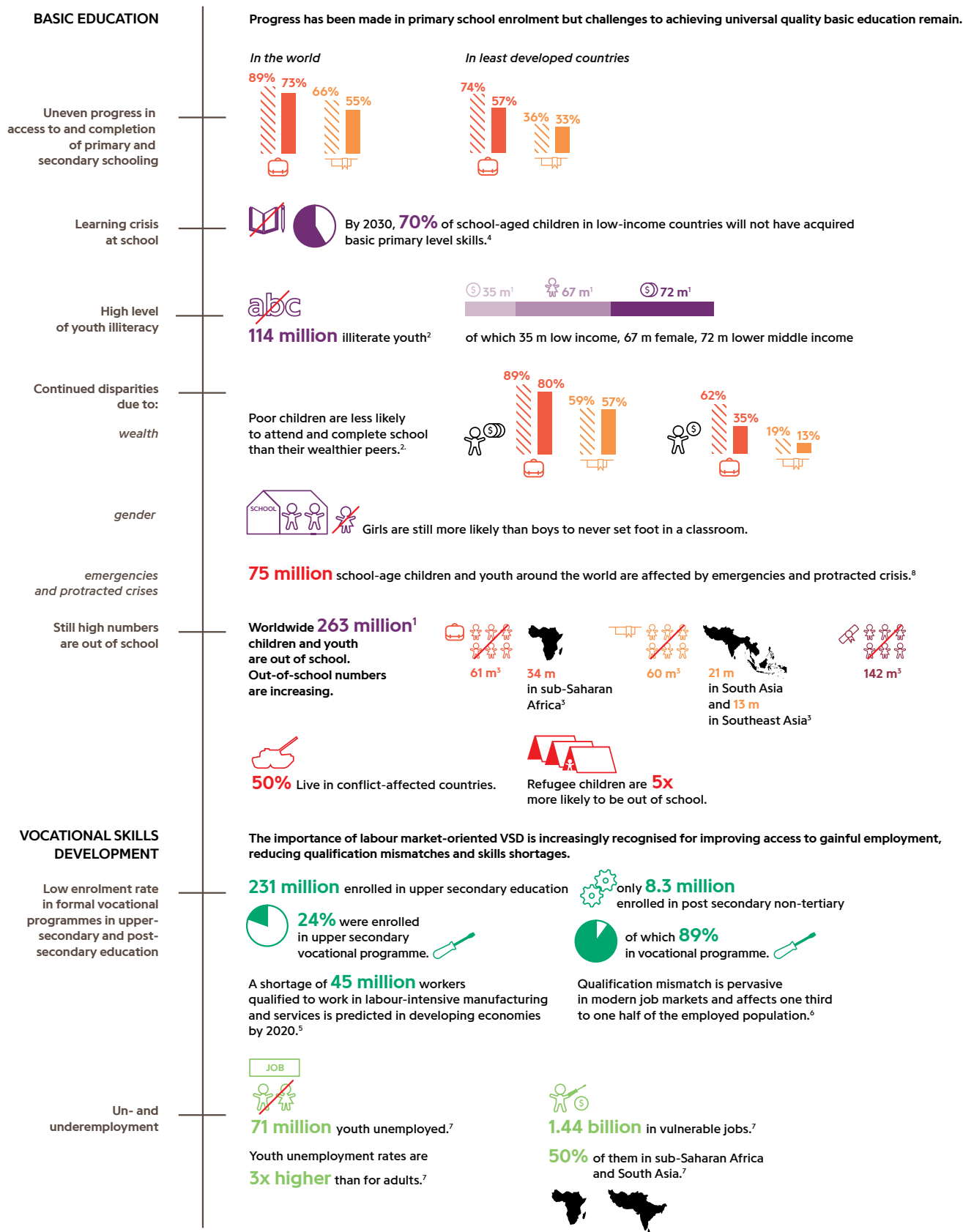
**The SDC's education priorities are implemented along the following six strategic axes:**

(1) global and regional agenda, (2) education system governance, (3) quality and relevance, (4) inclusion and equity, (5) sustainability, cohesion, resilience, (6) transition to work.

I don't ask your name  
I don't ask your ethnicity  
I don't ask your religion  
I don't ask your gender  
I don't ask your origin  
I ask if you go to school



# The world's education situation at a glance<sup>1</sup>



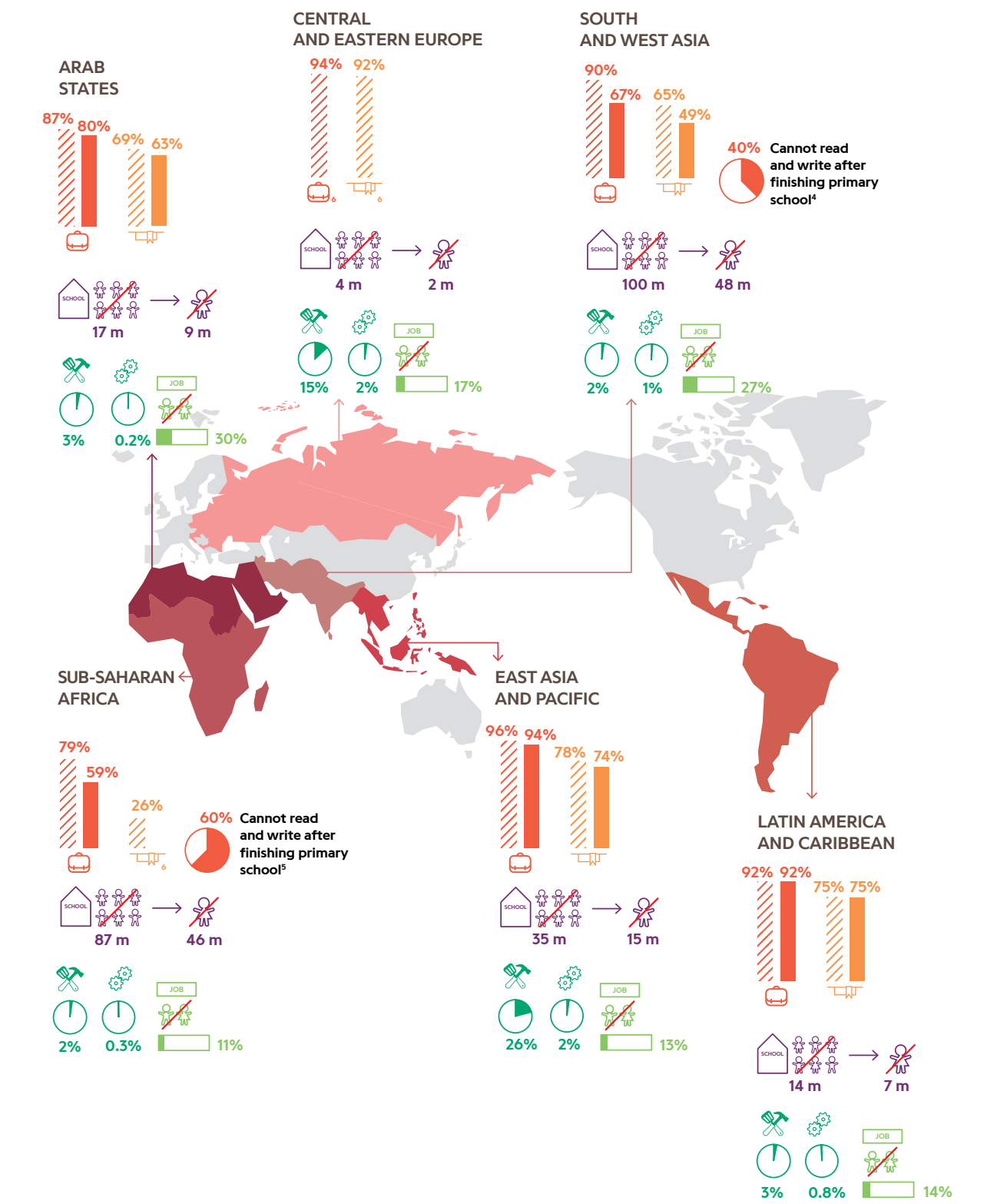
Primary education  
 Net enrolment rate<sup>1</sup>  
 Completion rate<sup>2</sup>  
 Upper secondary education  
 Conflict countries  
 Refugees  
 Lower secondary education  
 Net enrolment rate<sup>1</sup>  
 Completion rate<sup>2</sup>  
 Lower income  
 Middle-lower income  
 Higher income

<sup>1</sup> UIS 2014 <sup>2</sup> UNICEF 2016 <sup>3</sup> UIS 2016 <sup>4</sup> International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity 2016 <sup>5</sup> McKinsey Global Institute, 2012 <sup>6</sup> McGuinness, 2006; Cedefop, 2010; Leuven and Oosterbeek, 2011 <sup>7</sup> ILO 2015 <sup>8</sup> ODI 2016

1 UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (2007: 33) suggests that statistics are likely to understate vocational education enrolments because they don't include non-formal and informal vocational education.



# Education statistics per region<sup>2</sup>



Primary education  
 Net enrolment rate<sup>1</sup>  
 Completion rate<sup>2</sup>  
 Out-of-school primary to upper secondary (6-17 years)<sup>1</sup>  
 Lower secondary education  
 Net enrolment rate<sup>1</sup>  
 Completion rate<sup>2</sup>  
 Girls out of school<sup>1</sup>  
 Share of vocational enrolment of upper secondary<sup>3</sup>  
 Share of vocational enrolment of post-secondary non-tertiary<sup>3</sup>  
 Youth unemployment rate<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> UIS 2014  
<sup>2</sup> UNICEF 2016  
<sup>3</sup> Data July 2016 - estimate and calculations from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2016)  
<sup>4</sup> GMR 2013  
<sup>5</sup> PASEC  
<sup>6</sup> Completion rate: no data  
 Regions according to UIS classification <http://uis.unesco.org/>

2 There is a serious dearth of statistical data on VSD. UNESCO's statistical reporting unit has provided several reasons for the lack of data which makes it difficult to get a holistic overview of VSD: In most countries VSD is not a clearly defined field. TVET is often overseen by several different ministries rather than being the exclusive purview of the ministry of education.

### 1.1. Achievements and challenges in education

Education is a powerful means to tackle poverty and inequality. It is a fundamental element of development policy. While the main responsibility for education lies with the State, international agendas have been instrumental in orienting national policies in education.

From 2000 to 2015, considerable **progress** was achieved under the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the related Education for All framework (EFA).<sup>i</sup>

- Increased universal primary school enrolment from 84% in 1999 to 93% in 2015 and a narrower gender gap<sup>ii</sup>
- Enhanced awareness of technical and vocational education, exemplified with the adoption of the Shanghai Consensus in 2012<sup>iii</sup>
- Greater awareness of education as part of humanitarian aid, following the UN General Assembly resolution on the right to education in emergency situations in 2010
- Establishment of a global funding structure, such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), for the coordination and harmonisation of national education system support<sup>iv</sup>

**Major gaps nevertheless remain.** Global data and national averages mask significant education disparities among and within countries. While the MDGs focused on access to primary school, the quality of learning and school-retention were neglected. Many students fail or drop out of school and cannot complete primary and secondary education or training. This has resulted in both a learning crisis and in a skills gap. Many of today's young people in developing countries are illiterate and lack relevant skills for gainful work.

Basic education systems remain weak and continue to produce generations of young people who do not have the required knowledge and skills that provide the foundation for equal participation in society and the labour market, for the development of abilities to lead meaningful lives, and for further education and training. The lack of effective and relevant education opportunities impedes young people's individual development and their prospects for socio-economic integration and decent work, which threatens development and political stability as a whole. In addition, despite progress in gender equality, in many parts of

the world, girls and women are still facing higher barriers to access and to complete their education than boys and men.

**Education is also challenged by global trends that are affecting people's livelihoods and adding pressure to already stretched national education systems.** Population growth, migration and displacement, climate change, food insecurity, to name just a few factors, are all impacting education. So do conflicts, disasters and humanitarian crises, which are increasing in scope and scale. Global trends risk deepening socio-economic gaps and creating social tensions, are reinforcing existing vulnerabilities and education inequalities. Low-income countries and fragile and conflict-affected contexts are disproportionately concerned (see Box 1).

As a result, major shortcomings in inclusive equitable quality education persist:

- Many students who start school do not complete compulsory basic education – in the least developed countries only 57% finish primary school, even fewer secondary education (33%)<sup>v</sup>
- Only a minority of those in school actually do learn – in low-income countries only 31% will acquire basic primary level skills by 2030<sup>vi</sup>
- Many remain out of school – 263 million children and youth are out of school<sup>vii</sup>, 50% are living in conflict-affected countries<sup>viii</sup>
- Crises disrupt education and expose children and youth to protection risks – each year without school decreases the chances of (re-)accessing education, resulting in lost generations and social capital
- Large numbers are out of work – 71 million youth are unemployed and 156 million young workers are living in poverty, in part due to a lack of adequate skills sets<sup>ix</sup>
- Few are enrolled in vocational education and training – only about 11% of all secondary students in the world, with major gaps in labour-market relevance, quality and affordability of training offers<sup>x</sup>
- International funding for education is decreasing – in humanitarian crises, it is the least-funded sector despite its life-saving, protective character

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In today's rapidly changing and interconnected world, lacking levels of relevant quality basic education and vocational skills limit the fulfilment of basic human rights and equal opportunities in overcoming poverty.

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## 1.2. Education a key pillar for development and peace

**With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development education has received new attention.** The Agenda not only promotes the right to education, it also emphasises the transformative character of education for poverty reduction, economic growth, sustainable development, and creating just and peaceful societies. It considers education to be a fundamental element for addressing global trends and advancing the different goals of the Agenda (illustration next page and annex 2).<sup>xi</sup>

In the humanitarian field too, awareness has increased regarding the role of education as a protective and life-saving intervention during crises and its important bridging function to post-crisis recovery. The prominent role of education in emergencies at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and the launch of the Education Cannot Wait Fund are important milestones.<sup>3</sup>

### EDUCATION IN THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT<sup>4</sup>

**Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (SDG 4)**

- covers the entire spectrum of education from early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education, including vocational education and training and lifelong learning
- strengthens aspects that raise the level of relevant quality learning
- promotes innovative solutions for enhanced inclusiveness
- emphasises the role of education in situations of conflict, epidemics, natural disaster and crisis
- has a holistic view of education, including its contribution to human rights, citizenship, peace and non-violence, protection, sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles
- considers education a catalyst for the entire development agenda.

3 Education Cannot Wait (ECW) is a new global fund to transform the delivery of education in emergencies - one that joins up governments, humanitarian actors and development efforts to deliver a more collaborative and rapid response to the educational needs of children and youth affected by crises.

4 The vehicle for the implementation of SDG 4 is the SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA) adopted by 184 UNESCO member states and the education community in November 2015. The FFA specifies that UNESCO, as the specialised UN agency for education, will continue its mandate to lead and coordinate the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda. In order to ensure strong global coordination, UNESCO is tasked with convening a multi-stakeholder SDG4-Education 2030 steering committee (SDG4-Education 2030 SC) as a key structure for coordinating support for global education efforts within the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development architecture.

#### BOX 1: GLOBAL TRENDS AND EDUCATION

**Demography:** An increasingly young population and pressure on urban centres are challenging the absorption capacity of education systems and deepening the existing education disparities. ➔ *Educating urban youth represents a great socio-economic potential and creates human capital for investments.*

**Rapidly changing labour markets** require education systems to adapt in order to remain relevant and adjust to new ways of working ➔ *Critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and use of ICT are increasingly important skills.*

**Climate change and disaster, food insecurity and epidemics** are impairing education (access, quality) and threatening people's lives ➔ *Education enhances people's resilience and their understanding of relevant climate and health-related issues.*

**Fragility:** By 2030, over 60% of extreme poverty in the world is projected to be in countries affected by fragility where state institutions and access to services are often weak. Inequalities in education lead to unequal socio-economic prospects. Research shows that rising education inequalities increase the risk of violent conflict; consequently, experiencing conflict can exacerbate pre-existing education inequality. <sup>xii</sup> ➔ *Inclusive quality education is a critical element in positively influencing the state-society relationship and addressing underlying causes of violence, if sensitive to social dynamics.*

**Emergencies and protracted crises** are increasing (80% of today's crises are protracted). Crises are impacting the education and protection needs of millions of children and youth by limiting access to learning and protective environments. This harbours the risk of losing generations and signifies a major fall-off in social and economic development and in the recovery of crisis-affected countries. ➔ *Education during emergencies and crises offers prospects, is protective and life-saving, provides normalcy and hope for children, youth and communities while their world falls apart.*

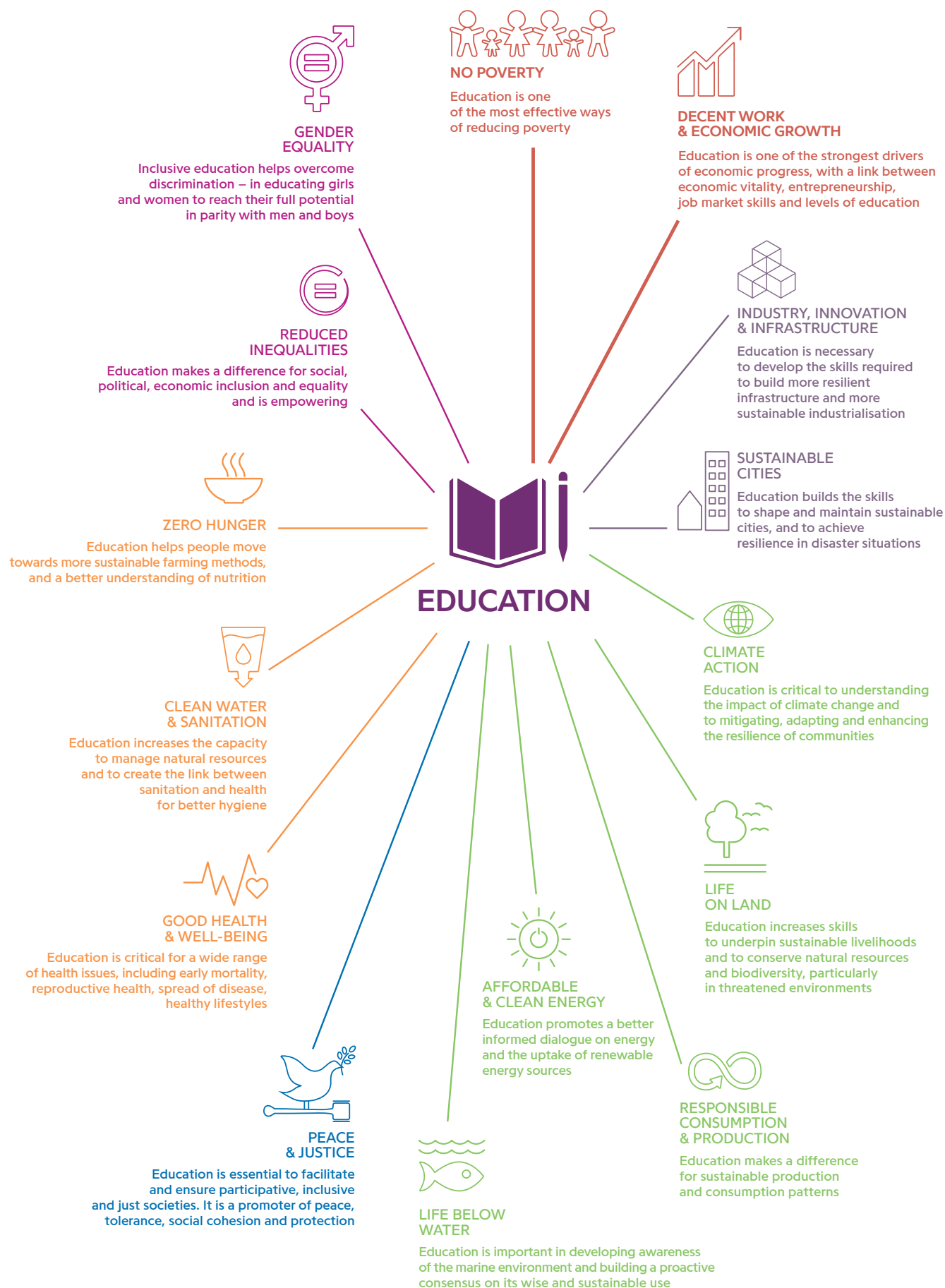
**Global issues have strong and mainly negative impacts on education systems. By contrast, education represents an important lever for tackling and facing global challenges. The SDC is active in integrating these trends and impacts in its current and future orientations in education.**

#### BOX 2: MIGRATION

244 million migrants including 65 million forcibly displaced people (refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced) are unprecedented figures. Many are facing legal barriers and discrimination, lack access to education and training or do not have market-relevant skills. Often they have limited socio-economic prospects and difficulties in integrating in host societies.

**The SDC sees education for migrants as an opportunity: Ensuring access to basic education and vocational skills development opportunities, recognising migrants' prior qualifications and level of education enhance their chances of social integration and of accessing the labour market in their host societies. These factors are important investments which pay off both in countries of destination and of origin. Migrants' active economic participation contributes to increasing the productivity of host countries, reduces their dependence on aid and social services, and favours their integration into the local society. Education, knowledge and skills sets gained during migration and displacement constitute an asset on their return to their country of origin.**

# The contribution of education to the different SDGs



Source GMR 2016 & Global Partnership for Education

# 2 The SDC and education

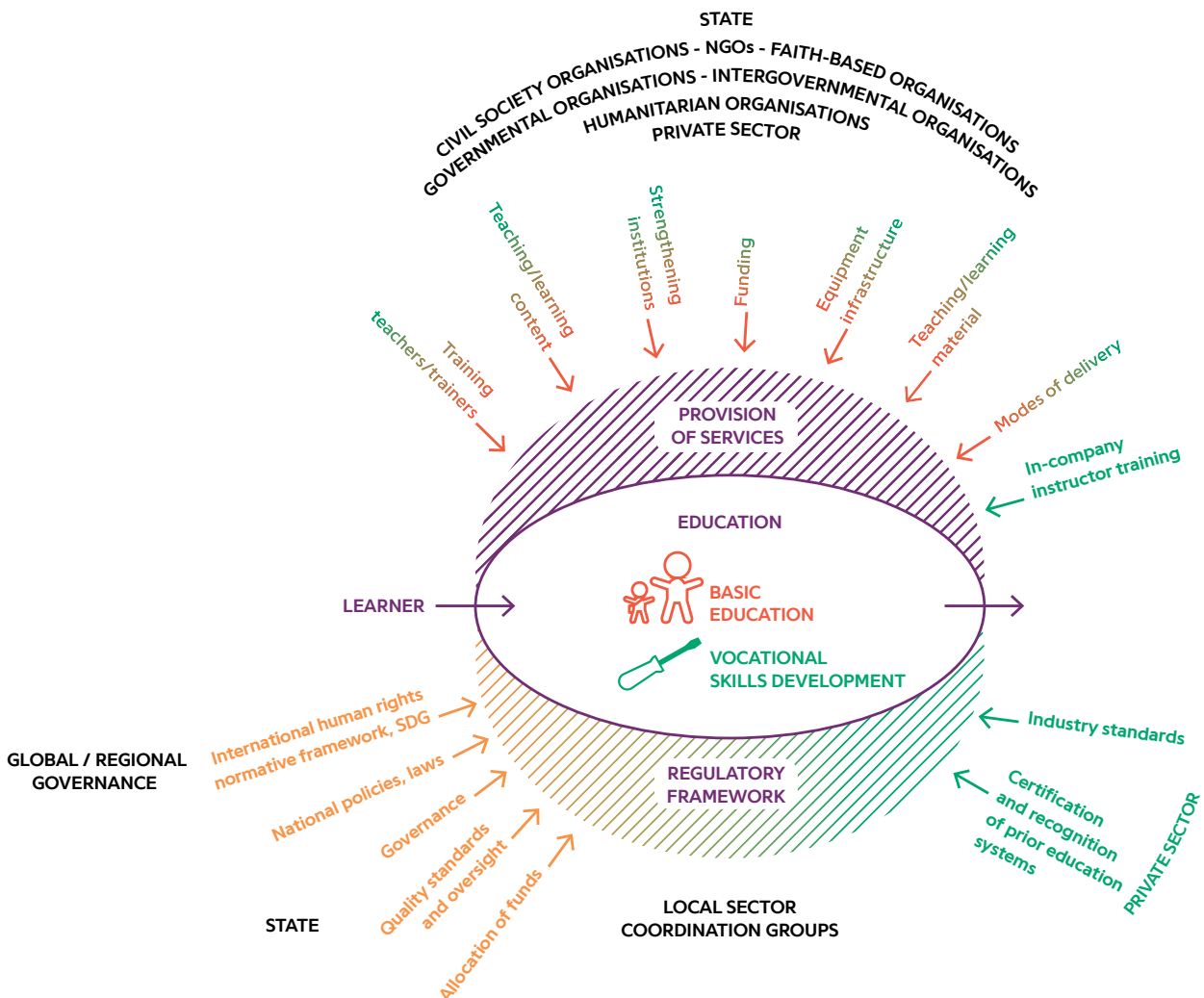
## 2.1. Quality education is a right and a common good

The SDC's approach to education is rights based. Quality education is a fundamental human right, an enabling right and a common good.

- All individuals have an equal right to meaningful, quality education without discrimination.
- The right to education is to be protected in all situations, including those of humanitarian crisis, displacement and migration.
- As an enabling right, education contributes to the realisation of other human rights.

The notion of education as a common good implies the collective dimension of education as a shared social endeavour. **A functioning education system relies on the roles and responsibilities of multiple stakeholders under the monitoring and regulating function of the State.**<sup>xiii</sup>

### Roles and responsibilities of different actors towards education



- **The State is responsible for safeguarding the regulatory framework** for ensuring the fulfilment of, respect for and protection of the right to quality education for all. This includes corresponding laws, policies and quality standards and the monitoring of their application. The development of policies and standards-setting can be the result of collaboration between governments and the private sector, civil society, agencies and other stakeholders.
- **The provision of education services is the collective responsibility of a variety of stakeholders** from the public and private spheres, including civil society, the private sector, faith-based organisations and others. Actions can range from supporting the provision of public education to providing various types of education services, including formal and alternative education, in line with the regulatory framework, national policies and standards.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> While the provision of education is a shared responsibility that can include public-private partnerships, the SDC is against for-profit schooling and the commercialisation of basic education. Private and alternative basic education provision must respect the right to universal basic education and adhere to regulatory national policies and quality standards.

**Quality education is the right to relevant learning as described in the ‘four pillars of learning’.** Through learning, knowledge is acquired and competencies developed. Knowledge encompasses information, understanding, skills, attitudes and values. Competencies are the ability to use knowledge in specific contexts.<sup>xiv</sup>

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**RELEVANT QUALITY EDUCATION AFFIRMS EQUAL ATTENTION TO EACH OF THE ‘FOUR PILLARS OF LEARNING’<sup>xv</sup>**

**Learning to know:** to provide the cognitive tools required to better comprehend the world and its complexities, and to provide an appropriate and adequate foundation for future learning.

**Learning to do:** to provide the skills that would enable individuals to effectively participate in the global economy and society.

**Learning to be:** to provide self analytical and social skills to enable individuals to develop to their fullest potential psycho-socially, affectively as well as physically, for an all-round ‘complete person.

**Learning to live together:** to expose individuals to the values implicit within human rights, democratic principles, intercultural understanding and respect and peace at all levels of society and human relationships to enable individuals and societies to live in peace and harmony.  
Source: Unesco



## 2.2. Basic education and vocational skills development

The SDC's education engagement comprises long-standing experience in basic education (BE) and in vocational skills development (VSD).<sup>xvi</sup> BE and VSD are complementary elements.

There is evidence that a combination of quality basic education and vocational skills development relevant to the labour market empowers individuals to develop capacities which broaden their social and economic opportunities.

**BE establishes the foundation for individual, social and economic development and political participation.** It develops essential abilities for life and is the basis for lifelong learning. Knowledge and competencies acquired through basic education should reach a minimum proficiency level to enable people to develop their full potential.

**VSD ideally builds upon the foundations of basic education. Its aim is to achieve long-term integration of trained people in the formal or informal economy** and relates as such to the education and the labour market systems alike. Considering the bridging function of VSD to employment, efforts to increase employability are often accompanied by measures to facilitate access to gainful employment and income.<sup>xvii</sup>

The SDC concentrates within BE on primary and lower-secondary education, which in most countries is compulsory, on alternative and non-formal basic education, on education in emergencies and lifelong learning. In VSD the focus is on upper-secondary-level skills acquisition and continuous training and non-formal vocational skills development.<sup>6</sup>

## DEFINITION OF BASIC EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

**Basic education (BE)** aims to meet the basic learning needs of children, youth and adults and to build their foundational basic skills and competencies. Basic learning needs are defined as literacy and numeracy, oral expression and problem solving, values and attitudes, knowledge and the essential skills for living together, survival, developing individual potential to the full, living and working in dignity, participating fully in society and development, improving the quality of life, making informed decisions and continuing learning. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met vary according to country and culture and can change over time. BE comprises (pre-)primary and lower-secondary-level formal education (public and private) and alternative non-formal education programmes designed to respond to the particular basic learning needs of people of all ages (lifelong learning). Alternative non-formal education can be equivalent in complexity of content to formal BE and include for example second-chance and accelerated education, catch-up classes, literacy/numeracy programmes and other context-relevant learning. BE also includes education in emergencies and can take place in different locations, including school buildings, temporary shelters in contexts of humanitarian crisis, or in any other protective learning environment.

**Vocational skills development (VSD):** The broad concept of VSD encompasses all organised learning processes for the development of technical, social and personal competencies and qualifications that contribute to the sustainable long-term integration of trained people in decent working conditions in the formal or informal economy, either on an employed or self-employed basis. VSD usually combines theory and practice and can take place in schools or technical institutes, workshops or at the workplace in enterprises. According to the concept of lifelong learning, VSD can take place at all education levels, from secondary to tertiary, and be acquired throughout an individual's economically active life. It includes formal and non-formal VSD offers.<sup>7</sup>

6 The SDC concentrates its resources in the areas of its particular expertise, which are basic education (pre-/primary, lower-secondary, alternative non-formal basic education, education in emergencies and lifelong learning) and upper-secondary-level vocational skills development, non-formal VSD and recognition of prior learning. While the SDC acknowledges the importance of early childhood development it is not an SDC priority. Tertiary education (university/academic and VSD) is supported in exceptional cases, for instance for teacher and trainer training or in cases when education is used as an instrument for contributing to other sustainable development goals as part of lifelong learning (e.g. in the fields of health, agriculture/food security, water, climate change, migration). The SDC wishes to ensure continuity in what it is best at, particularly considering the enormous challenges both in BE and in VSD. With regard to literacy programmes for adults, the SDC encourages BE literacy/numeracy skills as a part of VSD programmes and BE literacy/numeracy skills components in programmes of other sectors. Stand-alone adult-literacy programmes will no longer be a SDC priority.

7 Alternative education is the overarching term referring to all types of education programmes that are not considered by governments and agencies to offer formal education. In basic education, it is equivalent to the term non-formal, also in vocational skills development 'non-formal' is still used.

Aligned to international normative frameworks, the SDC's BE and VSD programmes are defined in the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017–2020, including in VSD based on the Joint Strategic Framework Paper on Swiss International Vocational Education and Training Cooperation.<sup>xviii</sup>

The SDC's education interventions are inspired by Switzerland's federalist, inclusive and multilingual context, its development and humanitarian tradition, and by the **achievements of the Swiss education system**.

The Swiss education system is characterised by:<sup>xix</sup>

- **Permeability:** Flexible pathways to enter, re-enter, catch-up, bridge school or training programmes regardless of age and life circumstances, with equal acceptance of post-compulsory general and vocational education and training.
- **Inclusivity in compulsory basic education:** Children with different social, linguistic and cultural backgrounds and legal status can attend the same state school free of charge.
- **Decentralised (cantonal) responsibility for compulsory education:** Schools are run by local authorities (municipalities). Because education is locally rooted, tailor-made solutions can be implemented.
- **Established system of school boards:** Social accountability and the close involvement of parents associations.
- **Context-specific language of instruction:** Depends on the language region and is taught in one of the four official languages; a second official language is taught gradually.
- **Effective vocational training system:** Strong

dual vocational education and training system with responsibility shared between the public and the private sector, and social partners.

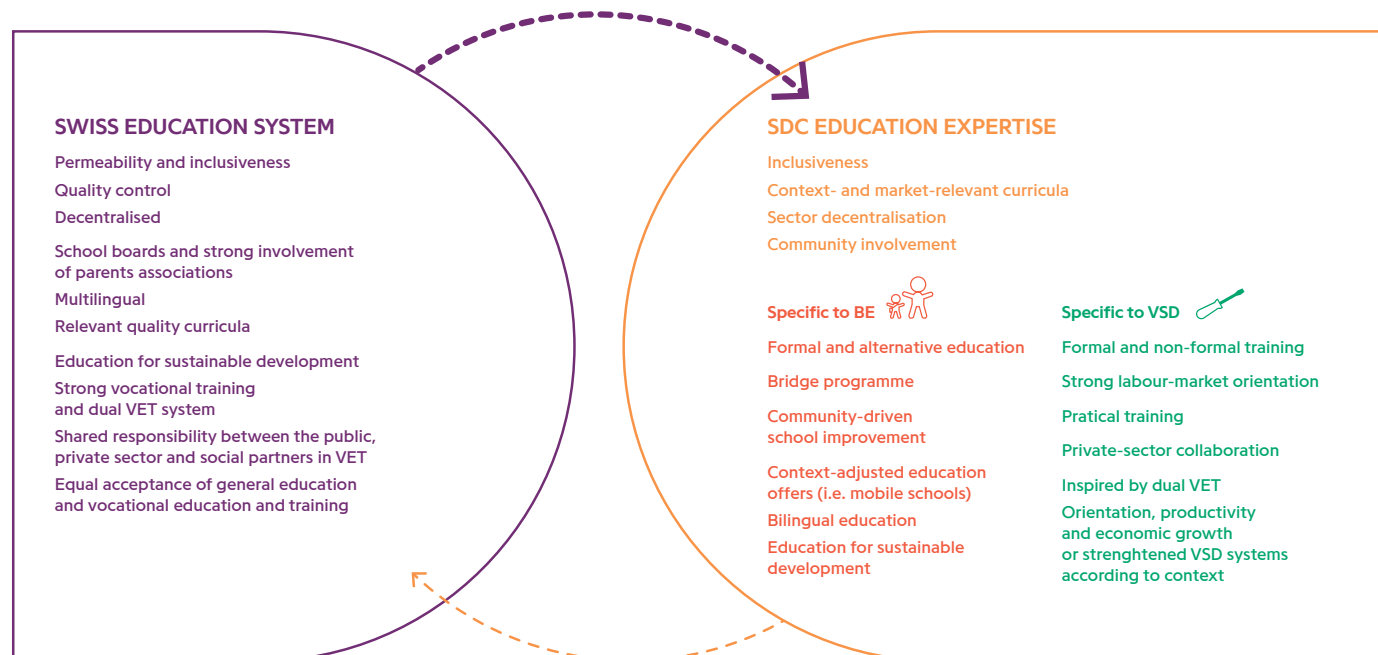
The Swiss background translates into the SDC's work. The SDC's profile has in particular been shaped with regard to:

- inclusiveness for the disadvantaged and those who have missed out, through flexible education offers tailored to people's needs and context
- education system governance, community participation and social accountability
- reliability and contextual knowledge owing to the SDC's strong country presence which mutually nourishes its international dialogue, multilateral and bilateral work
- orientation towards poverty reduction in BE and VSD

More specifically in

- **Basic education** through bilingual education, alternative education, bridge programmes and education offers adapted to the life conditions of communities, education for sustainable development, as well as integrated education-protection interventions and safe-school construction in contexts of humanitarian crisis.
- **Vocational skills development** through a strong labour-market orientation, private-sector collaboration, practical training and dual elements; orientation towards improving the employment and income situation of the SDC's target groups, increasing productivity and economic growth and/or strengthened VSD systems according to context.

## SDC education expertise is inspired by the Swiss education system







### 2.3. Approaches in BE/VSD and across sectors

The SDC's approaches respond to age-related learning needs, are influenced by the requirements of the context and the priorities of partner countries.

SDC interventions are informed by sound context and needs analysis, coordinated with and complementary to other actors. Approaches apply to the SDC's development, transition and humanitarian aid – whereas priorities, scope and scale may vary.

- 1 The SDC ensures systems strengthening through coordinated and harmonised action.
- 2 The SDC focuses on basic education and/or vocational skills development and deepens their interconnection where relevant as a comprehensive approach to inclusivity within a permeable education system.
- 3 The SDC maintains the interaction between VSD and private-sector development (PSD)/ financial-sector development (FSD) to ensure access to gainful employment and income, and to advance economic development.<sup>8</sup>
- 4 The SDC enhances synergies between education and other sectors through integrated approaches in education programmes and strengthened education components in non-education programmes.

<sup>8</sup> Strategic steering of the interplay between VSD, PSD and FSD is provided through the SDC's triennial mid-term orientations for the thematic cluster of employment and income (e+i), with implementation being supported through operational guidance from the e+i network.

## 1 The SDC ensures systems strengthening

The SDC contributes to implementing national education sector plans and policies, or engages in subsystem strengthening i.e. for VSD. In countries where the SDC is present it participates in local donor groups and sector coordination to ensure coordination and complementarity of action, harmonisation of approaches and the avoidance of parallel systems. During humanitarian emergencies or protracted crises and in situations where state capacity is low or absent, the SDC's actions are aligned with a humanitarian-response plan and the national education plan and coordinated within the cluster system.

## 2 The SDC focuses on BE and/or VSD and deepens their interconnection where relevant as a comprehensive approach to inclusivity within a permeable education system

Educational needs change over the course of a person's lifespan. The SDC's expertise in basic education and vocational skills development permits targeted responses to a person's age-specific learning needs.<sup>9</sup>

- **The SDC continues to provide support for quality BE and/or VSD** according to country needs.
- **The SDC encourages the interconnection between BE and VSD** to enhance inclusivity, to ensure that age-specific learning needs are met, and to provide a comprehensive approach to education. In so doing:

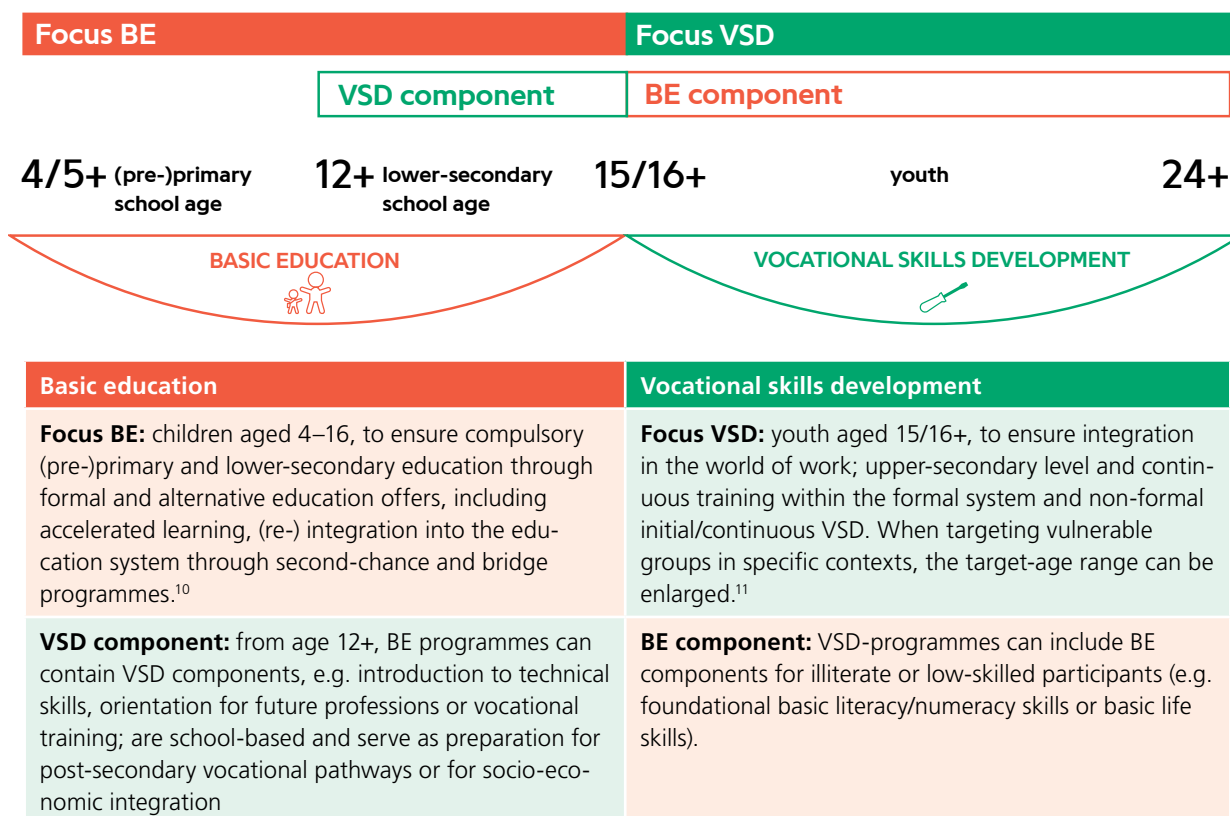
<sup>9</sup> For the definition of age groups (children, youth, young people), see glossary.

1. The SDC enables **consecutive education offers for a BE-VSD-labour market continuum**: Ideally acquired in childhood and adolescence through formal or alternative basic education, BE lays the foundation for further learning pathways. One possible pathway can be VSD. VSD builds upon the foundations of BE and facilitates the transition from education to the world of work. It is offered within the public education system or through non-formal skills development with a view to enabling better integration into the labour market.
2. The SDC fosters **interlinked BE and VSD offers**, including bridge opportunities between BE and VSD programmes, particularly for out-of-school and disadvantaged children and youth: When basic education has been missed out due to drop-out or exclusion, gaps can be filled at a later stage through adapted BE/VSD offers corresponding to a person's age and learning needs.

Interlinked BE/VSD offers are particularly relevant for:

- a) (re-)integration into the education- and labour-market systems for
  - out-of-school children above regular primary-school entrance age of 12+:  
Focus on BE with VSD component and upon completion bridge to VSD offers or general education where feasible
  - disadvantaged, unskilled and illiterate youth aged 15/16+: VSD with BE skills component
- b) preparation for post-BE learning pathways (from lower-secondary)





### 3 The SDC maintains complementarity and interaction between VSD and private-sector development (PSD)/ financial-sector development (FSD) for increased employment and income of target groups

VSD bridges the worlds of education and work. It relates not only to the education system but also to the employment system. The lack of labour-market relevant skills can be an important bottleneck for private-sector development and inclusive growth. By enhancing competitiveness and increasing productivity via VSD, economic development is thus spurred and additional contributions to combating poverty and exclusion accrue.<sup>xx</sup> When tackling under- or unemployment in economies or regions with insufficient absorption capacity for VSD graduates, working on the vocational skills offer is rarely enough. Next to improved employability and matching services, the labour demand side has to be addressed, i.e. more jobs need to be created in the formal or informal economy. That is where PSD and FSD play a complementary role: both spur enterprise activity and hence the creation of jobs.

<sup>10</sup> The age span for basic education is determined according to the international standard classification of education (ISCED 2011). The customary or legal age of primary school entry is usually not below 5 or above 7. Primary education typically lasts until 10 to 12. Students enter lower-secondary generally between 10 and 13, and complete it by age 15 to 16. The duration of primary/secondary education and age of entry varies per country. UIS provides country-specific information: <http://uis.unesco.org/>

<sup>11</sup> National differences in defining youth are widespread. The SDC's programmes take into account national youth definitions and the orientation of VSD programmes for determining their age focus.

#### 4 The SDC enhances synergies between education and other sectors through integrated approaches in education programmes and strengthened education components in non-education programmes.<sup>xxi</sup>

1. The SDC strengthens **integrated approaches in BE and VSD programmes**: Integrated approaches enhance the quality of BE and VSD and correspond to holistic quality education. They may include components related to learners' well-being (e.g. health, food-security and nutrition, water/sanitation, protection) or to global challenges (e.g. climate change and disaster, sustainable development, peace).
2. The SDC strengthens **education in non-education programmes** by integrating BE or VSD components in programmes of other sectors or themes:

**BE skills components in non-education programmes** to develop basic (life) skills and to meet basic learning needs such as literacy/numeracy, knowledge and skills for survival, sustainable development, resilience, social cohesion, peace, human rights and civic participation

**VSD components in non-education programmes** to support professional development, technical skills and labour-market insertion

Education activities in programmes of other sectors/themes can enhance the effectiveness of these programmes and contribute to their specific goals:

- **Sectors/themes**, such as health, water, agriculture/food security, climate change, migration, governance, can strengthen the educational activities within their programmes in order to enhance participants' capacities for productive, sustainable and healthy living, environmental awareness, cohesion and resilience and for social inclusion
- **Schools and vocational training centres** can serve as platforms for conducting and promoting sector-specific actions and initiatives.
- **In humanitarian contexts**, interlinkages between other themes/sectors and education contribute to responding to the needs and vulnerabilities of children and youth, enhancing their protection and resilience, and saving and sustaining lives
  - » Protection: integrated child protection/ education in emergencies interventions or education components in protection programmes to respond to needs and risks specific to children
  - » Disaster risk reduction (DRR): DRR education interventions through comprehensive approaches including safe infrastructure, capacity strengthening, policy work in line with comprehensive school safety frameworks
  - » Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH): interventions at schools / training centres for access to water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion
  - » Sex and gender-based violence (SGBV): activities at schools / training centres for prevention and referral
  - » Food security/nutrition: activities in schools/ training centres such as canteens, school gardens, vocational skills
  - » Cash: education-related components as part of cash programmes

For examples of education components in non-education programmes see annex 3.

# Vision and strategic orientations

## Equal opportunities for all to access and complete relevant quality education that fosters social, economic and political participation

For the SDC education is an essential foundation for individual, social and economic development.

Education fosters values such as equality, respect, tolerance and dignity; it enhances people's abilities to lead meaningful and productive lives, to pursue sustainable development, and to enhance social cohesion and resilience.

The SDC's vision is oriented along the following **six strategic orientations** and their respective lines of intervention:

- (1) global and regional agenda,**
- (2) education system governance,**
- (3) quality and relevance,**
- (4) inclusion and equity,**
- (5) sustainability, cohesion and resilience,**
- (6) transition to work.**

The strategic orientations support the SDC's aim to enhance the provision of relevant quality basic education for all and expand vocational skills development. They are mutually reinforcing. The SDC promotes the interlinkage of its engagement at the following three levels: (1) the macro level for improved policy frameworks b) the meso level for reinforced institutions, and (3) the micro level for the effective implementation and provision of education. The **lines of intervention** provide an indicative framework and comprise building blocks for the SDC's engagement.

The SDC's programmes and their focus are defined on the basis of context and needs analysis and partner countries' priorities. The SDC considers its investments in coordination and complementarity with other donors and Swiss governmental offices. Committed to the efficient use of resources, its interventions are guided by relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, development impact and sustainability. The SDC adheres to the principles of quality, equity and inclusiveness, non-discrimination and conflict sensitivity.

**Operational guidance** per strategic orientation is covered in annex 1. Criteria for monitoring and evaluation are to be found in section 4.6.

- » The SDC will increase its commitment to education (BE and VSD).
- » The SDC addresses education through its bilateral and multilateral engagement in development, transition and humanitarian cooperation, and through its global programmes.
- » The SDC engages in education in developing and transition countries and will step up its education support in fragile and crisis-affected contexts.
- » The SDC reinforces the nexus of development/transition and humanitarian aid.
- » The SDC strengthens inter-sectoral collaboration and integrated approaches within its education programmes and in other thematic (non-education) programmes to develop different types of competencies for life, work, cohesion, sustainability, resilience and protection.
- » The SDC strengthens strategic partnerships with relevant Swiss and international stakeholders, including the private sector, and invests in coalition building.
- » The SDC makes Swiss experience and expertise in BE and VSD available.

# Overview of the SDC's strategic orientations in education

**GLOBAL AND REGIONAL AGENDA**  
Enhance international policy dialogue  
for effective, efficient and resilient national  
education systems



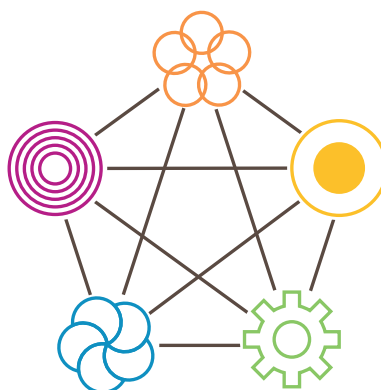
## COUNTRY AND LOCAL LEVEL



### EDUCATION-SYSTEM GOVERNANCE

Contribute to effective,  
inclusive and equitable  
education systems through  
strengthened governance and  
institutional capacities at national  
and decentralised levels

**INCLUSION  
AND EQUITY**  
Enhance equitable access  
to quality BE for all  
and to expanded VSD options,  
with special attention  
to the disadvantaged  
and marginalised, including  
crisis-affected societies



**QUALITY  
AND RELEVANCE**  
Enable relevant quality  
learning that provides  
competencies for life  
and work and has  
a transformative impact  
on human development

### SUSTAINABILITY, COHESION AND RESILIENCE

Make use  
of the transformative  
role of education  
for sustainable development,  
civic participation, social  
cohesion and resilience

### TRANSITION TO WORK

Enhance labour market  
outcomes through informed  
choices, improved matching,  
entrepreneurship support  
and facilitated access  
to gainful employment

### 3.1. Global and regional agenda



#### Enhance international policy dialogue for effective, efficient and resilient national education systems

##### GLOBAL AND REGIONAL EDUCATION GOVERNANCE INCREASINGLY INFLUENCES NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY MAKING.

The impact of global trends on national education systems has become a **global responsibility**. Likewise, the performance of a country's education system has gained an international outreach. In order to be effective, national education systems need to meet the demands of a globalised economy and increased mobility. Different **multi-stakeholder forums** such as the UNESCO-coordinated Education Framework for Action 2030, the Global Partnership for Education, the Donor Committee for Dual Vocational Education and Training, and initiatives related to education and protection in fragile contexts and humanitarian crises are key to advancing the Agenda for Sustainable Development. The challenge is to implement its ambitious goals. Strengthening the performance of national education systems, inclusiveness, and resilience demand the mobilisation of resources, both domestic and international, public and private, and enhanced collective action.

##### Lines of intervention

- 1 **Contributing to the implementation of the Education 2030 Agenda** by influencing the international policy dialogue and global governance, based on the SDC's strategic priorities and country presence. 
- 2 **Supporting global, regional initiatives and multilateral partners** in line with the SDC's strategic priorities. 
- 3 **Strengthening strategic partnerships, alliances, and coalition building** with like-minded stakeholders for the SDC's leverage and positioning, including joint endeavours with the SDC's Global Programmes. 

##### BOX 3 DONOR COMMITTEE FOR DUAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- » The Donor Committee for Dual VET (DC dVET) is a joint initiative of the SDC and the Austrian Development Agency, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Liechtenstein Development Service.
- » DCdVET jointly promotes dual vocational education and training as a valuable option in development and transition cooperation.
- » The goal of the DCdVET is to strengthen institutional exchange and learning, provide thematic assistance to members' projects, raise public awareness about the dual approach and its adapted transfer to partner countries.

##### BOX 4 GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION (GPE)

- » GPE is the major multi-stakeholder partnership and funding platform for education. It aims to strengthen education systems in developing and transition countries and in fragile contexts – it is therefore a strategic partner of the SDC.
- » GPE supports the ambition and vision of Education 2030 calling for inclusive, equitable quality education for all by 2030.
- » GPE's mission is to galvanise global and national support for education, focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable children and young adults.
- » GPE board members are donor and partner countries, multilateral organisations, private sector and civil society. This is a unique opportunity to coordinate efforts to support the education sector at international and national level.

## 3.2. Education system governance



**Contribute to effective, inclusive and equitable education systems through strengthened governance and institutional capacities at national and decentralised levels**

**INEFFICIENT GOVERNANCE, INSUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND LACKING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ARE AMONG THE ROOT CAUSES OF UNDERPERFORMING AND INEQUITABLE EDUCATION SYSTEMS.**

Good governance in education describes how education ideally should be managed at the national and decentralised levels and authority be exercised so that it ensures inclusive, equitable participation and the achievement of required results. Addressing governance in education, with its close link to the labour-market system for VSD<sup>12</sup>, is part of a **systemic approach** to education. It encompasses state institutions, citizens, civil society organisations, the private sector and other relevant actors and their interactions. It requires acknowledging the importance of **sector policies** that underlie education governance processes, interests and power dynamics. They determine the inclusivity and equity of access to quality resources, services and decision making. They nevertheless remain ineffective if there is not the **institutional readiness and capacity** for their implementation, adequate and well-managed financing, civic participation and public accountability. In many countries, the economically better-off still have better access to quality education.<sup>xxii</sup> **Harmonised efforts** to strengthen governance, increase financial resources and institutional capacity are key to enhancing national education systems' inclusiveness and performance.

<sup>12</sup> VSD, as understood by the SDC, stresses the importance of the link between VSD and the labour market system. VSD is not only part of the education system, but can also be an instrument of the labour market system or fall within other policy areas such as economic development, agriculture for ATVET, or others. VSD in SDC partner countries tends to be highly fragmented, with several ministries in charge.

### Lines of intervention

- 1 Contributing to the definition of inclusive policies and quality measures** aligned to human rights conventions and international standards, **sector decentralisation** and institutional multi-level set-up, adequate and equitable public financing. 
- 2 Supporting institutional capacities** for strengthened, accountable sector management and spending, quality and performance oversight, inclusive practices and meaningful participation at the national and decentralised levels. 
- 3 Enhancing private-sector involvement** in governance structures to ensure greater availability of financial resources, and better performing, relevant VSD sub-systems. 
- 4 Enhancing civic participation**, management and public accountability to foster active community involvement at schools/training centers. 

### POLICY DIALOGUE

The SDC's policy dialogue focuses on strengthened management and institutional capacity for effective education systems. More specifically:

- » sector governance that meets the education-access and quality demands of all
- » sector decentralisation
- » private-sector involvement in the VSD sub-sector
- » alignment of humanitarian and national sector coordination in humanitarian crises
- » dialogue in line with the SDC's strategic priorities for institutionalisation



#### BOX 5 ENGAGING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

- » Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) calls for the mobilisation of all actors
- » Partnerships with the private sector allow the creation of shared values and foster innovation through pooling of interests, competencies and resources for enhanced education and employment results.
- » The SDC promotes private-sector engagement for better education inclusion, quality, relevance and labour-market access.

**Dialogue with the private sector is conducted by the SDC for better performance and governance of education systems and shared responsibility in education provision, as well as for partnering in the design and reform of VSD programmes.**

#### BOX 6 STRENGTHENING EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN FRAGILE AND CRISIS CONTEXTS

- » Education is a central interaction point between state and society. A weak education system can be an indicator of state fragility and create the risk of state-society alienation. Support for education service provision combined with institutional capacity strengthening and policy dialogue promote the right to quality education for all, but also have a wider impact with regard to peace and state building, including during and after crises.
- » In crisis situations, state institutions may be absent or overwhelmed. Humanitarian aid supports national education systems in coordination, governance and service delivery. Close collaboration with national education stakeholders remains key providing that they are not instrumentalised by conflict-parties. This enhances local governance capacity and society recognition, ensures alignment with policies and prepares post-crisis transition.

**Education provision and governance support at central and decentralised level are key entry points for the SDC to work on state fragility.**



### 3.3. Quality and relevance





#### Enable relevant quality learning that provides competencies for life and work and has a transformative impact on human development

##### LEARNING RESULTS IN MANY COUNTRIES ARE WEAK. WHAT IS TAUGHT AT SCHOOL OR IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING IS OFTEN CONSIDERED TO BE OF LIMITED RELEVANCE AND INSTRUCTION CAN BE OF LOW QUALITY.

Low quality education can be a result of weak institutional capacity: Teachers and trainers may be underqualified, pedagogical approaches ineffective, material insufficient, language of instruction different from spoken language, or learning content not relevant to the context. As a result, many children do not reach the necessary **learning outcomes**. They repeat, drop out, or lack the qualification to complete basic education. This hampers their potential and development. Many young people do not acquire the **relevant skill sets** to match the requirements of the local economy. Labour-market orientation and information, relevant occupation standards and curricula that emphasise practical learning, the development of relevant technical, personal and social competencies may be lacking. This is often due to a disconnection between the world of education and the world of work or a lack of adaptation mechanisms.

However, learning quality can also be impacted by factors such as students' **health or nutrition situation or psychological condition**. Violence in education environments is frequent, particularly in fragile or crisis contexts, but also elsewhere. The type of infrastructure may impact learning too.

##### Lines of intervention

- 1 **Enhancing the capacity of teachers, trainers and education personnel** to ensure teaching and training has a positive impact on learners and leads to the required results. 
- 2 **Ensuring that content, materials and language in BE are context-relevant**, in line with the criteria of quality education to enhance students' knowledge, learning outcomes and the competencies required for life and further learning. 
- 3 **Increasing labour-market relevance and the quality of VSD** through enhanced collaboration with the private sector and emphasis on practical learning to ensure that participants acquire the skills that the economy demands. 
- 4 **Providing safe, healthy and protective quality learning environments** to ensure the well-being and equal learning chances for all through integrated education approaches and/or collaboration with other sectors.<sup>xxiii</sup> 

#### POLICY DIALOGUE

The SDC's policy dialogue focuses on strengthened performance and capacity of education systems. More specifically:

- » regulation and monitoring of quality standards
- » effective teachers' and trainers' training systems
- » mobilisation of qualified teachers and material
- » curricula adjusted to learning and protection needs of crisis-affected communities
- » involvement of all relevant stakeholders (private and public)

For BE:

- » context-relevant quality learning content
- » bilingual education in multilingual contexts
- » child-friendly, protective quality learning environment
- » student-centred approaches
- » safe school construction

For VSD:

- » labour-market relevance of VSD, including cooperation with the private sector and practical training
- » market-relevant learning content

#### BOX 7 QUALITY IN BASIC EDUCATION

- » Quality basic education goes beyond literacy and numeracy. It includes a variety of disciplines such as environment and life context, human rights, citizenship, cultural and religious diversity.
- » Teachers are key actors. Learning outcomes are enhanced if teaching is in students' own language and if it is learner-centred and non-discriminatory.
- » Learning environments are essential parts of quality. Schools that are conducive to learning take into account children's and teachers' emotional, psychological and physical well-being. Infrastructure, equipment and material are important. Equally important, however, are the inclusiveness, gender sensitivity and safety of schools and the active involvement of children and parents. Schools have to be free of violence and be protective.

**The SDC applies a context-based approach to basic education. It takes into account decentralised governance, including communities' participation and their realities such as language and culture. The SDC promotes a holistic understanding of quality in education.**

### 3.4. Inclusion and equity







#### Enhance equitable access to quality BE for all and to expanded VSD options, with special attention to the disadvantaged and marginalised, including crisis-affected societies

##### INEQUALITIES IN EDUCATION ACCESS AND RETENTION PERSIST – GIRLS AND WOMEN REMAIN AMONG THE GROUPS OF CONCERN, AS DO THE POOR, MINORITIES, MIGRANTS AND FORCIBLY DISPLACED.

**Barriers** to education are multiple. Factors include insufficient availability of services, geographic location, conflict and insecurity, existing education offers ill-adapted to people’s livelihoods (e.g. nomads, agricultural calendar). Such factors may be reinforced by **discriminatory** practices or policies, exclusion on the basis of ethnic/religious association, legal status or other forms of marginalisation. They all prevent children from starting school at the required age or youth from gaining access to training. **Gender** inequality in education affects both girls and boys, and women and men, but girls and women continue to be more often disadvantaged. **Poverty** remains a major factor of exclusion due to the lack of comprehensive poverty-reduction mechanisms. In the absence of functioning education systems during **crises**, the education, development and protection needs of crisis-affected children and youth often remain unaddressed, exposing them to multiple risks and limiting their future prospects. Social and economic exclusion in fragile contexts can be a driver of **conflict and violent extremism**. To enhance inclusion and equity in education, **targeted solutions** are required for the hard-to-reach, vulnerable, minority groups, girls/women and crisis-affected and should include flexible alternative learning pathways for those who missed or dropped out of education. To break the cycle of the intergenerational transmission of poverty, access to quality basic education and vocational-skills development needs to be expanded, and education systems need to become more inclusive and equitable.

##### Lines of intervention

- 1 **Expanding access to universal (pre-) primary and lower-secondary education** through context-adapted offers and **provision of vocational skills development** to enhance equity, reaching the disadvantaged. 
- 2 **Providing flexible learning opportunities for out-of-school children and excluded youth** to facilitate their (re-) integration into the education system, or into the economy (youth), and enhance their chances for personal development. 
- 3 **Developing comprehensive measures, including cross-sectoral collaboration to lower barriers to BE and VSD** due to gender, health, socio-economic deprivation, migration and other factors in order to enhance access and retention. 
- 4 **Enhancing inclusive and conflict-sensitive quality basic education in fragile and crisis contexts to meet the learning and protection needs** of marginalised and crisis affected children, and to foster socio-economic prospects and social cohesion.<sup>13</sup> 

<sup>13</sup> The SDC strengthens the interplay between development and humanitarian aid particularly in protracted crisis and in fragile contexts.

#### POLICY DIALOGUE

The SDC’s policy dialogue focuses on enhanced inclusiveness and equity of education systems. More specifically:

- » inclusive and equitable education policies
- » permeability of education systems, including flexible learning pathways, second-chance, bridges, alternative education
- » equitable quality BE/VSD offers adjusted to contexts, people’s needs and living-conditions
- » recognition of prior learning and certification
- » inclusion of forcibly displaced into national education systems
- » conflict and crisis-sensitive education policies, planning and practices
- » protection of education against attacks

#### BOX 8 A GENDER-LENS IN EDUCATION

- » Girls and women still face higher barriers to attend and remain at school or in training than boys or men.
- » Women are less likely than men to acquire the skills for equal participation in the labour market.
- » In some contexts boys are excluded from education, for example when they have to contribute to a household's livelihood.
- » Gender-based violence in the education environment remains a concern for girls and boys as do gender-specific protection risks in conflict situations, including violent methods of recruitment or rape.

**The SDC responds to gender issues through targeted measures. It promotes girls and women's basic education and VSD but also addresses concerns specific to boys and men. It addresses women's economic empowerment, including training in non-traditional trades, literacy and facilitates access to jobs.**

#### BOX 9 EDUCATION IN EMERGENCY AND CRISIS SITUATIONS IS LIFE SAVING AND PROTECTIVE

- » Protracted crises risk the loss of generations – refugee and internally displaced children are often excluded from basic education. This negatively impacts their cognitive, emotional and social development, and future prospects. It also impedes countries' post-crisis recovery.
- » Crisis-affected communities often prioritise education above other needs as their hope is of a better future for their children.
- » Education in conflict /crisis situations can come under attack or be instrumentalised by conflict parties in violation of international conventions.
- » Children are the most vulnerable social group in crisis situations. Without education they face higher risks of being recruited by armed groups, exploited, exposed to violence and psychosocial stress. Education is crucial for their development and well-being.

**For the SDC, basic education is a major component of child protection. The SDC's integrated education in emergencies/ child protection approach addresses the learning and protection-needs of children affected by humanitarian crises.**



### 3.5. Sustainability, cohesion and resilience



#### Make use of the transformative role of education for sustainable development, civic participation, social cohesion and resilience

##### EDUCATION HAS TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY, SOCIAL RELATIONS AND COPING MECHANISMS BECAUSE IT SHAPES BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES.

Basic education and vocational skills development components in non-education programmes have a transformative potential for sustainable development. **Education across sectors** comprises a life-long learning approach, enhancing people's chances to live productive and meaningful lives, for example through literacy/numeracy or vocational skills in agriculture, governance or health programmes for illiterate or low-skilled rural farmers, health workers or migrants. It also enhances participants' knowledge of issues related to sustainable consumption, environmental degradation or political participation through teaching people across sectors about sustainability, human rights, democratic values and conflict transformation. On the issue of enhancing resilience, particularly with regard to public health issues, climate change and disaster or nutrition practices, **children and youth are important agents of change**. What they learn not only benefits them but has a wider impact on communities. Education can divide society or bring people together. Providing it is not instrumentalised, it has great potential to **mitigate violence**, facilitate cohesion and dialogue: promoting peace starts in the classroom.

##### Lines of intervention

- 1 **Encouraging basic literacy/numeracy skills and vocational skills in non-education programmes** – migration, water, agriculture/food security, health, governance – to enhance participants' competencies for productive lives, sustainable production and consumption. 
- 2 **Improving young people's knowledge of disaster, the adverse effects of climate change, disease, poor nutrition, sanitation and hygiene** to enhance their awareness, resilience and well-being through relevant basic life skills education activities in programmes of both BE and other sectors. 
- 3 **Addressing causes of social grievances, tensions and violence through targeted measures at school/training/community level** to foster cohesion, violence prevention and conflict resolution particularly in fragile conflict-affected and crisis contexts.<sup>14</sup> 
- 4 **Promoting education for sustainable development; citizenship and human rights education, value-based education; education for conflict resolution, a culture of dialogue and other relevant basic life skills** in both education and non-education programmes to foster environmental sensitivity, enhance tolerance, respect and socio-political participation. 

<sup>14</sup> Targeted measures incorporate conflict sensitive education and are developed on the basis of conflict analysis. For more guidance: INEE – Guiding Principles on Integrating Conflict Sensitivity in Education Policy and Programming in Conflict-Affected and Fragile Contexts, UNESCO Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism.

#### POLICY DIALOGUE

The SDC's policy dialogue focuses on the impact of education systems on learners and the way education can positively influence people. More specifically:

- » inclusive, non-discriminatory education reform, review of learning content, conflict sensitive education, peacebuilding through education
- » education for sustainable development, citizenship, human rights and related topics in policies and curricula reform
- » conflict and disaster risk reduction (C/DRR) in sector policies, enhanced institutional capacities for comprehensive application

#### **BOX 10 PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE) AND EDUCATION**

- » Poor governance, corruption, impunity and perceptions of injustice, economic, social and political exclusion can be the breeding grounds of violent extremism especially among young people.
- » The SDC's Peace and State-building Strategy, human rights policy and Switzerland's foreign policy Action Plan on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) guide the SDC's work on PVE.
- » Addressing PVE is a cross-sector task. It includes work on governance, corruption, conflict transformation, violence prevention and livelihood, including inclusive education and employment.
- » The SDC's Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development programmes increase socio-economic and individual prospects, social cohesion, political participation, governance and employability, and facilitate access for youth, including those from marginalised groups, to basic services, gainful employment and income.

**The SDC's education programmes contribute to PVE by being relevant to PVE but not PVE specific.**



### 3.6. Transition to work



**Enhance labour market outcomes through informed choices, improved matching, entrepreneurship support and facilitated access to gainful employment and income**

**THE MILLIONS OF NEW ANNUAL ENTRANTS TO THE LABOUR MARKET ARE FACING THE CHALLENGE OF FINDING WORK THAT CORRESPONDS TO THEIR SKILLS, EXPECTATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS AND THEIR GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION.<sup>xxiv</sup>**

The transition to work can be a lengthy process as **access to gainful employment and income is conditioned by several factors**, in addition to training-relevance and quality. These include information asymmetries, quality of vocational guidance, the performance of matching services, lacking entrepreneurship and the availability of jobs. Choice of education pathway is influenced more by tradition or image than by vocation or labour-market demand. Weak placement systems contribute to skills and qualification mismatches, skill gaps and high levels of un- or underemployment among young people. In many countries, there are not enough jobs to absorb the new labour market entrants. Especially in rural areas and fragile contexts, self-employment remains often the only option for income generation.

#### Lines of intervention

- 1 **Strengthening vocational orientation and guidance** in formal or alternative lower-secondary basic education to enable informed choices of career path. 
- 2 **Expanding access to career counselling and matching services** for graduates and unemployed youth for better employment results. 
- 3 **Fostering entrepreneurship** and support trainees to take advantage of (self-)employment opportunities. 
- 4 **Aligning VSD with economic development or private-sector development** initiatives and engagement with the Swiss and/or locally active private sector, while focusing on sectors with job growth prospects and partnerships with private sector actors for eased labour market integration. 

#### POLICY DIALOGUE

The SDC's policy dialogue focuses on advocating enhanced dialogue between education and labour-market actors.

More specifically:

- » attractive VET systems, including optimisation of fund allocation and increased permeability with general education streams
- » integration of vocational orientation and guidance, career services and entrepreneurship
- » improved performance of matching services
- » alignment of VSD with economic development and growth sectors for increased absorption of graduates

#### BOX 11 LABOUR MARKETS IN SDC PARTNER COUNTRIES

- » Labour markets in SDC partner countries tend to be highly segmented, and labour mobility is restricted.
- » Significant imbalances between the number of jobs created and the high numbers of young people seeking work result in high under- and unemployment.
- » A substantial number of income-generating opportunities is to be found in the informal economy, however in jobs that are often precarious. Self-employment is often the only option. Underemployment is masked by official statistics.

**The SDC encourages the analysis of demand for skilled labour in both quantitative and qualitative terms, paying special attention to displacement effects and favouring VSD in areas with sufficient absorption capacity, job growth or opportunities for self-employment.**

The SDC's Education Strategy is the framework of the SDC's work at the national and international levels. Responsibility for its implementation is shared by the SDC's South Cooperation, Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Humanitarian Aid and Global Cooperation departments. In this way it ensures context-adjusted, meaningful and flexible interventions.

#### 4.1. Instruments of the SDC's engagement

**The SDC addresses education through its bilateral and multilateral engagement in development, transition and humanitarian cooperation and through its global programmes.**

It advances its strategic priorities in education through its range of instruments including bilateral and multilateral cooperation and through its global programmes. The SDC ensures that interventions at global, regional and country level are coherent and mutually reinforcing.

- **Policy dialogue:** The SDC reinforces policy dialogue on education at the global, regional, and national levels within its partnerships. It actively engages in relevant initiatives, including board memberships and other steering functions.
- **Multilateral engagement:** The SDC strengthens dialogue on education with multilateral institutions and its priority organisations, including core- and multi-bi contributions to multilateral programmes and secondments to UN agencies. Moreover, the SDC reinforces education components in its five global programmes.
- **Bilateral engagement:** The SDC increases education in bilateral cooperation through contributions to partners and direct actions. It defines interventions on the basis of context- and education-needs-analysis in line with national education sector plans and country priorities and in coordination and complementarity with other actors. It ensures flexibility in planning and implementation, including short- and long-term support depending on country realities.

#### 4.2. Programmatic considerations

##### 4.2.1. Geographical and contextual

**The SDC engages in education in developing and transition countries and will step up its education support in fragile and crisis-affected contexts.**

The SDC's education strategy applies to its work in developing and transition countries and countries affected by humanitarian crisis.

Within the same vision and strategic orientation, the type and focus of the SDC's education engagement may vary depending on the education demands and vulnerabilities of populations, inclusiveness and performance of countries' education systems, and the demands of the local economy. In countries affected by humanitarian crises, it is also influenced by the capacity of national education systems to cope with the crisis situation, as well as the protection and education concerns of children and youth.

Contexts and education needs can vary within countries. Based on sound analysis, its added value and resources, the SDC decides on the appropriate action to take while being guided by the following contextual considerations:

- **Fragile and conflict-affected contexts:** About half the countries where the SDC is active are characterised by fragility, comprising multi-level factors of poverty including structural needs in basic services and weak or unstable institutions. They are more exposed to social unrest and violent conflict. Sound conflict analysis, conflict-sensitive programme management (CSPM) and conflict-sensitive education are an integral part of the SDC's education work in such contexts. Through education the SDC addresses the underlying causes of fragility (and conflict) where relevant in collaboration with other actors including those active in civilian peacebuilding. It also addresses the impacts of humanitarian emergencies and protracted crises flexibly and through a mix of intervention modalities including synergies between development and humanitarian aid.
- **Humanitarian and protracted crises:** The SDC strengthens its engagement in education in emergencies and protracted crises to ensure children's protection and basic education needs are addressed, including those of both the





displaced and affected host communities, as well as to ensure that the national education systems' capacity is strengthened to cope with the crisis. The SDC also ensures that its interventions are in accordance with the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards.<sup>xxv</sup>

- **Urban and rural:** While the SDC continues to focus on rural or semi-rural areas due to still major education and poverty challenges, it is increasing its presence in urban areas both for basic and vocational education.
- **Migration:** The SDC identifies the education needs both of migrants, refugees and internally displaced people to enhance their social and economic integration and prospects. For labour migrants in countries of departure in particular with regard to the basic and vocational skills required in countries of destination.
- **Vulnerability to natural disasters:** In contexts prone to disaster, the SDC enhances DRR in and through education to foster local resilience.
- **Transition countries:** The SDC focus lies on vocational skills development and its contribution to inclusive economic development, supporting VSD-system reform and increased offers of relevant training and improved transition to work.

#### 4.2.2. Nexus between development/transition and humanitarian aid

**The SDC reinforces the nexus of development/transition and humanitarian aid.**

The SDC ensures complementarity between its development/transition and humanitarian aid through the

flexible application of the instruments at its disposal, permitting a combination of short-, mid- and long-term support, particularly in fragile contexts and during protracted crisis, and a transition from emergency interventions to early recovery and durable solutions.

This implies that:

- **The SDC development/transition education programmes in fragile contexts have integrated contingency components** as part of the regular education portfolio (including a funding and/or programmatic scenario) which enable rapid education in emergency interventions in the event of crisis, until potential complementary humanitarian actions take over.
- **Joint context analysis, strategic planning and funding between SDC humanitarian aid and SDC development interventions** as well as flexible partnerships ensure context-adjusted education interventions, complementarity and flexibility and well-aligned short-, mid-, longer-term approaches based on the comparative advantages of each, especially during protracted crisis. In this way the SDC is able to address structural and crisis-specific challenges in education, permit a link between emergency and recovery, embed emergency interventions within national education system support, and enhance national capacity and resilience.<sup>xxvi</sup>

#### 4.2.3. Synergies between BE and VSD, VSD and PSD/FSD programmes

**The SDC emphasises the complementarity between its BE and VSD interventions and maintains synergies with private-sector development and financial inclusion for vocational-skills development.**

Its activities can take different forms depending on whether in partner countries: a) the SDC is focused on basic education and vocational skills development; or b) on BE or VSD.

- a) **The SDC deepens the complementarity and interconnection between BE/VSD programmes**, including joint and integrated programme planning and implementation.
- b) **The SDC focuses on BE and/or VSD, taking into account the following two situations:**
  - Focus on BE: inclusion of VSD components where applicable for vocational orientation or in order to bridge to VSD-offers (e.g. for vulnerable children as of age 12+)
  - Focus on VSD: inclusion of BE components where applicable in order to close basic education gaps, e.g. foundational literacy/ numeracy skills

**The SDC maintains the complementarity and interaction between VSD and private-sector development (PSD)/financial-sector development (FSD).** It encourages engagement with the Swiss and locally active private sector for enhanced employment and income results.

The complementarity between BE and VSD applies in all contexts, including during humanitarian crises.

#### 4.2.4. Synergies between education and other thematic areas/sectors

**The SDC strengthens inter-sectoral collaboration and integrated approaches within its education programmes and in other thematic (non-education) programmes.**

The SDC reinforces synergies between education and other sectors in strategies and programme implementation:

##### **BOX 12 DIGITALISATION: POTENTIAL FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- » ICT and mobile technologies have huge potential for education. They can be harnessed for strengthening education system governance, knowledge dissemination, quality and assessment of learning, teacher training.
- » They are promising tools for promoting inclusiveness by enabling access to learning and information, including for disadvantaged people.
- » Increased digitalisation implies the development of adapted standards, changing teaching practices and instruments.

**The SDC promotes the use of ICT and mobile technologies in education. It makes use of the advantages they offer for strengthening the performance and inclusiveness of education systems. Its programmes take into account the changing requirements and skills needed for life and work in a digitalised world.**

- 1 **In the framework of country strategies:**
  - **Education programmes:** a) synergies between BE/VSD programmes and those of other sectors, b) education programmes apply cross-sectoral integrated approaches
  - **Programmes of other sectors:** integrate a) BE/VSD components for skills relevant to productive lives, b) BE life skills components for sustainable development, cohesion, well-being and resilience
- 2 **In the framework of humanitarian aid:**
  - Education components expanded in protection, DRR, WASH, SGBV, food security, cash programmes
  - Support for basic education access during emergencies/crises strengthened through education in emergencies interventions, including integrated approaches with child protection
- 3 **In the framework of the SDC's Global Programmes:**
  - Global Programmes Health, Climate Change, Food Security, Water, Migration: Integrated education components and collaboration with education

#### 4.2.5. Innovation, data and evidence

**The SDC proactively looks for innovation** with the objective of increasing the efficiency of education interventions and positively influencing inclusion and system performance, through new technologies, innovative financing mechanisms, cash programmes in education, etc.

**The SDC actively seeks to learn from evidence-based studies and impact evaluations in education.** In order to enhance knowledge and learning, the SDC supports the reinforcement of data quality, collection and analysis, the documentation and sharing of evidence and good practices in order to improve quality and effectiveness of interventions in education and to support policy dialogue. The Education Network as well as the Employment and Income Network for VSD closely collaborate with the Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division, as well as with the SDC-funded Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development (r4d programme).

### 4.3. Collaboration and partnerships

#### The SDC strengthens strategic partnerships with relevant Swiss and international stakeholders, including the private sector, and invests in coalition building.

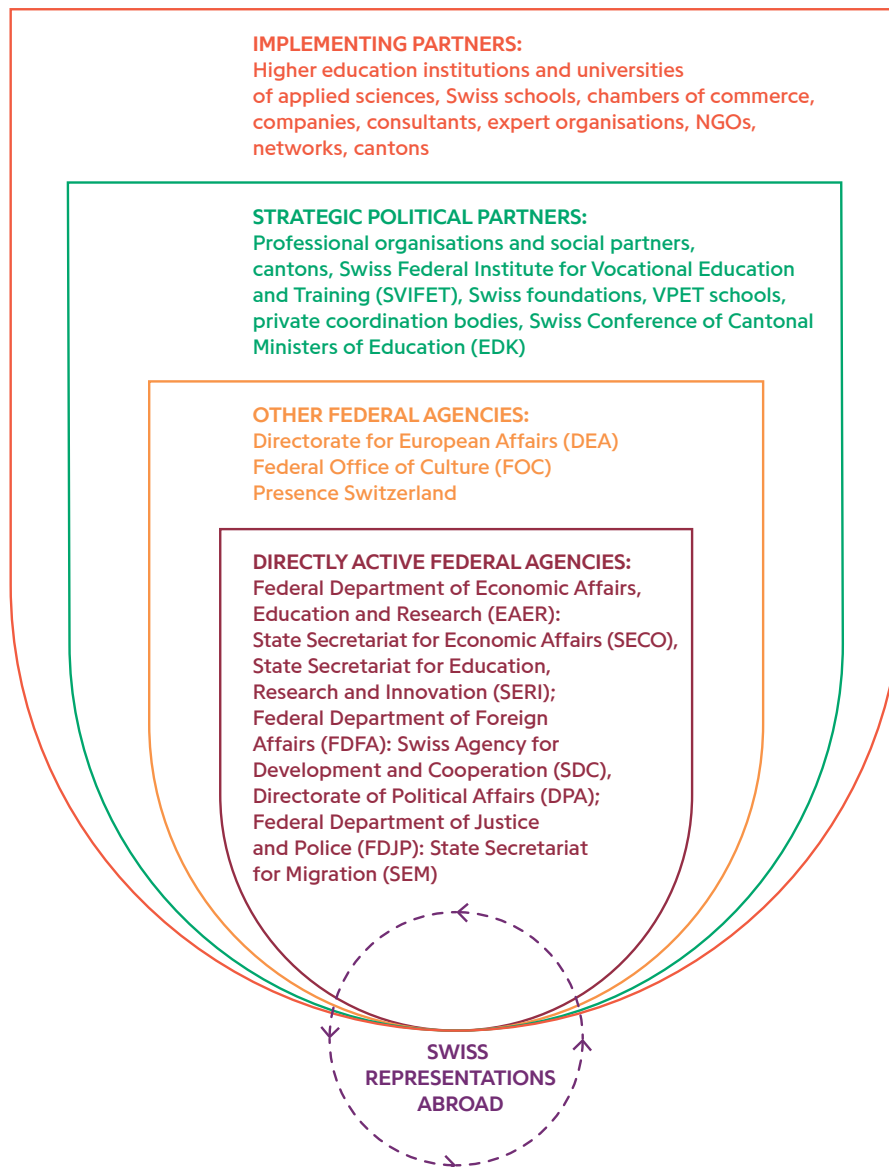
The SDC strengthens and maintains strong partnerships with diverse stakeholders in Switzerland and internationally.

**Collaboration with other Swiss offices:** the SDC coordinates the Education Strategy with other Swiss federal offices and departments. In its policy dialogue and programmes it makes use of the complementarity of Switzerland's foreign and national policy instruments, such as those of SECO, United Nations and International Organisations Division, State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (for

further information on Swiss offices in international cooperation see Annex 5).

**Use of Swiss expertise:** the SDC reinforces the use of Swiss expertise in its international cooperation, including between Swiss and partner countries' experts, where clear added value can be identified for and by the partner country. This includes collaboration with civil society actors, academia, cantonal offices, experts, the private sector as well as other Swiss government offices. When using Swiss expertise, special attention is paid to intercultural competence as well as context adaptation.

#### Swiss Agencies and partners<sup>15</sup>



15 Aligned to Strategischer Grundlagenbericht IBBZ (2014)

**Partnerships with diverse stakeholders:** Based on careful analysis and periodic reviews, the SDC seeks partnerships with a variety of stakeholders, including multilateral organisations and funds, international networks and specialised institutes, global and regional initiatives, other donors, (I)NGOs, academia, municipal authorities and the private sector in Switzerland and internationally.

**Country partners:** The SDC promotes strong local expertise for sustainable results in partner countries. To this end, it partners with relevant institutions and actors from the public and private sectors in its partner countries.

**Private sector:** The SDC promotes engagement with the Swiss and locally active private sector for creating shared value through pooling interests, competencies and resources in both BE and VSD. Collaborating with the private sector for enhancing labour-market orientation in VSD is at the heart of its work. Collaboration with private-sector service providers, partnering with social enterprises and with other private-sector actors in VSD programmes and in BE can enhance the SDC's results.

#### 4.4. Roles and responsibilities at the SDC

**The SDC's board of directors** is responsible for implementing the Swiss Federal Council's Strategy on Switzerland's International Cooperation, which sets out the framework for the implementation of the SDC Thematic Guidance on Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development.

**The SDC's departments, divisions and country offices** are responsible for implementing the education strategy in the framework of global institutions and programmes, cooperation strategies and humanitarian assistance.

**The SDC's thematic focal points (Education and VSD)** represent the SDC within Swiss and international entities and dialogue, provide technical advice to the SDC departments and divisions at head office and country offices and promote knowledge management and capacity development through network-facilitation.

#### 4.5. Financial and human resources

Gradual adjustments of the resources in its bilateral- and multilateral engagement and global programmes reflect SDC's commitment to BE/VSD:

- a) larger investments in education programmes in BE and VSD
- b) scaling up the education components in other sectors
- c) thematic specific policy dialogue in multilateral organisations

#### **BE and/or VSD is therefore to be reflected in cooperation strategies, global programmes, multilateral contributions and policy dialogue.**

For the latter, the implementation of the education strategy demands stronger political dialogue on education with SDC priority organisations, in particular UNICEF, UNRWA, UNHCR, World Food Programme, World Bank, ICRC, Global Partnerships and regional development banks.

The SDC will reinforce its staff-education capacity in its cooperation offices and at head office to ensure the quality of its education programmes and non-education programmes with education components. This will be achieved through:

- stronger thematic networks and focal points (EDU/VSD) and reinforced collaboration with other networks for joint activities and planning;
- capacity-building measures in BE/VSD at SDC head office and country offices;
- technical advice during strategy, programme and project formulations, monitoring and evaluations;
- peer reviews, exchange and mutual-learning activities.

## 4.6. Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation

**Knowledge management is promoted through the SDC's networks:** The networks for Education (for BE) and Employment and Income (for VSD) are important instruments for knowledge management and for providing strategic orientation on BE and VSD respectively. Through these networks, the SDC can draw on its own and direct partners' operational experiences. They contribute to institutional learning and communication with its professional community. Collaboration, joint activities and exchanges with other SDC networks, as well as with its partners and like-minded institutions will be strengthened. The mandate of the SDC's thematic networks is summarised as follows:

- promote learning and enhance professional and methodological knowledge
- provide theme-related operational advice to the SDC organisational units
- capitalise on experience and formulate good practices
- link global initiatives and global policy dialogue with field-related activities and vice versa.

**Monitoring and evaluation** of the implementation of the SDC Thematic Guidance on basic education and vocational skills development is incorporated in the SDC's regular monitoring and evaluation system. The Education Network and Employment and Income Network for VSD therefore work closely with the SDC's Quality Assurance and Evaluation and Corporate Controlling division.

The SDC's education and VSD programmes are based on comprehensive context analyses, feasibility studies, demand and needs assessments. In fragile and crisis-affected contexts they also include a conflict analysis and conflict-sensitivity assessment. In addition, VSD programmes include a solid market analysis. At country level, country offices are in charge of monitoring based on their established monitoring systems.

The SDC emphasises monitoring and results measurement, including at outcome and impact-level. This requires programmes to have a sound baseline, to work more with a theory-of-change approach and be regularly evaluated and reoriented if needed. Pilot initiatives should aim to achieve systemic change from the beginning and be planned accordingly.

Monitoring is conducted on four levels:

- 1 **The SDC's aggregated reference indicators (ARI)** were defined in line with the monitoring of the Strategy on Switzerland's International Cooperation. They are mandatory for its results frameworks in bilateral and multilateral cooperation for supporting education. They will be used to communicate Switzerland's engagement in basic education and vocational skills development to the Swiss Parliament and public.
- 2 **The SDC's reference indicators** complete its ARI. They have been selected by the SDC's thematic networks and are recommended for the results, programme and project monitoring-frameworks of the SDC country offices, in Global Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid as well as by its partner organisations. They provide relevant qualitative and quantitative data, are aligned with the strategy's orientations and lines of intervention as well as with the SDGs. They will be gradually updated and completed. They are communicated by the SDC's Education Network and its Employment and Income Network for VSD and can be found on their respective Sharewebs. The focal points of both networks provide advice on their application where necessary.
- 3 **The SDC's SAP criteria** capture bilateral, global and humanitarian financial engagement in BE and VSD programmes as well as the education components in the programmes of other sectors. The SAP categories provide the possibility of reporting on BE and VSD separately and to make use of 2nd and 3rd sectors to capture education in non-education programmes.

### THE SDC'S AGGREGATED REFERENCE INDICATORS (ARI)

Basic education:

- » ARI EDU 1: Number of people benefiting from primary, secondary education or continuing and alternative non-formal basic education and learning opportunities including education in emergencies (f/m)
- » ARI EDU 2: Number of teachers or other educational personnel trained (f/m)

Vocational skills development and employment:

- » ARI IED 1: Number of persons enrolled in new or better VSD (f/m)
- » ARI IED 2: Number of persons having new or better employment (f/m)

4 **Fields of observation** for each of the six strategic orientations are mainly outcome related and qualitative. They guide the assessment of the implementation of the SDC Thematic Guidance on Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development. The follow-up will be done along the lines of the guiding questions set out below on the basis of data from the SDC's annual reports, case studies, impact evaluations, research reports, country and partner monitoring, data collection in relation to ARI, reference indicators and SAP criteria.

The following table includes a set of monitoring and evaluation questions which should be considered, to the extent possible, in exchanges with SDC Cooperation Offices, implementing partners, during face-to-face meetings, in annual reports, in reviews/evaluations (i.e. at project/programme level).



## Fields of observation

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### **Strategic orientation 1: Global and regional agenda**

Enhance international policy dialogue for effective, efficient and resilient national education systems.

- By what means and in which fields did the SDC influence international policy dialogue and governance for effective, efficient and resilient national education systems?
- 

### **Strategic orientation 2: Education system governance**

Contribute to effective, inclusive and equitable education systems through strengthened governance and institutional capacity at national and decentralised level.

- What difference did the SDC make in which countries with regard to sector governance, engagement of the private sector, and national policy influence as a result of policy dialogue, governance support and institutional capacity reinforcement?
  - How did the SDC contribute to local sector governance and decentralisation?
- 

### **Strategic orientation 3: Quality and relevance**

Enable relevant quality learning that provides competencies for life and work and has a transformative impact on human development.

- In what way and in which contexts did the SDC contribute to better learning outcomes, enhanced teaching capacity, and made schools and other education centres safer, healthier and better protected?
  - What evidence is there to show that learning in BE and VSD has been relevant to the demand of the communities and the labour market?
- 

### **Strategic orientation 4: Inclusion and equity**

Enhance equitable access to quality BE for all and to expanded VSD options, with special attention to disadvantaged and marginalised including crisis-affected groups.

- How did the SDC's interventions enhance access to education, particularly for disadvantaged, excluded and crisis-affected groups. Which measures were the most effective?
- 

### **Strategic orientation 5: Sustainability, cohesion and resilience**

Make use of the transformative role of education for sustainable development, civic participation, social cohesion and resilience.

- To what extent have the SDC's non-education programmes incorporated education components, in which fields and with what results?
  - What was the influence on social cohesion, resilience, citizenship, participation and the prevention of violence and awareness about sustainable practices?
- 

### **Strategic orientation 6: Transition to work**

Enhance labour market outcomes through informed choices, improved matching, entrepreneurship support and facilitated access to gainful employment and income.

- To what extent has the sustained and gainful self- or wage employment of the participants of supported education and/or employment promotion programmes been reached? What measures have been most effective?

# ANNEX 1 – Guidance



## 1. Orientation: Global and regional agenda



### 1. Contributing to the implementation of the Education 2030 Agenda by influencing international policy dialogue and global governance, based on the SDC's strategic priorities and country presence

- » The SDC contributes to shaping policies related to its strategic priorities through dialogue, board memberships and other steering functions.
- » The SDC reinforces its policy dialogue on education within its multilateral partnerships and active engagement in international platforms related to development, transition and humanitarian contexts. In particular, the SDC supports the alignment of the global Education 2030 Agenda with the national policy frameworks of its partner countries, advocates the strengthening and permeability of education systems, including labour-market-relevant VSD and adapted dual VET.
- » The SDC promotes the role of education for sustainable development and peacebuilding. In fragile contexts and protracted crises, it promotes the transition from shorter-term humanitarian to longer-term sustainable education interventions.



### 2. Supporting global, regional initiatives and multilateral partners in line with the SDC's strategic priorities

- » The SDC seeks international and regional partnerships to reinforce, leverage and complement its engagement and advocacy at country level.



### 3. Strengthening strategic partnerships, alliances, and coalition-building with like-minded stakeholders for the SDC's leverage and positioning, including joint endeavours with its Global Programmes

- » The SDC builds strategic alliances with like-minded international and Swiss stakeholders based on Switzerland's comparative advantages, including joint endeavours with the SDC's Global Programmes to enhance the role of education in global issues.
- » The SDC cooperates with (Swiss) universities and institutions in the field of international educational development as well as with non-traditional education partners for exchange and expertise.



## 2. Orientation: Education system governance



### 1. Contributing to the definition of inclusive policies and quality measures, aligned to human rights conventions and international standards, sector decentralisation and institutional multi-level set-up, adequate and equitable public financing

- » The SDC supports state institutions in the development of education policies in line with its different BE and VSD intervention streams to enhance the inclusiveness, equity, quality, relevance and permeability of education systems, including the institutionalisation of relevant approaches and efforts to promote decentralisation.
- » The SDC promotes governance efforts in education where possible in collaboration with governance efforts in other sectors in which it is active as part of wider poverty-reduction, economic-growth and sustainable-development strategies.
- » The SDC advocates increased spending in national education in favour of those areas and people most in need,<sup>16</sup> including the universalisation of free compulsory basic education (primary and lower-secondary) and budget increases for vocational skills development.

<sup>16</sup> For basic education particular attention is given to deprived rural or urban areas, disadvantaged wealth-quintile of society, marginalized, socio-culturally excluded, crisis-affected.





## 2. Supporting institutional capacities for strengthened and accountable sector management and spending, quality and performance oversight, inclusive practices and meaningful participation at the national and decentralised levels

- » The SDC supports government efforts for the effective implementation of policy and decentralisation efforts by facilitating the assignment of roles and responsibilities at different levels, related decision power, accountable resource management and equitable allocation of human and financial resources (predictable, transparent, and adequate fiscal transfers).
- » The SDC supports institutional capacity reinforcement to ensure inclusion, equity and effectiveness in education systems, institutionalisation of related approaches, strengthened capacities in results-based management, reliable data, performance assessment and monitoring.
- » The SDC supports national and decentralised actors in fostering effective multi-level education coordination and management, taking into account the diversity of relevant public and private stakeholders, including different ministries/technical entities, and vertical and horizontal exchange. In addition, the SDC promotes strengthened collaboration and coordination among actors in BE, VSD and the private sector to smoothen the transition from primary and secondary to vocational education and the labour market.



## 3. Enhancing private-sector involvement in governance structures to ensure greater availability of financial resources, and better performing, relevant VSD sub-systems

- » The SDC supports capacity building and private-sector involvement at all levels of governance with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and degrees of formal competence to increase the relevance of VSD systems. Governance structures, such as national training boards, sector skills committees and local multi-stakeholder platforms and networks, are instruments to improve matching the demand and supply of skills and increasing ownership.



## 4. Enhancing civic participation, management and public accountability to foster active community involvement at schools/training centers.

- » The SDC supports interventions that enhance communities' and students' awareness and actions for inclusiveness, equity and quality of education and their participation and accountability. This involves raising communities', educators' and student's awareness of their role in the functioning of schools/training centres and of the relevance of vocational skills development, school-based management and community participation, student parliaments, stronger parent-teacher associations, technical advisory boards, local exchange platforms between schools, vocational training centres and the private sector, etc.



## 3. Orientation: Quality and relevance



### 1. Enhancing the capacity of teachers, trainers and other education personnel to ensure teaching and training has a positive impact on learners and leads to the required results

- » The SDC supports interventions that improve teachers' and trainers' performance in the classroom, workshop or company, and skills for context-relevant and student-centered teaching via pre- and in-service training and mentoring, and the institutionalisation of effective approaches. Vocational teachers are to be equipped with practical labour-market-oriented skills, and in-company instructors need guidance in didactics and pedagogy. Target group: BE/VSD teachers and trainers
- » The SDC supports training the trainers in order to strengthen national and local capacities to provide training, learning assessments, accreditation and quality control, and to ensure that defined education standards are met. Target group: education personnel, education authorities, instructors, etc.
- » The SDC trains teachers and education personnel on education for sustainable development, citizenship education, human rights and value-based education, DRR education and other related topics linked to sustainability, cohesion, and resilience.
- » During emergencies and in crisis and/or conflict contexts, the SDC reinforces the capacities of education personnel in crisis-relevant issues, including psychosocial support, hygiene/health education, mine-risk education, awareness of attacks on schools and early warning, children's rights, values and tolerance, SGBV, referral systems, protection, conflict-risk and/or disaster-risk reduction, etc.
- » The SDC supports the deployment of qualified teachers – particularly female – to marginalised areas and the provision of teaching and learning materials. Target: shortage of qualified teachers and materials particularly in areas with low learning outcomes



## **2. Ensuring that content, materials and language in BE are context relevant, in line with the criteria of quality education to enhance students' knowledge, learning outcomes and competencies for life and further learning**

- » The SDC supports the provision of context-relevant quality education – including content that is reflected in relevant curricula as well as teaching and learning material. Relevant quality education takes into account peoples' realities and the different aspects of meaningful quality learning (learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together), meets the basic learning needs (i.e. literacy/numeracy, knowledge and survival skills, participation, informed decision-making, values implicit in human rights, democratic principles etc.) and builds a solid foundation for positive participation and further learning.
- » The SDC supports bilingual education in public, private and alternative education, promotes its integration into national education systems and strengthens related capacities. Target: schools in areas where the first/home language differs from the national language



## **3. Increasing labour-market relevance and quality of VSD through enhanced collaboration with the private sector and emphasis on practical learning to ensure that participants acquire the skills demanded by the economy**

- » The SDC supports the establishment of labour-market information systems and supports the definition and implementation of occupational standards and improved curricula. It focuses on orientation towards the needs of the local economy, increased practical training and adapted learning infrastructure and materials for increased relevance. It supports efforts to raise the quality of training delivery, including the introduction of quality assurance mechanisms. Flexible initial and continuous training programmes offered by public or private providers are supported in response to the economy's needs. Target: all VSD interventions from age 15+, all contexts



## **4. Providing safe, healthy and protective quality learning environments to ensure the well-being and equal learning chances for all through integrated education approaches and/or collaboration with other sectors**

- » The SDC supports targeted measures for creating conducive learning environments, which enhance students' learning capacities, ensure learners' and teachers' physical and psychological well-being, and are inclusive, equitable, safe and protected. Measures involve for example: community-based school improvement activities, including the use of innovative measures such as voucher or cash approaches, community sensitisation, school management and students' parliaments; school-based health, nutrition, water/sanitation/hygiene interventions, school canteens and gardens; school-based disaster and conflict-risk-reduction plans, codes of conduct, protection-referral systems, violence prevention, psychosocial and recreational activities etc.
- » The SDC supports the rehabilitation/building of safe and/or disaster-resistant schools – where possible through community-based approaches –, provision of equipment and services (i.e. material, water and sanitation), institutional and local capacity reinforcement and policy dialogue; as well as the setup of temporary learning spaces during crisis
- » The SDC supports the protection of education from attack through policy dialogue, awareness-raising and capacity-building, targeted school-based measures etc.<sup>xxviii</sup>



## 4. Orientation: Inclusion and equity



### 1. Expanding access to universal (pre-)primary and lower-secondary education through context-adapted offers and the provision of vocational-skills development to enhance equity and reach disadvantaged groups

- » The SDC supports interventions that expand the offer of context-adapted and inclusive basic education and vocational-skills-development opportunities through support for public, private and alternative service provision, particularly for the hard-to-reach, disadvantaged and marginalised, and for underserved rural or urban areas.
- » The SDC ensures that basic education provision and services are aligned with national policies, and that regulatory frameworks and data contribute to national education monitoring systems.



### 2. Providing flexible learning opportunities for out-of-school children and excluded youth to enable their (re-)integration into the education system, or into the economy (youth), and enhanced chances for personal development

- » The SDC supports BE interventions that provide a second chance to out-of-school children above the regular primary-school entry age through flexible, age-appropriate catch-up or accelerated public/formal or alternative basic-education offers with, upon completion, the possibility of bridging to local/formal schools or vocational training. For those aged 10+, alternative/second-chance BE interventions may include non-work-based VSD components. Target: out-of-school children aged 9 to 15
- » The SDC's alternative and second-chance BE offers are to be inclusive, equitable, aligned with regulatory frameworks and reinforce the local/formal education system. To ensure equity and enhance quality of the national education system and existing schools, bridge programmes or alternative education should strengthen the capacities of local/public/formal schools/teachers.
- » The SDC supports VSD interventions that provide youth, who missed or dropped out of school with market-relevant, target-group-specific vocational-skills-development offers which may include BE components for those with inadequate levels of literacy and numeracy. Target: disadvantaged and marginalised youth aged 15+.



### 3. Developing comprehensive measures, including cross-sectoral collaboration, to lower barriers to BE and VSD due to gender, health, socio-economic deprivation, migration or other factors in order to enhance education access and retention

- » The SDC supports targeted measures to lower barriers to education (access and retention). Barriers vary and measures are developed accordingly on the basis of thorough analyses of bottlenecks and the causes of exclusion. Interventions may, for example, include information outreach, awareness raising and advocacy, promoting recognition of prior learning; social-protection and poverty-reduction measures (i.e. cash and voucher approaches, social insurance, comprehensive cross-sectoral interventions to accessing services); collaboration with health, nutrition and water sectors; gender-specific activities, including promoting education for girls; remedial classes for those at risk of dropping out etc. Target: access and retention barriers related to gender, poverty, socio-cultural or legal discrimination and persons with special needs



### 4. Enhancing inclusive and conflict-sensitive quality basic education in fragile and crisis contexts to meet the learning and protection needs of marginalised and crisis affected children, and to foster socio-economic prospects and social cohesion

- » The SDC promotes the inclusion of marginalised children in education systems in fragile contexts, and aspects of basic education interventions that enhance social cohesion, prevent violence and facilitate conflict transformation. It therefore ensures that interventions are aligned with conflict-sensitive education and that they refer to INEE Conflict-Sensitive Education or other similar tools (reference: [http://toolkit.ineesite.org/inee\\_conflict\\_sensitive\\_education\\_pack](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/inee_conflict_sensitive_education_pack)).
- » The SDC supports interventions that enable children affected by crisis (conflict or natural disaster) to access quality basic education in safe and protective learning environments, thereby prioritising an integrated education in emergencies/child protection approach. Education-in-emergencies interventions pursue an integrated education and child-protection approach, address both education and protection needs of children and are adjusted to the respective crisis-context: They involve support to host-community schools, formal and alternative education offers, accelerated or catch-up classes in regular or temporary schools, teaching and learning material, crisis-relevant curricula and teacher training; child-friendly spaces and other psychosocial and recreational activities; human rights, children's rights and value-based education, school-based protection-referral, violence prevention, conflict and disaster-risk-reduction activities, mine-risk awareness, early-warning-systems, awareness on the protection of education from attack, SGBV-prevention, health and hygiene promotion; provi-

sion of water/sanitation and food in schools etc. – Interventions may use innovative approaches such as voucher and cash-transfer, mobile technologies etc. Education interventions in crisis-contexts are aligned with national standards and the INEE Minimum Standards.



## 5. Orientation: Sustainability, cohesion and resilience



### 1. Encouraging basic literacy/numeracy skills and vocational skills in non-education programmes – migration, water, food security, health, governance – to enhance participants' competencies for productive lives, sustainable production and consumption

- » The SDC fosters the education components of the global and bilateral programmes in other sectors that aim to increase participants' literacy/numeracy, technical, soft and life skills for enhanced economic productivity, socio-economic participation and sustainability. Target: the SDC global and bilateral programmes across sectors



### 2. Improving young people's knowledge of disaster, the adverse effects of climate change, disease, poor nutrition, sanitation and hygiene to enhance their awareness, resilience and well-being through relevant education activities in programmes of both BE and other sectors.

- » The SDC encourages activities related to climate change and disaster risk reduction in BE-programmes and through educational activities in programmes of other sectors. This field includes, for example, climate change and environmental education or comprehensive school safety and DRR (i.e. safe learning facilities, school disaster management, disaster risk reduction and resilience education, risk-informed education sector policy and plans)<sup>xxix</sup>
- » The SDC encourages health, nutrition, safe water, hygiene and sanitation promotion in BE programmes and encourages programmes of other sectors to use schools as platforms to improve young people's resilience and health, enhance knowledge and awareness on sustainable and healthy lifestyles



### 3. Addressing causes of social grievances, tensions and violence through targeted measures at school/training/community level to foster cohesion, violence prevention and conflict resolution particularly in fragile conflict-affected and crisis contexts

- » The SDC addresses social grievances, the underlying causes of conflict through targeted interventions in schools (BE) and training (VSD), involving human rights, citizenship and value-based education; education activities for conflict transformation, social cohesion, respect and tolerance; school- and community-based conflict-risk reduction and protection plans; school-parliament etc. Target: fragile conflict-affected contexts, urban areas characterised by violence
- » The SDC ensures that all activities are based on sound conflict analysis and conflict-sensitive programme management, and are in line with INEE conflict-sensitive education standards or other similar standards/tools.



### 4. Promoting education for sustainable development; citizenship and human rights education, value-based education; education for conflict resolution and a culture of dialogue in both education and non-education programmes to foster environmental sensitivity, enhance tolerance, respect and socio-political participation

- » The SDC promotes education for sustainable development, civic education, human rights and value-based education and other topics that foster sustainable development, social cohesion, violence prevention, conflict transformation and political participation as part of its BE and VSD programmes, as well as through related education components in programmes of other sectors (i.e. BE-components in other sectors) and through policy dialogue. Target: the SDC global and bilateral programmes across sectors, BE and VSD programmes
- » The SDC BE provides guidance on related topics, contributes to institutional capacity and actively promotes education as a means for transforming societies.
- » The SDC encourages programmes of other sectors to use students and teachers as agents of change for sustainable development and social cohesion through reinforced collaboration with education stakeholders and school-/training-centre-based interventions, including collaboration with the SDC's BE and VSD programmes. Target: the SDC global and bilateral programmes across sectors



## 6. Orientation: Transition to work



### 1. Strengthening vocational orientation and guidance in formal or alternative lower-secondary education to enable informed choices of career path

» The SDC supports the introduction of vocational orientation and vocational guidance, based on information on the labour market situation and career requirements. Target: children and youth enrolled in lower secondary education



### 2. Expanding access to career counselling and matching services for graduates and unemployed youth for better employment results

» The SDC supports interventions to strengthen career counselling, job matching services, including strengthened public or private employment services and coaching for employment. Target: VSD students and graduates aged 15+, unemployed youth



### 3. Fostering entrepreneurship and support trainees to take advantage of (self-)employment opportunities

» The SDC supports the integration of entrepreneurship training and business skills in VSD and fosters access for graduates to service providers in business development and finance. The combination of the SDC's private-sector-development instruments with training is encouraged to facilitate access to employment and income in the local economy. Target: VSD students and graduates, unemployed youth and adults



### 4. Aligning VSD with economic development or private-sector development initiatives and engagement with the Swiss and/or locally active private sector while focusing on sectors with job growth prospects and partnerships with private-sector actors for eased labour-market integration

» The SDC supports collaboration with the private sector and local economic or private-sector development initiatives for increased employment and economic development outcomes. It focuses on sectors with job growth prospects and increases its VSD contribution for productivity and economic growth. It supports the provision of VSD in modern trades with good income prospects thereby increasing the attractiveness of VSD and contributing to increased social acceptance.



# ANNEX 2 – The contribution of education to the other SDGs

	<p><b>Education is the one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty.</b>          If all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills, there could be a 12% drop in global poverty. Besides, education increases the earnings of individuals and raises average annual gross domestic product of countries.</p>
	<p><b>A mother's education improves her children's nutrition, especially as she seeks higher levels of schooling.</b>          If all mothers in low-income countries had a primary education, 1.7 million children would be saved from stunting as a result of malnutrition in early childhood, and if they had a secondary education it would be 12.2 million children.</p>
	<p><b>Better educated people are much less vulnerable to health risks.</b>          When mothers in particular are educated, they are more likely to be well informed about various diseases and take steps to prevent them. Each extra year of a mother's schooling reduces the probability of infant mortality and a child whose mother can read is more likely to live past age five.</p>
	<p><b>Education builds on itself, creating greater capacity to educate others and nurture a culture that values learning.</b>          Education equips learners of all ages with the skills and values needed to be responsible global citizens, such as respect for human rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability. Investing in and strengthening a country's education sector is key to the development of any country and its people.</p>
	<p><b>Education enables girls and women to reach their full potential - in parity with men and boys - in their homes, communities, workplaces and institutions of influence.</b>          One additional school year can increase a woman's earnings by up to 20%. Some countries lose more than \$1 billion a year by failing to educate girls at the same level as boys.</p>
	<p><b>As communities become better educated about the links between their sanitation and health they see substantial improvements in sanitation.</b>          Educating communities about the links between sanitation and health, and implementing new, affordable technologies enhance their access to improved sanitation.</p>
	<p><b>Like education, clean and accessible energy is an essential building block of a country's social, economic and environmental development.</b>          Educated citizens will likely be more inclined to recognise and adopt new practices and technologies that will help them and their communities prosper. And, with education, those citizens will be positioned to build and maintain energy infrastructures that will sustain their countries for a long time to come.</p>
	<p><b>Education is one of the strongest drivers of economic progress and prosperity.</b>          Each additional year of schooling raises average annual gross domestic product growth by 0.37%. Over a 45-year period, average annual growth in income per capita was much higher in East Asia and the Pacific than in sub-Saharan Africa. The difference in education levels explains about half of the difference in growth.</p>

	<p><b>With education, countries have greater capacity to assemble and maintain the physical building blocks of progress, health and security.</b></p> <p>As people become better educated, they are more likely to acquire their own critical technical skills and creative problem solving necessary to build and sustain roads and bridges, ICT systems, ports and airports, health and financial systems, governance practices, that enable life in a country to improve and flourish.</p>
	<p><b>Educating children from across the demographic, geographic and cultural spectrum brings about an improvement in a country's income inequality.</b></p> <p>An improvement in a country's education equality can raise its per capita income. With improved education, people from disadvantaged communities are better positioned to advocate for their own rights and needs, gain entry into higher echelons of economic, social and civic life and help narrow gaps of inequality.</p>
	<p><b>With education, people are more likely to understand, support and craft creative solutions to ensure the basic ingredients of sustainable cities and communities.</b></p> <p>Good urban planning, efficient energy use, good water and sanitation management, social inclusion and other elements of well-working communities require people with knowledge and skills that are only available through quality education.</p>
	<p><b>Education raises the odds that people will use energy and water more efficiently and recycle household waste.</b></p> <p>Education improves the chance that farmers will address climate change by adopting techniques such as soil conservation, variation in planting dates and changes in crop varieties.</p>
	<p><b>With higher levels of education, people across many different societies show greater concern about the well-being of the environment.</b></p> <p>The more people are educated, the more they tend to express concern for the environment. Also, environmental education programmes have been responsible for important advances in many national and regional efforts to fight climate change and protect aquatic life and terrestrial ecosystems. That kind of education can only reach its full potential where a critical mass of a country's or region's inhabitants have foundational learning skills that come with primary and secondary education.</p>
	
	
	<p><b>Education is an essential precursor to peace, tolerance and a healthy civil society.</b></p> <p>People with secondary education are more likely than those with only primary education to show tolerance for people who are different from them. Moreover, literate people are more likely to participate in the democratic process and exercise their civil rights.</p>

Source: [www.globalpartnership.org/blog/17-ways-education-influences-new-17-global-goals](http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/17-ways-education-influences-new-17-global-goals)

# ANNEX 3 – Education components in non-education programmes

## ENVIRONMENT/CLIMATE CHANGE

Awareness-raising modules on environmental issues - included in curricula or provided in non-formal settings – contribute to changing behaviours and attitudes towards sustainable development. Such modules can include theoretical contents as well as practical activities.

### EXAMPLE OF SDC PROGRAMMES

“We don’t have a spare planet” – environmental protection through education

*Through their participation in small projects such as how to manage water resources or their discussion on the value of renewable energy, Macedonian children are taught environmental education in school in order to raise their awareness of environmental issues and to bring about a change in behaviour in the younger generation.*

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

Improving the school environment and infrastructure can prevent disasters, or mitigate their impact on education. Bringing a DRR component into schools can improve children and youth’s preparedness for disaster. Engineers and technicians can also be trained in using and applying DRR-sensitive instruments, such as earthquake resilient building techniques.

### EXAMPLES OF SDC PROGRAMMES

Improve access to good quality education through building safe, permanent and comfortable school infrastructure

*After the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, efforts were made to provide safe and durable educational infrastructures for children by rebuilding schools in accordance with the appropriate architectural and anti-earthquake norms.*

Disaster risk reduction in schools in Haiti

*In order to manage recurring natural disasters that obstruct Haiti’s development, engineers and technicians (m/f) on a local level are trained in using and applying DRR-sensitive instruments, and management and awareness of DRR is raised amongst the local population.*

## GOVERNANCE / DDLG

The positive impact of education on development also depends on the governance of the overall politico-administrative system. A functioning deconcentrated or decentralised education system with well-established responsibilities and relations as well as citizens who demand quality education from public actors are both key. More generally, citizen education programmes help to educate young people to become active, informed and responsible citizens, willing to take responsibility for their communities and contribute to the political process.



## EXAMPLE OF SDC PROGRAMMES

### Governance for vocational training in agriculture, Benin

*The Local Governance Programme strengthens the capacities of municipalities and citizens with the aim of enabling them to improve the living conditions of the population through quality services, also in education. Public bodies are supported in setting up the institutional arrangements (local capacities and finances, as well as accountability) for vocational training in agriculture in the departments of Borgou and Alibori (concertation framework). One of the reasons for the lack of quality vocational training was institutional instability and the dysfunctionality of the consultation frameworks created to organise the vocational training sector (at national and district level). The general objective is thus to support the institutional structures and relations between different levels of governance for the organisation of vocational training in the deconcentrated services and communes.*

### Promotion of citizenship education, Kosovo

*The decentralisation of politics and administration is key to peaceful coexistence in Kosovo. The development of local administrations, which offer high-quality services, is supported in a Local Governance Programme. At the same time, civil structures are supported in order to achieve their transparency and reliability. The project aims over the long term to create future generations of responsible and active citizens who can help to hold public agencies accountable. The project aims to guarantee the quality of citizenship education in schools. Through a contest, teachers of fifth-grade classes throughout Kosovo support pupils in developing their abilities and skills to address real life community issues in a creative and responsible way.*

## PROTECTION

In situation of conflicts and crises, the integration of education components in protection-programmes is key to ensuring children's age-specific protection, development and socio-emotional needs and enhancing their resilience to violence, exploitation, health and other life-threatening concerns.

## EXAMPLE OF SDC PROGRAMMES

### Integrated protection, education and WASH assistance to vulnerable children and their families affected by the IDP crisis in Iraq

*The Iraq crisis is severely impacting the well-being of children, who are increasingly exposed to conflict, displacement, and death. The SDC contributes to creating safer learning environments for conflict-affected children to help them learn, receive psychosocial treatment and improve their health and wellbeing.*

### Integrated protection/education in emergencies intervention in Lake Chad

*In response to the crisis in the Lake Chad region, the SDC is helping to ensure protection and access to education for children who fled Boko Haram through providing formal and alternative education services, improving their psychosocial well-being through recreational activities, referral and training, including awareness of the risks related to unexploded ordnance.*

## FOOD SECURITY, NUTRITION & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Education can raise young people's knowledge about nutrition and consumption issues, which can in turn improve their health. Capacity-building and training of farmers, livestock breeders and other value-chain participants is another way to integrate education components into rural development or food security programmes. This has a direct impact on the quality and productivity of the beneficiaries' work and on their livelihoods.

EXAMPLES OF SDC PROGRAMMES
Vegetables go to school
<i>The integration of vegetable garden programmes at school in several SDC priority countries not only aims at improving children’s knowledge and awareness of the importance of vegetable consumption in healthy nutrition but also improving their nutritional status.</i>
Support to the reform of the Agriculture and Forestry College in Luang Prabang
<i>The institutional capacity of the Northern Agriculture and Forestry College in Laos is reinforced through a modern education programme that includes a four-year higher diploma curricula on agronomy, livestock production, agro-business and forestry, teacher training on technical, methodological and behavioural skills, and transparent, effective and gender-sensitive management.</i>

## WATER AND SANITATION

In the same way as environmental education, awareness raising and capacity building on water issues, including water resources and sustainable water management, have a positive impact on sustainable development. Moreover, improving WASH conditions in schools helps to prevent illnesses, benefiting both children’s health and education.

EXAMPLE OF SDC PROGRAMMES
Water security in the Middle East (Blue Peace)
<i>In order to draw attention to the Blue Peace process and to communicate more accurately and effectively about water, education is being provided for the Blue Peace media network and new journalists.</i>
Blue School initiative
<i>Several ‘blue schools’ are being implemented within the framework of increased official development assistance, some directly by the SDC (e.g. in Nicaragua and Honduras), others by its partners (International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance IRHA, consortium of NGOs).The components of a blue school are: sustainable access to safe drinking water, sustainable access to sanitation and hygiene, a school garden as a practical place to demonstrate the relationships between food production and efficient water management, and watershed and land management practices, wherever suitable.</i>

## HEALTH

Education can be integrated in health programmes in different ways: for example in the form of prevention and awareness-raising on health issues, such as HIV, reproductive health and common diseases (malaria, etc.), or in providing training to health professionals through improved curricula, training trainers and providing infrastructure and equipment.

EXAMPLES OF SDC PROGRAMMES
Medical education reform project
<i>Training programmes for health workers and under/postgraduate medical students are supporting Tajikistan’s medical education reforms, which aim to improve the quality of health care services in the country.</i>
Safeguarding young people – sexual and reproductive health
<i>In order to reduce HIV infections and improve sexual and reproductive health, young people are being taught the knowledge, skills and values to protect themselves through training programmes that also target teachers, services providers and youth workers, who play an important role in raising awareness among young people.</i>

## PEACEBUILDING

The promotion of inclusive education and training targeted at vulnerable groups (youth at risk, people who have escaped trafficking, etc.) and adapted to the needs of communities help prevent violence, foster peace and social cohesion. Education and training as part of peacebuilding programmes can improve the social and economic prospects and integration of young people and, in turn, mitigate the risk of violence.

## EXAMPLES OF SDC PROGRAMMES

### Roma take an active role in improving their living conditions

*In order to improve the living conditions of Roma and contribute to their social integration, children and young people receive learning support and young Roma take part in education programmes to improve their chances in the job market or pave the way to self-employment.*

### Community empowerment in the Gaza Strip

*The Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip are empowered through taking an active part in the community, including in integrated programmes for children, young people and women on non-formal education, such as artistic skills development, rights awareness and psychosocial support.*

### Preventing violent extremism in Mali

*In Mali, the root causes of violent extremism are being tackled by supporting political and inter-intra religious dialogue, strengthening vocational training in regions most severely affected by radicalisation, and implementing accelerated school centres in the Timbuktu region to compensate the delay caused by school closures.*

## MIGRATION

Education and providing migrants with skills adapted to the labour market increases their chances of finding employment. The provision of information services, guidance and psychosocial support can improve the conditions of migration and ensure decent work.

## EXAMPLES OF SDC PROGRAMMES

### Safer migration project

*Vocational skills training and pre-departure information and support are given to Nepali migrants on short-term labour contracts travelling to the Middle East and Southeast Asia to prepare them for their future working environment, raise their awareness of their rights and give them legal and psychosocial support*

### Skills development programme in Cambodia

*By strengthening the national technical vocational training system in Cambodia, young men and women from rural areas are given training in vocational skills relevant to labour-market needs which increases their chances of finding decent employment as an alternative to urban or international migration.*

### Basic education and vocational skills for mobile populations

*The Sahel economy depends heavily on livestock, but herders remain largely excluded from education systems, which require people to stay in one place and are focused on urban professions. In cooperation with livestock farming organisations in West Africa, Switzerland aims to satisfy the rights and educational needs of these populations in order to mitigate their social, political and economic marginalisation.*

## CASH

There is increasing recognition that investment in human development at an earlier age can have a significant impact on the lifetime earnings capacity of an individual. This notion is the basis for the popularity of conditional cash-transfer programmes to help boost child health, nutrition and education outcomes.

## EXAMPLE OF SDC PROGRAMMES

### Swiss cash expertise for fresh local food in school meals in Haiti

*Through the secondment of a cash expert to the World Food Programme in Haiti, Switzerland helped design and launch a pilot project on the inclusion of fresh local food in children's school meals in 24 primary schools of the Nippes region. In this area, which has strong agriculture potential, the project is designed to enable schools to purchase fresh vegetables and fruit with cash transfers as an add-on to the school-meal rations of each child which traditionally contain only cereals and beans. The cash assistance through the school creates a sustainable link with small local producers and allows children to have a more nutritionally enriched school lunch.*

# ANNEX 4 – SWISS offices in international cooperation

The **UNESCO Section**, which is part of the FDFA's United Nations and International Organisations Division, Directorate of Political Affairs, is composed of the UNESCO Coordination section and the Secretariat of the Swiss Commission for UNESCO. UNESCO Coordination is UNESCO's contact point for the federal administration while the Secretariat supports the Commission in its task as an advisory body for the federal authorities in all areas concerning Switzerland's relations with UNESCO.

Switzerland's governmental offices active in international cooperation on vocational education and training.

**Switzerland's international cooperation on vocational education and training (VET)** is motivated by different policy areas: education, development cooperation, external affairs, migration and economic matters. To enhance the coordination and coherence of Switzerland's international engagement in VET, the relevant federal agencies<sup>XXX</sup> have developed a Joint Strategic Framework Paper on Swiss International VET Cooperation<sup>XXXI</sup>, which defines the following three overarching objectives:

- 1 Strengthen the Swiss VET system in the international context;
- 2 Promote economic and social development in partner countries through VET; and
- 3 Promote Switzerland as a relevant international player in VET.

The SDC's education strategy builds upon the Joint Strategic Framework Paper on Swiss international Cooperation and concerns the SDC's engagement in its priority countries in development and transition cooperation, humanitarian aid, global programmes and within the Swiss contribution to reduce the economic and social disparities in the enlarged European Union, as well as in its cooperation with multilateral agencies. The SDC accords high importance to coordinating its engagement with all relevant federal agencies in line with their respective mandates and priorities, especially in cases where country priorities overlap, in order to ensure coherence of Switzerland's contribution.

**The SDC** is the lead Swiss agency for objective (2) promote economic and social development in partner countries through VET. The SDC aims to achieve this objective through projects and measures in the area of vocational skills development

that promote sustainable development on the individual and systemic levels. Within this objective, it coordinates its engagement predominantly with the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM).

Vocational education and training is an important pillar of Swiss development cooperation. The SDC has supported vocational skills development (VSD) for more than four decades. In line with its mandate to alleviate poverty, its engagement is oriented towards an increased offer of relevant training, qualifications and better access to gainful employment and incomes for its target groups, including the poor and vulnerable. At the systemic level, the aim is to achieve enhanced productivity, inclusive economic growth as well as functioning VSD systems for more sustainability and systemic change. The core elements of the Swiss dual VET system, i.e. orientation on the needs of the local economy, collaboration with the private sector, and an emphasis on practical training provide inspiration for its projects in partner countries. The SDC promotes skills development for both the formal and the informal economies either within the framework of the formal education system or through non-formal initial or continuous vocational skills development, recognition of prior learning and certification. The focus is on secondary VET and continuous training in the formal system and non-formal initial and continuous vocational skills development.

SECO: Within the objective of promoting economic and social development, the SDC coordinates its activities closely with the **State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)**, which is engaged in professional skills development to enhance productivity and therefore the competitiveness of partner countries. This supports a stronger integration in the world economy and contributes to the creation of jobs. SECO targets higher-level groups (post-secondary and tertiary level) in its priority countries.<sup>XXXII</sup> SECO focuses primarily on advanced on-the-job training in the formal economy, applying a sectoral approach and involving the private sector where there is a significant lack of skilled labour. Furthermore, SECO aims to improve labour market conditions in its priority countries. In this way SECO complements the SDC's activities.

Objective (2) is also related to Swiss migration policy. As one of its instruments, the **State Secretariat for Migration** establishes migration partner-

ships with selected partner countries. Within this framework, there are possibilities for regular migration and exchanges in the area of initial and continuous vocational education and training.

The **State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)** focuses on objective (1), strengthen the Swiss vocational and professional education and training VPET system in the international context. In order to achieve this overarching objective, SERI implements various measures, a) to improve international recognition of Swiss VET and professional education qualifications, b) to establish Switzerland as an international partner recognised as possessing specialised expertise, c) to promote the international competences and mobility of Swiss stakeholders, and d) to assure the quality of Swiss VPET on an international level. SERI's cooperation activities are carried out in multilateral as well as in bilateral settings. In the latter, SERI prioritises cooperation with European countries and countries with which Switzerland maintains strong ties from an economic and educational policy perspective. In the few cases where country priorities overlap with the SDC's and SECO's strategic priorities, SERI either closely coordinates its activities with these two agencies or takes a subsidiary and supporting role.

**The political affairs divisions of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs** primarily contribute to objective (3), promoting Switzerland as a relevant international player in vocational education and training.



# ANNEX 5 – Glossary

## **Alternative education**

Alternative education is the overarching term referring to all types of education programmes that are not considered to be formal by governments and agencies.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Alternative Education activities have clear learning objectives, but vary in terms of duration, in terms of whether they confer certification for acquired learning, and in organisational structure. It also describes different approaches to teaching and learning other than state-provided mainstream education, usually in the form of public or private schools with a special, often innovative curriculum and a flexible programme of study based to a large extent on individual students' interests and needs.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

## **Assessment**

Process of appraising the knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competencies of an individual against predefined criteria (learning expectations, measurement of learning outcomes). Assessment is typically followed by certification.<sup>xxxv</sup>

## **Bilingual education**

Refers to 'first-language-first' education, i.e. schooling which begins in the mother tongue and transitions to other languages. Learning is better achieved in an educational programme designed with local actors and with bilingualism based on a national language in combination with another language (official national or international language/s).

## **Bridge programme (BE)**

Bridges should be established between educational alternatives and the formal school system as well as between basic education and vocational training, thus allowing the continuation of the educational curriculum and socio-economic integration.

## **Bridge programme (VSD)**

Bridge programmes provide compensatory learning intended to fill gaps accumulated by individuals during education and training, mainly to enable them to participate in training.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

## **Child**

Article 1 of The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood lower. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the monitoring body for the Convention, has encouraged states to review the age of majority if it is set below 18 and to increase the level of protection for all children under 18.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

## **Continuous/continuing education or training**

Education or training after initial education and training or after entry into working life aimed at helping individuals to: improve or update their knowledge and /or skills; acquire new skills for a career move or retraining; continue their personal or professional development.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

## **Dual VET (or VSD or training)**

Dual vocational education and training is known as VET and takes place in at least two places of learning (therefore dual), i.e. on the job, in particular at the workplace in a company and off the job, in particular at VET schools and in VET centres. VET programmes lead to a full vocational qualification and therefore last for several years. At the workplace in a company, the focus is on teaching or training contents related to professional practice while basic skills and theoretical content related to the occupation and general education are taught at the VET centre or school. The practical training at the company clearly predominates in terms of scope, and the companies and their associations and representations of interest play a key role in shaping dual vocational education and training.<sup>xxxix</sup>

## **Education for sustainable development (ESD)**

Education for sustainable development ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society while respecting cultural diversity. It is lifelong learning, and an integral part of quality education. ESD is holistic, transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society.<sup>xli</sup>

## **Education in emergencies and crises (EiE)**

Education in emergencies (EiE) is the provision of quality formal and non-formal basic education opportunities that meet the protection and learning needs (physical, psychosocial, and cognitive) of children affected by emergencies and protracted crises (epidemics, forced displacement, armed conflict, crises or long-term instability, or sudden onset natural disasters / any combination of these). Education in emergencies and crises provides the physical, psychosocial and cognitive protection for sustaining and saving lives, opens up future prospects and supports recovery in crisis-affected countries.

### **Employability**

Combination of factors that enable individuals to progress towards, enter employment, stay in employment and progress during their careers.<sup>XLIII</sup>

### **Equity**

Equity in education entails reducing discrepancies based on gender, economic status, place of domicile, ethnic group, language and similar characteristics. Equity in education is the means to achieving equality. It intends to provide the best opportunities for all to achieve their full potential and to address instances of disadvantage that restrict educational achievement. It involves providing special treatment or taking special action to reverse disadvantages that prevent learners from accessing and benefiting from education on an equal basis.<sup>XLIV</sup>

### **Formal education or training (or VSD)**

Education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organisations and recognised private bodies and, in their totality, make up the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national education authorities or equivalent, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national education authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education. Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognised as being part of the formal education system.<sup>XLV</sup>

### **Foundation basic skills**

Foundation basic skills include the basic academic knowledge and skills that learners acquire often as result of their participation in formal school education (primary and secondary schools) or through alternative education programmes. These skills, which include as a minimum basic literacy and numeracy skills, provide the foundation upon which learners receive further education to deepen their capacity for leading fulfilling, meaningful lives and finding decent employment.<sup>XLVI</sup>

### **Global citizenship education (GCED)**

GCED equips learners with: a) knowledge of global issues and universal values such as justice, equality, dignity and respect; b) cognitive skills to think critically, systemically and creatively, adopting a multiple perspective approach; c) non-cognitive skills including social skills such as empathy and conflict resolution, communication skills, networking and interacting with people of different backgrounds, origins, cultures, perspectives; d) behavioral capacities to act collaboratively and responsibly, and to strive for the collective good.<sup>XL</sup>

### **Initial training (or VSD or VET)**

Initial (or pre-employment) vocational education and training (VET) prepares people for future employment, self-employment, or any sort of gainful activities, i.e. it aims to make people employable. It facilitates the transition of youth from the general education system to the world of work at different school levels.

### **Labour-market orientation**

The cornerstones of labour-market-oriented and demand-driven VET systems are: a) participatory development of occupational profiles and standards with representatives of industry; b) development of curricula based on occupational profiles; c) competence based teaching and learning with a significant share of practical and/or workplace training; d) assessment and certification procedures with strong involvement of employers.

### **Lifelong learning**

The principle of lifelong learning is that the entire education system should be designed to facilitate lifelong and 'life wide' learning and the creation of learning opportunities for people of all ages. The acquisition of knowledge, skills, competencies that lifelong learning should entail is not limited in its conceptual understanding to that of foundational skills, but also encompasses a larger panel of skills, bearing in mind the emergence of new skills deemed critical for individuals such as learning to learn, skills for global citizenship, entrepreneurial skills, and other core skills.<sup>XLVII</sup>

### **Literacy skills**

According to UNESCO's 1958 definition, the term refers to the ability of an individual to read and write with understanding a simple short statement related to his/her everyday life. The concept of literacy has since evolved to embrace multiple skill domains, each conceived on a scale of different mastery levels and serving different purposes. Many people today view literacy as the ability to identify, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials in various contexts. Literacy is a process of learning that enables individuals to achieve personal goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in the community and wider society.

### **Non-formal education and training**

Learning activities typically organised outside the formal education system. In different contexts, non-formal education covers educational activities aimed at imparting adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children and youths, life skills, vocational skills, and general culture. Such activities usually have clear learning objectives, but vary in terms of duration, in terms of whether they confer certification for acquired learning, and in organisational structure.

### **Numeracy skills**

Numeracy is most often assumed to depend on a solid mathematical education and innumeracy to be the result of poor schooling. However, challengers of this definition prefer to relate 'numeracy' to the ability to process, interpret and communicate numerical, quantitative, spatial, statistical and even mathematical information in ways that are appropriate for a variety of contexts. The term increasingly refers to a competence that allows more effective participation in relevant social activities.<sup>XLVIII</sup>

### **(Technical and) vocational education and training (TVET or VET)**

TVET and VET are a combination of ILO-preferred (human resources training and development) and UNESCO-preferred (technical and vocational education) terminology. They address mainly the formal economy and education and training at secondary and tertiary levels and aim to render people employable, including their ability to cope with all aspects of the social, economic and technical environment. In the area of development cooperation, the terms are nowadays often replaced by the broader term (vocational) skills development. TVET programmes are generally designed to prepare learners for direct entry into a particular occupation or trade and usually lead to a labour market vocational qualification that is recognised by the relevant authorities

### **Vocational guidance**

Range of activities designed to help individuals take educational, vocational or personal decisions and to carry them out before or after they enter the labour market. Guidance and counselling can be provided at school, training centres, job centres, the workplace or in other settings.<sup>XLIX</sup>

### **Youth**

According to UNESCO, youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age group. UN statistics are based on the range from 15 to 24 years. National definitions of youth vary and may include people up to 30 or 35 depending on the context.

### **Young People**

There is no harmonised definition of 'young people'. The SDC uses 'young people' as synonym for 'children and youth'.





# Endnotes and Sources

- i The Education for All (EFA) was a global movement to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. At the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, 164 governments pledged to achieve EFA and identified six goals to be met by 2015.
- ii Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report (2015) Education for all 2000–2015: Achievements and Challenges. UNESCO: Paris
- iii Source: [www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/concensus-en.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/concensus-en.pdf)
- iv Established in 2002, GPE brings together 60+ developing country governments, 20+ donors, international organizations, civil society, teacher organizations, the private sector and philanthropy to improve the lives of children and youth through quality education for all (source: GPE 2016)
- v Source: UNICEF (<http://data.unicef.org/topic/education/overview/>)
- vi Source: The Education Commission (2016). The learning generation: Investing in education for a changing world
- vii Source: UNESCO/UIS 2016
- viii Source: GPE 2016 – conflict-affected countries have only 20% of the world's primary-school-age children but 50% of the world's out-of-school children (GPE)
- ix Source: ILO 2016 (<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/lang--de/index.htm>)
- x VSD is not a clearly defined field in most countries. It is overseen by several different ministries. The offer of VSD providers is highly diverse. Little data on non-formal VSD is available, even if most VSD-needs are covered by it in developing countries.
- xi The SDC has been actively engaged in the process of defining SDG 4. It is strongly involved in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and a number of other global and regional initiatives, such as the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, Donor Committee for Vocational Education and Training to name a few and contributes to a number of multilateral organisations.
- xii Source: UNICEF, Fhi360 (2016) Education Inequality and Violent Conflict: Evidence and Policy Considerations ([www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/resource-epdc-brief-edu-inequality-violent-conflict.pdf](http://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/resource-epdc-brief-edu-inequality-violent-conflict.pdf))
- xiii The SDCs understanding of education as a 'common good' is influenced by the following publication: UNESCO (2015). Rethinking Education. Towards a global common good? UNESCO: Paris
- xiv Source: UNESCO 2015
- xv Source: Unesco <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/networks/global-networks/aspnet/about-us/strategy/the-four-pillars-of-learning/>
- xvi Bildungsverfassung 2006, Botschaft Bundesrat 24.02.2016 zur Förderung von Bildung
- xvii The SDC acknowledges the importance of a holistic education and training system. It recognises the need for a balanced skills mix with promotion of BE and VSD for poverty reduction, increased competitiveness and inclusive economic growth, based on strong basic education. In VSD, in addition to supporting VSD-system reforms and institutional capacity building, the focus lies on secondary-level skills provision and continuous training within the formal system, and non-formal initial and continuous VSD. It is here where the SDC sees the biggest needs of young people in partner countries in search of access to the world of work and broader prospects.
- xviii See: [www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/topics/international-cooperation-in-education/strengthening-the-position-of-swiss-vpetin-an-international-con.html](http://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/topics/international-cooperation-in-education/strengthening-the-position-of-swiss-vpetin-an-international-con.html)
- xix See: [www.edk.ch/dyn/16342.php](http://www.edk.ch/dyn/16342.php) for further reference to the Swiss education system
- xx Source: ILO 2008
- xxi For examples of education components in non-education programmes see annex 3
- xxii On average low-income countries spend 11 times more per student on tertiary than on primary education whereas spending for vocational skills development is insignificant. In comparison, high-income countries spend only 1.3 times more for tertiary than for primary students. Source: GMR 2015
- xxiii Of particular relevance are inter-sectoral collaboration with health, food security/nutrition, wash, protection, DRR
- xxiv According to ILO, there are 40 million new annual labour-market entrants worldwide – source: World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2015.
- xxv See: [www.ineesite.org/en/minimum-standards](http://www.ineesite.org/en/minimum-standards)
- xxvi The SDC ensures a 'problem-based' approach that puts all its instruments in the service of the context based on their respective comparative advantage. This may imply co-funding through development/transition and humanitarian credits, flexible partnerships steered by their capacities in the respective context, etc.
- xxvii Basic education is a separate network. VSD is part of the Network on Employment and Income.
- xxviii For reference: <http://www.ineesite.org/en/protecting-education-from-attack>
- xxix For reference: [http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/Comprehensive\\_school\\_safety.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/Comprehensive_school_safety.pdf)
- xxx The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), the Directorate of Political Affairs, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Directorate of European Affairs of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).
- xxxi See: [www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/topics/international-cooperation-in-education/strengthening-the-position-of-swiss-vpetin-an-international-con.html](http://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/topics/international-cooperation-in-education/strengthening-the-position-of-swiss-vpetin-an-international-con.html)
- xxxii See: SECO's Position Paper on Skills 2017
- xxxiii Source: UNESCO
- xxxiv Source: OECD
- xxxv Source: CEDEFOP 2014
- xxxvi Source: CEDEFOP 2014
- xxxvii Source: Unicef
- xxxviii Source: CEDEFOP 2014
- xxxix Source: DC dVET 2016
- xl Source: UNESCO 2013
- xli Source: UNESCO 2014
- xlii Source: adjusted from INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery (2010)
- xliii Source: CEDEFOP 2014
- xliv Source: UNESCO
- xlv Source: UNESCO
- xlvi Source: UNESCO
- xlvii Source: UNESCO
- xlviii Source: GMR
- xlix Source: CEDEFOP 2014





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