Economic and Social Council

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

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

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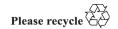for Sustainable Development: progress in implementing the Strategy**

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

Note by the secretariat**

Summary

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

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

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regard to the implementation of education for sustainable development in the ECE region.

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

1.	National reporting on the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development offers a valuable opportunity for countries to learn from each other and to share newly produced resources and materials within and beyond the ECE region.

2.	In preparation for the seventeenth meeting of the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development, countries are requested to fill in the questionnaire below, informing on progress made and challenges encountered in working on priority action areas after the fourth mandatory reporting cycle carried out in 2018 and since the sixteenth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 10 and 11 May 2021).

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

(a)	quality education and ESD;

(b)	whole institution approach and ESD;

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

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

4.	Countries are kindly requested to submit this information in writing to the secretariat via e-mail (nona.iliukhina@un.org and esd@unece.org) by **13 May 2022.**

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

6.	Countries will be invited to complement the secretariat's presentation with interventions on outstanding activities and initiatives implemented since the sixteenth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 10 and 11 May 2021), in particular regarding how the implementation of national strategies for ESD contributes to the new developments and challenges for ESD in the region. Given the limited time available, countries will only have up to three minutes each for interventions from the floor.

Questionnaire for 2022 informal country[1] reporting on the implementation of the priority action areas of the newly drafted framework for the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030[2]

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

I.   Priority action area (a)

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

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

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

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

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

ESD topics and competences are integrated in initial teacher training curricula and output requirements in all educator areas at all universities in Hungary. ESD competences are also part of the in-service teacher assessment and evaluation educator competence portfolio, which serves as a basis for educators' appraisal in Hungary.

Hungary adopted a research-based ESD competence framework through a multi-stakeholder consultation process when introducing the framework and developing trainings. In the past 3 years, the Educational Authority of Hungary organized briefings on ESD for all school leaders in the country at the opening events of the school term, and from 2019 on, in the traditional series of professional learning events called Autumn and Spring Pedagogical Days, each Pedagogical Education Centre in the country organized professional learning programs on ESD and early school leaving. With this, Hungary goes beyond simply providing teacher trainings as professional learning opportunities and exploits other, efficient forms of professional learning known from literature. The programs had a participatory approach: with the help of workshops, good practice exchanges and open sessions, they involved hundreds of teachers in each region. From 2020, teachers' preparation is also supported by a multi-stage, free online mini-course system developed by the Educational Authority of Hungary. Training programs strengthening ESD competences contributed to the successful qualification of 15,000 teachers in this competence area in 2020/2021. Over the past two years, the Ministry of Hunan

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[1] Countries with a federal structure are free to provide several inputs or questionnaires from different states or entities, if appropriate.

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

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

Capacities and the Educational Authority have reached around 18,000 teachers through trainings, briefings and presentations. The multiplication trainings of Pedagogical Training Centre staff have also started and the Ministry of Human Capacities initiated strengthening the professional networks at both regional and national levels.

Besides, the country's whole-institutional ESD networks (the Hungarian Eco-School Network and the Green Kindergarten Network) provide peer learning and exchange opportunities across subject areas, schools, cities and even regions.

The initiative of developing teachers' ESD competences in Hungary received the GENE Certificate Exemplifying Quality in Global Education in 2021.

Hungary would like to make a presentation on this topic: integrating ESD in teachers' professional learning.

II. Priority action area (b)

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

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

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

Hungary has two excellence networks operating with WSA/WIA, both engaging over one-third of child/student and teacher population in the country. In Hungary, the Green Kindergarten Network and the Eco-School Network with their respective self-assessment and award systems are efficient representatives of the whole-institutional approach of ESD. These twin networks have long traditions and Hungary's aim is to further expand the two networks, including the further involvement of technical and vocational education and training institutions. The number of kindergartens and schools successfully applying for membership has been increasing evenly over the past years. Hungary also aims to invest in the infrastructural development of schools in the network with special regard to applying green, energy-efficient solutions.

The Hungarian Eco-School Network was founded in 2000 with 22 schools on board. It was the first official and nationwide environmental education school network in Hungary, which has been coordinated by the Ministry of Human Capacities. In the past 21 years the Network has grown to over 1300 schools from all over the country. The Hungarian Eco-school Network coordinates, announces and organises in-service teacher trainings and programs for those schools that put the principles of sustainability in the centre of their curricula and operation. Moreover, pedagogical supplementary materials, books and educational packages are prepared or regularly recommended by the Network to support the daily work of the member schools and to keep them up-to-date. Eco-schools operate with an ESD-focused local curriculum and a whole-school approach, extending ESD activities and environmentally conscious attitude to each member of the school community. Schools are requested to showcase their ESD activities on their own website, while regional eco-school meetings provide opportunities for them to share and exchange experiences. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, the in-service trainings and regional Eco-school meetings were

organized online in 2020 and 2021.

All school types in the spectrum of the Hungarian public education system are represented in Eco-school Network: the majority of member schools are primary schools, about one-quarter are secondary and vocational schools, but there are some art schools, special needs schools, boarding schools and dormitories, too. The proportion of vocational training institutions is also growing, typically agricultural vocational schools have the title of eco-school, but several vocational schools typically those for which have commercial-catering, tourism, IT or environmental trainings are also part of this network.

The Green Kindergarten Network, coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture consists of a network of almost 1100 kindergartens throughout the country. The Ministry of Agriculture supports the network by operating a website, organising special events and an inner network of pillar kindergartens. The curriculum of green kindergartens includes dedication towards ESD, promotes recognition, protection and preservation of local heritage and places special emphasis on environmental education, building developmental activities on this while also reflecting these value choices in the infrastructure and operation. Green kindergartens work with a whole-institutional approach.

There are special trainings available for eco-school (and green kindergarten) staff on WSA/WIA.

The Hungarian Eco-school Network received the GENE Certificate of National Recognition for Quality in Global Education in 2021.

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

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

The main challenge is the lack of financial resources and financial incentives.

3.   Have there been any monitoring processes (for instance, self-assessments) in your country that support formal and non-formal institutions and organizations when assessing their progress regarding application of WSA/WIA to ESD?

Yes ☒ No ☐

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

In formal education in Hungary, both the Eco-school Network and the Green Kindergarten Network have a sophisticated indicator framework. These contain indicators on specific areas of the WSA/WIA operation. Besides, schools are invited to set their own local indicators.

The Network is open to every Hungarian public educational institution with a yearly open application system built on self-evaluation according to a set of criteria. The application process invites schools to go through a reflective cycle including the revision of existing and proposed activities from an ESD point of view referring to the set of quality criteria provided and accepted by the Network, then setting their own challenges and assessing their results leading to another cycle of reflection and revision. After a successful application, schools are allowed to possess the title Eco-

school, which they may renew every three years. After two consecutive successful applications, schools are eligible to apply for the title Permanent Eco-school.

The set of criteria has been renewed several times in expert consultation processes over the past 20 years and had been transformed to a fully digital process. The WSA/WIA criteria used in Hungary builds on the set of criteria first proposed by the Environmental Schools and Initiatives, but revisions considered new findings on learning environments, challenges set by new strategies including SDGs.

Hungary would like to make a presentation on this topic: WSA/WIA – monitoring and assessment in the twin network of Eco-Schools and Green Kindergartens in Hungary.

III. Priority action area (c)

Supporting ESD within ICT and digital education

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

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

The new situation implied by the COVID-19 pandemic was a significant challenge but also a massive opportunity for the Hungarian public education, as the majority of teachers continued teaching creatively and with commitment on a new basis, it resulted in that many of them underwent a significant development in digital methodology and the use of digital tools. At the same time, it became clear that these measures need to be taken forward at system level: targeted in-service training for teachers (not only in terms of skills, but also digital methodologies); continuing infrastructural developments (especially improving the equipment for children and families in need, expanding the Internet network and increasing bandwidth in schools), creating and sharing high-quality digital content, expanding the functionality of the KRÉTA (central system of administration and registration in public education). Besides these, special and extra attention has to be paid for digital child protection and for the conscious use of the Internet and media.

As for ESD programs, Hungary experienced an increased interest in formal education. One example of this is the growing success of the Sustainability Thematic Week, which was implemented in 2016 by the Ministry of Human Capacities and which has attracted an increasing number of schools each year since its introduction. In the programs related to the Sustainability Thematic Week, students engage in active learning to address certain topics of sustainability. In addition to the extraordinary classes, the program series also includes in-service teacher training, workshops and applications Originally, it has been a classical face-to-face event, but due to the pandemic, it had to switch to digital. In the academic year 2020/2021, more than 370,000 students from 1,630 schools took part in the thematic week, which is about a third of all the institutions and students in Hungary, while 1,070 teachers took part in teacher trainings. This online event was also a good example of the possibility of implementing quality ESD programs at the national level, despite the challenges caused by the pandemic. In 2021, Dr Jane Goodall and President János Áder gave extraordinary online lessons. Besides, about 20 online lessons and more than 30 adaptable lesson plans were shared (and used during the theme week) by the participating institutions.

With the support of the Ministry of Human Capacities, the World's Largest Lesson reached nearly 4,700 classes from 634 schools joining in 2019, while in 2021 over 5,000 classes decided to follow the online event. The main purpose of the program is to raise students' awareness of the SDGs.

In a comprehensive nationwide survey linked to Sustainability Week, a survey of students' environmental attitudes was launched with the help of leading researchers in the field. As part of a gap-filling research program called Students and Teachers on Sustainability, around 25,000 young people aged 10–18 were reached through an online questionnaire and focus group research. The research results confirm the approach and effectiveness of the series of these events: a higher proportion of respondents who took part in the Sustainability Week are committed to environmental or nature protection programs, for example.

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

There are programs to support ICT use and digital education in Hungary but not specifically to integrate ICT / digital pedagogy to ESD.

We believe that developing capacities at one end stay in the system and can be exploited at another. Therefore generally developing teachers' capacities on digital pedagogy and investing in school infrastructure may support effort in the field of ESD too.

The Digital Education Strategy (the objectives of which include the provision of adequate quantity and quality of digital educational content, progressive infrastructure and suitable digital equipment in all schools) and the National Core Curriculum (describing approaches and requirements of digital education) apply to all educators in the country – programs are available to all educational actors to integrate digital education in their work: including ESD.

The Government of Hungary, in order to widely disseminate digital pedagogical methods and to support their application in public educational institutions, has taken a number of measures in recent years. Achieving these goals has also been supported by a number of EU projects in recent years. As a result of these development measures, the bandwidth has been expanded at thousands of public educational facilities at the national level, and wireless network has been constructed where it was needed. In addition, about 100,000 ICT tools have been placed in public education institutions. Students and staff in public education have been provided the educational version of Office 365 within the framework of the Government's Clean Software Programme including MS Teams free of charge. The widely used central system of administration and registration in public education (KRÉTA) has been enriched with a new function supporting digital collaboration, which can be used by all students for online communication and problem solving.

The ICT infrastructural development with teacher trainings on digital pedagogy, cyberbullying and digital education can contribute to integrating digital pedagogy and ICT use in ESD.

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

country on this topic

There is assistance on the national level to increase ICT and digital education but not specifically with regards to ESD.

(See also above.)

In Hungary's national recovery and resilience plan, we set the goal of improving the institutions' ICT equipment. To this end, we plan to

– equip schools with enough modern computers year-to-year to provide each 5th and 9th grader with one for personal use (about 100,000 computers per year);
– provide schools with devices especially for teachers (55,000 computers);
– improve 6,000 classrooms with interactive flat panels to support digital education;
– improve computational and algorithmic thinking and creativity by providing ICT tools for schools;
– offer digital and digital pedagogical competence development programs for teachers (workshops, embedded programs, training, self-education opportunities), we will motivate them to participate in such programs.

IV. Priority action area (d)

Enhancing entrepreneurship and employment within ESD

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

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V. COVID-19 and ESD

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

Yes ☒ No ☐

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

The pandemic imposed significant challenges but also opened new opportunities for Hungary – see section III.1.

2. Are there any lessons learnt in your country from COVID-19, which, in your opinion, would strengthen the role of ESD in the national context as a vehicle for empowering youth and citizens to be more resilient in future emergencies?

Yes ☒ No ☐

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

The pandemic increased interest in sustainability topics, which strengthen ESD initiatives and help involving youth in such programs.

Besides, recent research reveals that WSA/WIA ESD schools have lower rates of early school leaving. Large-scale research also supports that young students taking part in ESD programs (such as the Sustainability Thematic Week) have more positive environmental attitudes and show more agency to act towards sustainability than those not participating in these programs. Therefore, one lesson learnt from the pandemic is that it was – in all senses – worth continuing central efforts in ESD, and we believe that this will return in better responses in future emergencies.