



G20 Education Ministers' Declaration





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June 22, 2021- Catania (Italy)

Preamble

1. We, Ministers of Education of the G20 members and invited countries, met in Catania, Italy, in a hybrid format, on June 22, 2021, to re-affirm the fundamental role of education for inclusive economic growth, equity, equality, human dignity, social inclusion, and wellbeing. We recognise the importance of putting education at the centre of the political agenda as part of the recovery from the present global crisis to build back better and with resilience for the future.
2. We reiterate that the right to education is a human right and the basis for the realisation of all other rights, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2018 G20 Education Ministers' Declaration.
3. We recognise the importance of advancing discussions and initiatives to achieve progress on Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda, to *ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. These include initiatives promoting gender equality and fighting all kinds of discrimination.
4. We also recognise the importance of enabling all people, particularly children and young people, to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development and active citizenship including, among others, through education for sustainable development.
5. We reaffirm our commitment to mitigating the impact of the pandemic on education systems in order to ensure access to quality education and educational continuity, as affirmed in the G20 Education Ministers' Statement on COVID-19 of June 27, 2020 and the G20 Education Ministers' Communiqué of September 5, 2020.
6. We reiterate our commitment to not leave anyone behind by providing access to quality education and a safe return to the classroom to all through efficient and effective stimulus and recovery programmes. We reaffirm the importance of the coordination between education and labour policies to facilitate youth transition from school to work, in line with the G20 Education Ministers' Declaration of September 5, 2018.

Blended teaching and learning

7. We recognise the importance of current societal and technological innovations and the potential transformative impact that digital technologies, Artificial Intelligence and Big Data can have on education. Because everyone needs to be prepared for the transformation, we deem it critical to improve the educational environment and confront all dimensions of the digital divide, paying particular attention to supporting vulnerable groups.



8. We also recognise the risks and challenges of technological innovations and the importance of the ethical use of digital technology in education settings and call upon stakeholders to respect existing regulations in terms of safeguarding the privacy and security of students' and teachers' data.
9. We acknowledge the contribution of technologies to educational continuity before and during the current crisis. Digital tools also support the exchanges of experiences, including at international level, the creation of education communities of practice and the interaction between teachers, school leaders, students and their families.
10. Recognizing the irreplaceable role of the school which provides face to face education as well as a safe place for all children, we highlight the importance of ensuring educational continuity through all modalities of teaching and learning, particularly distance and blended modalities. We note the disproportionate effect that COVID-19 related restrictions have had on women in terms of increasing caregiving and home-schooling responsibilities, which have threatened their participation in the labour market. We must keep equity at the centre of our decisions in order to address disparities in education.
11. We recognise the central role played by teachers, educators and education support staff as agents of change. We will continue to support their initial education, induction and continuous professional development at all levels, together with their mental health and wellbeing.
12. We also recognize the role played by parents, caregivers and communities in maintaining educational continuity and the importance of supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community, particularly that of students.
13. We acknowledge the role of higher education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and other lifelong learning institutions in transitioning to blended and distance education modalities to continue the provision of vital education services.

Educational poverty

14. We emphasize the importance of paying particular attention to young people and children from disadvantaged backgrounds, who face disproportionate challenges and a higher risk of falling further behind due to the pandemic and other socio-economic factors. Measures should be taken that are: preventive, tackling the structural roots of exclusion, interventionist, addressing the needs of students, and compensatory, providing second chance opportunities for those who have left school, or have experienced significant learning losses.
15. We recognise the need to provide equal access to all levels and types of education and to facilitate transitions between levels, from early childhood education to primary, secondary, post-secondary education, including higher education, TVET and other lifelong learning opportunities, particularly for girls, women, and vulnerable groups, as one of the means to address educational, professional, economic, and social inequalities.



Global Cooperation and Commitments

16. We commit to continued collaboration in education by sharing experiences, best practices and lessons learnt, to promote equitable, efficient, and effective policy and technical support, with particular focus on vulnerable groups within G20 countries and beyond.
17. We welcome the ongoing efforts by the international community to jointly strengthen cooperation in the field of education in line with Education 2030 agenda.
18. We acknowledge the contribution of multilateral organisations in support of international efforts to mitigate the worldwide impact of COVID-19 on education. We thank the ILO, OECD, UNESCO and UNICEF for their valuable contribution to our work and we will continue our fruitful cooperation with them.

Way forward

19. We will continue to collaborate on effective methods to overcome obstacles to teaching and learning, exacerbated by the pandemic, by sharing ideas and experiences on the benefits and disadvantages of blended education and on policy options to reduce educational poverty.
20. We encourage the use of lessons learned from the deployment of distance learning initiatives across all levels of education during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the impact assessment of our efforts on educational opportunities and outcomes, engagement, mental health, and well-being, as well as the additional impact on female students, teachers and academics. This will inform and lay the foundations for the longer-term goal of building more equitable, accessible, and resilient education systems.
21. We support a clear and innovative vision and mission of education as one of the cornerstones of sustainable growth and stability. In this perspective, we encourage cooperation towards such educational approaches, as education for sustainable development.
22. We thank the Italian Presidency for its leadership in 2021 and look forward to our next meeting in 2022 under the Presidency of Indonesia. We will submit this Declaration to the G20 Leaders' 2021 Summit.