KEY MESSAGES

The number of countries reporting on the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation, the basis of the global indicator for this target, rose from 57 to 83 between the last two consultations.

The Recommendation’s Guiding Principles, including human rights and fundamental freedoms, are only fully reflected in 17% of countries in in-service teacher education but in over 80% of countries in student assessment, up from just under half in the previous consultation.

The IEA International Civic and Citizenship Study shows that 11 of the 18 countries for which a comparison could be made improved students’ civic knowledge scores between 2009 and 2016. A special module in 14 European countries showed that 88% of grade 8 students agreed immigrants should have equal rights.

Teaching materials may not fully tap education’s potential for peace. Globally, inclusion of conflict prevention and conflict resolution was low at around 10% of social science textbooks over 2000–2011.

Pathways to violent extremism are complex and have multiple causes. High-quality, equitable education that increases respect for diversity can make a positive contribution, albeit only in the long term. An open classroom climate that accepts critical viewpoints needs to be embraced.

Non-formal education in the form of media literacy, safe spaces for discussion, youth clubs and community centres can help people become critical media consumers, increase respect for diversity and ultimately reduce the risk of violent extremism.
Sustainable development and global citizenship

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

GLOBAL INDICATOR

4.7.1 – Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment.

THEMATIC INDICATORS

4.7.2 – Percentage of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education.

4.7.3 – Extent to which the framework on the World Programme on Human Rights Education is implemented nationally (as per the UNGA Resolution 59/113).

4.7.4 – Percentage of students by age group (or education level) showing adequate understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability.

4.7.5 – Percentage of 15-year-old students showing proficiency in knowledge of environmental science and geoscience.
Monitoring progress on target 4.7, with its unique and novel focus on the content and purpose of education, remains challenging and continues to evolve. Country reporting on the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms provides the basis for global indicator 4.7.1. The number of countries that responded increased from 57 in the fifth consultation (2009–2012) to 83 in the sixth consultation (2013–2016). Preliminary results of the sixth consultation are now available at the regional level, while negotiations continue on the possibility of also providing country-level results.

Countries report on the extent to which their education systems reflect the Recommendation’s Guiding Principles and associated topics in four domains: education policies, curriculum, teacher education and student assessments. Implementation is weakest for in-service teacher education, which ‘fully reflects’ the recommendation in 17% of responding countries. The most rapid changes are observed for student assessment, with over four in five countries reporting inclusion of the Guiding Principles in the sixth consultation, up from just under half in the fifth consultation. While reported inclusion of the principles in some form is practically universal, only 21% of countries reported that the teaching hours dedicated to them were ‘fully sufficient’ (Figure 14.1).

The seventh consultation, to be piloted in 2020, will split the curriculum component into content and resources and will bring further improvement to make the case for the Inter-agency and Expert Group for Sustainable Development Goal Indicators to upgrade the global indicator from tier III to tier II.

The sixth consultation covered prevention of violent extremism, where the role of education is increasingly considered critical. All responding countries in the Arab States, which suffer some of the largest numbers of victims of conflict, included the topic in curricula, compared with between 36% and 74% of countries in other regions. Yet there are limits to what education can be expected to achieve in terms of prevention (Policy focus 14.1).

All countries in the Arab States cover prevention of violent extremism in the curricula

IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) offer an important complementary perspective. Questions in the 2016 ICCS provided interesting insights into students’ values and attitudes, especially relating to thematic indicator 4.7.4 – ‘Percentage of students by age group (or education level) showing adequate understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability’ (Data focus 14.1).

The 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development contains a new module on ‘global competence’, with results to be released in late 2019. It includes questions relating to global citizenship, similar but rarely identical to ICCS questions. The PISA survey also includes assessment of cognitive and social-emotional skills relating to open and intercultural communication, alternative perspectives, conflict resolution and adaptability (OECD, 2018).
Around half the 55 countries expected to take up the global competence module will also take up the cognitive skills assessment.

Before the SDGs were finalized, the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, representing civil society organizations, suggested adding universal access to comprehensive sexuality education for all young people as a standalone SDG 4 target (UN MGCY, 2015). Eventually, thematic indicator 4.7.2 – ‘percentage of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education’ – was adopted. Countries have been invited to include questions in their education management information systems on whether schools teach (a) generic life skills, (b) sexual and reproductive health and (c) HIV prevention. Data can be gathered through annual school censuses or school-based surveys. Following pilot tests, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics country survey included the sexual and reproductive health question in 2017 and covered generic life skills and HIV prevention in 2018. Reported data will aggregate head teacher responses to a school census form. Questions directed at students as beneficiaries would also be desirable, however.

**DATA FOCUS 14.1: ATTITUDES TOWARDS EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ARE LINKED TO SCHOOL PROCESSES**

Contrary to some common perceptions, the SDG 4 agenda not only puts literacy and numeracy indicators at the heart of the education debate but also attempts to introduce indicators on a broader range of learning outcomes. The international community is still working on the operational definitions of these indicators. In practice, the discussions are determined by available comparable information rather than consensus on what should be monitored.

The ICCS, which assesses grade 8 students, is the primary source of data for comparable citizenship-related learning outcomes. Following the first round in 2009, the second round in 24 countries in 2016 aimed to analyse young people’s knowledge and understanding of civics and citizenship, and related attitudes, perceptions and activities (Schulz et al., 2017). Although not designed with target 4.7 in mind, it informs measurement and monitoring of thematic indicator 4.7.4.

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1. This section draws on a background paper by Sandoval-Hernández and Miranda (2018).
Some 35% of students scored at the highest of five levels, being able to make connections between the processes of social and political organization and influence, and the legal and institutional mechanisms controlling them. Some 13% scored no more than level D, their knowledge limited to recognizing basic features of democracy and simple examples of rules and laws. Out of the 18 countries for which a comparison could be made, 11 countries significantly improved scores between the two rounds, and none showed significant declines (Schulz et al., 2017).

Five questions were used to construct an index of the extent to which students endorsed equal rights for all groups defined by ethnicity or race. For instance, 57% of students in 2016 strongly agreed that all ethnic and racial groups ‘should have an equal chance to get good jobs’, while only 31% strongly agreed that members of these groups ‘should be encouraged to run in elections for political office’. Country scores on the index increased significantly between 2009 and 2016. Female students, those with greater interest in civics and political matters and those with greater civics knowledge held more positive attitudes (Schulz et al., 2017).

Endorsing equal rights was positively associated with participation in school activities and perceptions of classroom openness in most countries, and with perceptions of student interaction quality at school in half the countries. An analysis using 2009 ICCS data had shown that students who perceived the classroom environment as open and valued participation in school were more likely to endorse equal rights for all ethnic groups (Treviño et al., 2018). According to 2016 data, in at least half the countries, students who endorsed equal rights for all groups also tended to believe this was good for democracy (Figure 14.2).

A special module with questions on immigration was added in 2016 in the 14 European countries taking part. Overall, a large majority (88%) agreed or strongly agreed that immigrants should have equal rights; the rates varied from 76% in Bulgaria (where attitudes had turned more negative since 2009) to 94% in Sweden (where attitudes had turned more positive). Levels of agreement were lowest (on average 68% across countries) on whether immigrants should be able to continue to speak their own language, and were as low as 51% in the Netherlands and 58% in Flanders (Belgium) (Losito et al., 2017).

**FIGURE 14.2:**

Students who believe in equal rights for all ethnic groups also believe it is good for democracy

Index of endorsement that (a) all ethnic or racial groups should enjoy equal rights and (b) equal rights for all ethnic or racial groups is good for democracy, selected education systems, 2016

Notes: A score of 50 for the equal rights endorsement index was the ICCS 2009 average. A score of 1 for the equal rights and democracy index meant ‘bad for democracy’, 2 ‘neither good nor bad’ and 3 ‘good for democracy’. Source: Sandoval-Hernández and Miranda (2018).
POLICY FOCUS 14.1: EDUCATION’S ROLE GROWS IN EFFORTS TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Violent extremism has been defined as ‘beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals,’ and radicalization as ‘processes by which a person adopts extreme views or practices to the point of legitimizing the use of violence’ (UNESCO, 2017a, pp. 19, 20).

Countering violent extremism has diverted huge amounts of resources for intelligence, preparation and investigation to detect and prevent terrorist attacks. In some regions, including Europe, indiscriminate violent attacks are a concern. The diversity of threats has increased but so has the range of responses (Europol, 2018).

Preventing violent extremism is much more challenging precisely because the roots of radicalization are diverse, and its drivers have multiple layers. Prevention is seen nonetheless as a necessary first line of defence against terrorism, and several observers argue that education has a key role in policy and programme design (Bhatia and Ghanem, 2017).

Violent extremism threatens the 2030 Agenda. Extremists tend to turn development challenges, such as poverty, into instruments to achieve their goals or will even exacerbate the challenges as a tactic to create a vicious circle of marginalization, particularly affecting the poorest and most vulnerable (United Nations, 2015).

While violent extremism, terrorist attacks and state and non-state civilian targeting undoubtedly directly cause migration and displacement, public opinion in high income countries has come to overemphasize the reverse – that migration is associated with terrorism (Crabtree and Kluch, 2017). This is despite the fact that such a relationship is very tenuous, attacks by foreigners amount to a fraction of those by nationals, and repressive measures in host countries, rather than migration per se, can be a cause of violent extremism (Dreher et al., 2017).

A large body of literature has emerged on the dynamics of radicalization, highlighting both individual and structural drivers (Table 14.1). These interact in complicated ways; there is no single or even typical path to radicalization. However, in principle, education can affect both radicalization and reactionary responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pull factors (individual)</th>
<th>Push factors (structural)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual background (e.g. existential and spiritual search for identity, adolescent crisis, sense of mission, etc.)</td>
<td>Lack of socio-economic opportunities (poverty, corruption, unemployment, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with collective grievances and narratives of victimization, providing powerful emotions</td>
<td>Marginalization, structural discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misuse/distortion of beliefs, political ideologies, polarized and divisive views</td>
<td>Poor governance, violations of human rights, corrupt justice system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction to charismatic leadership, social communities, networks</td>
<td>Prolonged and unresolved conflicts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


EDUCATION IS KEY TO PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM, EVEN IF THE RELATIONSHIP IS COMPLEX

Exclusion from education can be a source of grievance that provides fertile ground for radicalization. The collapse of the education system in the Syrian Arab Republic during the war means many young Syrians find it impossible to disengage from armed groups through education. In some cases, armed groups set up schools based on their ideology. Although host countries have taken many steps to include all Syrian refugee children and youth in their education systems, lack of education opportunities due to initial discrimination or lack of documentation has resulted in feelings of helplessness and desperation, increasing young people’s vulnerability to exploitation and radicalization (International Alert, 2016).

Research on the causal relationship between education overall and violent extremism or terrorism is inconclusive (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003). This may reflect the complexities of how education interacts with other individual and structural drivers and their effects. A study in eight Arab countries showed that unemployment increased the probability of radicalization only among the more educated; disappointed expectations of improving economic standing through education increased the allure of violent extremism to address grievances (Bhatia and Ghanem, 2017).

Education content also has a bearing. Analysis of extremists’ backgrounds found an over-representation of engineers in Islamist and right-wing radicalized circles and of social scientists in left-wing radicalized circles, leading to a theory that academic disciplines may be proxies for individual traits that make some education pathways more likely to lead to selective recruitment (Gambetta and Hertog, 2016). That is, rather than education level, what education means in specific contexts may trigger specific radicalization paths.
Despite such intricacies, the UN Secretary-General’s report on the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism emphasized the mitigating role education can play by promoting respect for diversity, peace and economic advancement as buffers against radicalization (United Nations, 2015). A study of 17 sub-Saharan African countries identified education as one of 4 cornerstones of a strategy against violent extremism (Lelo, 2011). Indeed, violent extremists often see education as a threat and target schools, as in the Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria in April 2014 and the al-Shabaab killing of Kenyan students in April 2015 (United Nations, 2015).

**EDUCATION POLICIES CAN EXPLORE MORE OPTIONS FOR PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

Results from the sixth consultation on implementation of the UNESCO 1974 Recommendation showed that 60% of participating countries, including all participating Arab states, had given increased emphasis to its Guiding Principles in national curricula in the previous five years. The principles include ‘Understanding and respect for all peoples, their cultures, civilizations, values and ways of life’ and ‘Readiness on the part of the individual to participate in solving the problems of his community, his country and the world at large’ (UNESCO, 2018b).

However, teaching materials may not match stated curricular priorities. A global analysis shows that the inclusion of themes on conflict prevention and conflict resolution, such as domestic or international trials, truth commissions and economic reparations, was low at around 10% of social science textbooks over 2000–2011. Coverage was highest in Asia and the Pacific on conflict prevention and in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean on conflict resolution at around 15% (Bromley et al., 2016).

**Teachers have a critical role**

Teachers can play an important role in fostering tolerant and critical attitudes. However, preventing radicalization is a sensitive task. Without adequate preparation, teacher efforts may be inefficient or counterproductive (UNESCO, 2016). The principles of democracy, citizenship, human rights and cultural diversity must be consistently applied. Drawing teachers from a particular social group can reinforce social inequality and division (INEE, 2017). Ineffective pedagogical methods, such as rote learning, do not promote social inclusion or build resilience to extremism (UNESCO, 2016).

A review of 32 case studies worldwide showed that peer-to-peer learning, experiential learning, teamwork, role playing and approaches stimulating critical thinking, such as open discussions, were most effective at encouraging cognitive, social-emotional and behavioural changes in support of a culture of peace. Selective support for individuals at risk, e.g. home visits to students reported to engage in aggression, also proved effective (UNESCO, 2018a).

Some policies aimed at curtailing violent extremism have been criticized as unduly limiting personal freedoms, such as freedom of speech and expression in education, in the pursuit of security (UNESCO, 2017a). The US Federal Bureau of Investigation’s guidance on preventing violent extremism and the United Kingdom’s Prevent policy could be interpreted as implying on schools’ role as places for open discussion and inquiry, and increasing law enforcement involvement in education. There is also lack of evidence of their effectiveness (Patel and Koushik, 2017).

**Non-formal education offers alternative ways to prevent violent extremism**

Schools can be convenient sites for violent extremism prevention initiatives involving stakeholders outside education. An initiative to prevent violent extremism among Moro youth in the southern Philippines aims to empower Christian and Muslim youth by giving them safe spaces in schools and universities to discuss their grievances without fear of repercussions. The private sector provides mentors and resources for youth-led advocacy initiatives (International Alert Philippines Programme/Mindanao Business Council, 2018).

Some programmes use victims’ voices to make topics more relevant and salient to students. In Indonesia,

> The inclusion of conflict prevention and conflict resolution was low at around 10% of social science textbooks over 2000–2011
Without adequate preparation, teachers’ efforts to foster tolerant and critical attitudes may be inefficient or counterproductive. The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism has been involved in Victims Voices of the Alliance for a Peaceful Indonesia, which uses bomb attack survivors’ stories for advocacy with secondary school students in vulnerable areas. The project also aims to advocate in prisons to raise awareness among prisoners and staff who might underestimate the threat of violent extremism (ICCT, 2018).

The processes of violent extremism are not gender neutral. Violent extremist and terrorist groups often target women and girls for gender-based violence, including abductions, forced marriages, sexual violence and attacks on gender activists (GCTF, 2014). Thus, gender-sensitive strategies for education against violent extremism should engage women and examine their roles. Germany’s Expert Center on Gender and Right-Wing Extremism focuses on countering racist, anti-Semitic and radical attitudes. It trains kindergarten teachers, members of youth clubs and community centres, and other civil society actors on using gender-sensitive approaches and democratic principles. It also offers training sessions for journalists, who are key influencers (RAN, 2018) (Box 14.1).

Women can lead such education initiatives. For 20 years, the women’s organization Pakistan Initiative for Mothers and Newborns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province taught mediation and conflict transformation skills to 35,000 youth and 2,000 women (Women Without Borders, 2010). By contrast, approaches that focus on women only as mothers and wives might lead to seeing women as responsible if children or husbands become radicalized (Giscard d’Estaing, 2017).

Gender-sensitive strategies for education against violent extremism should engage women and examine their roles.

BOX 14.1:

Building media literacy can offset media and social media’s negative influences

When the media channel discriminatory views, it can increase marginalized communities’ vulnerability. The media in many European countries disproportionately portray migrants in general and Muslims in particular in relation to social issues, such as rising unemployment and criminality, pandering to racist stereotypes. Extremist right-wing websites spread fabricated sensationalist reports on social media, largely unconstrained by legal or policy measures (ENAR, 2017). Developing journalists’ capacities is important for raising awareness about radicalization and the role of the media (UNESCO, 2017b).

Conversely, building media literacy skills allows citizens to be responsible, critical media consumers and producers (Kellner and Share, 2007). This involves teaching people to examine alternative narratives from credible sources, and empowering students to build their own narratives and evidence-based learning. Educational approaches promoting these skills are part of building a culture of democracy and inclusion.

Serbia’s School without Violence programme provides web resources on violence, hate speech and discrimination, a platform to share experiences; and teacher training on digital violence prevention and media literacy (European Commission, 2016). In the United Kingdom, a creative design agency, with support from local government funding, created ‘digital disruption’ workshops aimed at protecting vulnerable youth from violent extremist propaganda online. Teams of experts worked with youth to investigate the ways online misinformation affected them and their peers, and create videos promoting critical thinking when engaging with internet content (Briggs and Feve, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Pathways to violent extremism are complex and have multiple causes. Only a small minority of people experiencing identified contributing factors actually take the path of violent extremism. High-quality, equitable education can make a positive contribution although it is a long-term process whose effects cannot be immediate (Mirahmadi et al., 2015). While expectations about what formal education can achieve directly should be tempered, its potential contribution to peaceful societies needs to be further pursued along three paths (Davies, 2009). First, education should increase respect for diversity (Chapter 5). Second, conflict prevention, resolution without resort to violence and reconciliation need to be systematically introduced in learning materials. Third, an open classroom climate that accepts critical viewpoints needs to be embraced. Nor does education end with schooling. Multiple opportunities exist for preventing violent extremism through non-formal means that actively involve communities.