

THEMATIC FACTSHEET

BASIC EDUCATION

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Education is a key component of sustainable development and an effective way of escaping poverty. It is also a driver of social cohesion and growth. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) aims to provide children and youth with better access to basic education and lifelong learning. Photo: © Taghrid Mohammad

Challenges

- › There are still significant inequalities in terms of access to education, particularly for girls, minorities and migrants. More than 260 million children and young people worldwide do not have access to school. Half of them live in conflict zones. Crisis situations hamper opportunities for education and leave children in a precarious position.
- › Although more children attend school, the number of children who complete primary education is still low, in particular in low-income countries where more than 40% of children are not completing primary education.
- › About 130 million children worldwide are unable to read or write even after 4 years of schooling. This is largely due to the poor quality of education systems.
- › Since 2010, international aid for basic education has decreased from USD 6.2 to 5.3 billion, while needs continue to increase. By contrast it is encouraging to note that the countries concerned have themselves earmarked a bigger proportion of their national resources for education (from 4.6% to 5.1% of GDP).

Strategic priorities

In order to respond to the current and future challenges, the SDC draws on its expertise and that of Switzerland (bilingualism, bridges, involvement of communities). It contributes to the implementation of goal no. 4 on education of the 2030 Agenda and focuses on the following priorities:

1. Reinforcing the governance of education systems

To offer quality education to all children, including those who have been excluded from school, the SDC aims to strengthen education systems. In this respect, it particularly supports the decentralised governance of education systems.

2. Improving the quality and relevance of education programmes

The SDC works to ensure quality basic education through improved teacher training, high-quality teaching materials and course content that is applicable to the context. It particularly supports bilingual curricula.

3. Ensuring equitable access to basic education

The SDC promotes access to basic education for all, with a particular focus on disadvantaged, marginalised and displaced people. By means of alternative educational programmes, it caters to the needs of children who are excluded from school and reinforces the inclusive nature of the education system. By building bridges, the SDC ensures these children are reintegrated into the education system or in vocational training programmes.

4. Connecting basic education and vocational training

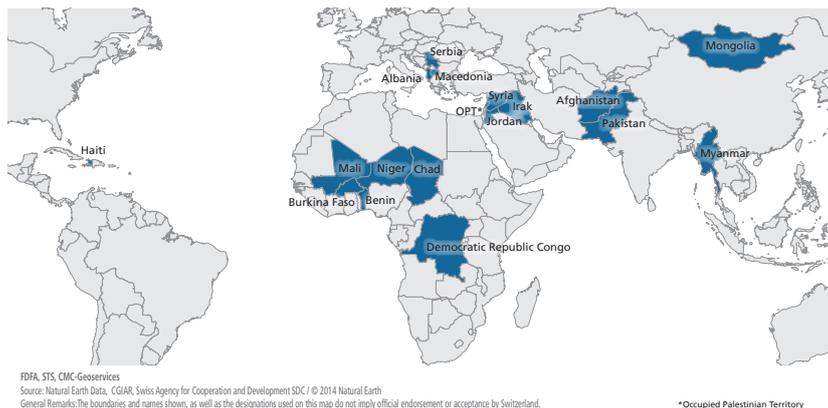
By adopting a comprehensive approach to education, the SDC enhances the complementarity and interdependence of basic education and vocational training. It supports the development of training programmes that combine the acquisition of basic knowledge and vocational skills.

5. Promoting education in fragile contexts and humanitarian crises

In emergency and crisis situations, the SDC responds to the needs of children and youth in terms of protection and education. It increases their resilience to violence and natural disasters, and seeks to promote

SDC's basic education projects

Partner countries



education as a driver of social cohesion and a means of conflict transformation. In addition, it ensures consistency in its humanitarian and development operations.

6. Recognising the cross-cutting nature and transformative role of education

The SDC builds on the transformative role of education to promote sustainable development, civic participation and social cohesion. In particular, it promotes basic education in other sectors, such as migration, water, food security and health.

Examples of projects



Niger: adapting to the humanitarian crisis

The SDC fosters initial and continuing training of teachers to enhance the quality of education in Niger. In the Diffa region, the SDC redirected 60% of the development programme funds to respond to the humanitarian crisis. In collaboration with the ministry of education, more than 12,000 displaced children returned to school in the region.



Afghanistan: promoting access to quality education for girls

The SDC supports efforts to improve the quality of teaching and access to primary and secondary school for girls in the province of Takhar. More than 1,114 teachers were trained and 31 girls' secondary schools were equipped with libraries, textbooks and IT equipment.



Haiti: rebuilding schools and developing construction plans

Following the earthquake in 2010, the SDC worked closely with the Haitian authorities to rebuild schools. Within the scope of this programme, eight of the 12 planned schools have already been built, and three earthquake- and hurricane-resistant schools have been designed.



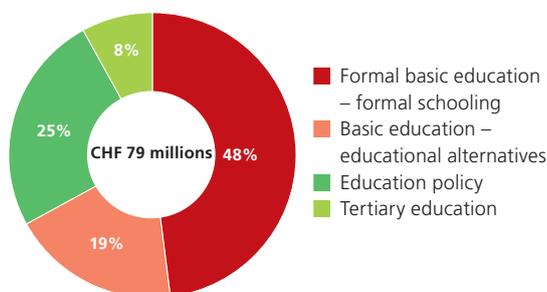
Chad: protection and education for vulnerable children

In response to the crisis around Lake Chad, the SDC support contributes to child protection and to access to quality education. Focussing on vulnerable children, SDC implements formal and alternative education programmes, improves psychosocial well-being and raises awareness of the risks associated with unexploded ordnances.

Partners

The SDC supports a range of partners at the international, regional, national and local levels. Recognizing GPE as a priority fund in the Dispatch on International Cooperation 2017–2020, SDC contributes CHF 10 million annually to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The SDC also supports the specialised institutes of UNESCO, civil society partners including education policy networks, and Francophonie programmes. These partners are active in advocacy, training, service provision and research and analysis on international policies.

Expenditure by sector (2016)



Expenditure by area (2016)

Humanitarian aid	21 %
Cooperation with Eastern Europe	5 %
South Cooperation	74 %

The Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017–2020 provides for a 50% increase in commitments for basic education and vocational training compared with the commitments made under the 2013–2016 dispatch.

Imprint

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