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## *Transforming Education Summit*

### **National Consultation Report**

#### **Foreword**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact, particularly regarding access to educational opportunities for children and young people, especially those of vulnerable groups, thus making imperative both for States and the International Community as a whole to reaffirm their commitments in giving Education a key role in enabling people to achieve lasting well-being for themselves and their families, thereby contributing to a sustainable recovery and a fair, inclusive development.

It is thus necessary to reflect together on how to advance towards the Education we want for the future: an Education that promotes knowledge, participatory learning, human rights, respect for democratic values and for peace, contributing to fight inequalities, and re-directing educational opportunities towards inclusion and sustainability.

In this context, the Secretary-General of the United Nations convened the Transforming Education Summit (TES) as a global meeting at the highest level aiming to define a new approach to education systems following the COVID-19 pandemic, which effectively responds to the current challenges and allows for a new vision for the future of education, focusing on five key areas of transformation: Schools, Quality Lifelong Learning, Teachers, Connectivity and Education Financing.

The TES constitutes a critical opportunity to highlight the decisive importance of Education in fostering personal, social and economic development; and to reaffirm, at the highest level, the political commitments regarding recovery of learning; to give renewed impetus to the Agenda for Sustainable Development, to reassess the SDGs original goals and objectives, and to pursue initiatives materialising the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development.

It can therefore make an important contribution in catalysing the debate on how Education may shape a peaceful, democratic, fair and sustainable common future based on three key questions:

- What do we need to do to renew the public and political commitment around a new path for education?



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- How to establish a national shared vision and mobilise common actions for equity, inclusion and quality education to respond to nowadays educational challenges?
- What do we need to creatively reinvent ensuring that all students learn with quality and succeed, regardless of their home and host contexts?

In line with the Common Agenda and the United Nations recommendations, Portugal has been developing educational policy measures such as: a) Students' Profile by the end of Compulsory Schooling; b) National Strategy for Citizenship Education; c) Curriculum Flexibility and Autonomy; d) Legal framework for inclusive education; e) Essential Learnings. These policy measures create the opportunities and are in line with the main objectives defined throughout the action tracks: i) Ensuring access to quality, inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools, guaranteeing gender equality; ii) Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development; iii) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession; iv) Digital learning and transformation; v) Financing of education.

The moment in which we live, and the challenges arising thereof, make more evident the relevance of intergovernmental actions and multilateral cooperation mechanisms for the achievement of solutions to realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), abiding by international law and human rights norms.

In this context, seeking to respond to the emerging questions we are now confronted with, Portugal organised a broad National Consultation and Reflection process, involving relevant stakeholders in the education community and society at large around educational issues, with a view to developing a shared vision for the future of education and reinforcing political and social, public and private commitments around SDG4 common goals aiming at reimagining Education.

## **1. TES National Consultation Process**

Seeking to respond to the emerging questions posed the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Portugal carried out a broad National Consultation and Reflection for the Pre-Summit, bringing together relevant stakeholders, such as headmasters, teachers and trainers, school coordinators of the Strategy for Citizenship Education, students from various schools and levels, local authorities, governmental organisms and National Institutes, Non-Governmental Organizations, community leaders, representatives from the private sector and the Media, parents' associations, scientific communities and teachers unions, providing an inclusive and open forum, in a joint call to action.



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The Portuguese National Consultation for transforming education as a preparation for the UN's high-level Summit to be held in New York in September 2022, took place on 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2022, in a Lisbon school. Our National Consultation was chaired by the Minister of Education, João Costa, and by the National Convenor, Eulália Alexandre.

This consultation process is a key component of Portugal's preparation for the global Transforming Education Summit. The main purpose of the consultation is to develop a shared vision, commitment, and alignment of actions across constituencies to transform education by 2030 as well as, to discuss education policy, planning, and budgetary changes needed to recover from learning losses, get SDG 4 back on track, and reimagine education into the future.

The Consultation was held in Portuguese language, and it was attended by 146 participants, 66 men and 80 women, from all over the country.

This consultation was held with the participation and contribution of all stakeholders in the field of education, including youth, civil society, teachers, the private sector, development partners and the Ministry of Education. The invitations addressed to the participants focused on the need to ensure the greatest representation of participants, considering their age, sectorial domain, and stakeholder representation.

Regarding the age group of the participants, it was mostly adults between 30 and 59 years old (94), children and young people aged between 5 and 17 years old (33), the remaining 19 participants were over 60 years old (10) and between 18 and 29 years old (9).

Bringing together different stakeholders from a large variety of sectors such as: Education (93), Local Authorities (13); Community and Youth representatives (6); International Non-governmental organisations (6); National and Multinational Companies (3); Trade Unions (3); Social Security and Child protection (5); Academy (3); Health, Nutritioners and Psychologists professional organisations (3); Digital companies (2); Intermunicipal Communities (regional authorities) (2); Media (1); Non-governmental organisation (1)

The number of participants engaged per stakeholder group is distributed as follows: Youth and students (43); Public Servants (26); School leaders (19); Teachers, educators, facilitators (14); Local authorities (13); International Non-Governmental Organizations (6), Small/medium



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enterprises/unions (5); Scientific community, academic, universities and research institutes (5); Parents and caregivers (4); Large national businesses (2); Multi-national corporations (2); Regional economic community (2); Local Non-Governmental Organizations (1) Indigenous people and community leaders (1); Media (1); City and local government representatives (1); Government and national institutions (1).

## 2. Principles of Engagement

The main purpose of the consultation is to develop a shared vision, commitment, and alignment of actions across constituencies to transform education by 2030 as well as, to discuss education policy, planning, and budgetary changes needed to recover from learning losses, get SDG 4 back on track, and reimagine education into the future.

In accordance with the proposal presented in the National Convenor's Handbook, TES, the National Convenor team organized the national consultation session, respecting the principles of inclusion, equity, and cross-representation. The "voice of children and young people" took particular focus in this organization.

The five thematic action tracks were discussed in eleven separate small group discussions. All the groups of discussion had different *representatives* to ensure the diversity of the contributions. Students were represented in all the groups.

Each moderator had guidelines for the discussion of the 5 Action Tracks, that have been organized and discussed previously by the Convenor' team, who defined a group of several questions to facilitate the dialogue among participants. One rapporteur per room registered the contributions and at the end of the sessions, the group of participants approved the conclusions presented by each rapporteur of the different groups.

In a second moment, the document was sent by e-mail to each participant with the main conclusions presented on the Consultation's session, organized around the 5 Action Tracks, for final validation and submission of comments.

The National Convenor Team produced the National Consultation Report. Portugal has also presented a National Statement of Commitment to Transform Education ahead of the TES.



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### 3. Consultations focus and outcomes

Portuguese national consultation was organized around the 5 Action Tracks and all the eleven groups discussed all the themes, at the same time.

The outcomes of this public consultation are listed in the action tracks below.

The Portuguese education policy measures share the UNESCO call for action and the vision for transforming education based on the Key elements defined in the 5 Action Tracks.

#### *Action Track 1 - Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools*

In order to improve the holistic development of children and young people, and based on curriculum flexibility and the autonomy of schools, several strategies that could contribute to upscale the achievements of this action track were identified:

- Pre-School Education for all children.
- Listening to the students about their visions for better learning, their social and emotional well-being involving them in school life decisions.
- Building safe school environments - Preventing different types of physical and verbal violence, bullying and cyberbullying, submission and dating violence, attitudes, and behaviors of racial, ethnic, cultural discrimination.
- Enlarging programs to support students and learning recovery - Mentorship, psychological support aiming at the students' social and emotional well-being.
- Working together with families and health services to tackle students' problems with mental health, healthy food habits and lifestyle and preventing disruptive behaviours.
- Ensuring inclusive schools valuing students' ethnic, cultural, and historical diversity and plurality by means of developing interdisciplinarity and projects opened to the community on a whole-school approach.
- Enlarging the Arts National Programme and The National Programme for School Sports to foster creativity, responsibility, autonomy, empathy, and team spirit.
- Encouraging youth associations aiming at a broader intervention in school life and organisation.



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- Creating conditions for the parents' active involvement, to improve their participation in school life, listening to them and fostering partnerships.
- Promoting the necessary conditions for articulation between schools, local authorities, local companies, and other organisations to share resources and know-how to deepen the social dialogue and address the problems of school population, mainly the most vulnerable families.

### ***Action Track 2 - Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development***

The National Strategy for Citizenship Education comprises the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals through mandatory work domains and the initiatives and projects developed by schools:

- Enlarging sustainable and holistic education, combined with all other components of learning, including the participation of young people in decision-making structures, listening to their voices, and promoting their participation, at the national and European level through ERASMUS+.
- Creating transformative school learning projects based on empathy, creativity, critical thinking, and arts through active methodologies.
- Promoting intergenerational education within the sharing of ideas and experiences from different contexts, from people's knowledge from different parts of the country.
- Promoting citizenship and democratic participation through partnerships with youth organizations fostering formal education, non-formal and informal education, and lifelong learning.
- Reinforcing the development of social and emotional skills to prepare students for the unknown, for uncertainty, for the need to be resilient, contributing to a healthier transition process to adulthood.
- Supporting the development of essential skills for the world of work: developing different languages and symbols (native and foreign languages), technologies and science.



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- Promoting networks between companies and schools, helping young people to be trained according to their motivations and expectations in line with the employment opportunities in their territories.
- Rethinking access to higher education that favours the pursuit of studies and lifelong learning.
- Reinforcing cooperation between the Ministry of Education and local authorities and companies for working on the necessary qualifications and relevant training, reaffirming professional paths.

### ***Action Track 3 - Teachers, teaching, and the teaching profession***

Teachers, trainers, and other education personnel are essential for achieving transforming education. Educational transformation needs well-trained, professionally qualified, and motivated teachers for addressing diversity in learning styles, methodologies, and experiences. Changes brought by the pandemic including the widespread digitalization have emphasized the urgency to offer teacher professional development opportunities on digital tools and how to tackle diversity in the teaching and learning process to enable all learners, especially the most vulnerable, to reach their objectives.

There are Curricular Autonomy and Flexibility Regional Teams that regularly work with schools, especially school leaders, to support networks among schools on team-based approaches to support teaching and learning and strategies to reach every child.

In Portugal schools and teachers have autonomy to manage the curriculum with flexibility, to adapt and prioritize content and pedagogy in terms of the organization of learning to address the Students' Profile and the potential of each learner.

The Portuguese education system is confronted by teachers' shortage because the average age of our teachers are over 50 years old and in the coming years many of them will be retired. This school year we've added flexibility that enables the expansion of the pool of candidates entering the teaching school staff, and some measures are being organized to make the teaching profession more attractive.

It's important to ensure adequate qualifications, skills, and professional development needs of teaching personnel and to develop teacher leadership, autonomy, and innovation.



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- Accelerate a school culture founded on processes of pedagogical innovation and continuous improvement of the students' learning adjusting the answers to the identity of each educational project.
- Negotiate with Higher Education Institutions the initial training model for teachers, training them professionally in accordance with the new demands of the teaching profession.
- Reinforce the investment in the qualifications and professional training of teachers, through continuous training programs based on the school's needs.
- Transform school into an organic space with time and place to learn, talk, debate, raise questions and find solutions.
- Make the teaching profession more stable, attractive, and dignified, ensuring progression in the teaching career.
- Improve the management and leadership model in schools
- Create incentives for the rejuvenation of the teaching profession by attracting young teachers.

#### ***Action Track 4 - Digital learning and transformation***

Learning, as a result of Covid-19, has benefited from a new approach that boosted the use of digital tools in schools. Technology has introduced the use of new resources in teaching and has currently an important role in the implementation of the learning recovery plan.

The issue of the technological plan of education has been mobilizing a lot of efforts to achieve a greater and broader consolidation of learning at the digital level by all those involved in the educational process. Stakeholders in the TES pointed out very clear guidelines:

- Reinforce digital technologies tools at the service of educational goals.
- Provide teachers and education leaders with training and support to ensure that they can integrate digital tools in their practice to prepare learners to use technology productively in learning activities and other empowering purposes.
- Ensure access to quality equipment, internet and digital educational resources for all students tackling inequalities among the school population
- Build digital learning environments that include all students and protect users' digital wellbeing including security and data privacy.





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- Invest in digital infrastructures and educational software aligned with digital learning approaches, ensuring its maintenance, and updating.
- Consolidate digital transformation, to prepare all young people to take advantage of technology for learning purposes improving educational equity.

### ***Action Track 5 - Financing of education***

Financing of education should result from a shared vision and commitment of all government areas in prioritizing education.

The participants in the TES reinforced the need to:

- Mobilize more resources, domestically and internationally taking into account the needs and features of each territory, guaranteeing equity in access to learning for all.
- Prioritize public investments towards achieving equity and quality in education as a national strategy.
- Prioritise financial sustainability, finding partnerships and solutions for new answers, not focusing on profit.
- Embrace community and local projects, thus contributing to schools' operational funds
- Transform on the public financing of education systems, taking a whole-of-government and multi-stakeholder approach which is conscious of the inter-dependencies between education and other sectors such as health, nutrition, energy.

### **Main outcomes regarding the four key complements of the national consultation**

1 - The learning recovery programme due to school's lockdown caused by the pandemic situation motivated the implementation of short-term actions, which were aimed at ensuring the full recovery of learning. These translated into the following:

- Universalising access to free, quality early childhood education to provide equity and inclusion for all children, specially the most vulnerable.
- Listening to students' voice regarding their socio-emotional needs and involving them in school life decision-making process.
- Keeping up mental health issues in schools as a priority for intervention in public policies in



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partnership with health services.

- Involving stakeholders to prevent academic failure and school leaving, by applying appropriate solutions to the specific needs of each social, economic, and cultural context.
- Implementing the values of democratic citizenship at school, as a vision of a plural and equitable society, promoting greater participation of young people in the defense of human rights.
- Promoting inclusion as a core value of the curriculum and promoting public policies that allow everyone access to a training path and full social inclusion.

2. The transformation of education is based on innovative approaches, identified as levers of educational policies and practices in the medium and long term, which are embodied in:

- Enhancing teachers and education leaders with training and support to ensure that they can integrate digital tools in their practice to prepare learners to use technology productively in learning activities and other empowering purposes.
- Increasing the access to devices, connectivity, and high quality educative digital resources, in order to take advantage of technology for educational equity.
- Enabling project-based learning to build digital literacy and soft skills that learners need to become future-ready citizens to enter in an increasingly digitalized marketplace.
- Highlighting the importance of cybersecurity and the critical and safe use of digital media.
- Build digital learning environments that include all students and protect users' digital wellbeing including security and data privacy.

3. The implementation and evaluation of measures and programs to recover learning in the post-Covid 19 and accelerate the pursuit of SDG4 by 2030, presuppose:

- Making the educational process more participatory, creative, and innovative, placing students as a central element of the school and mobilizing teachers to effectively implement this paradigm.
- Investing in a greater variety of training paths and lifelong training.
- Promoting school sports, the arts and the different literacies of languages, science, health, and the sustainable environment, which are areas that promote self-knowledge, creativity,



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autonomy, empathy, and collaboration.

- Investing in teachers' professional training through initial and continuous training, creating incentives for the teaching career to attract young teachers.
- Assessing the impact of the various educational policy measures that are implemented.

4. Public funding for education must be adequate and sustainable, which is why it is very important to:

- Continue to carry out efforts to ensure greater allocation of resources to ensure a quality education for all.
- Recognize education as a budgetary priority, ensuring the equitable use of resources and territorial cohesion.
- Use local, regional, and European synergies to promote partnerships that address the educational community's needs for financial and material resources.
- Stimulate the exercise of autonomy in schools, seeking a better allocation and use of resources and financial means aiming at the educational success of all students.

In short, the National Consultation clearly reflects the focus given by the participants to the importance of education as a key factor in transforming society. Education is a fundamental right that supports the development of a full democracy, contributing as a social lift in the fight against social inequalities.