

Networking to Integrate SDG Target 4.7 and Social and emotional learning¹ into Educational Materials (NISSEM)

NISSEM POSITION PAPER: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, integrate SDG Target 4.7 themes into all education strategies.

All existing education laws, policies, curricula, textbooks and other instructional materials, teacher education, and student assessments should be evaluated and strengthened in order to support national and global SDG progress. Specific steps should be taken to incorporate messages for ‘people and planet’, including Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

2. Promote Target 4.7 themes through social and emotional learning (SEL).

Writers of textbooks and other educational materials should integrate and apply SEL in relation to Target 4.7 themes and topics in ways that are age-appropriate and contextually relevant.

3. Engage diverse stakeholders to develop locally relevant materials to promote Target 4.7 themes.

- a) Consult with teachers, youth, community leaders, examination boards and other stakeholders, together with local writers to assess needs and to ensure that textbook content is appropriately contextualized.
- b) Introduce and train textbook developers--including writers, editors, and illustrators--to Target 4.7 themes and SEL topics and how these themes and topics support each other. This training should also focus on how to ensure that these themes and topics reflect local capacities and priorities, resources, pedagogy and language skills.
- c) Provide ongoing support to monitor and guide the inclusion of these topics as writers develop new educational materials. Draw on existing international guides to ensure that textbook illustrations promote gender equality and social inclusion.
- d) Bring together writers and subject specialists at national examination boards to ensure that Target 4.7 themes are meaningfully reflected in national assessments and examinations.

4. Equip teachers to promote student engagement and agency around Target 4.7 themes by embedding structured pedagogy in student materials.

Embed structured pedagogy in textbooks to support the teaching of ‘people and planet’ and Target 4.7 themes through social-emotional learning. Specifically, design textbooks with pedagogical practices that support more active learning processes by girls and boys that build both knowledge and skills needed to support sustainable development, explicitly adapted, where necessary, for large and crowded classrooms.

¹ SEL refers to: “the process of acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively” Elias, M. J., Zins, J. E., Weissberg, R. P., Frey, K. S., Greenberg, M. T., Haynes, N. M., . . . Shriver, T. P. (1997). *Promoting social and emotional learning: Guidelines for educators* Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

NISSEM POSITION PAPER: RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

5. Revise educational materials to foster inclusive national and global identities.

Revise textbooks and other educational materials to reflect the positive contributions of both dominant and marginalised or minority groups in society, including balanced representation of female and male contributions.

6. Measure and monitor Target 4.7 learning in terms of attitudes, behaviour, skills and content knowledge.

- a) Encourage ministries of education and national researchers (i) to measure the impact of incorporating Target 4.7 themes and SEL in educational materials through learning assessments, classroom observation, focus group discussions and other forms of student and teacher responses and (ii) to revise materials to increase that impact.
- b) Increase collaboration between various national and international agencies to improve reporting of the curricular integration of Target 4.7 themes, as well as the measurement of relevant learning outcomes.

7. Invest in systematic trials of revised teaching and learning materials and use results to improve materials iteratively.

- a) Allocate adequate funds to integrate and trial SEL and 4.7 themes into education materials, and to fund research, feedback and revision. Funds for all three purposes are particularly essential a) to train and provide on-going support to writers of textbooks and other education materials and b) to embed simple, engaging pedagogy for teachers and learners into these materials.
- b) Encourage multi-year, multi-partner innovation and research by interested countries and share results widely.

8. Secure donor commitments to contextualize, revise, trial and finalize Target 4.7 themes and SEL in educational materials.

- a) In countries that express an interest in better integrating Target 4.7 themes and SEL into educational materials, donors should support developing and trialling of prototype writer-training workshops in order to create effective, contextualised educational materials and to share results.
- b) Donors should support the development of standard criteria and guidance regarding the inclusion of SEL and Target 4.7 thematic elements in education materials.

9. In all SDG4/EDUCATION 2030 processes, include recommendations to the effect that:

- a) In light of Target 4.7 themes and SEL, countries should devise effective strategies to contextualize these themes by reviewing, evaluating, revising, trialling and finalizing textbooks and educational materials in a timely manner, drawing on the best available guidance and evidence, both local and international.
- b) Training and funding should be provided for national teams of textbook and other educational materials writers and examiners in low-resourced, conflict-affected and post-conflict settings, to develop
 - I. guidance on and support for including Target 4.7 themes and SEL in core school subject materials,
 - II. age-appropriate sequencing and contextualisation of these themes and topics and
 - III. incorporating pedagogy supporting SEL into educational materials design.

c) ADVANCING SDG 4 IN LOW RESOURCE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED SETTINGS Networking to Integrate SDG Target 4.7 and Social and emotional learning² into Educational Materials (NISSEM)

Position Paper, Version 2.0

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 4.7

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.

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will not be achieved without significant reform to current systems of education. It is today's learners who will be called upon to implement the SDGs and live with their consequences. SDG Target 4.7 is critical in this regard. The global indicator for Target 4.7 encourages countries to review and reconsider existing (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment to assess how adequately they incorporate Target 4.7 themes. Implementing Target 4.7 is particularly pressing in settings where conflict has damaged education systems or where insufficient resources or traditional pedagogy limit the range and relevance of teaching and learning materials.³ In many such contexts, textbooks constitute "the first and sometimes the only books that a young person may read [and] in most classrooms they determine what and how teachers teach."⁴

Target 4.7 highlights the importance of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) that can promote lasting, informed and value-based changes in the attitudes, skills and behaviour of young people. Effective GCED and ESD therefore demand teaching and learning approaches that foster a range of social and emotional skills, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. Such skills are rarely integrated into existing textbooks and teacher preparation programs.

² SEL refers to: "the process of acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively" Elias, M. J., Zins, J. E., Weissberg, R. P., Frey, K. S., Greenberg, M. T., Haynes, N. M., . . . Shriver, T. P. (1997). *Promoting social and emotional learning: Guidelines for educators* Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development. x

³ See Appendix A "Why focus on textbooks in low resource and conflict affected contexts?"

⁴ "Few instruments shape children's and young people's minds more powerfully than the teaching and learning materials used in schools. Textbooks convey not only knowledge but also social values and political identities, and an understanding of history and the world. Teachers and students trust textbooks as authoritative and objective sources of information, assuming that they are accurate, balanced and based on the latest scientific findings and pedagogical practice." UNESCO. (2016). *Textbooks pave the way to sustainable development*. Global Education Monitoring Report: Policy Paper. Paris: UNESCO. 28. December. 19. Retrieved from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002467/246777E.pdf>.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) should ideally begin in early childhood and then be progressively applied to personal life and responsible local, national and global citizenship and sustainable development as individuals mature.⁵ Progress in sustainable development is unlikely, if not impossible, without greater personal resilience, gender equality, respect for diversity, social cohesion and peaceful relations. As discussed below, achieving such aims presents a particular challenge in the over-crowded and under-resourced classrooms prevalent in many countries.

In early 2017 a group of international academics and practitioners joined forces to promote the integration of Target 4.7 themes and related social and emotional skills into textbooks and other education materials, particularly in countries facing resource shortages, prolonged violence or post-conflict reconstruction. Following well-attended workshops at the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conferences in 2017 and 2018, as well as at UKFIET 2017, the UCL Institute of Education (2017) and George Washington University (2018), this group undertook a soft launch of a structured networking initiative, entitled Networking to Integrate SDG Target 4.7 and Social and Emotional Learning into Educational Materials (NISSEM), at the CIES workshop in March 2018.

This NISSEM Position Paper serves as a resource for individuals or organizations seeking to advance effective policy recommendations and strategies for action on the Target 4.7 and SEL agenda in difficult settings. Initially, sections of the paper were formulated by some 40 invited specialists, working in four thematic groups, during an intensive two-day workshop hosted by George Washington University. The draft was launched at the CIES 2018 NISSEM workshop and is being reviewed by concerned colleagues at multiple agencies, NGOs and academic institutions. NISSEM hopes this Position Paper will inform global policy makers – in particular, members of the SDG Education 2030 Steering Committee, participants in the Global Education Meeting (December 2018), and preparatory meetings. We also believe it is relevant to strategic discussions during the SDG High Level Political Forum in July 2019. Overall, the Position Paper constitutes a policy and advocacy brief for national and sub-national education authorities as they formulate plans of action to address Target 4.7 themes.

KEY PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, integrate SDG Target 4.7 themes into all education strategies.

Meaningful progress in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be supported through education and lifelong learning that builds social cohesion and promotes gender equality, human rights, global citizenship, peaceful resolution of conflicts, appreciation of cultural diversity and sustainable development.

NISSEM is committed to assisting education authorities in low- or middle-income, conflict-affected and post-conflict settings to advance the SDG goal for quality education. In particular, NISSEM focuses on all themes listed in Target 4.7, which incorporates, elevates and expands long-standing international commitments to education for positive behavioural and societal transformation. These themes will have to be adapted and refined into different languages, messages, and approaches by local policy-makers, curriculum developers, writers, and

⁵ See UNESCO. (2015). *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and learning objectives* Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002329/232993e.pdf> UNESCO. (2017). *Education for Sustainable Development: Learning Objectives* Paris: UNESCO and Global Education for 2030 Agenda. 62. Retrieved from: <http://www.unesco.ch/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Learning-objectives.pdf> Leicht, A., Heiss, J., & (eds), W. J. B. (Eds.). (2018). *Issues and trends in Education for Sustainable Development*. Paris: UNESCO and Global Education for 2030 Agenda.

educators in ways that inspire appropriate local responses. The 2016 *Global Education Monitoring Report*, for example, refers to many of the Target 4.7 themes as relating to ‘people and planet’.⁶

RECOMMENDATION 1: All existing education laws, policies, curricula, textbooks and other instructional materials, teacher education, and student assessments should be evaluated and strengthened to better support national and global SDG progress. Specific steps should be taken to incorporate messages for ‘people and planet’, including Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

2. Promote Target 4.7 themes through social and emotional learning (SEL).

SEL is an important contributor to positive behavioural change, a necessary condition to achieve greater social cohesion and respect for peace, cultural diversity and human rights. Research in many OECD countries suggests that SEL is most effective when it is sequenced, active, focused and explicit (SAFE).⁷ SEL-based approaches should underpin the teaching and learning of Target 4.7 themes in ways that promote concrete and lasting learner commitment in these areas.

Each education system needs to engage all learners in meaningful ways in order to motivate them to become responsible actors at the personal, community, national, and global levels. Such personal engagement begins in early childhood by building positive SEL experiences, adapting the application of these skills over time as the students mature. SEL effectiveness increases when it is tailored to contextual factors, such as students’ emerging language skills, teachers’ capacities, and what are realistic options for young people’s engagement in Target 4.7 themes beyond their schools. Finally, a new generation of textbooks needs to create synergies between current academic, institutional and practitioner interest in SEL and related approaches, such as ‘life skills’ and ‘21st century skills’ in order to promote local, national and global citizenship and sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATION 2. Writers of textbooks and other educational materials should integrate and apply SEL in relation to Target 4.7 themes and topics in ways that are age-appropriate and contextually relevant.

⁶ The 2016 *GEM* Report sets out a comprehensive agenda on the need for ‘education for people and planet’, including several key messages:

- Living sustainably requires a huge shift in mind set. Education has to be part of that change.
- Progress in health, nutrition and gender equality is inextricably linked with progress in education.
- Getting children into school does not result in more peace but the right type of education can help. Conflict and violence are meanwhile destroying education systems.
- The world must pull together to overcome barriers to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

⁷ Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students’ Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405-432.

3. Engage diverse stakeholders to develop locally relevant materials to promote Target 4.7 themes

In low-resourced and post-conflict settings, textbooks are the main, and often the only, learning materials available to teachers and students. In many subject areas, textbooks serve as the de facto curriculum as well as the default daily lesson plan. In stable, well-resourced education systems, a wide array of materials and connectivity options in and out of school can foster SEL and promote most Target 4.7 themes. However, many under-resourced systems must deal with over-sized and crowded classes, poor reading and comprehension skills (often due to learning in a second language), teachers who are insufficiently-prepared and supported and often driven to promote rote learning for high-stakes examinations. Such conditions are an obstacle to promoting SEL and achieving ‘a huge shift in mindset’⁸ to ‘people and planet’ themes, such as gender, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability by 2030.

The push in recent decades to provide every child with a textbook, and widespread support for revising textbooks to cover 21st-century skills, suggests one potentially powerful strategy that may be feasible even in many difficult context—namely, embedding more content and pedagogy around ‘people and planet’-related behaviour change in textbooks and other education materials.⁹ Textbook revision is already included in many national education plans and funding for textbooks exists in national or household-level budgets. Target 4.7 themes and SEL are particularly well-suited to language, social studies, and science subjects as well as to supplementary materials for early grades reading and accelerated learning or adult education. However, many textbook writers and developers—typically university faculty, curriculum specialists and/or experienced teachers—may have limited knowledge of sustainability issues, including Target 4.7 themes, or of SEL as the basis for behaviour change. Moreover, urban-based writers often know little of the challenging conditions in rural classrooms or how emerging ‘people and planet’ issues might be contextualized to be relevant, motivational and impactful to the current generation of girls and boys in rural and peri-urban areas.

These immense challenges can only be addressed through conscious and targeted training and continuing support for local writers of textbooks and other educational materials designed for national education systems. At this level, all teachers, youth and other stakeholders should be engaged in needs assessments and content development to ensure appropriate contextualisation, relevance and practicality. Core textbooks must integrate locally developed, pedagogically structured, and motivational versions of SEL and its application to Target 4.7 themes. They should provide teachers with easy-to-follow pedagogical techniques for engaging students, even where resources are limited and classes are overcrowded. Finally, the new content should be embedded in all required and nationally assessed subjects. Curriculum and writing teams for textbooks should liaise with national examination authorities to ensure the Target 4.7 content and related skills are systematically incorporated into student examinations and assessments. The presence of these topics in national examinations will ensure that teachers and students pay attention to them.

RECOMMENDATION 3 (a) Consult with teachers, youth, community leaders, examination boards and other stakeholders, together with local writers to assess needs and to ensure that textbook content is appropriately contextualized.

⁸ See footnote 4.

⁹ UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (UNESCO MGIEP). (2017). *Textbooks for Sustainable Development: A guide to embedding* New Delhi: UNESCO MGIEP. 186. Retrieved from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002599/259932e.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION 3 (b) Introduce and train textbook developers--including writers, editors, and illustrators--to Target 4.7 themes and SEL topics and how these themes and topics support each other. This training should also focus on how to ensure that these themes and topics reflect local capacities and priorities, resources, pedagogy and language skills.

RECOMMENDATION 3 (c) Provide ongoing support to monitor and guide the inclusion of these topics as writers develop new educational materials. Draw on existing international guides to ensure that textbook illustrations promote gender equality and social inclusion.

RECOMMENDATION 3 (d) Bring together writers and subject specialists at national examination boards to ensure that Target 4.7 themes are meaningfully reflected in national assessments and examinations.

4. Equip teachers to promote student engagement and agency around Target 4.7 themes by embedding structured pedagogy in student materials

Structured pedagogy is a recognised factor in effective education interventions, especially in low-resourced settings. Textbooks can enable structured and appropriate pedagogy while putting contextualised and motivational SEL and Target 4.7 ‘people and planet’ themes in the hands of female and male students and teachers, for core, assessed learning areas.

Effective pedagogical approaches and exercises embedded in student materials can help teachers introduce innovations such as active learning and themes that may be new to teachers as well as students. Long, complex narratives should be reworked into shorter structured texts that (a) incorporate stories to engage students’ imaginations; (b) give students opportunities to practice relevant attitudes, values and behaviours; and (c) promote students’ agency. Texts should integrate a clear pedagogy for teachers, including when students should listen, discuss, write their own thoughts and answer questions or engage in active learning tasks. Supplementary materials should be made available to teachers and online when introducing new pedagogies or unfamiliar subject matter.

The precise form of textbook-based support will depend on teacher capacities and resources, as well as students’ reading skills, and mother tongue/second language issues, among others. As noted above, training is often needed to familiarize writers of educational materials both with Target 4.7 themes and approaches to SEL and with strategies to incorporate structured pedagogical techniques into student materials. Field trials in a range of school settings representing urban, peri-urban and rural parts of the country can provide invaluable feedback to ensure new materials are well understood and motivational for female and male teachers and students, that they convey relevant and accurate factual knowledge, and that they foster the desired teaching and learning activities and outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 4. Embed structured pedagogy in textbooks to support the teaching of ‘people and planet’ and Target 4.7 themes through social-emotional learning. Specifically, design textbooks with pedagogical practices that support more active learning processes by girls and boys that build both knowledge and skills needed to support sustainable development, explicitly adapted, where necessary, for large and crowded classrooms.

5. Revise educational materials to foster inclusive national and global identities

Many factors affect how children learn and understand themselves within the world, including ‘everyday history’, mass media, gender traditions, family beliefs, religious instruction, social conventions, teachers’ attitudes and beliefs, among others. Together, these may undermine healthy child development and, by extension, peace and sustainable development. Educators recognize that education has ‘two faces’,¹⁰ equally able to foment social division or support social cohesion. This has been especially true of textbooks. Although some textbooks allow students to critically analyse inclusive narratives from multiple perspectives, too many textbooks continue to portray a limited range of children—e.g. more boys than girls, or certain ethnic groups to the exclusion of others—and indirectly and directly promote biased or uncritical thinking. Where textbooks are the only teaching and learning material in the classroom, they become very powerful tools for shaping young minds and hearts.

The content of education texts can foster the spirit of learning to live together through inclusive global, regional and national narratives—for example, highlighting constructive activities undertaken by youth from all sections of society and across national borders. Review committees reflecting representative identities, including racial, ethnic, gender, professional, can provide guidance, identify biased materials and suggest positive elements for inclusion in new or revised texts. Writers of educational materials need to develop content that demonstrates the positive contributions of all members to society, while acknowledging the tensions and challenges diversity poses in society. Male and female youth and adults from diverse and marginalized groups in society can help writing teams to develop stories relevant to a range of perspectives. Textbook illustrators should be skilled at portraying the ethnic diversity of the citizens, male and female, individually and in groups, as well as the nation’s varied physical and social environments.

RECOMMENDATION 5. Revise textbooks and other educational materials to reflect the positive contributions of both dominant and marginalised or minority groups in society, including balanced representation of female and male contributions.

¹⁰ Bush, K. D., & Saltarelli, D. (Eds.). (2000). *The two faces of education in ethnic conflict: towards peace-building education for children*. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Center.

6. Measure and monitor Target 4.7 learning in terms of attitudes, behaviour, skills and content knowledge.

In all domains of learning, educators struggle to measure whether students have learned and internalized important values, attitudes, skills and behaviours, such as SEL. In recent years, new initiatives around global competencies and citizenship have underscored the importance of including SEL in all educational settings.¹¹ Particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings, the compelling psychological and educational needs of children have galvanized several efforts to develop SEL measurement and better teaching approaches.¹² In general, however, lack of robust measurement continues to constrain the development of effective, contextualized approaches to teaching Target 4.7 themes and SEL in many countries. High stakes examinations and low stakes assessments that mainly focus on cognitive learning also serve as a barrier. Nevertheless, textbooks in core assessed subjects can and should include narrative and pedagogical support for values and attitude formation related to Target 4.7 themes.

RECOMMENDATION 6 (a) Encourage ministries of education and national researchers (i) to measure the impact of incorporating Target 4.7 themes and SEL in educational materials through learning assessments, classroom observation, focus group discussions and other forms of student and teacher responses and (ii) to revise materials to increase that impact.

RECOMMENDATION 6 (b) Increase collaboration between various national and international agencies to improve reporting of the curricular integration of Target 4.7 themes, as well as the measurement of relevant learning outcomes.

¹¹ See, for example, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2017/06/02/social-skills-matter-but-how-do-we-measure-and-grow-them-in-the-classroom/>

¹² See, for example, Torrente, C., Johnston, B., Starkey, L., Seidman, E., Shivshanker, A., Weisenhorn, N., . . . Aber, J. L. (2015). Improving the quality of school interactions and student well-being: impacts of one year of a school-based program in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. *Journal on Education in Emergencies*, 1(1).

7. Invest in rapid, systematic trials of revised teaching and learning materials and use results to improve materials iteratively

Policy makers and planners tend to focus on student enrolments, classroom spaces and budgeting. However, to support Target 4.7 they will need to work more closely with curriculum experts, textbook writers, supervisors, teacher trainers, head teachers and teachers—in short, all those who all contribute to structuring actual classroom learning activities. Planners in particular should be aware of the need and timing sequence for funding the full range of curriculum development activities, from needs assessment through writer training, trialling of sample materials, feedback, development and trialling of full sets of materials, feedback, teacher preparation and support, assessment modalities, and continual upgrading of quality. This sequencing needs careful attention if Target 4.7 themes are to be integrated and contextualized effectively in core curriculum areas.

The development of appropriate curriculum and educational materials is of particular importance in conflict- and disaster-sensitive education planning, for preventing and mitigating both conflict and vulnerability. Education planners need to incorporate crisis-sensitive approaches when budgeting for new or revised textbooks and learning materials, as well as research into the impact of the new materials and feedback for subsequent revisions.

RECOMMENDATION 7 (a) Allocate adequate funds to integrate and trial SEL and 4.7 themes into education materials, and to fund research, feedback and revision. Funds for all three purposes are particularly essential a) to train and provide on-going support to writers of textbooks and other education materials and b) to embed simple, engaging pedagogy for teachers and learners into these materials.

RECOMMENDATION 7 (b) Encourage multi-year, multi-partner innovation and research by interested countries and share results widely.

8. Secure donor commitments to contextualize, revise, trial and finalize Target 4.7 themes and SEL in educational materials

The donor community understands that improving the quality of education and learning is a major factor in achieving sustainable development. However, donors do not always recognize the importance of and time necessary for contextualizing Target 4.7 themes in order to make those themes relevant and actionable in under-resourced or conflict-affected settings. For example, instructional methods and digital technology typically used in high resource countries to convey Target 4.7 themes are less available in low-resourced and conflict-affected settings.

Donors could usefully support different approaches in these settings, including, as described above, reviewing existing text-based materials and creating a new generation of textbooks. Business as usual will not produce the quality of education necessary to support sustainable development. Ideally, donors would commit sufficient resources to prepare relevant guidance and tools to contextualize Target 4.7 themes and SEL and to trial those guidance and tools in interested countries. Finally, donors could help build and provide open access to the growing knowledge base around SEL and Target 4.7 themes and their application in diverse settings.

- a) RECOMMENDATION 8 (a) In countries that express an interest in better integrating Target 4.7 themes and SEL into educational materials, donors should support developing and trialling of prototype writer-training workshops in order to create effective, contextualised educational materials and to share results.**

RECOMMENDATION 8 (b) Donors should support the development of standard criteria and guidance regarding the inclusion of SEL and Target 4.7 thematic elements in education materials.

9. In all SDG4/EDUCATION 2030 processes, include actionable recommendations to address Target 4.7.

The inclusion of Target 4.7 themes and the integration of SEL in textbooks in low-resourced and conflict-affected settings present formidable challenges. International support and guidance should coherently address these problems and stress the importance of developing writer capacities in this area. In order to take on these challenges, scaled-up innovations are needed for the production and distribution of revised/reworked textbooks and other education materials that include motivational and inspirational messaging for low-resource, conflict-affected and related situations.

RECOMMENDATION 9. SDG4/EDUCATION 2030 processes should include recommendations to the effect that:

(a) In light of Target 4.7 themes and SEL, countries should devise effective strategies to contextualize these themes by reviewing, evaluating, revising, trialling and finalizing textbooks and educational materials in a timely manner, drawing on the best available guidance and evidence, both local and international.

(b) Training and funding should be provided for national teams of textbook and other educational materials writers and examiners in low-resourced, conflict-affected and post-conflict settings, to develop

- i. guidance on and support for including Target 4.7 themes and SEL in core school subject materials,***
- ii. age-appropriate sequencing and contextualisation of these themes and topics and***
- iii. incorporating pedagogy supporting SEL into educational materials design.***

For further information, please contact NISSEM at NISSEM.SDG4@gmail.com.

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APPENDIX A: Why focus on textbooks in low resource and conflict-affected contexts?

COMMON CONDITIONS IN LOW RESOURCE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED SETTINGS	IMPLICATIONS FOR INTEGRATING SEL & SDG Target 4.7 IN LOW RESOURCE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED SETTINGS
FOR NATIONAL POLICY MAKERS AND EDUCATION SYSTEM LEADERS	
Most governments have committed to provide all children with textbooks. Textbooks are the main, if not the only, teaching and learning materials used in all schools during basic education.	Opportunity to embed SEL and SDG Target 4.7 content in new or revised materials that governments are already committed to produce for schools.
Content and methodology in some textbooks currently in use contribute to conflict and/or undermine SDG Target 4.7 targets and related indicators	Urgency: To meet SDG Target 4.7 targets by 2030, many countries need to reconsider and revamp textbook content without delay.
Conflict destroys schools as well as learning and teaching materials. The post-conflict period often brings demand for new textbooks.	Introducing changes in curriculum to accommodate SDG Target 4.7 themes is sometimes easier when starting from scratch or during cycles of curriculum reform when willing to consider new material that motivates students and is linked to SEL/4.7.
Implementing lasting change is a slow process and quick wins are needed to motivate broader changes.	New textbooks can be produced and distributed in less than five years, and supplemental education materials can be produced in less time.
Scalability: Textbook content that promote learning of SEL skills and SDG Target 4.7 themes have often relied on intensive teacher education and support, therefore unsuited to nation-wide implementation in low-resource and post-conflict settings.	Scalability: New textbooks are intrinsically scalable for nation-wide use. Maximizing coverage of SEL and SDG Target 4.7 themes in textbooks that governments have already committed to provide/are revising has the potential for national outreach.
Limited human resources and national expertise.	With proper guidelines and writer training, revising textbook content and methodology can be achieved using existing human and time resources.
FOR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS	
Donors classify many more countries as post-conflict or conflict-affected in recent years.	Many country partners have more donor funds available for textbook revision that address SEL and SDG Target 4.7 than previously.
Many donors believe that education can help reduce future or even current conflict or violence.	Donors are willing to spend on activities that reduce future conflict and violent extremism while promoting sustainable development.
Many donors are interested in funding discrete, concrete activities to reduce violence and conflict. Revising textbooks, teachers' guides and related materials are funding priorities of many multi-donor SWAPs.	The revision, production and distribution of textbooks and supporting materials is a discrete, concrete activity. Training and support for textbook writers on SEL/4.7 themes is a relatively minor additional expenditure.
Donors are funding book writing, production, and distribution, especially of early grade reading material, and writers are in need of help to identify engaging topics and pedagogically sound criteria for developing these materials.	SEL and SDG Target 4.7 themes provide many engaging topics for reading materials in lower and upper primary grades for literacy reinforcement as well as instruction in social studies and science.
Donors wish to complement academic achievement in reading and mathematics with enhancement of skills like resilience and inter-cultural communication.	A strong evidence-base shows that SEL improves academic achievement and promotes many life skills.