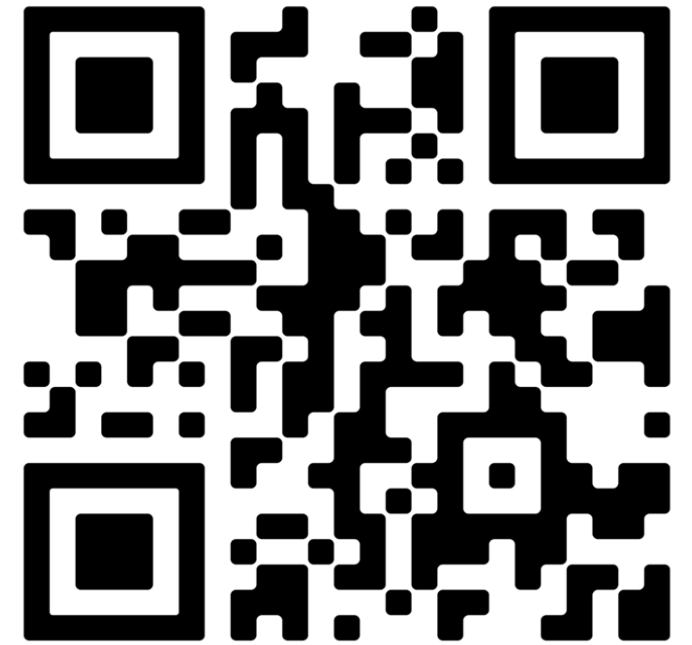# Seventh National Forum on Education for Sustainable Development

Reflections on the UN Transforming Education Summit

Patrick Paul Walsh

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Vice President of Education and Director of the SDG Academy
UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

SDGacademy

An Initiative of the Sustainable
Development Solutions Network

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

[Reflecting on 10 Years of SDSN (unsdsn.org)](unsdsn.org)

"Initially on behalf of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, SDSN provided important academic and legal oversight of the post 2015 process. Since then, SDSN continues to mobilize academics to play a pivotal role to partner with governments, corporates, and civil society to take action to realize the possibilities offered by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While we have achieved much, we still have so much more to do."

- Patrick Paul Walsh
VP of Education &
Director, SDG Academy

Our Courses- https://sdgacademy.org/
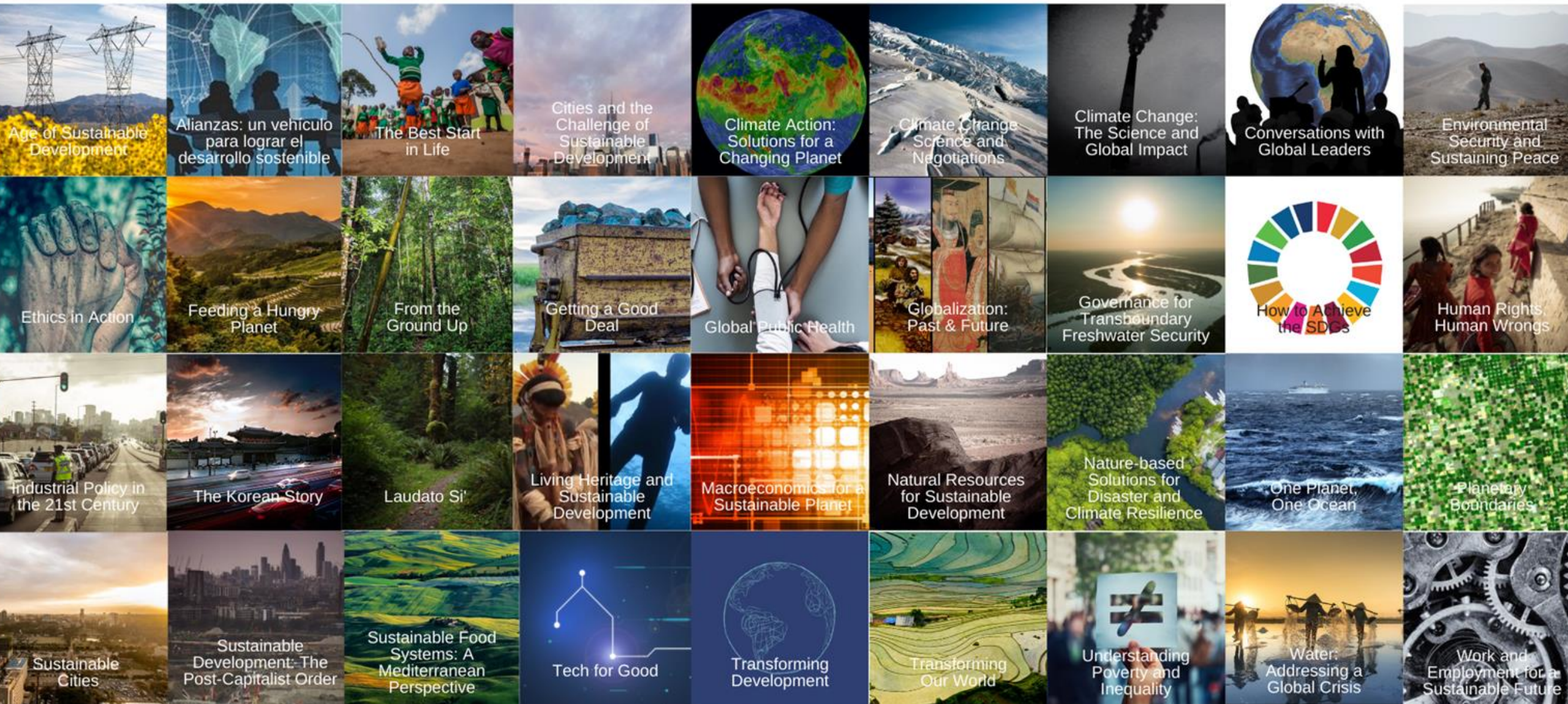
Professional Certificate

https://www.mission4point7.org/
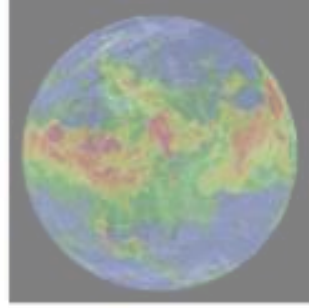
SDG Target 4.7 *"By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development"*

Mission 4.7 was founded by the SDG Academy, both flagship programs of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, in partnership with the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, UNESCO, and the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University.

Mission 4.7's vision is a world in which the SDGs are achieved through the efforts of educators and practitioners (in government, corporates, and civil society) by providing them with the relevant educational content and fostering partnerships to advance sustainable development everywhere.

Ideally, at every stage of life, individuals should understand how they coexist in harmony with people and planet. We may not wish to harm people, or our common home, but all of us must "go back to school" and learn how to create positive linkages to people and nature in our everyday activities. Not only will this secure a much-improved life support system for today's people, but it also will secure a sustainable future for tomorrow's people.

The Global Science Commons and Sustainable Development, by Patrick Paul Walsh, University College Dublin (UCD)
IAU Horizons issue, vol. 26, no. 2, 2021

In a paper for International Association of Universities (IAU Horizons), we argue that the current knowledge for the SDGs in the Global Science Commons is far inside the knowledge frontier required to create a sustainable operating space for humanity. We make three recommendations;

1) Knowledge is not always free to access or oriented to the public good. Open science for the SDGs needs to be embedded in HEIs as a norm.

2) HEIs need to be incentivised to build capacities in institutions in lower income settings, to ensure the Global Science Commons can deliver a safe space for all humanity.

3) HEIs knowledge needs to be disseminated and shared at great speed across SDG 17 targets. Universities need to take advantage of entry points for SDG science into education and training, research and policymaking – and use effective mechanisms, including digital innovation, to deliver effective Science Policy Practice Interfaces.

The Learning Poverty Rate, which measures the share of children who cannot read a simple text with comprehension by age 10.

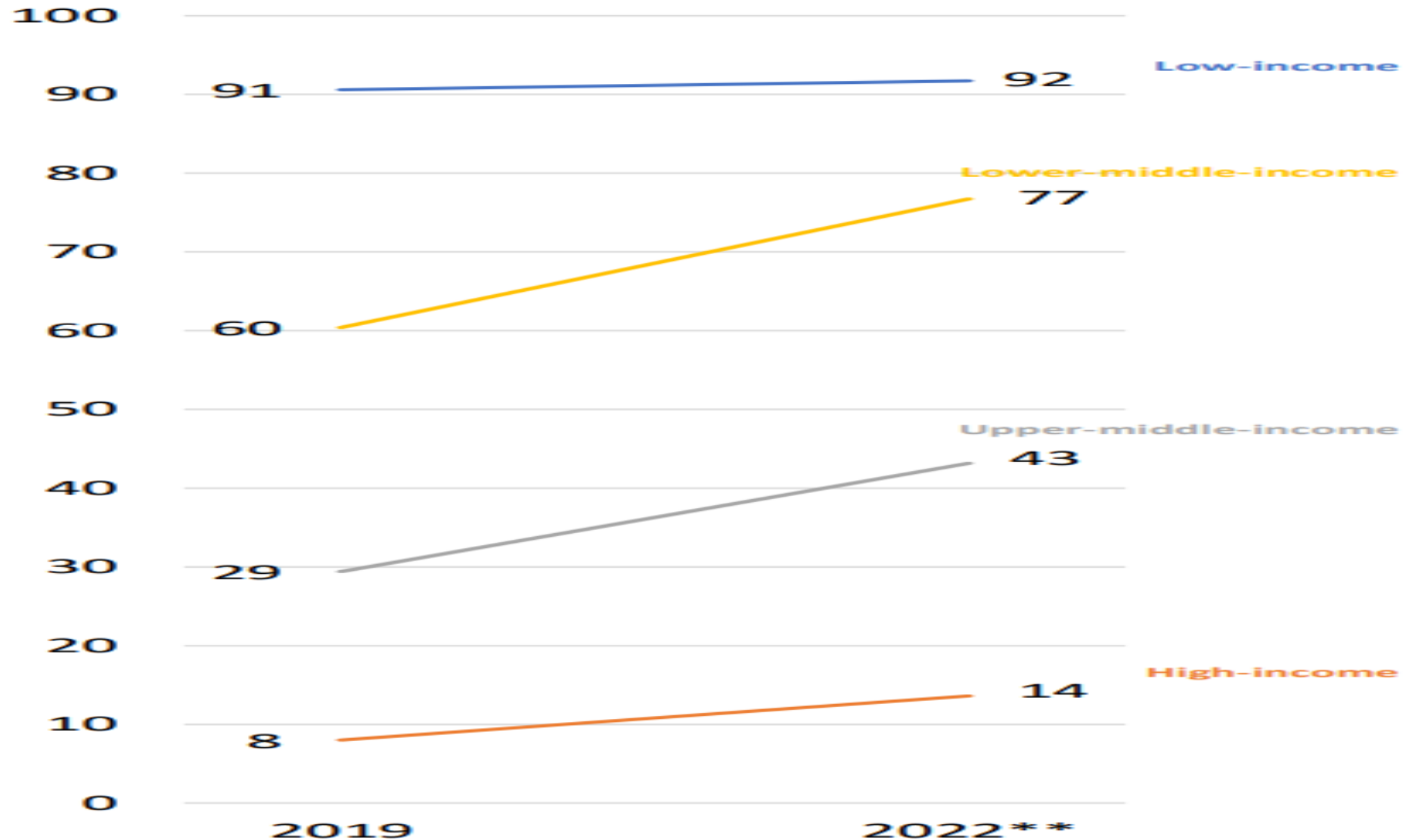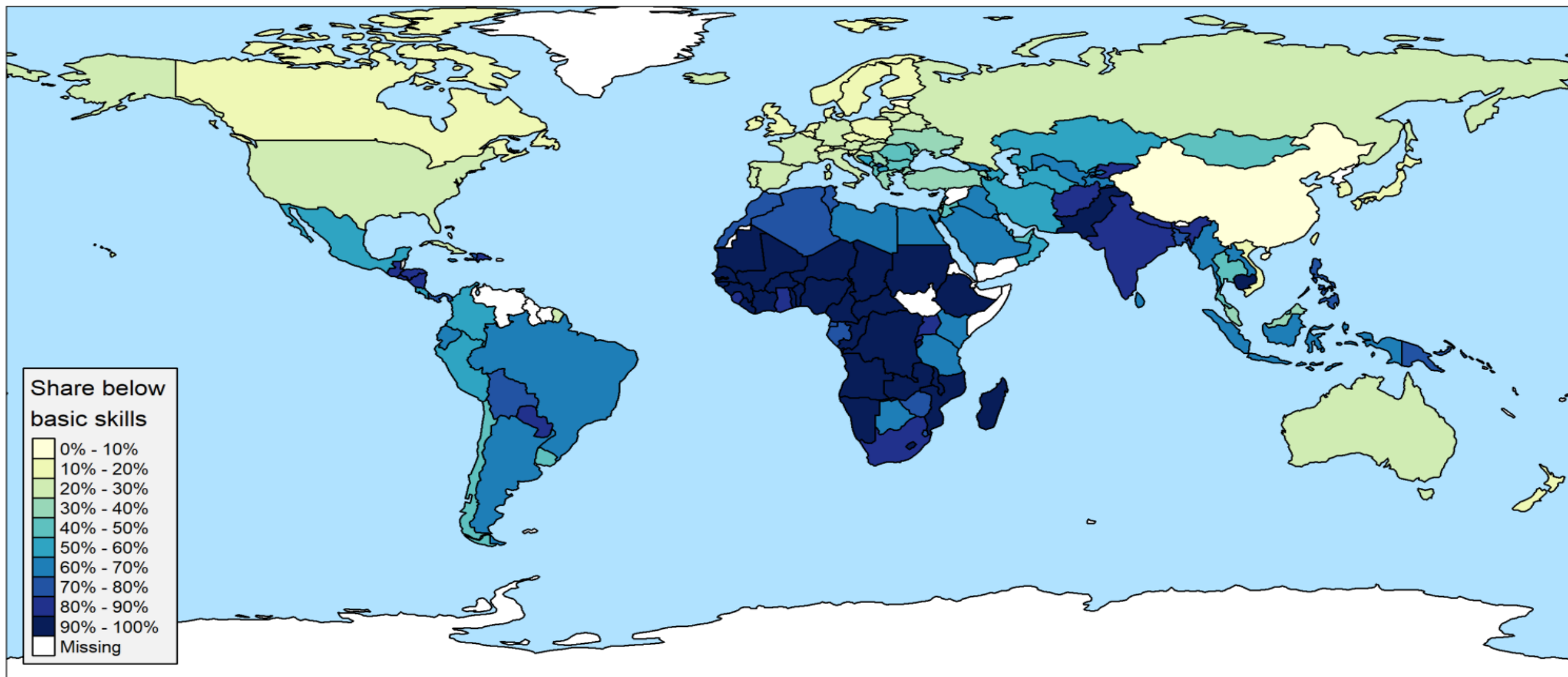# The State of Global Learning Poverty: 2022 Update

Figure A4: Share of students who do not reach basic skill levels

Notes: Estimated share of current students who do not reach at least basic skill levels in math and science (equivalent to PISA Level 1) in each country. See section 3 for methodological details.

Share of global investment in education and of 0-14 year old global population by national level of income

■ Share (%) of global number of children 0-14 years old   ■ Share (%) of global public investment in education
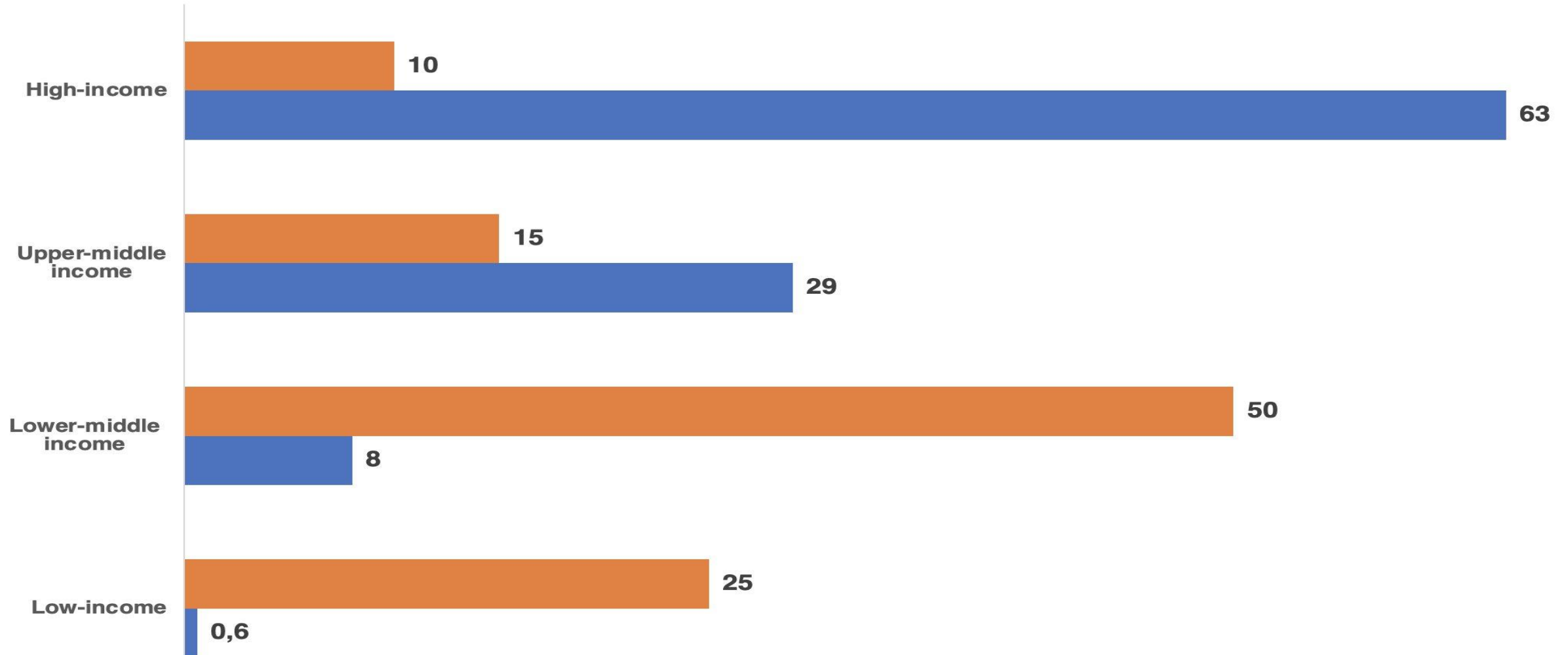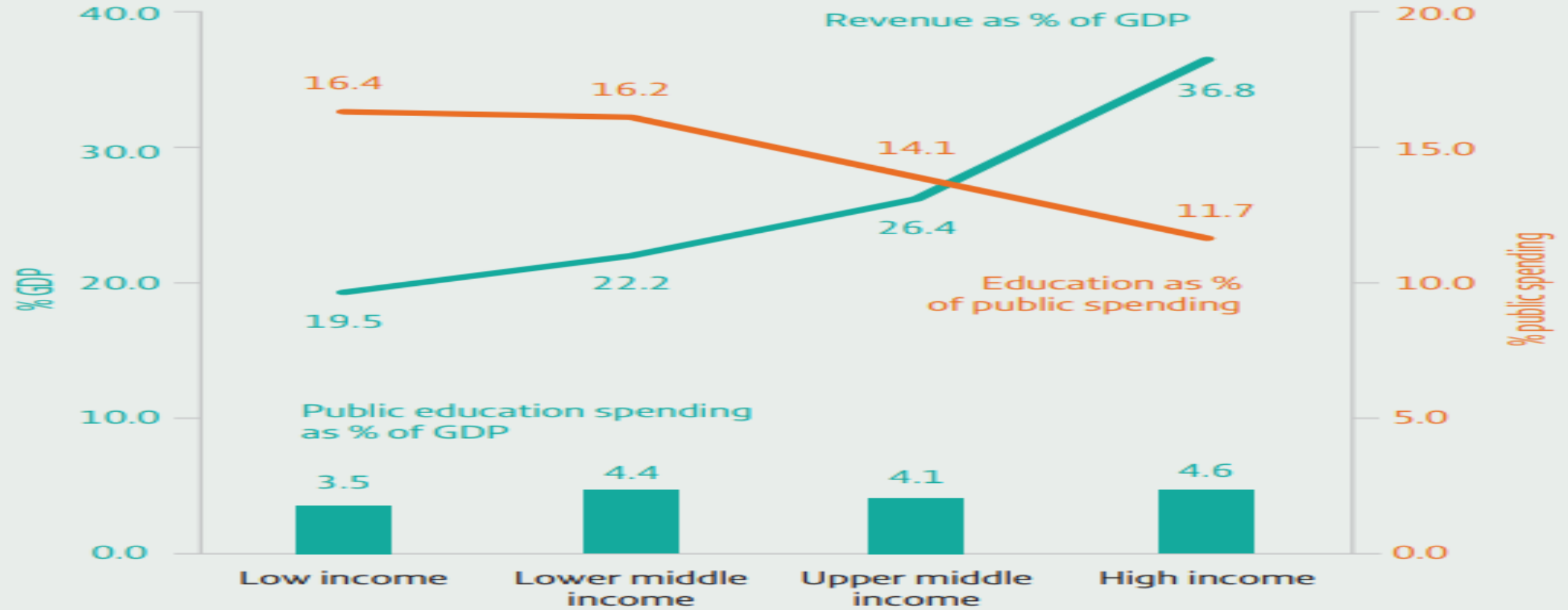

High-income
- 10
- 63

Upper-middle income
- 15
- 29

Lower-middle income
- 50
- 8

Low-income
- 25
- 0,6

UNESCO, World Bank: Education Finance Watch 2022, UN Population Division data

FIGURE 21.2:

Poor countries spend little on education despite its priority in budgets

Public education expenditure as share of (i) total public expenditure and (ii) GDP, and total revenue as share of GDP, by country income group, 2019 or latest available year

Revenue as % of GDP

16.4   16.2

14.1

11.7

36.8

26.4

22.2

19.5

Education as % of public spending

Public education spending as % of GDP

3.5   4.4   4.1   4.6

Low income | Lower middle income | Upper middle income | High income

%GDP

%public spending

Absolute differences between poor and rich countries in spending per student are vast.

In primary education, spending per student ranges from US$168 in low-income to US$8,363 in high-income countries, in PPP Dollars, a 50-fold difference

The gaps in spending between high-income and low-income countries are smaller in upper secondary (25 times)

The gaps in spending between high-income and low-income countries in tertiary education (6 times).

Consequently, public investment is highly regressive.

The Education 2030 Framework calls for government to commit at least 4% to 6% of GDP to education and/or at least 15% to 20% of public expenditure to education

Even after an increase in domestic resources is taken into account, the annual financing gap over 2015-2030 for reaching universal pre-primary, primary and secondary education of good quality in low and lower middle-income countries is $39 billion.

Underinvestment leading to

1) Pre-School Gross Enrolments Gaps

**(Life- long SDG gaps?)**

2) *Skill Gaps*

We find that at least two-thirds of the world's youth do not reach basic cognitive skill levels, ranging from 24% in North America to 89% in South Asia and 94% in Sub-Saharan Africa.

(Upskilling Gaps SDG/ESG?)

3) *GDP gaps- Production Possibility Frontier*

Our economic analysis suggests that the present value of lost world economic output due to missing the goal of global universal basic skills amounts to over $700 trillion over the remaining century, or 11% of discounted GDP.

(SDG Gaps – An economic analysis of the present value of lost world economic output due to missing the targets of SDG 4 would be ? trillion over the remaining century, or ? of discounted GDP (https://un-modelling.github.io/ and https://www.unsdsn.org/the-world-in-2050))

FIGURE 12.9:

Non-state actors provide most job-related training

Adult participation in job-related training, by provider type, European countries, 2016

GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2021_fig12_9
Source: Eurostat database.
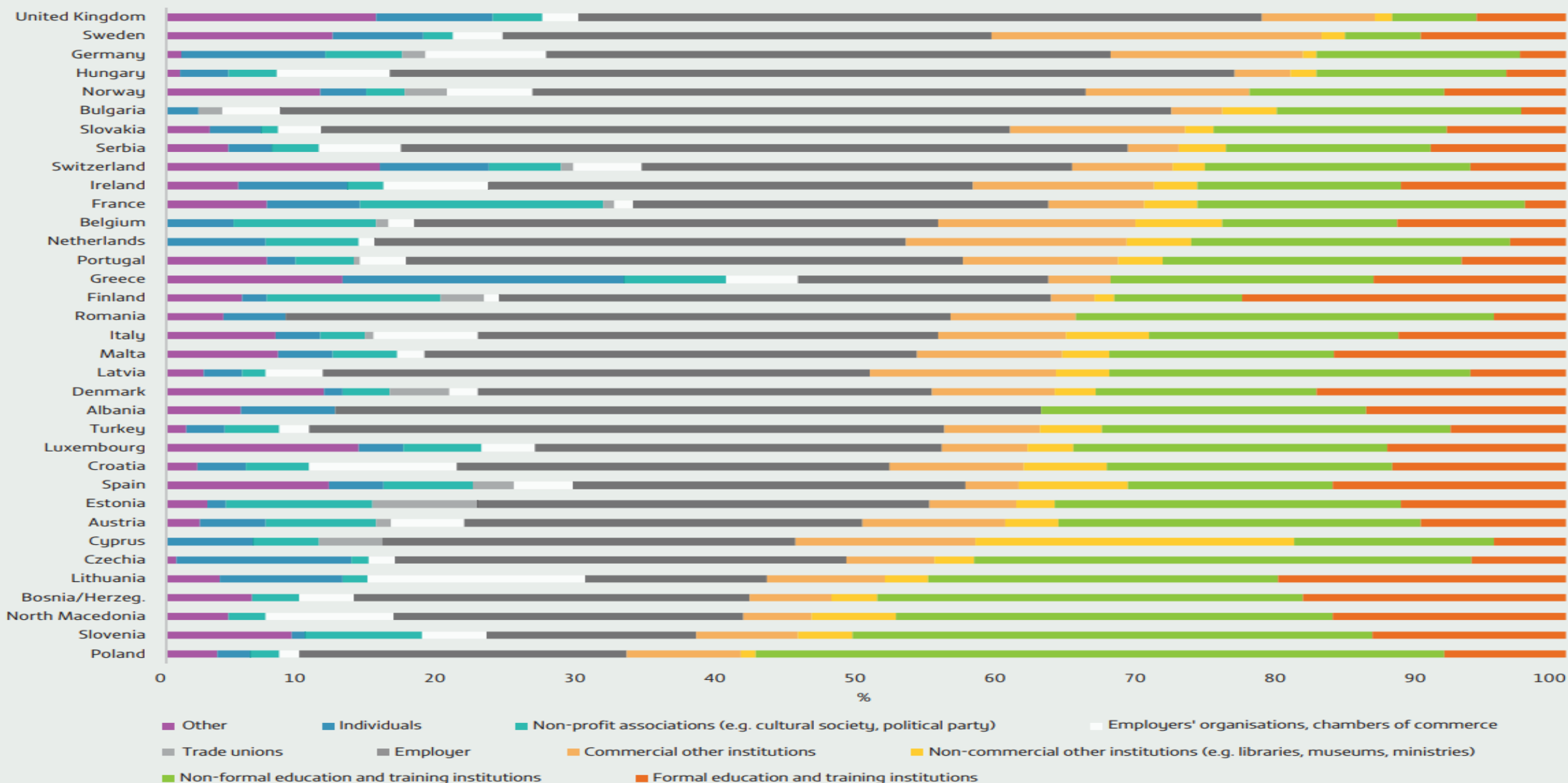
Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."

Target 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys **complete free, equitable and quality** primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

Target 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

Target 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

Target 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

Target 4.5 By 2030, **eliminate gender disparities** in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

Target 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

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 nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

Target 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

Target 4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

Target 4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island

Other SDGs with direct reference to education

SDG1. A – Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)

SDG 4.7/12.8./13.3 – Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education, and (d) student assessment

Health and well-being (SDG 3 target 3.7)
By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes

Gender equality (SDG 5 target 5.6)
Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee women aged 15-49 years access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education

Decent work and sustainable growth (SDG 8 target 8.6)
By 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

Responsible consumption & production (SDG 12 target 12.8)
By 2030 ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature

Climate change mitigation (SDG 13 target 13.3)
Improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning.

HEIs are still a key actor in this mission;

- Key Curators of SDG Knowledge (Curriculum, Data, Research, IP) and Wisdom!
- They are at the center of an intergenerational transfer and creation of knowledge for sustainable development.
- In addition, HEIs are responsible for training teachers and creating curricula in schools.
- Finally, HEIs also engage in upskilling of corporates and work within science–policy–practice interfaces.
- HEIs can and should be a key part of building **SDG 4** capacities and pathways within and across nations at all stages of lifelong learning.

ESD is the key to achieving sustainable development through the following six SDG transformations:

- **Education,** gender, and inequality
- **Health**, well-being, and demography
- **Energy** decarbonization and sustainable industry
- **Sustainable food**, land, water, and oceans
- **Sustainable cities** and communities
- **Digital** revolution for sustainable development

Drawing on earlier work by **The World in 2050** initiative, SDSN has introduced the above six SDG transformations as modular building blocks of SDG achievement. Each transformation identifies priority investments and regulatory challenges, calling for actions by well-defined parts of government working with business and civil society. None of these transformations can be operationalized if every individual in governments, corporates and civil society has little exposure to ESD and little experience to put learnings into practice in their sphere of influence. Hence, the first transformation above (education, gender, and inequality) is the necessary condition to achieve the other five.

Top 10 skills of 2025

- Analytical thinking and innovation
- Active learning and learning strategies
- Complex problem-solving
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Creativity, originality and initiative
- Leadership and social influence
- Technology use, monitoring and control
- Technology design and programming
- Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility
- Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation

Type of skill

- Problem-solving
- Self-management
- Working with people
- Technology use and development

Transforming Education Summit : United Nations, New York, 16, 17 & 19 September 2022

The Youth Declaration Sept 16th

Solutions Day Sept 17th

The UN Secretary General's vision statement Sept 19th

Six calls to action have been announced during the Summit.

A number of global initiatives have been created. One of them is the International Financing Facility for Education, which will enhance funding for education around the world.

Another initiative to come out of the Summit is the Gateways to Public Digital Learning, which will bring partners together to ensure equitable access to and resources for digital learning.

High-Level Steering Committee

The SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee, the apex body of the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism, will play a key role in following up on the Summit outcomes. It will continue to monitor progress, engage youth, and champion cross-sector and multilateral cooperation, and the knowledge hub will be the space for knowledge and practice exchange. Working with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring Report, the Committee will follow up on the new global initiatives launched at the Summit. Read more about these follow-up activities.

[Education in Crisis Situations](#)
Partnership for Transformation

[Digital Learning](#)
Assuring quality public digital learning for all

[Addressing the Learning Crisis](#)
Assuring and improving quality of learning for all

[Advancing Gender Equality](#)
Empowerment in and through Education

[Transform the World](#)
Greening Education Partnership

[Financing Education](#)
Inventing More, More Equitably and Efficiently

We will establish national strategies and budgets with short, medium, and long-term targets, to advance progress across all three keys, in order to unlock the power of digital learning. Three Keys and Six commitments:

Content

We commit to establishing and iteratively improving public digital learning platforms with high quality, curriculum-aligned education resources, ensuring they are free, open and accessible for all, in line with UNESCO's Recommendation on Open Educational Resources, while also protecting the privacy, safety and data security of users. We will work to advance progress towards this commitment through the 'Gateways to Public Digital Learning' multi-partner initiative launched at the Transforming Education Summit.

We commit to ensuring these platforms empower teachers, learners, and families, support accessibility and sharing of content, and meet the diverse needs of users, including learners with disabilities, speakers of minority languages, girls and women, as well as refugees and people on the move.

Capacity

We commit to achieving universal digital literacy for education and other empowering purposes with a special focus on women and girls in order to close longstanding digital skills gender divides.

We commit to building the capacity of all teachers and relevant education personnel so they can harness the power of digital resources to support their students to learn, leveraging existing tools and alliances including the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers and the Global Education Coalition.

Connectivity

We commit to connecting every school to the internet, and to facilitating the extension of internet services to households and individuals in order to provide additional avenues to education and lifelong learning.

We commit to adopting a whole-of-government approach and leveraging existing initiatives, such as [Giga](#) (UNICEF and ITU), to implement the policies, regulations, technologies, and financing required to ensure that school connectivity is safe, sustainable, and equitable.

UNESCO Transformative Education Pre-Summit: Transforming Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with FAIR OERRs, Digital Innovation, and Diamond Partnerships

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
SOLUTIONS NETWORK
A GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

Center for Sustainable Development
EARTH INSTITUTE | COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

MISSION
4.7

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Solutions Day: September 17th, Session/Event in UN HQ

Transforming Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) by implementing the UNESCO Open Education Resource (OER) Recommendation within Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships.
 The Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN, The Permanent Mission of Ghana to UN , UN Academic Impact, UNESCO, UN Library and SDG Academy's Mission 4.7

UN HQ Room CR4 - 16.30 to 18.00 September 17th.

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