

# THEMATIC FACTSHEET

## BASIC EDUCATION

November 2019



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 263 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

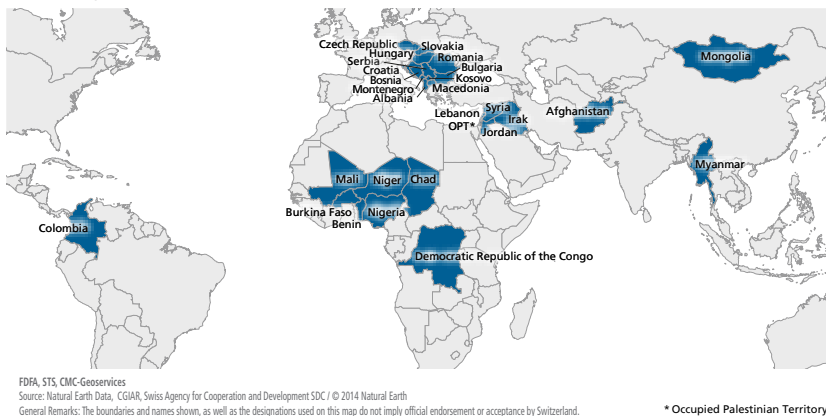
By adopting a comprehensive approach to education, the SDC enhances the complementarity and interdependence of basic education and vocational training. It supports the development of training programmes that combine the acquisition of basic knowledge and vocational skills.

#### 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

Beneficiary 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, health and climate change.

## 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.

## Examples of projects



### Benin, Bangladesh, Madagascar: Improving hygiene, access to water and sanitation through blue schools

Switzerland strengthens the learning and implementation of new concepts such as water cycles or recycling in schools. As part of this programme, 3,800 pupils have been given access to water and 160 vegetable gardens have been established. More than 500 teachers have been trained accordingly.



### Lebanon and Jordan: Rehabilitation of Public Schools

Thanks to SDC support in school rehabilitation, more than 87,000 Lebanese and Jordanian children and Syrian refugees have access to a safe and high-quality learning environment. Pupils and teachers participate in a variety of activities that promote healthy learning environments, including activities such as music or group games that have a positive impact on social cohesion.



### Burkina Faso: Adapting to the humanitarian crisis

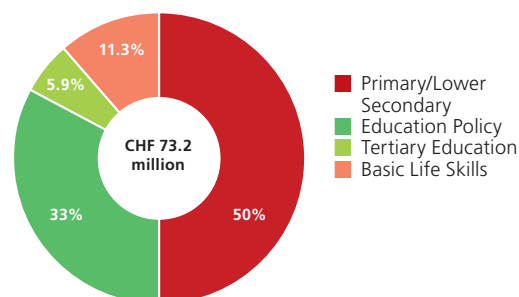
In Burkina Faso, hundreds of schools have been closed for several months due to conflicts. Switzerland is helping to ensure that more than 60,000 pupils continue to be taught their mother tongue, French and mathematics, as well as violence prevention and health, through an innovative radio education programme.



### Afghanistan: Basic education for perspectives, peace and gender justice

The SDC was involved in training more than 2,700 teachers. 142,000 pupils benefited from the improved quality of teaching, with 40 per cent among them being girls. In addition, the SDC responded to the current unstable conflict situation by giving access to school to approximately 3,000 displaced children.

## Expenditure by sector (2018)



## Expenditure by area (2018)

Humanitarian aid	8.4 %
Cooperation with Eastern Europe	6.8 %
South Cooperation	84.8 %

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

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC  
3003 Bern, Switzerland  
www.sdc.admin.ch  
Photographs: SDC