



## Declaration of the G7 Ministers of Education 2019

4 July 2019

### Preamble

We, the education ministers of the G7 have come together on 4 July 2019 at France Education International in Sèvres, to reaffirm the crucial role of education in promoting equal opportunities for all and in addressing inequality in our societies. We follow the principles agreed during previous G7 presidency under Japan (Kurashiki 2016) and G20 presidency under Argentina (Mendoza 2018) and in reference to the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). We have strived to extend the discussion on education beyond G7, associating three outreach countries - Argentina, Estonia, Singapore -, international organisations - OECD, UNESCO - and experts from the civil society to France's G7 presidency.

We note that social and economic inequality persists undermining the potential of those who are disadvantaged and marginalised. We stress that access to quality education is a human right. We strongly believe that education is central in promoting equality, including gender equality. Education should be inclusive and foster the full inclusion of all people in society.

We consider that confronting inequality requires substantial efforts across borders to improve educational policies and systems, and develop innovative pedagogical approaches by building on the insights of research, international benchmarking, comparative analysis and collaborative pilot projects.

**We recognise that despite differences among our education systems**, access to high quality early childhood education and comprehensive professional development for teachers and educators are important levers in alleviating inequality, including the promotion of gender equality and the combat against gender stereotypes.

**A- Research has shown** that early childhood education helps to develop fundamental skills, attitudes and values which are keys in preparing children for success, not only in an educational environment, but also in life, notably in building relationships with their peers. According to international studies, there is a strong correlation between quality early childhood education and positive learning and educational performance in later years. The major challenge for early childhood education is thus to better prepare children for mastering basic skills – speaking, reading, writing, counting, respecting others - while ensuring that their cognitive, social and emotional development happens under optimal conditions. We are aware of the positive effect that early childhood education has on children from disadvantaged backgrounds and of the importance of coordinated efforts to promote early childhood education.

We therefore aim to:

- **build inclusive education environments for all children**, regardless of their personal and socio-economic background or geographical location, respecting their individuality, development, basic needs and rights and particularly by taking into consideration children in vulnerable situations;
- **promote early childhood education environments** in which attitudes, values, and pedagogical approaches enable children to develop their cognitive, social, emotional, physical and language potential, and foster a positive self-image, as well as physical, intellectual and social well-being. In addition, children's enthusiasm for learning must be encouraged by soliciting and developing their curiosity and interest;
- **support early childhood education framework conditions** which guide children in their daily activities, respect each child's own learning pace, and that are structured around daily periods most conducive to learning, as identified by cognitive and neuroscientific experts;

- **favour activities and games in learning modalities** that contribute to motor development, socialization, autonomy and the mastery of language, and that play a crucial role in the academic success and social integration of children and young people;
- **strengthen the link between families and early childhood education environments** and encourage greater parental involvement in their child's education, while valuing parents' choices and encouraging mutual trust;
- **foster smooth and coherent transitions by strengthening the links between educational institutions** throughout the early years of learning and development in particular from early childhood education to primary school.

**B- We recognize** that teachers and educators play a key role in tackling inequality through high quality pedagogical approaches as well as through their mindful attention to the well-being and support of children and families. Facing the new challenges of our society, including those of the digital era, requires high quality professional development. We are aware that the well-being and commitment of teachers stem from the quality of their professional development, the enhancement of their career opportunities and the positive image society has of their role. Such a vision guarantees the attractiveness and prestige of the teaching profession.

We therefore aim to:

- **support comprehensive approaches to teacher and educator professional development.** In addition to transmitting knowledge, teachers must be capable of developing the social, emotional and behavioural skills of their students which encourage humanistic common values such as respecting others, learning to live together and valuing diversity;
- **foster dialogue and partnership among the multiple stakeholders** involved in teacher professional development, including decision making, monitoring and evaluation;
- **promote access** to individual and collective professional development, as part of a progressive and coherent continuum, and develop **support for teachers and educators in the acquisition of skills, including digital literacy;**
- **support high-quality professional development based on** practical experience, learning methods focused on real-life professional situations, and innovative and evidence-based pedagogical approaches;
- **recognize the key role of educational institutions leaders and teacher trainers in empowering teachers;**
- strengthen teacher professional development through learning about **benefits of pedagogical and educational approaches used in other countries.** It may include international mobility of teachers, benchmarking, research and study visits;
- **foster dialogue between teachers / educators at a global level as well as the exchange of pedagogical resources, experiences and practice amongst teachers.** As appropriate in specific countries, encourage relevant initiatives and projects such as the interconnection of digital social networks of teachers and platforms as well as the development of new international and multilateral initiatives, including those developed by international organizations, to share pedagogical materials through collaborative digital platforms and to share expertise, development and content in the field of e-assessment ;
- **place the issue of teachers' professional development on the agenda** of international seminars, conferences and events.

#### Way forward

- We, the G7 Members, wish to seize the international momentum and take the appropriate steps to help ensure educational success for all children, in cooperation with international organizations and the civil society as appropriate.
- We encourage the implementation of collaborative pilot projects and the sharing of best practices and research evidence. We welcome the development of international initiatives in partnership with international organizations as appropriate, in order to address inequality.
- We thank France for hosting a successful ministerial meeting. We also thank the ministers of Argentina, Estonia and Singapore, and the representatives of international organizations – OECD and UNESCO – for their contributions.
- We will submit this declaration to the G7 Leaders' 2019 Summit.
- We agree to pursue these objectives in the education field in the upcoming years.