



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Sustainable  
Development  
Goals



# Education for Sustainable Development:

## Partners in Action

Global Action Programme (GAP) Key Partners' Report (2015-2018)



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## UNESCO Education Sector

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education, and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.



United Nations  
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Education  
Sector

## The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



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# Introduction

The Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was launched by UNESCO as a follow up to the United Nations Decade of ESD in order to accelerate progress on sustainable development and scale up action in all areas of education and learning. Its duration is from 2015 to 2019.

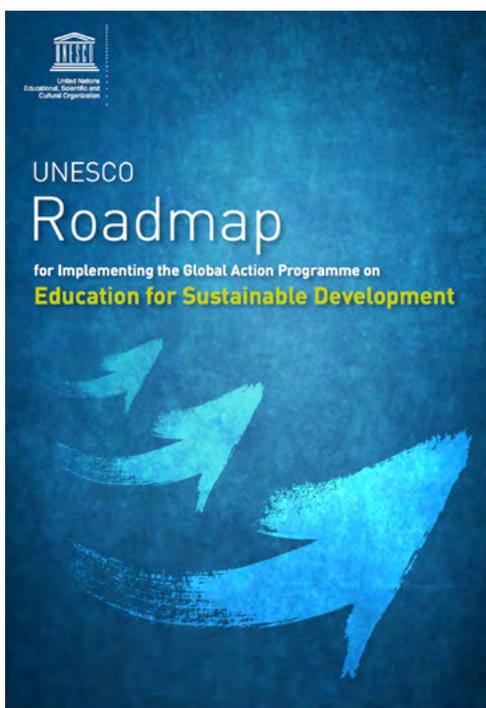
To that end, UNESCO works with a network of 97 GAP Key Partners from government, civil society, the private sector and academia active in five Priority Action Areas: advancing policy, transforming learning environments, building the capacity of educators, empowering youth, and accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level. Each GAP Key Partner committed to meet specific targets by 2019.

To measure progress in meeting the targets set by the GAP Key Partners, 10 indicators were identified, two in each Priority Action Area. Through surveys sent to them by UNESCO, GAP Key Partners report against these 10 indicators and toward the targets set for each indicator. In the surveys, GAP Key Partners are also invited to rate the benefits of participation in the GAP for their work and provide qualitative data concerning their implementation progress.

Three progress reports are scheduled to be produced:

- The first report, covering progress between 2015 and 2016, was released by UNESCO in 2017
- This second report, covering 2015-2018, is to be published in 2019
- The third and final report, covering the entire period of the GAP, 2015-2019, will be published in 2020

This second report presents the results of the GAP Key Partners survey carried out at the end of 2018, with a response rate of 78%. The report presents the analysis of the quantitative responses of GAP Key Partners to each of the 10 indicators. Based on the qualitative responses provided by the GAP Key Partners, a short comment on each of the progress status is also provided.



## GAP Key Partners' achievements 2015-2018



**959 strategic ESD policy documents**

supported



**1,486 programmes**

providing technical support for policy development, implemented at the country level



**151,588 learning institutions**

supported



**26,315,288 learners**

involved



**2,049,479 teacher educators**

participated in capacity-building activities



**48,462 teacher training institutions**

supported



**3,441,952 youth leaders**

supported



**762,958 youth leaders trained**

as trainers



**5,685 networks/civil society organizations**

conducted ESD activities



**2,390 ESD activities/programmes**

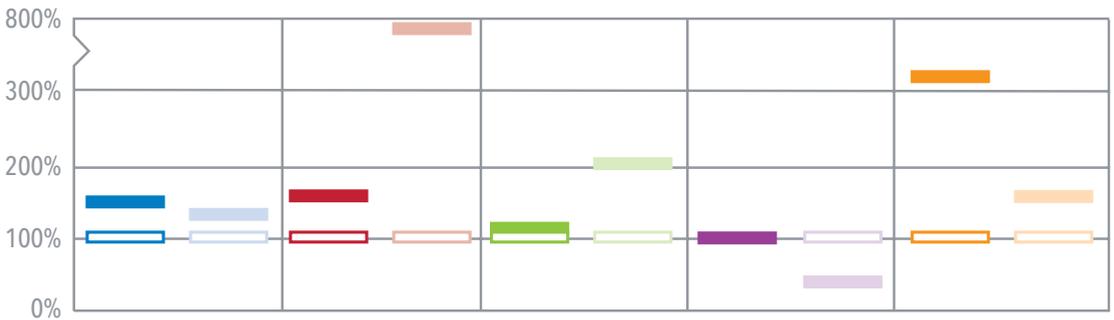
established by local authorities

# Achievement rate for all indicators from 2015 to 2018

Each Priority Action Area is monitored by two complementary indicators that capture the nature and reach of the activities undertaken by GAP Key Partners.

■ Achieved (2015-2018)

▭ Targeted (2015)



**1:**  
Strategic  
policy  
documents  
supported

**3:**  
Learning  
institutions  
supported

**5:**  
Educators  
trained by GAP  
Key Partners

**7:**  
Youth leaders  
supported by  
GAP Key  
Partners

**9:**  
Organizations  
conducting ESD  
activities with  
local authorities  
and GAP Key  
Partners' support

**2:**  
Programmes  
supporting  
ESD policy  
development

**4:**  
Learners  
directly  
involved  
in GAP Key  
Partners'  
activities

**6:**  
Teacher-  
training  
institutions  
supported by  
GAP Key  
Partners

**8:**  
Youth leaders  
trained as  
trainers

**10:**  
ESD programmes  
established by  
local authorities  
with GAP Key  
Partners' support

## GAP Key Partners are active in 147 countries

GAP Key Partners have reinforced ESD in national and international education and sustainable development policies, and worked with regional organizations to promote dialogue and harmonize responses to the changing environment.



**Africa:** Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe • 40 countries

**Arab States:** Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates • 10 countries

**Asia and the Pacific:** Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam • 29 countries

**Europe and North America:** Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Chechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America • 42 countries

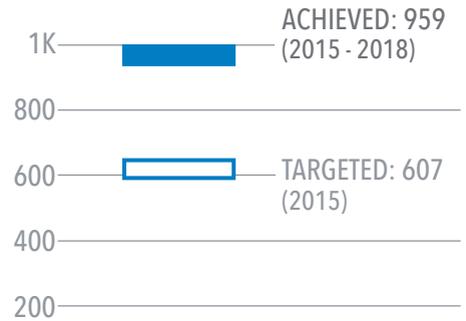
**Latin America and the Caribbean:** Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Uruguay • 26 countries

# Advancing policy: Mainstream ESD into both education and sustainable development policies to create an enabling environment for ESD and bring about systemic change

## 1. Number of strategic policy documents supported

**GAP Key Partners supported 959 policy documents, such as national action plans, guidelines and frameworks to advance ESD, exceeding their target by 58%.**

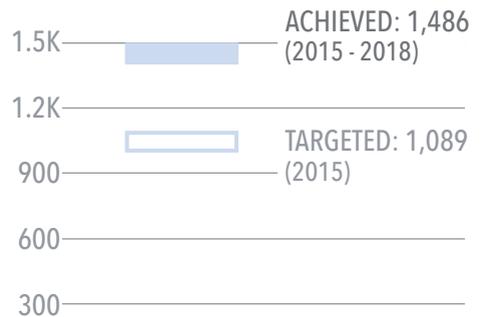
The additional qualitative information provided by GAP Key Partners reveals that the above progress is attributable to the momentum created by the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. The SDGs have greatly increased government interest in and demand for ESD, resulting in numerous efforts to integrate ESD into various government policies.



## 2. Number of programmes supporting ESD policy development

**GAP Key Partners supported 1,486 ESD programmes, exceeding their target of 1,089 programmes by 36%.**

The additional qualitative information provided by GAP Key Partners reveals that the most sought after form of technical support was the design and implementation of programmes to reinforce education and sustainable development policies. GAP Key Partners working with regional bodies and organizations made an especially important contribution.

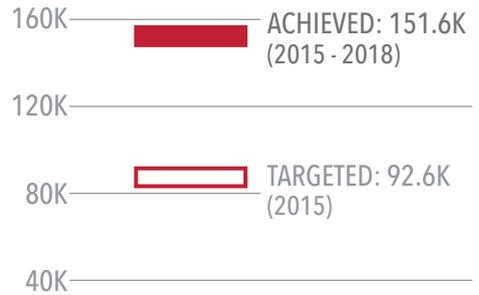


# Transforming learning and training environments: Integrate sustainability principles into education and training settings

## 3. Number of learning institutions supported

**GAP Key Partners supported programmes and activities in more than 150,000 schools, training institutions and other organizations, exceeding their target by 64%.**

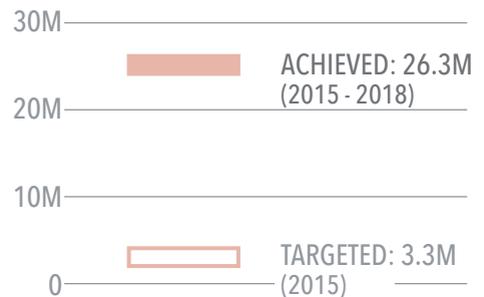
The additional qualitative information provided by GAP Key Partners reveals that the Whole Institution Approach – the integration of the principles of sustainable development into all aspects of an institution – was a particularly useful methodology to promote ESD. It also showed that GAP Key Partners worked not only in formal education institutions, but also in various types of learning and training settings outside the school system, attesting to the diversity of institutions practising ESD.



## 4. Number of learners directly involved in partners' activities

**GAP Key Partners reported that more than 26 million learners of all ages were involved in educational programmes and activities, exceeding the original 3.3 million target by 691%.**

The additional qualitative information provided by GAP Key Partners reveals that the impressive progress made in this area was possible because GAP Key Partners worked in a wider range of institutions and learning environments than expected, enabling GAP Key Partners to reach more individual learners than initially targeted. However, there is also the view that the exceptional overachievement of this target may in part originate also from the fact that the initial target was set too low.

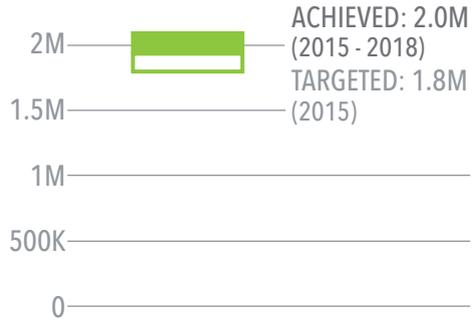


# Building capacities of educators and trainers: Increase the capacities of educators and trainers to more effectively deliver ESD

## 5. Number of educators trained by partners

**GAP Key Partners reached more than 2 million educators, exceeding their target of 1.8 million by 16%.**

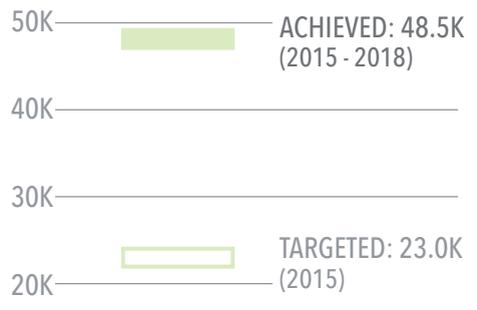
The additional qualitative information provided by GAP Key Partners reveals that the above progress was aided by collaboration with existing networks of educators, including teachers' unions and advocacy groups. GAP Key Partners also commented on the relevance of teacher education to the other Priority Action Areas, recommending that ESD teacher training be further scaled up.



## 6. Number of teacher training institutions supported by GAP Key Partners

**GAP Key Partners supported more than 48,000 teacher training institutions, exceeding their original aim of 23,000 by 111%.**

The additional qualitative information provided by GAP Key Partners reveals that the favourable ESD policy environment in many countries translated into the creation of more training and professional development opportunities for educators, which contributed to the good achievement of the target. GAP Key Partners also reported that the training opportunities provided outside the education sector were greater than expected, which indicates that more attention needs to be paid to ESD activities beyond the formal education system.

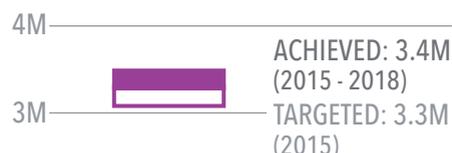


# Empowering and mobilising youth: Multiply ESD activities among youth

## 7. Number of youth leaders supported

**GAP Key Partners supported 3.4 million youth leaders, exceeding their target by 100,000, or 4%.**

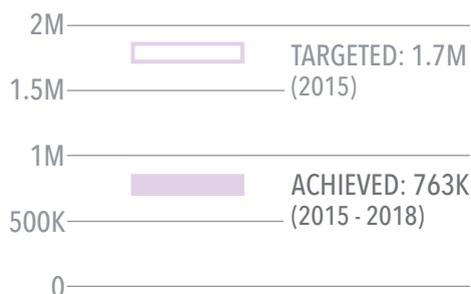
The target was met, but the rate of achievement is relatively modest. However, this should not be interpreted as low youth participation in ESD activities. The additional qualitative information provided by GAP Key Partners reveals that youth leaders were involved in the implementation of other Priority Action Areas, but not counted as youth leaders. Therefore, it is likely that youth involvement in the GAP activities is higher than reported.



## 8. Number of youth leaders trained as trainers

**GAP Key Partners fell short of their target of training 1.7 million youth leaders, reaching only 763,000, or 51% of their target.**

The additional qualitative information provided by GAP Key Partners suggests that successful train-the-trainer programmes for youth leaders were more resource intensive than foreseen, which may explain the relatively low achievement rate. According to GAP Key Partners, successful train-the-trainer programmes require in-depth training and systematic follow up – for example through mentorships – so that trainees would feel confident training others. This may imply that while GAP Key Partners have trained fewer youth leaders, they seem to have provided them with more in-depth training and systematic follow-up.

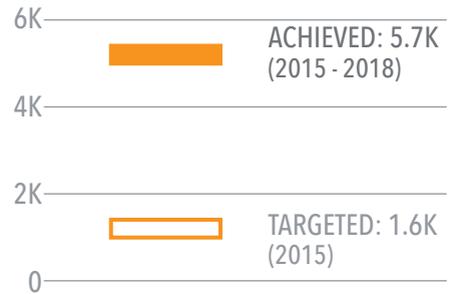


## Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level: Increase ESD programmes and multistakeholder networks in communities

### 9. Number of organizations conducting ESD activities with local authorities and GAP Key Partners' support

**GAP Key Partners surpassed their original goal of supporting the ESD activities of 1,567 local organizations, reaching 5,685 organizations, 263% more than expected.**

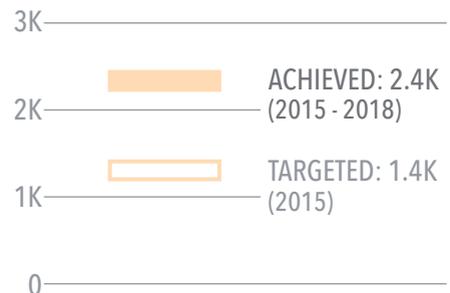
The additional qualitative information provided by GAP Key Partners reveals that the higher rate of achievement of this indicator was aided by collaboration with diverse stakeholder groups who helped to translate the global commitment to sustainable development into local actions. It also shows that local ESD activities ranged widely, from the development of environmental regulations to consumer awareness programmes and sustainable urban plans, among others.



### 10. Number of ESD programmes established by local authorities with GAP Key Partners' support

**Partners developed 2,390 ESD programmes and activities with local authorities, exceeding their target of 1,399 by 71%.**

The additional qualitative information provided by GAP Key Partners suggests that the good progress on this indicator was aided by the great enthusiasm to create sustainable communities that GAP Key Partners found among their local partners. Some GAP Key Partners noted that local multistakeholder networks provided an especially good way to engage authorities in ESD programmes. Some pointed in particular to UNESCO's Learning Cities as a useful mechanism. UNESCO's Learning Cities is a UNESCO network of governments providing inspiration, know-how, policy dialogue, peer learning and best practice to support lifelong learning for all in pursuit of sustainable development in municipalities.

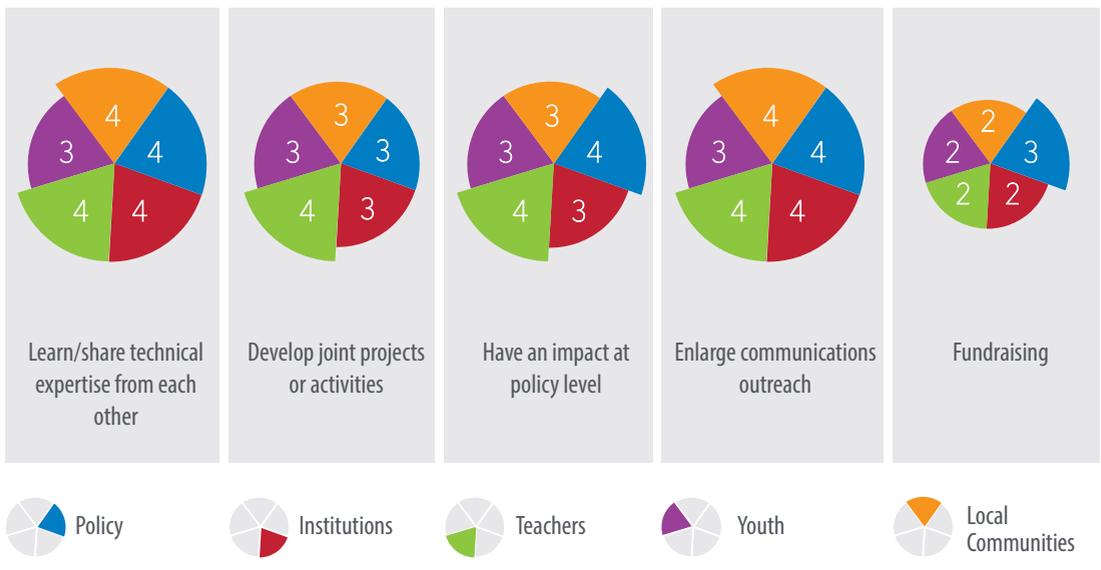


# Benefits for GAP Key Partners

## Belonging to the GAP promoted exchange among partners and accelerated ESD progress locally, nationally and globally.

GAP Key Partners were invited to rate the benefits of participation in the programme as measured by five qualitative indicators, including learning, impact and outreach. They noted among the advantages that the GAP provided a platform to work with partners in other Priority Action Areas in their own countries and internationally. All partners expressed a desire for UNESCO to provide assistance with fundraising to meet the need and demand for more action on ESD.

5 = Very useful, 1 = Not useful at all



© UNESCO/GAP Partner Networks meeting in San José, Costa Rica, 2018.

## The Way Forward

This report confirms that the GAP Key Partners have made good progress. While surpassing nine out of 10 targets, GAP Key Partners have spearheaded innovative pedagogies, expanded ESD beyond the classroom into many other kinds of learning settings, and built new partnerships beyond the education sector. In doing so, GAP Key Partners have been able to capitalize on the momentum created by the adoption of the SDGs.

The recommendations below have been developed on the basis of this second GAP Key Partners report. They can help guide the implementation of the “ESD for 2030” framework, which is under consideration with the UNESCO Governing Bodies and the UN General Assembly in 2019 as the follow up to the GAP.

- **Ensure a favourable policy environment**

GAP Key Partners have been greatly helped by a favourable policy environment at the global, regional, national and local levels. Further progress on ESD will depend on how much governments will continue to provide the necessary supportive framework for ESD implementation.

- **Harness the partnership approach**

GAP Key Partner Networks have helped members to scale up their ESD actions. Moving forward, multi-stakeholder partnerships should continue to play a key role in ESD implementation, bringing together stakeholders from government, civil society and the private sector.

- **Reach out to non-education stakeholders**

GAP Key Partners have observed an increasing demand for ESD from stakeholders associated with other sectors. The broad and comprehensive framework provided by the SDGs should be used as a unique opportunity to establish joint initiatives between ESD actors and those who work for the achievement of other SDGs.

- **Expand transformative education approaches**

GAP Key Partners have successfully promoted innovative ways of learning, such as the Whole Institution Approach, which emphasize individual transformation and behavioural change, inside and outside the classroom. The future of ESD will largely depend on how learning can contribute to real-life action for a better, more sustainable world.

# UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD

The UNESCO-Japan Prize honours outstanding ESD projects developed within the GAP framework. Funded by the Government of Japan, this prize is unique in the support it provides to laureates, including national and regional events to showcase winning projects and opportunities to foster exchange. Three projects per year have received an award of US\$50,000 each.

2015	2016	2017	2018
<p>rootAbility (Germany), "Green Office Model"</p> 	<p>CCREAD (Cameroon), "Integrated ESD schemes in schools and communities"</p> 	<p>Zikra (Jordan), "Zikra for Popular Learning"</p> 	<p>Let's Do It Foundation (Estonia), "World Cleanup Day 2018" and "Keep It Clean"</p> 
<p>SERES (Guatemala and El Salvador), "ESD Youth Ambassadors"</p> 	<p>Okayama ESD Promotion Commission (Japan), "Okayama ESD Project"</p> 	<p>Hard Rain Project (United Kingdom), "Hard Rain" and "Whole Earth"</p> <p>Aligning human systems with natural systems</p>  <p><a href="http://www.hardrainproject.com">www.hardrainproject.com</a></p>	<p>Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (Namibia), "NaDEET Centre on NamibRand"</p> 
<p>Jayagiri Center (Indonesia), "Eco-Friendly Entrepreneurship for Youths and Adults"</p> 	<p>National Union of Students (United Kingdom), "Green Impact"</p> 	<p>Sihlengeni Primary School (Zimbabwe), "Permaculture"</p> 	<p>Kalabia Education Program (Indonesia), "Environmental Education for the Heart of the Coral Triangle"</p> 

## Connect with the Global Action Programme on ESD

UNESCO  
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(ED/PSD/ESD)  
Division for Peace and Sustainable Development  
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From  
the People  
of Japan

# Education for Sustainable Development:

## Partners in action

### Global Action Programme (GAP) Key Partners' Report (2015-2018)

This brochure presents the main findings from the monitoring survey UNESCO conducted in 2018 among GAP Key Partners, which captured their achievements since the start of the GAP in 2015.

GAP Key Partners working in five Priority Action Areas have surpassed eight out of 10 of the targets they set at the beginning of the GAP—a sign of growing global awareness that ESD is integral to the concept of education quality and necessary to accelerate progress towards a sustainable future.

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