



# Cross-Sectoral Cooperation

for Sustainable Futures

Written by Dr. Jana Arbeiter and Dr. Maja Bučar



## BRIDGE 47

The Bridge 47 Network brings people of various backgrounds together to learn from each other and collaborate for advancing transformative learning and SDG Target 4.7. Bridge 47 – Building Global Citizenship Education is a project co-created by 14 European and global partner organisations, co-funded by the European Union. The project mobilises civil society to take action for global justice through Global Citizenship Education.

This publication is part of a series of publications commissioned to support advocacy for more space for Target 4.7 and Agenda 2030 in European and global policies. The publications are created to encourage discussion and represent the author's view on the topic.

### **Cross-Sectoral Cooperation for Sustainable Futures**

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**Writers: Dr. Jana Arbeiter and Dr. Maja Bučar**



This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the 14 project partners and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

# Contents

<b>Summary</b> .....	4
<b>Introduction</b> .....	5
<b>Why is cross-sectoral cooperation important?</b> .....	7
<b>Building and strengthening multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions</b> .....	9
<b>1 Foundation for building cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions</b> .....	10
A. Identification of goals and objectives .....	10
B. Identification of key stakeholders .....	11
<b>2 Relationships within multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions</b> .....	14
<b>3 Structures and operating procedures</b> .....	16
<b>4 Coordination</b> .....	17
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	19
<b>Footnotes</b> .....	20
<b>References</b> .....	21

# Summary

Cross-sectoral cooperation is important to strengthen the coherence and collaboration, as well as mobilization of resources needed for addressing systemic challenges, implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and enabling transformative change. Building or strengthening cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions within SDG Target 4.7, can support equipping everyone with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to contribute to a more sustainable and just future.

Multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions in support of SDG Target 4.7 on a local, regional and global level are essential mechanisms for promoting and implementing sustainable development. They can enable coherence and collaboration, as well as pooling of expertise and resources needed for co-creation of the relevant policy proposals linked to the implementation of SDG Target 4.7. Building and strengthening multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions require a clear basis for establishing well-defined relationships within the multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions, well-designed structures and operating procedures and strong coordination. But most importantly, they have the potential to combine key stakeholders from relevant sectors of society, which can advocate for the implementation of SDG Target 4.7 and the (co)-creation of appropriate policies that address global justice, sustainability, and key global challenges. This publication identifies the following recommendations for establishing multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions in support of SDG Target 4.7:

- **Multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions in support of SDG Target 4.7 on a local, regional and global level should be established, and resources should be made available for this.**
- **Stakeholders wishing to establish multi-stakeholder groups in the context of SDG Target 4.7 should clearly define their main goals and objectives.**
- **Stakeholders involved in multi-stakeholder groups in the context of SDG Target 4.7 need to be strategically identified and cover all major societal sectors, including different components of SDG Target 4.7.**
- **Coalitions in support of SDG Target 4.7 should place focus on facilitation, active listening, and peer learning opportunities.**
- **Inclusive and flexible coordination and leadership should be applied, stressing transparency, accountability and joint commitment to the cause.**

# Introduction

**T**he 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework that engages all sectors of society in an integrated manner. SDG 17 specifically proposes multi-stakeholder cooperation across sectors to strengthen the mobilization of all available resources needed to achieve all 17 SDGs (Stibbe et al., 2020). This paper addresses the need for multi-stakeholder cooperation for the successful implementation of SDG Target 4.7. As agreed by a range of stakeholders in the Envision 4.7 Roadmap “multi-level and cross-sectoral partnerships” are needed to “mobilize all available resources” (2019: 2) to address systemic challenges, achieve SDG Target 4.7 and enable transformative change (Stibbe et al., 2020: 10). Partnerships within SDG Target 4.7 can support equipping everyone with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed for a sustainable and equitable future.

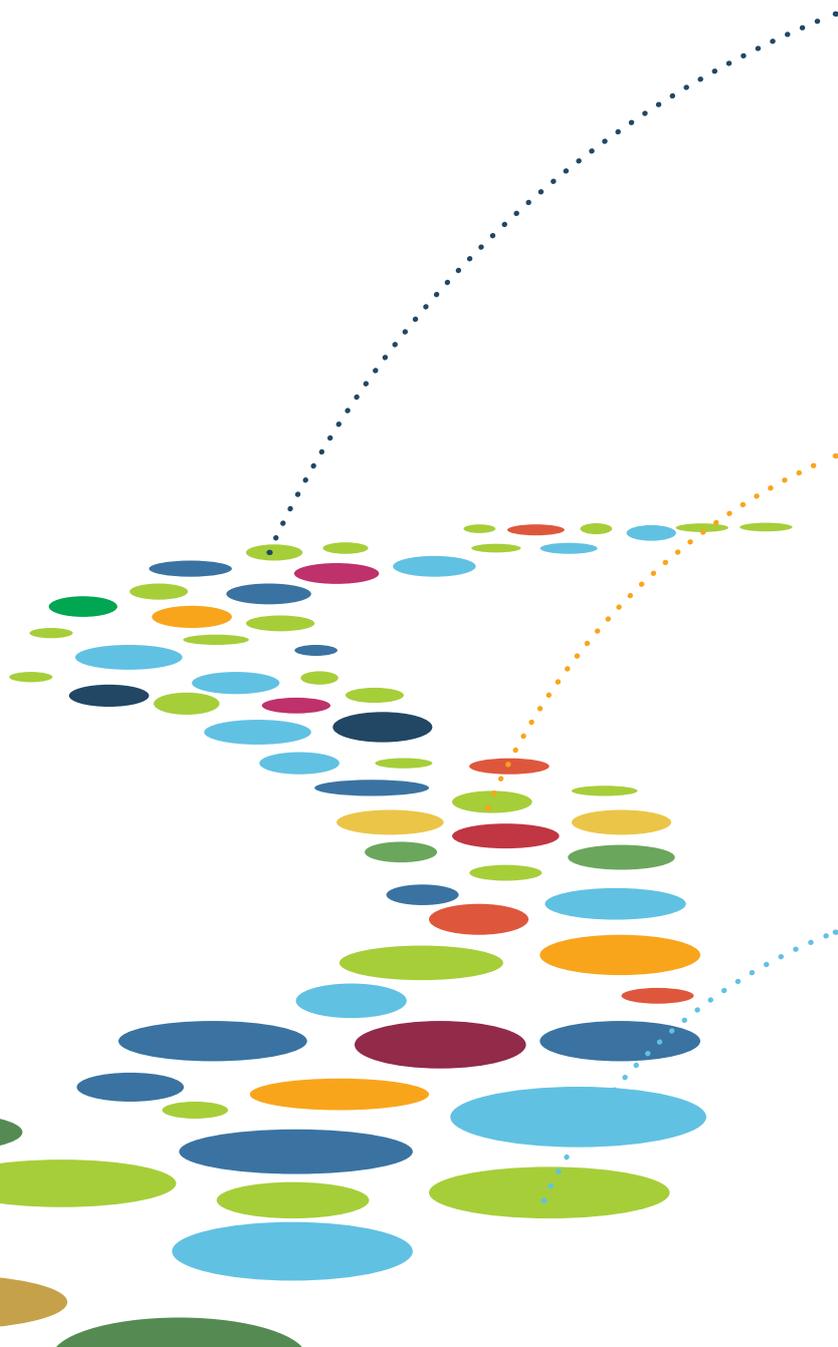
Efforts have been made to ensure that institutions, people, ideas, technologies, knowledge and even resources needed to achieve the SDGs are in place. A key question to address is how to combine these efforts in a way that promotes transformative change (Stibbe et al., 2020: 8). In this paper, we argue that strengthening

spaces for multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions for SDG Target 4.7 within and across national, subnational, regional and international levels has the potential to support transformative change. The scale and ambition of transformative change envisaged in the 2030 Agenda and SDG Target 4.7 requires policies “which respect human rights and address key global challenges of the 21st century, such as climate change, poverty, inequality, resource depletion and quality of life” (Envision Roadmap 4.7, 2019: 1). Appropriate strategies to foster cross-sectoral collaboration among civil society, business, governments, foundations, academia and others are needed to ensure well-being within planetary boundaries and leaving no one behind (Stibbe et al., 2020: 10). Cross-sectoral cooperation of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions can enable the pooling of expertise, knowledge and resources, and is understood to be “an essential mechanism for promoting and implementing sustainable development” (AtKisson, 2015: 5). Cooperation within multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions helps to focus attention on specific topics, goals or issues. Cross-sectoral cooperation also has the potential to multiply stakeholder influence, which can accelerate change (AtKisson, 2015; Stibbe et al., 2020).

Transformative change and fundamental shifts towards more just and sustainable futures require shifts in thoughts, feelings and actions of people. In the context of the 2030 Agenda, this can be achieved with the successful implementation of SDG Target 4.7., which can equip learners with the knowledge, skills and values needed to promote, among others, global justice and sustainable development. Transformative change thus requires not only appropriate knowledge, expertise, skills and financial and non-financial resources, but also the understanding that all of them need to be shared among stakeholders and across sectors. Building the understanding that all sectors of society are interconnected and cooperation between them is important is crucial if the scale and ambition of SDG Target 4.7 are to be achieved. Single-sector, short-term and top-down approaches, where knowledge, skills, expertise and even resources are not shared and multiplied, cannot deliver long-term effects (Stibbe et al., 2020: 11).

As identified by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (2014: para. 65) “a truly universal transformation of sustainable development” can be achieved if we “expand our [...] full participation, including multi-stakeholder, issue-based coalitions.” Improved cooperation and coordination, which ensures the broadest possible representation of relevant stakeholders, can help “co-create relevant policy proposals linked to the implementation of SDG Target 4.7” (Envision Roadmap 4.7, 2019: 2). Engaged multi-stakeholder cross-sectoral cooperation is therefore needed, if we wish for the blueprint for sustainable development to work.

The following paper aims to explore existing strategies in strengthening spaces for multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions in the context of SDG Target 4.7, to offer arguments for establishing and strengthening such coalitions at different levels. The first part of the paper presents the characteristics of cross-sectoral cooperation of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions and their potential to generate inclusiveness and diversity. The second part discusses key elements required for the formation of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions and the third part presents arguments and recommendations for strengthening such groups or coalitions in the framework of SDG Target 4.7.



# Why is cross-sectoral cooperation important

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/2014 defines multi-stakeholder groups as

*“voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both state and non-state, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits.”<sup>1</sup>*

These are groups or coalitions of various stakeholders where mutually beneficial public good issues and challenges are the common ground for their cooperation (Steets, 2010). They form an ongoing relationship and through cooperation, align their interests around a shared vision, combine their complementary resources and competencies, and share risks to maximize value creation towards commonly agreed goals (Stibbe et al., 2020).

The Envision 4.7 Roadmap, calls for the creation or strengthening of “coalitions reflecting the strengths and expertise of different components of transformative education and identify common interests, messages and actions that connect different actors in new ways to deliver the outcomes of SDG 4.7.” Multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions in the context of SDG Target 4.7 could be understood as groups of diverse stakeholders cooperating to create structural and institutional capabilities that enable all learners to acquire the transformative knowledge and skills needed to “maximize value creation towards the Sustainable Development Goals” (Stibbe et al., 2020: 6).

## **Key characteristics of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions:**

- various stakeholders;
- shared mutually beneficial public good issue or challenge as the basis for their cooperation;
- ongoing relationship;
- aligned interests of stakeholder around a shared vision;
- combined resources, knowledge, competences;
- sharing of risks, responsibilities, benefits and resources.

The cooperation of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions can be limited only to one sector,<sup>2</sup> but in the context of this paper, we are interested in cross-sectoral cooperation. This means that they are composed of stakeholders from different sectors,<sup>3</sup> seeking relevant inclusivity in terms of membership, which is necessary for solving complex problems (Severino, 2010; Bäckstrand, 2006).

The main aim of the cross-sectoral cooperation of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions is to pool resources (financial and human), skills, knowledge, connections and capabilities (Steijn, Klijn and Edelenbos, 2011; Provan and Kenis, 2008; Austin and Seitani, 2012; Pattberg and Widerberg, 2015). This way they can more effectively address public policy issues and find solutions, which are difficult to address by state actors alone (due to for example lack of resources, knowledge or willingness) (Kolk, 2008; Steijn, Klijn and Edelenbos, 2011). The multi-stakeholder approach is in contrast to the top-down

approach, where government-led interventions do not involve different sectors in the process (Kelly, 2012) and may sometimes be ineffective in addressing complex issues, such as sustainable development.

**Cross-sectoral cooperation of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions can help:**

- in addressing specific societal problems that state actors are unable to address;
- in accessing new knowledge, innovations, private and public networks, opportunities and resources.

A similar point is highlighted in Envision 4.7 Roadmap (2019: 2), where one of the general recommendations is to establish cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder groups linked to SDG Target 4.7 and strengthen existing multi-stakeholder groups “by ensuring wider representation including European Union Member States, the private sector, business, civil society and the EU Directorates-General.” The roadmap goes on to call for improved cooperation and coordination at cross-European, regional and local levels across different policy areas.

Today, when a sustainable development issue is sufficiently complex, coalitions of multi-stakeholders are often formed to address it (AtKisson 2015), because they have great opportunity to strengthen activities around the 2030 Agenda by sharing experiences and benefits in achieving the goals (Gray and Stites, 2013; Keyton, Ford and Smith, 2008).

Multi-stakeholder groups and coalitions across sectors are, however, difficult to form. First, it is difficult to sustain long-term multi-stakeholder coalitions. As a variety of actors work together internal competing priorities between stakeholders could arise (Keyton et. al. 2008; Hutchinson, 1998). To address differences in opinions and competing priorities, accountability, transparency, and good leadership among partners are required (Turner, Merchant, Kania and Martin, 2012). Second, depending on the level of the multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions - national, regional or international - issues may arise regarding their success. On the one hand, local coalitions

may lack the ability to collaborate with other local stakeholders. On the other, at the national, regional or international level, there is a risk that more resourceful stakeholders may lead coalition-building processes, leading to less inclusive processes as some groups become more dominant than others (Worley and Mirvis, 2013; Donders, Van den Bulck and Raats, 2019). There is a possibility that stakeholders with more financial resources, better knowledge, skills and expertise, or even influence, can dictate the cooperation between stakeholders. Often big and powerful stakeholders, such as state actors (e.g. ministries etc.) wish to lead the process of coalition building and direct the common vision of the multi-stakeholder group (Donders et al, 2019). Third, the effectiveness and longevity of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions depend on how individual actors can balance between the goals of the group/coalition and their own goals as institutions (Kveton, Louda, Slavik and Pelucha, 2014; Clarke, 2014).

Informal and flexible working practices may prove effective and appropriate in the early stages of multi-stakeholder dialogue. The likelihood of longevity of multi-stakeholder coalitions or groups is related to their joint fundamental purpose, partnership relationships, structure and set-up, and formal governance structures and clearly defined working procedures (Colbey, 2009; Stibbe et al., 2020). Given that a variety of actors from different sectors can bring together key resources that can create the necessary levers for system transformation (Stibbe et al., 2020), transparency and accountability must be ensured, operational and management structures, allocation of human and financial resources, and scope and activities need to be clearly defined (Alsaeedi et al, 2019; Stibbe et al., 2020; UNDESA, 2020; De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber et al., 2021).

Based on the literature review, we present four key elements that need to be developed and maintained in forming multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions and ensuring effective delivery of outcomes in the context of Target 4.7:

- **Foundations for multi-stakeholder coalition building**
- **Relationships within multi-stakeholder coalitions**
- **Structures and operating procedures**
- **Coordination**



# 1

## Foundation for Building cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions

In the following section, this publication discusses two key elements for building new or strengthening already existing multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions: a) identification of goals and objectives; and b) identification of key stakeholders.

The success of multi-stakeholder groups depends largely on a sense of joint purpose and clear identification of common goals and objectives. The defined goals and objectives may also influence which stakeholders should be a part of the multi-stakeholder group or coalition in question. A careful mapping of key stakeholders from relevant sectors is an important element of building cross-sectoral coalitions

### A. Identification of goals and objectives

While motivations for building multi-stakeholder coalitions may vary, the common purpose and goals must be clearly defined at the outset. Common ground needs to be found on how the cross-sectoral coalition can benefit sustainable development (Coulby, 2009: 19; Moyes and Nash, 2011; De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber et al., 2021: 4). If there is no clear direction as to what the purpose of multi-stakeholder collaboration is, those involved will struggle to make the case for the benefits of joining a multi-stakeholder group or coalition to other stakeholders they wish to involve. This

process requires identifying a clear set of problems to be addressed and presenting a strong motivation for creating a coalition as the best response to the proposed problems (Wolff and Erenberg, 2018).

In the literature analysed, authors note that a clear identification and definition of the main objectives that the multi-stakeholder group pursues is an important step for consensus building and the inclusion of academic, societal and private sector perspectives in the policy and decision-making process (Coulby, 2009; Polimédio et al, 2016; Wolff and Erenberg, 2018; Alsaeedi et al, 2019). Mission, expectations, and standards should be clear, to enable the success and longevity of any established coalition (Alsaeedi et al, 2019).

#### CASE STUDY

##### The German Council for sustainable Development

The German Council for Sustainable Development is tasked with generating contributions to the German Sustainable Development Strategy, specifying concrete areas of action and projects, and making sustainability a public issue of vital importance. It includes individuals from civil society, the business sector, the scientific community and the political arena. It has a well-defined work programme, where expectations, standards and rules of procedures are well defined (German Council for Sustainable Development, n.d.).

Multi-stakeholder groups and coalitions should also create spaces for dialogue where they can manage the expectations for cross-sectoral cooperation. The EU Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) Programme for example organizes meetings, where exchange on joint understandings of opportunities and challenges of the multi-stakeholder group are discussed. The group is also consulted on topics that future meetings should address and on which key stakeholders may be missing from the meeting (EU DEAR, 2020: 6).

Based on the above analysis, we provide some possible objectives for multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions, working in the context of SDG Target 4.7. The Envision 4.7 Roadmap identifies key issues that need to be addressed by cross-sectoral coalitions in the context of SDG Target 4.7, which provides a good basis for advocating for groups that address these topics.

*Rationale for SDG Target 4.7 multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions*

### Examples of possible objectives for multi-stakeholder groups on SDG target 4.7:

- Promote and work towards achieving SDG Target 4.7 and transformative education for sustainable development as a life-long process that can be implemented through formal, non-formal and informal education.
- Identify common interests, messages and actions that could be used to connect different actors in new ways to implement SDG Target 4.7.
- Develop national or regional overarching strategies for SDG Target 4.7.
- Initiate and create relevant policy proposals linked to the implementation of SDG Target 4.7, including ensuring sufficient financial and non-financial resources.
- Identify and develop local approaches to indicators and monitoring progress on SDG Target 4.7, and monitoring progress towards the target.
- Identify and develop competency frameworks that support the development of transformative competencies that are necessary to support sustainability.

## B. Identification of key stakeholders

It is important to map and identify all relevant stakeholders which need to be included in multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions. To avoid silo thinking, multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions can seek participation from, among others, local communities, educational and academic institutions, faith groups, foundations and private philanthropic organizations, parliamentary networks and associations, volunteer groups, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, business and industry, and the scientific and technological community (UNDESA, 2020; Forestier and Kim, 2020). When a wide range of stakeholders from different sectors is involved in a multi-stakeholder group or coalition, they may have differing views on priorities, values and even attributes, which, unmanaged, have the potential to result in inefficiency, or at worst, disintegration. That is why, when building or strengthening cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions, it is important to understand what the different stakeholders bring to the table, and what are the key considerations (Stibbe et al., 2020).<sup>4</sup>

The following questions can help in identifying key stakeholders to involve (Stibbe et al., 2020):

- **Whose interests are affected by the issue?**
- **Whose activities affect the issue?**
- **Who possesses the resources needed for achieving the set objectives and goals of the coalition?**
- **Who controls implementation processes?**

A risk assessment on stakeholders that might be neglected or ignored should also be made. Principles such as inclusivity, diversity and ‘leave no one behind’ should be followed in identifying stakeholders (Kindornay and Gendron, 2020). Focus should be put on creating participatory spaces for stakeholders from marginalized, but important sectors (Alsaeedi et al, 2019). In the case of SDG Target 4.7 that would mean not only stakeholders from educational, development, environmental and human rights sectors, but also culture, sustainable development, peace, gender equality and social inclusion

stakeholders should be given a seat at the table. Multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions should encourage space for active participation of all of their members, regardless of their importance or their size.

Stakeholder mapping, based on the above principles, may be a useful tool to understand who should be included in decision-making processes. It is important to take into account the views and positions of potentially participating stakeholders towards the key objectives of the multi-stakeholder group or coalition (Coulby,

2009; UNDESA, 2020). Even if we disagree with some of the positions that potential stakeholders hold, diversity can increase social acceptance of transformation and social change (Alsaeedi et al, 2019; UNDESA, 2020; De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber et al., 2021) and provide different overlooked perspectives.<sup>5</sup>

Several strategies could be enforced to ensure cross-sectoral representation of diverse stakeholders when building multi-stakeholder coalitions (Freeman et al, 2016; Wolff and Erenberg, 2018; Alsaeedi et al, 2019, Stibbe et al., 2020).

## Identification of key stakeholders

### Stakeholder mapping

#### Initial sweep

- Organizations and individuals from different sectors are identified and mapped (how they are affected by the issue, how they can influence it with their activities, what resources they can provide and what benefits they can have for the implementation process).

#### Mapping influence against interests

- Stakeholders who have high influence but low interest in the objectives may need awareness-raising. Stakeholders with high interest in the coalition's goals and low influence may require capacity development.

#### Role and level of engagement:

- Potential roles for identified stakeholders in the multi-stakeholder coalition, such as partner, contractor, influencer, champion, disseminator, funder, informer or critic are mapped.

### Power mapping

Tool where local, national, regional or international decision-making institutions are named and identified. For example, specific ministries or departments are identified, including the names of individuals within these institutions (Coulby, 2009: 22). This helps in identifying power relations and who has the most influence in the policy- and decision-making process on a particular issue.

### Political economy analysis

Provides an assessment of the political dimensions of a given context, including the identification of key actors.

### System mapping

Enables a clear map of the interconnectedness of different stakeholders, their power and influence, and political aspects in relation to defined objectives.

## Rationale for SDG Target 4.7 multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions

Stakeholder mapping, power mapping, political economy analysis and system mapping can be used to identify relevant stakeholders from key societal sectors that could help achieve the set objectives.

In identifying key stakeholders, a whole-of-society approach should be used,<sup>6</sup> building on the different components of SDG Target 4.7 and transformative education (e.g. sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, peace and non-violence, global citizenship, appreciation of cultural

diversity and culture's contribution to sustainable development). All sectors of society should be mapped, ranging from state actors to educators and civil society, and actors working on all the different components of SDG Target 4.7.

To appeal to the widest possible range of actors, it should be made clear why SDG Target 4.7 concerns actors from different sectors of society and how their interests are affected. In addition, the implementation process of policy changes needs to be identified to identify relevant actors who have the power to accelerate change.

A mapping focusing on relevant stakeholders for SDG Target 4.7 would include identification and naming of:

- At a local and national level, representatives of local and national governments (ministries, departments, municipalities, individuals) involved in SDG Target 4.7, sustainable development, education, environment, among others.
- At the European and global level, different institutions, directorates, departments, officials within the European Union, Council of Europe and United Nations and UNESCO.
- Relevant members of the national parliament(s).
- Civil society organisations engaged in the different components of SDG Target 4.7., including civil society platforms, youth organisations, education organisations, environmental organisations, among others.
- Relevant education actors, such as students, learners, teachers and educators, ensuring attention is paid to lifelong learning that takes place in formal, non-formal and informal settings.
- Relevant representatives of, academia, media and private sector.

# 2

## Relationships within multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions

If the involved stakeholders are diverse, there is a risk of fragmentation, silo thinking, unequal power relations or trust deficits between them (Keyton et al, 2008; Worley and Marvis, 2013; Bäckstrand, 2006; Otto et al, 2019). Therefore, trust and transparency, balance of power and equality, mutual benefit, accountability and commitment are necessary for maintaining strong relationships within a multi-stakeholder group or coalition (Stibbe et al., 2020; De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber et al., 2021).

**Trust and transparency** are important elements within multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions, where each stakeholder needs to behave consistently, meet their commitments and deadlines, communicate openly and share possible doubts and challenges. Key to building trust and transparency are providing opportunities for members to meet and build informal relationships, and develop their full capacity through peer learning opportunities, active listening, facilitation and promotion of collective interests (Alsaeedi et al., 2019). In addition, encouraging and recognizing the contributions of different stakeholders is important for their motivation and should be promoted through a whole-of-society approach and open dialogue (UNDESA, 2020).

### Rationale for SDG Target 4.7 multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions

Collective interests should take priority, and excessive focus on differences should be avoided. Multi-stakeholder groups should focus on peer learning opportunities, active listening and facilitation in order to find and advocate for synergies between the different components of SDG Target 4.7 and to promote a shared vision. For example, as there are a number of components within SDG Target 4.7, a strong focus on only one of them, such as Global Citizenship Education or Education for Sustainable Development should be avoided.

**Balance of power and equity** is important to ensure the effective functioning of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions. It is important to try to anticipate potential perceived asymmetric power relations among stakeholders (e.g. sub-national, national, regional, international organizations) on various issues (e.g. budget, activities, purpose, advocacy, strategies, etc.) (Coulby, 2009). Equity and balance of power can be ensured by identifying potential sources of power imbalance, such as critical resources (money, technical knowledge/skills, information, legal instruments, and political influence), structural and positional power, cultural and human influence, and the possibility that the partner has alternative coalitions that are more relevant to its mission (Stibbe et al., 2020). Power imbalances can be managed by: a) addressing and demonstrating

clearly what the unique and valuable resources of all partners are; b) acknowledging sources of power and power dynamics; c) identifying and addressing when specific power dynamics become problematic and design appropriate interventions; d) ensuring that information is distributed equally and that everyone is heard (Coulby, 2009; Stibbe et al., 2020: 90).

Conveners also emphasize the development of softer skills to build collaborative structures, such as facilitation, active listening, how to set aside ego, and promoting the collective interest (Alsaeed et al, 2019). The focus is on providing opportunities for members to meet informally and build relationships, and through a range of capacity development and peer learning opportunities, build these softer competencies to prevent and respond to potential conflict (Alsaeed et al., 2019).

### **Rationale for SDG Target 4.7 multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions**

Building softer skills, active listening, setting aside ego, promoting the collective interests, knowledge exchange etc., are particularly pertinent to the transformative education community, as a significant number of stakeholders involved, are likely to implement these actively in their own work and are likely to expect the same for the networks they are involved in.

**Mutual benefit** should be one of the goals of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions so that partners remain committed to staying engaged. Mutual benefits have the highest potential of being guaranteed if everyone is aware of the resources they are contributing to the joint work and the benefits they are generating from it (Stibbe et al., 2020). While common benefits (collective impact, achieved goals) that all stakeholders have agreed upon are crucial for multi-stakeholder cooperation, mutual benefits may also play a role. Mutual benefit does not necessarily mean that benefits are equally shared among stakeholders, but that cooperation can lead to a ‘win-win’ situation, where each stakeholder clearly sees the benefits they are deriving from the partnership (Stibbe et al., 2020: 52).

### **Rationale for SDG Target 4.7 multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions**

Not investing in education and lifelong learning opportunities will hinder the implementation of the SDGs, therefore SDG Target 4.7 in itself provides mutual benefits to all stakeholders. However, some of the benefits could also be:  
increased potential for political recognition of the work as support of a wider group of stakeholders;  
learning and exchange opportunities between actors working on similar topics;  
greater coherence and avoiding duplication of work, potentially leading to better impact of the overall work.

**Accountability and commitment** are also important, with investment in leadership and facilitation skills required to ensure effective mediation of diverse interests (BBCIC, 2021). Formal and informal feedback mechanisms could be provided to promote transparency, accountability and engagement. The literature review suggests the creation of what is known as a ‘partnership charter’, which clearly defines principles, values and expected behaviours to which stakeholders should commit, can be beneficial for the work (Coulby, 2009; Alseedi et al, 2019; Stibbe et al., 2020, UNDESA, 2020; De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber et al., 2021). Internal processes of multi-stakeholder groups can therefore include definitions of their mandates and different ways and methods of building consensus (De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber et al., 2021). Communication channels and conflict management strategies to promote collaboration and dialogue among members can also be identified and prepared (Fox, 2010).

### **Rationale for SDG Target 4.7 multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions**

Holistic, system-thinking strategies to respond to the complex and interdependent nature of SDG Target 4.7 should be adopted. The 2030 Agenda should serve as the basis for building stakeholder relationships, with a focus on a participatory and inclusive approach where everyone is aware of their resources, knowledge, skills, interests and influence.

# 3

## Structures and operating procedures

**Structures and operating procedures** should be appropriate for the multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions. To effectively achieve their goals, governance, coordination and operational structures, multi-stakeholder documentation, funding and resources should be well organized (Stibbe et al., 2020).

In addition, **governance structures** can be put in place to ensure transparency, accountability and compliance with cross-sectoral cooperation within the multi-stakeholder group or coalition and help achieve the goals and targets set (Stibbe et al., 2020). Governance structures can be very simple and decision-making can take place at the lowest possible authority (e.g. board, management board, advisory board) where those with the strongest knowledge have the appropriate weight, regardless of their power or resources (Alsaeedi et al., 2019; Stibbe et al., 2020; De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber et al., 2021).

**Multi-stakeholder documentation** such as partnership agreements, values and principles, and work plans can be useful in providing a clear understanding of the goals, objectives, values and principles of the multi-stakeholder group or coalition. This type of documentation provides an important source of information that can give stakeholders a clear idea of what the multi-stakeholder group is trying to achieve and the role of each participating organization (Stibbe et al., 2020; Coulby, 2009).

As noted by several authors, multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions for the SDGs will need resources to be able to implement their objectives (Coulby, 2009; Fox, 2010; Stibbe et al., 2020; De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber et al., 2021). Multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions should diversify funding to avoid (external) influences from a single donor and improve sustainability. The size of each stakeholder should be taken into account and potential memberships should not be seen as an obstacle to implementing the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’ (ibid.).

### Rationale for SDG Target 4.7 multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions

As suggested in the Envision 4.7 Roadmap, resources should be made available in each European country for the establishment of cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder groups linked to SDG Target 4.7.



# 4



## Coordination

Coordination of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions is one of the key elements of the process of bringing together a variety of stakeholders with potentially different interests, values, views and individual representatives. Coordination and leadership should focus on achieving results, for example through preparing work plans and dividing responsibilities. In addition, where appropriate, processes and culture should be established to enable accountability, transparency and risk assessment. In smaller multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions, one partner may take responsibility for leadership, while in larger multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions a secretariat may be established. In both cases, the role of the secretariat or coordinating partner is to oversee coordination in such a way that the multi-stakeholder group or coalition is results oriented (Coulby, 2009 ; Stibbe et al., 2020)

Stronger **leadership and coordination** is needed across various levels of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions with a leadership style that is responsive to the group's objectives (Alsaeedi et al, 2019). A **risk assessment** can be included to reduce the possibility of risks to individual partners, to collaboration, or to the outcomes that the multi-stakeholder group seek to achieve. A collective regular **monitoring and review process** is recommended to assess the efficiency, effectiveness and added value of the multi-stakeholder groups' work and outcomes (ibid.). This stage is important in any multi-stakeholder group

to align the group with its goals and make necessary changes to keep the cooperation on track. The review process can be used to strengthen the coordination of the multi-stakeholder group as needed and identify additional stakeholders who could add value to the shared goals and values (Stibbe et al., 2020). Finally, if a multi-stakeholder group wishes to have a transformative impact and effective leadership and coordination, it is of great importance that strong **communication** is established within the multi-stakeholder group and externally, emphasizing the promotion of **learning and knowledge sharing** ( Alsaeedi et al, 2019; Stibbe et al., 2020; De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber et al., 2021). In this sense, institutional learning, including between similar multi-stakeholder groups at sub-national, regional and global levels, is important to share information, capacity development and innovative approaches to problem solving (De Sas Kropiwnicki-Gruber et al., 2021).



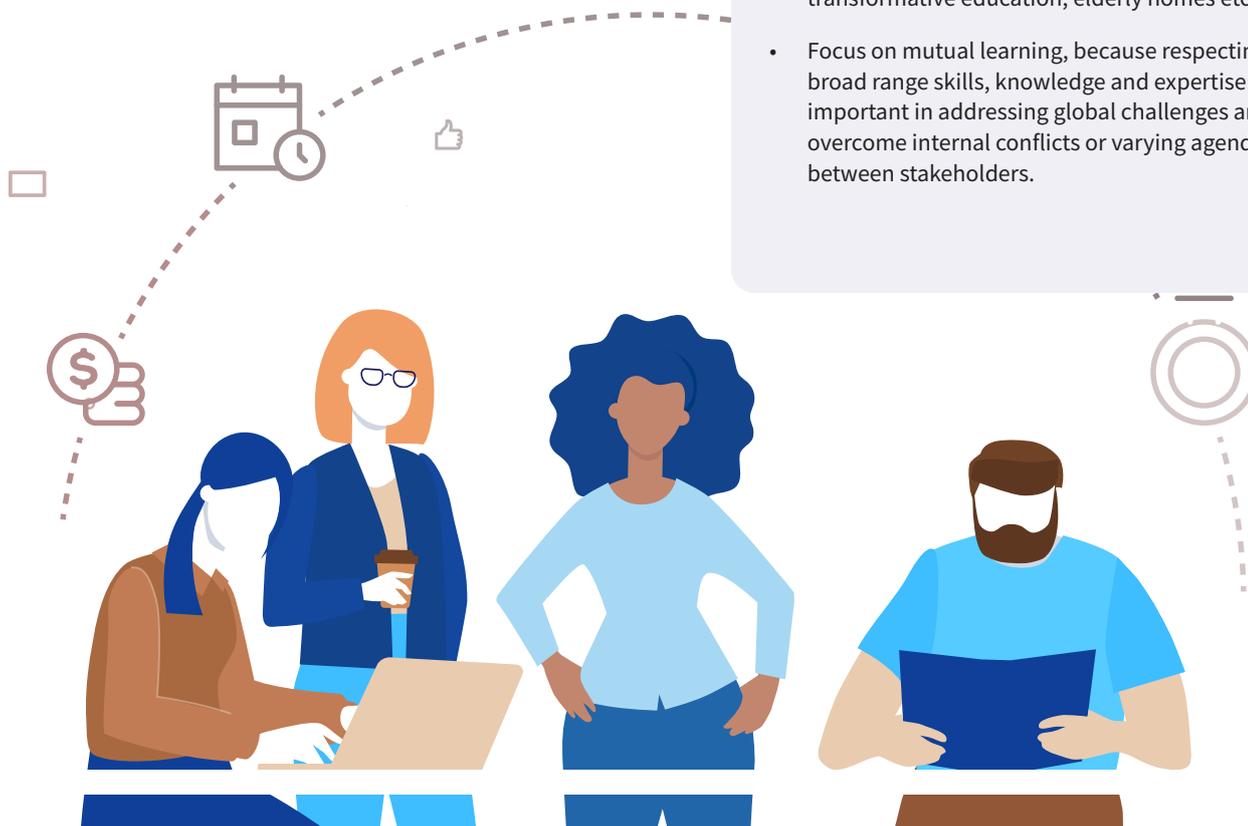
For effective coordination of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions working on SDG Target 4.7, we propose that stakeholders:

- Regularly review everyone's assumptions about key terms within the group (e.g. transformative education, sustainable development, social inclusion, global citizenship, etc)
- Clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of members, working groups, committees, etc (e.g. development of local SDG Target 4.7 indicators and monitoring processes, capacity building, resource acquisition)
- Promote institutional learning, where there is a lack of it (eg. ministries not directly dealing with transformative education, civil society organisations etc)

## Rationale for SDG Target 4.7 multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions

For effective management of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions working on SDG Target 4.7 we propose that stakeholders:

- Constantly review everyone's assumptions about key terms within the group or coalition and outside (e.g. transformative education, sustainable development, social inclusion, gender equality, peace and non-violence, cultural diversity etc.);
- Clear identification of roles and responsibilities of members, working groups, committees, etc. should be adopted (e.g. transformative education, lifelong learning, cross-sectoral cooperation, local development of SDG Target 4.7 indicators and monitoring process, capacity building and resource acquisition for SDG Target 4.7).
- Translate key materials into multiple languages as appropriate (e.g., definition of transformative education, 'educations for', etc.).
- Promote institutional learning, where there is a lack of it (e.g. ministries not directly dealing with transformative education, elderly homes etc.)..
- Focus on mutual learning, because respecting broad range skills, knowledge and expertise is important in addressing global challenges and help overcome internal conflicts or varying agendas between stakeholders.



# Conclusion

In summary, cross-sectoral cooperation of multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions is an important element for the successful implementation of the SDGs, including SDG Target 4.7. Multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions established to advocate for the implementation of SDG Target 4.7 and the creation of appropriate policies that address key global challenges should include the engagement of key stakeholders from different relevant sectors of society. This will make it possible to build structural and institutional capacity to enable all learners

to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development.

Building and strengthening multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions requires a clear basis for establishing multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions, well-defined relationships within multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions, well-designed structures and operating procedures and strong coordination.

**Based on the desk research conducted, the following recommendations are proposed:**

**Multi-stakeholder groups or coalitions in support of SDG Target 4.7 on local, regional and global levels should be established, and resources should be made available for this.**

Coalitions are essential mechanisms for promoting and implementing sustainable development. They enable coordination and collaboration, as well as the pooling of resources needed for co-creation of the relevant policy proposals linked to the implementation of SDG Target 4.7.

**Stakeholders wishing to establish multi-stakeholder groups in the context of SDG Target 4.7 should clearly define their main goals and objectives**

A well-defined collective purpose and goals can ensure the longevity of the multi-stakeholder group, which can benefit sustainable development and the implementation of SDG Target 4.7. Common principles and values should be clearly defined, and the collective benefits of the work should be clear for all.

**Stakeholders involved in multi-stakeholder groups in the context of SDG Target 4.7 need to be strategically identified, and cover all major societal sectors, including different components of SDG Target 4.7.**

A whole of society approach should be applied to critically identify potential stakeholders, representing all components of SDG Target 4.7, including education for sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, peace and non-violence, global citizenship and cultural diversity, all sectors of society, and lifelong learning that takes place in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

**Coalitions in support of SDG Target 4.7 should place focus on facilitation, active listening, and peer learning opportunities.**

This creates space for informal relationships to form, for capacity development and for ownership of the group's objectives to grow. The strengths and expertise involved should be acknowledged and shared.

**Inclusive and flexible coordination and leadership should be applied, stressing transparency, accountability and joint commitment to the cause.**

This involves clear objective-setting and work planning, as well as strong internal and external communication strategies.

# Footnotes

- 1 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/214 2005. Available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/60/214> (accessed on 20 May 2021).
- 2 Such an example would be multi-stakeholder group or coalition focusing only on the work in educational sector, composed of ministry for education, student groups, NGOs, even material developers and literacy facilitator.
- 3 Austria for example. Austrian Strategy Group for Global Education has been established in 2003, consisting of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Austrian Development Agency, Global Education Resource Centre, and Cooperative Secondary School from Vienna, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Federal Pedagogical Institute, FORUM Environmental Education, Institute for School-practical Training etc. (Tarozzi, 2022).
- 4 For more consideration when working main types of stakeholders, their role, resources and organizations, see Stibbe et al. (2020: 25–32).
- 5 Such an example is Estonian Coalition for Sustainable Development, which is composed of stakeholders from private, public and civil society sector. In 2019 they have launched a campaign to make SDGs more accessible to individuals, which encouraged other stakeholder express their interest to join and educate their own staff further (Terveilm, n.d.).
- 6 Whole-of-society approach »allows for more long-term strategic cooperation, involving not only governments, but also the private sector, local authorities, CSOs, academia, foundations and international organizations« (Fischer, 2019).

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# BRIDGE 47

Bridge 47– Building Global Citizenship

The lead partner for Bridge 47 is Fingo ry (Elimäenkatu 25–27,  
00510 Helsinki, Finland).

[contact@bridge47.org](mailto:contact@bridge47.org)  
[www.bridge47.org](http://www.bridge47.org)



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