Universal access to education – Summary note

Context

City / Country : Belgium
Structure : UNESCO
Area of activity : Education, educational mobility

Identified needs

The decision to adapt UNESCO resources into easy-to-read language stems from the need to address the challenges faced by individuals with low literacy levels, non-native speakers, or those with cognitive or developmental difficulties. These groups may struggle to access and understand critical information in complex formats, creating barriers to informed decision-making and participation in public discourse.

By simplifying the documents, we aim to ensure that:

- Information on global challenges is accessible to everyone.
- People can better understand the impacts of international crises and the initiatives addressing them.
- Organizations promote inclusivity and facilitate learning in a diverse audience.

For UNESCO and partnering organizations, adapting these documents into plain language:

- Broadens the reach and inclusivity of their educational campaigns.
- Strengthens their commitment to equality in access to information.

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- Builds awareness among a wider demographic, which supports advocacy and funding efforts.

Objectives

The primary objective of these adapted document is to inform and engage the public about:

- Global educational crises and UNESCO’s efforts to mitigate them, such as the "Global Coalition for Education" initiative, with the special focus on girls and young women, and how lacking access to education can impact their futures.
- The socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education.
- The urgency of investing in solutions to improve education and reduce inequalities.

These documents aim to inspire action by raising awareness, encouraging policy changes, and mobilizing community support.

UNESCO estimates that 24 million children and young people may drop out of school due to the economic effects of the pandemic. Girls and women are disproportionately impacted, with 131.7 million girls already out of school before the pandemic and 11 million girls risking never returning to school.

The document highlights the fact that lack of education affects economic and social development, leading to lower earnings and higher risks of early pregnancy. It warns against allowing COVID-19 to jeopardize girls' education and emphasizes the urgent need to ensure that all girls return to school.

Target group

- **Documents**: Target groups include individuals with limited literacy, non-native speakers, and educators seeking accessible learning materials.
- **Organization**: UNESCO and its partners primarily address policymakers, educators, students, and marginalized communities worldwide.

Existing

The UNESCO Digital Library serves as the repository of UNESCO's institutional memory, offering a rich source of high-quality information about the organization's activities across education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication. With a collection exceeding 350,000 documents dating back to 1945, it encompasses materials from the UNESCO Library, various documentation centers in Field Offices and Institutes, and the UNESCO Archives. Its primary mission is to share knowledge and ensure its preservation for future generations. All the materials are shared on an open source licence, ensuring that they are available for all interested parties.

UNESCO already provides:

- Reports and statistics on global issues, including education and health crises (e.g., the "Educational Crisis" report highlighting the digital divide);
- Documents of its governing bodies and the speeches of the Director-General from 1970 to present;
- Advocacy materials on various topics.

These resources are comprehensive but often dense and technical, which limits their usability for the general public or less specialized audiences.

Proposal

To enhance or replace existing resources, the following improvements are proposed:

- **Further Simplification**: Continue simplifying technical data into visual infographics, charts, and bite-sized content for clarity. When designing the charts, it is important to make them easy-to-read, including only the relevant data, and avoiding dense and complicated designs.
- **User Feedback**: Engage target groups in testing the usability of materials and adapt based on their needs.
- **Integration into Curricula**: Work with educators to include these simplified resources in teaching materials, ensuring they reach the intended beneficiaries directly.

Adaptation process

Returns

Length and conciseness - Is the material appropriately concise while retaining essential content? - Has excessive density or information overload been avoided?	*Yes,* the material is appropriately concise, retaining essential content while avoiding excessive density or information overload. The use of visuals and simplified language helps convey the information effectively.(SABA) The restructured text removes unnecessary complexity, ensuring that only relevant information is included. The concise format improves accessibility, making it easier for readers to absorb critical information quickly. (Studium) The excessive density of the text has been avoided; the difficult words have been replaced by the easier ones, however I think that the text from the beginning could be further simplified. The message from the original is maintained. (LAPP)
Language complexity and clarity - Is the language clear, accessible, and free from unnecessary technical terms, jargon, or overly complex structures (e.g., passive voice, long sentences)?	Yes, the language is clear and accessible, avoiding unnecessary technical terms, jargon, and complex structures. The text is aligned with CEFR levels A1-A2, making it easy for the target audience to understand. (SABA)

- Does the text align with relevant linguistic criteria (e.g., CEFR levels A1, A2, etc.)?	While the document is in French, the structural improvements suggest enhanced clarity and ease of comprehension. (Studium) The technical terms have been replaced by the easier terms. The text for me is on B1 level. I think further simplification could be done, particularly statistics-description-wise. (LAPP)
Purpose and effectiveness - Is the goal of the material (e.g., to inform, instruct, persuade) clearly conveyed and maintained in the adaptation?	Yes, the goal of informing and raising awareness about global educational crises and the need for digital inclusion is clearly conveyed and maintained throughout the adaptation. (SABA) The restructuring ensures that readers can easily grasp the urgency of the issue and the importance of educational recovery efforts. Adaptation enhances engagement by presenting clear calls to action, such as ensuring girls return to school. (Studium) Yes, the goal of the document is clearly conveyed in the adaptation (LAPP).
Audience suitability - Is the material appropriate for the intended audience in terms of	Yes, the material is appropriate for the intended audience, as it simplifies complex information, making it accessible for individuals with low

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reading level, language, and needs?	literacy, non-native speakers, and educators seeking accessible learning resources. (SABA) The simplified language ensures that individuals with limited literacy skills or cognitive challenges can engage with the material. (Studium) Yes (LAPP)
Structure and readability - Is the content well-organised, with logical flow, clear headings, bullet points, and other structural elements that enhance comprehension?	Yes, the content is well-organized with a logical flow, clear headings, and bullet points, which enhance comprehension and make the information more accessible to the target audience. (SABA) Key statistics and figures are clearly separated, making them easy to locate and understand. The structured layout ensures that readers can navigate the document efficiently. (Studium) Yes, the content is well-organised (LAPP)
Visual elements - Are visuals (charts, diagrams, etc.) clear, relevant, and effectively aligned with the text?	The proposal suggests using visual infographics, charts, and bite-sized content to simplify technical data. These visuals are intended to be clear, relevant, and effectively aligned with

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- Have visual adjustments improved clarity and usability?	the text, helping improve clarity and usability for the target audience. (SABA) The adapted format avoids text overload, maintaining clarity while highlighting crucial insights. (Studium) Yes, choosing of a different style of chart/graph made it a lot easier to understand the presented data. Also choosing square forms rather than rounded ones gives the impression that the content is more structured. (LAPP)
Educational and practical value - Does the material maintain its usefulness and accuracy despite any simplifications or modifications?	Yes, the material maintains its usefulness and accuracy despite simplifications. The key data and messages about the global education crisis, digital divide, and UNESCO's initiatives are preserved while presenting them in a more accessible format. The simplifications make the information more understandable without compromising the content's integrity. (SABA) The document serves as a strong awareness tool, helping stakeholders understand the long-term effects of educational disruption. Inclusion of gender-specific statistics and real-world

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	consequences strengthens its advocacy potential. (Studium) Yes, it maintains its usefulness and makes the document easier to understand for a bigger number of potential readers (LAPP)
Accessibility and usability ● Is the format user-friendly, avoiding design issues (e.g., small fonts, poor layout) that could hinder accessibility? ● Is the material easy to understand and implement for the target audience?	Yes, the format is user-friendly, with clear design elements and larger font sizes, ensuring accessibility. The material is simplified and structured for easy understanding and implementation by the target audience. (SABA) The document follows plain-language principles, improving accessibility for a diverse audience. Adaptation ensures that key information is highlighted and easy to find. (Studium) Yes (LAPP)