

The Salzburg Statement on *Collective Action for Education Equity*

Insights from Global Education Equity Initiatives

The Salzburg Statement reflects collective insights from transformative education initiatives around the world, demonstrating how localized efforts can create lasting systemic change.

- **The Áncash Effect (Peru):** A grassroots-driven movement that highlights the power of integrating the voices of a broad range of educational actors (students, teachers, parents, authorities) to drive systemic change.
- **Educando and Oaxaca Community Foundation (Mexico):** A foundation that ensures inclusive dialogue by bringing all stakeholders to the decision-making table.
- **Mexicanos Primero (Mexico):** An NGO that has shown how collective action can be catalyzed through continuous data-based narrative building.
- **SEED Care and Support Foundation & Black Girl's Dream Initiative (Nigeria):** An initiative that leverages local and youth leadership to foster collective ownership to drive transformation in underserved regions.
- **Shikshagraha (India):** A model for how hyperlocal, community-driven school improvements can scale nationally by weaving together government, grassroots organizations, and market actors.
- **Teach for All:** A global network that is developing collective leadership to ensure all children can fulfill their potential.

These initiatives, deeply rooted in local contexts, demonstrate the importance of investing in the collective leadership of diverse stakeholders in systems to drive co-created change.

In December 2024, an international group of 55 educators, policymakers, and researchers met in Salzburg for a session on "*The Future of Teaching*." One of the themes explored in the session focused on collective action and teacher leadership as levers for equitable education reform. This Statement reflects the group's shared aspirations, lessons learned from decades of persistent global challenges, and the mindset shifts necessary for sustainable transformation in education systems worldwide.

The Statement aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). By advancing collective leadership and multi-stakeholder collaboration, we work towards ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all (Target 4.1), increasing teacher support and professional development (Target 4.c), and strengthening education systems through community-driven action (Target 4.5).

Leadership in Collective Action

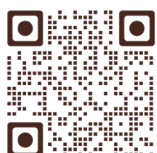
Leadership in collective action is about aligning heart and mind—connecting human purpose with practical solutions. It is not merely about creating policies, but inspiring collaboration, building trust, and redistributing power so communities lead the shaping of their futures. Leadership transcends titles and roles - it is reflected in the everyday actions of individuals like teachers, families and caregivers, and policymakers, whose decisions ripple through society to drive meaningful change.

Transforming education systems requires the collective effort of many different constituents. Teachers, students, parents, policymakers, media, and the private sector all have crucial roles in amplifying and sustaining educational transformation. At the core of this process is the recognition of shared humanity and understanding that sustainable change is built on mutual respect, trust, empathy, and vulnerability.

This is urgent work, but it requires patience and needs spaces for reflection, dialogue, and healing. By sharing stories and listening to diverse perspectives, we foster deeper empathy and collaboration across education systems, leading to more meaningful and sustained change. Leadership in collective action is about rehumanizing systems and creating a future rooted in shared purpose and hope.

Enabling Mindsets of Key Stakeholders

- **Students:** Take an active role in shaping their learning environments and advocate for change by engaging with teachers and decision makers.
- **Teachers:** Recognize themselves as leaders of change and collaborate with students and parents to co-create solutions for challenges.
- **Parents:** Shift from passive recipients to active contributors, advocating for their children's needs and fostering collaboration with teachers.
- **Governments:** Move towards collaborative policymaking by integrating local voices and investing in long-term, community-driven solutions.
- **Nonprofits:** Center community-driven solutions and drive innovation, while also collaborating with government to enable change at scale.
- **Media:** Highlight success stories and grassroots innovations, bridging the gap between communities and policymakers to foster informed dialogue.
- **Teacher's Unions:** Collaborate with governments, schools, and communities to co-design solutions, promote teacher leadership, and advocate for inclusive policies.
- **Founders, Owners, and Boards:** Create adaptive organizational structures that prioritize quality education for all.
- **Communities:** Recognize their collective power to shape education systems and create spaces for local leaders to emerge and lead change.
- **School Associations:** Support schools in co-designing solutions, foster collaboration between stakeholders, and ensure community voices are heard in educational decision making.



Find out more about the Salzburg Global session on *"The Future of Teaching."*

Mindset Shifts for Collective Action

At the heart of this Statement is the belief that achieving education equity demands not just actions but also shifts in mindsets across stakeholders. Mindset shifts are about reimagining roles, responsibilities, and relationships. They help break silos, foster collaboration, and restore agency to those at the grassroots level.

These shifts are critical because education reform is complex and interconnected, requiring stakeholders to move beyond traditional roles. Governments must embrace collaboration, teachers must see themselves as leaders, communities must recognize their collective power, and the media must highlight hope alongside challenges. Working collectively toward shared purpose drives deep, sustainable change.

Common Learnings

- **The Power of Collective Leadership:** Transformation is driven by networks, with teachers, parents, and local leaders co-creating change, not just implementing policies.
- **Local Context Matters:** Solutions must be rooted in local realities. Top-down mandates often fail where community-driven solutions thrive.
- **Trust and Relationships:** Sustainable reforms rely on trust-building, ongoing dialogue, and collaboration across sectors.
- **Grassroots Movements Drive Impact:** Communities can create scalable, systemic change, as seen in Shikshagraha (India) and Efecto Áncash (Peru).
- **Leadership Beyond Titles:** Real change is shown in everyday decisions, courage, and the actions of leaders at all levels - students, teachers, school leaders, parents, community leaders, policymakers - working to change the system.

Call to Action

This Statement calls on all stakeholders to reimagine their roles, embrace mindset shifts, and commit to collective action. By integrating the "heart" and "mind" of education, we can ensure every learner and community thrives. Together, we can transform education systems to reflect equity, humanity, and shared responsibility.

Through its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals —particularly SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 10, and SDG 17—this effort advances a global agenda for sustainable transformation. Through collective action, we can build education systems that embody inclusivity and foster shared responsibility for brighter, more equitable futures.