

Empower the young generation to accelerate the ecological and social transition

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November 2022

Executive summary

There are currently 1.2 billion 15- to 24-year-olds worldwide, representing 16% of the global population. Fully 90% of these young people live in emerging or developing countries, where the consequences of climate change are the most direct, and where the need for ecological and social transition is becoming more and more urgent each day. These regions are also home to the largest pool of innovation, be it technological, economic, political, social or cultural.

Today's global youth, very conscious of the challenges of the ecological, social and sustainable transition, is choosing to take action worldwide. To successfully secure a sustainable future for humanity, younger generations express the same need for guidance, training and recognition.

At the Schneider Electric Foundation, our goal is to support these young people and empower them to get involved and innovate, so that they can take their rightful place in the world of tomorrow being built before our eyes today. We go about fulfilling this objective each and every day, all over the world, through concrete initiatives and programs.

Introduction

Young people today are the main drivers and players in the ecological and social transition. All over the world, they are being called on to rise to the same challenges. But to do so, they need support, training and the freedom to innovate and actively shape society. That is the true purpose of what we do at the Schneider Electric Foundation, under the aegis of Fondation de France.

1. Younger generations and the transition: intertwined destinies

"We have an invaluable asset in the fight for the ecological and social transition: young people. There has never been a generation this vast and receptive."

**Gilles Vermot Desroches, General Delegate, Schneider Electric Foundation,
Senior Vice President, Corporate Citizenship & Institutional Affairs, Schneider Electric**

Young people are one of the largest demographic groups. They are also the first generation to feel the direct impact of climate change and certainly the last generation capable of doing anything about it.

The largest generation of young people in history

The younger generation, comprising people aged between 15 and 24, represents 16% of the world's population, or 1.2 billion people – and 1.8 billion if you include 10- to 24-year-olds. It is the largest generation of young people in history, and it is set to grow to almost 2 billion individuals by 2030.

The majority of young people live in **regions of the world, especially Africa and Asia, where energy needs are the greatest**, and where the issue of sustainable development and the impact of global warming are already largely visible and measurable. Africa, for example, is the youngest continent in the world, with 60% of its population aged under 25 (and 20% aged between 15 and 24).

Today, considerable issues need to be overcome to provide training that meets the needs and challenges of the transition, particularly in technical professions such as electricity and energy. These young people also represent a **phenomenal pool of skills**, at a time when they can sometimes feel "held back" by previous generations. That is why it is essential to support them so that they can take their rightful place and build a life in line with their dreams and aspirations.

Younger generations that share a new relationship with digital technology

The children of the new millennium are above all defined by their relationship with technology, as opposed to their date of birth. Indeed, while digital technology is still just a tool for over-35s, it has become part of daily life for Generation Y, and the very essence of Generation Z, who are now in their twenties.

From one generation to the next, the relationship with digital technology has become more and more a question of "being", and less and less one of "having", to the point of deeply shaping how younger generations learn and behave. The use of digital technology, especially social media, has profoundly **changed their approach to communication, knowledge management, learning** and, more broadly, social ties.

Thanks to the power of digital technology and social media, and their ability to connect people and break down barriers, today's young people, are putting immense pressure on governments and

companies, which are now being held accountable for their social and environmental impact as well as their impact on wider society.

A generation ready to take up the challenges of the transition?

Connected to each other like never before, young people today want to **contribute to the resilience of their communities**, by putting forward innovative solutions, stimulating social progress and inspiring new political movements. They are also agents of change, taking action to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and thereby improve people's lives and the health of the planet.

SDGs: 17 goals for a better world



The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice. The goals are interconnected and, to ensure that no one is left behind, it is crucial that we achieve each of them, and all of their targets, by 2030.

1.1. Young people, committed to the climate and the transition

Young people today are conscious of the world's imbalances and the issue of climate change. Worldwide, they are ready to commit to the social and ecological transition.

"To better the world they stand to inherit," notes the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the younger generation is already very "socially conscious"; they have "unleashed their collective will

and might” to speak out and “demand that companies and governments address such issues from inequality to climate change.”

Without waiting for an invitation or permission, young people are rallying their peers, starting and fueling movements, shifting loyalties to entities that align with their values, “calling out political leaders and defying the status quo to help shape a world they want to live in – one in which all can thrive.”

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 65% of 18- to 35-year-olds already consider climate change to be a global emergency. This figure rises to almost 70% among under-18s.

70%

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to be a global emergency.

Beyond simply being aware, younger generations are already heavily involved in **climate and social transition initiatives by civil society**, for example through climate marches and the citizen movements emerging all over the planet, and through their career choices, volunteering, involvement in NGOs and more.

Young people, aware of their role

Young people around the world are therefore already aware of the crucial role they have to play in the ecological and social transition, and of the need for them to become major players in the change. Key decision-makers, however, still need to be convinced of the wisdom of investing in younger generations and including them in the decision-making process.

To this end, UNESCO, through the International Institute for Educational Planning, supports initiatives by national ministries of education to plan youth education and training at all levels.

In concrete terms, it works with groups of local policy makers, planners and youth representatives to identify promising strategies, resulting in genuine engagement with younger generations and a greater ability to translate their commitments into real-world action.

Can young people drive change?

Young people can play an important role in implementing and monitoring the transition – and holding governments and companies accountable. With a political consciousness and the right resources, they have the potential to effectively transform the world into a better place for all.

Youth activism is on the rise worldwide, supported by greater connectivity and access to social media. As well as bringing new perspectives, young people often have first-hand knowledge of issues that are not accessible to older generations. They are capable of grasping and more fully understanding the challenges we face and can offer new ideas and alternative solutions. When young people are empowered and equipped with the skills needed to play a leading role, they can drive change in their communities and countries.

Making room for a new generation of leaders

Young and old alike, we are all at a turning point in the history of humanity. We can no longer postpone what we were unable or unwilling to do yesterday, and each generation must play a crucial role in responding to the problems posed by global warming and the necessary transition of our economies.

It is a decisive moment, where the leaders of today must allow those of tomorrow to take their rightful place and guide the younger generation, so that we can achieve the sustainable development goals we have collectively set for 2030 and, beyond that, ensure humanity's survival. There is no longer any doubt that the technologies needed for the social transition cannot be rolled out on a large scale without first gaining the trust of the community and younger generations in particular.

International Youth Day

International Youth Day, held every year on 12 August under the aegis of the United Nations, is designed to create a world for all ages. In 2022, its main message was that “action is needed across all generations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and leave no one behind.”

The United Nations also noted that young people continue to report age-related barriers “in various spheres of their lives such as employment, political participation, health and justice.” Intergenerational solidarity is key to sustainable development.

1.2. Promoting training and entrepreneurship

Training and empowering young people should enable them to actively shape their future and find their place in a complex and fast-changing world. **Fostering skills and employment among younger generations is now essential** to achieving the United Nation's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

In fact, education and training are the main target of Goal 4, which seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” In particular, the aim is to increase the number of young people with the relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for sustainable development and for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

In many countries, especially those with young populations, there is still a lack of real opportunities – or at least the situation is perceived as such by people looking for work in clean energy. This can contribute to a brain drain and a flight of skills, depriving certain regions of the world of the human capital needed for the transition.

95,000

young people leave the French school system
every year without any qualifications,
with a drop-out rate of 8.2% in 2020, versus an
average of around 10% in Europe as a whole.

Training young people, all young people

Goal 4 must also be able to provide skills development opportunities for people in Western countries who are unskilled, under-employed and unemployed, as well as for school drop-outs and

people who are not in employment, education or training. One way to achieve this is through lifelong learning and apprenticeships.

Encouraging apprenticeships and skills development

Technical training could also help companies and local communities to adapt to the changing skills requirements brought about by the emergence of new jobs linked to the transition, while increasing their productivity.

Apprenticeships are currently booming, particularly in France, where 718,000 new apprenticeship contracts were signed across all private and public sectors in 2021, an increase of 37% compared with 2020. Of these apprenticeships, 22% were for people with two years of tertiary education, 19% for people with three years and 21% for people with five years or more. Around 60% of apprentices go on to find work after their program.

6 in 10 young people
in France find a job after their apprenticeship.

Championing equal opportunities

More and more initiatives to promote equal opportunities are also emerging in the business world (100 Chances 100 Opportunities, Télémaque, etc.) and the social economy, backed up by measures to decompartmentalize learning and take it out of the classroom and school (Ticket for Change, Trézorium, etc.).

This is a natural development given that *“70% of learning takes place in the field, 20% through mentoring and only 10% in a traditional classroom setting with traditional methods,”* as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) stated in 2016.

1.3. Supporting innovation

Today, the ecological transition is paving the way for new models of socio-economic development for young people, in particular based on support for innovation and project leaders.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, redirecting investment flows to align with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals should lead to a four-fold increase in renewable energy jobs alone, which could amount to 42 million by 2050.

Research programs and innovative projects

The transition sector could assert itself as a highly innovative environment, provided it has the backing of the public authorities and the private sector and that these players support research programs and innovative projects in areas including low-tech solutions, sustainable development and the energy transition.

Along with environmental benefits, the transition is also expected to improve the health and well-being of the population worldwide, with the International Renewable Energy Agency predicting a 13.5% rise in its welfare indicator by 2050 as a direct consequence of reduced air pollution.

Stakeholders in the transition, regardless of where they are based or operate, should therefore encourage innovation and support start-ups through incubators, dedicated investment funds and other means. More generally, they should also help bring about concrete success stories in younger generations, providing them with a positive message and genuine support at the beginning of their careers.

But for all that to happen, young people need the opportunity to gain the right skills, and encouragement to innovate for a fair and sustainable energy transition.

Advocating initiatives

This is particularly true for youths from vulnerable or under-represented communities, such as women, inhabitants of rural and remote areas, and people who have not had access to formal education, as part of a structured education system.

10,000 - the number of clean energy projects through 2030 supported by Student Energy, the world's largest youth-led network dedicated to empowering younger generations to accelerate the energy transition.

This is a real-world example of what young people can achieve for the energy transition if they have the right support and are empowered to decide for themselves.



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2. Skilling and empowering the younger generation

The Schneider Electric Foundation aims to give all young people the means to build solutions for a better life, contribute to a fairer, lower-carbon society, and transform the world.

By providing our expertise, volunteering our time and collaborating with our partners on the ground, we are empowering younger generations and the broader community to achieve a better future through sustainable development.

Our work is divided into **three main areas**:

- 1. Support access to qualitative jobs. Through Vocational and entrepreneurship training,** a key driver of socio-economic and sustainable development across generations.
- 2. Learn new skills for the future & enhance innovation through innovative, forward-looking initiatives,** giving younger generations the boost they need to succeed and build the world of tomorrow.
- 3. Develop mentorship as a key contribution to the success of youth projects and initiatives.** Through the mobilization of our energies to spread the message to better understand the challenges and encourage contributions

Education, technological and social innovation and entrepreneurship are all essential ingredients to ensure that these initiatives are relevant and effective, making the biggest possible impact and responding precisely to the needs of beneficiaries.

Our ultimate goal is to skilling and empowering 1 million young people by 2025.

All of these actions are tracked and measured quarterly as part of the Schneider Sustainability Impact dashboard and Indicator 11: *“skilling and empowering 1 million young people by 2025”*.

2.1. Promoting training and entrepreneurship for young people across the world

Education and entrepreneurship are the cornerstones of the Schneider Electric Foundation, under the aegis of Fondation de France. More than 350,000 young people in over 45 countries around the world have already received vocational training in energy-related fields, thanks to the work of the Foundation, our partners and Schneider Electric employees.

Fostering vocational and technical training

The energy sector offers huge potential, particularly in electricity and renewables, and especially in areas where access to energy is still difficult and developing. In the long run, the objective is passing on skills to younger generations and giving them the means to support their families

This in turn can improve quality of life and create sustainable jobs – the very purpose of the “Training & Entrepreneurship” program that the Schneider Electric Foundation set up in 2009.

The Schneider Electric Foundation provides long-term encouragement and support to vocational training and entrepreneurship organizations throughout the world, amplifying their investment by donating teaching materials, setting up technical facilities, providing soft skills, training instructors and more.

These organizations include non-profits and public and private educational institutions that provide free and open training in electricity and renewable energy. The vocational training and entrepreneurship program receives 67% of the Foundation's funding.

Improving access to education and employment

Schneider Electric Foundation actively promotes vocational training for young people in 100 countries on all continents. It has a particularly strong presence in Asia, the Americas, Africa, and Europe.

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Improving vocational training

In India, for example, the Schneider Electric India Foundation has been instrumental in providing vocational training to 14,888 unemployed young people in 2021:

- 294 instructors have been trained and recruited for the program to improve the training on offer.
- 57 new educational centers in the fields of electricity and renewable energy have been established.
- 10 alumni meetings were held in 2021, allowing 280 graduates of the vocational skills development centers to share their career paths and experiences, meet new trainees and recommend them to their employers or companies for employment.
- 85 budding entrepreneurs received support this year from the incubator to start their own businesses.

Supporting women entrepreneurs

Schneider Electric and its Foundation are part of a consortium led by Plan International and Care that supports the DESFERS project in Africa. DESFERS promotes women's economic empowerment and improves their social standing in rural, off-grid areas in Senegal, Mali and Niger by supporting entrepreneurship and job creation in the renewable energy sector.

- Over five years, the project aims to train 7,000 women and support the creation of 4,650 small and medium-sized businesses in the sustainable energy sector.

Spotlight on the Schneider Electric School

Schneider Electric has a long history of promoting young people's employability.

Back in 1929, Schneider Electric founded its own school, the Ecole Paul-Louis Merlin in Grenoble, to address the difficulty of recruiting qualified workers in the energy sector and to give vulnerable young people access to good jobs.

Free and open to all, the Schneider Electric School today remains focused on vocational training, with an Apprentice Training Center established in 2019. Today, the school offers innovative approaches that align closely with industry practices. The courses provide students with qualifications including baccalaureates, BTS diplomas and vocational degrees – and have a pass rate of 92%.

Graduates can continue in higher education or find work in innovation-rich energy sector fields like renewable energies, domotics, smart buildings and energy management.

Training young people and developing entrepreneurial solutions with a purpose

Enactus France: one organization with strong impact

In France, the Foundation also **supports Enactus France**, a positive-impact skills accelerator. For the past 20 years, Enactus France has been helping university and school students, teachers and professionals to develop cross-cutting skills that foster innovation and advance society.

The support of the Foundation mostly targets students from technical schools and more specifically in less advantaged areas.

Armed with an innovative approach and active leadership on social and environmental issues, beneficiaries then set out to empower people to build a fairer, more inclusive and more sustainable world.

ENACTUS IN FIGURES

+ 8,500

involved students
since 2015

+ 14,000

supported students
since 2002

90

organizations supported
since 2018

Building the India of tomorrow through entrepreneurship

The Foundation also supports the Jagriti Yatra train, which since 2008 has taken hundreds of young Indians eager to discover and make the transition on a 15-day journey of 8,000 km to meet all the actors of change in this country-continent: leaders, entrepreneurs, problem solvers and innovators in the service of the transition.

Training & entrepreneurship: 2021 key figures and 2025 objectives

328,359

people trained since 2009

2025 OBJECTIVE: 1M

5,879

teachers trained since 2009

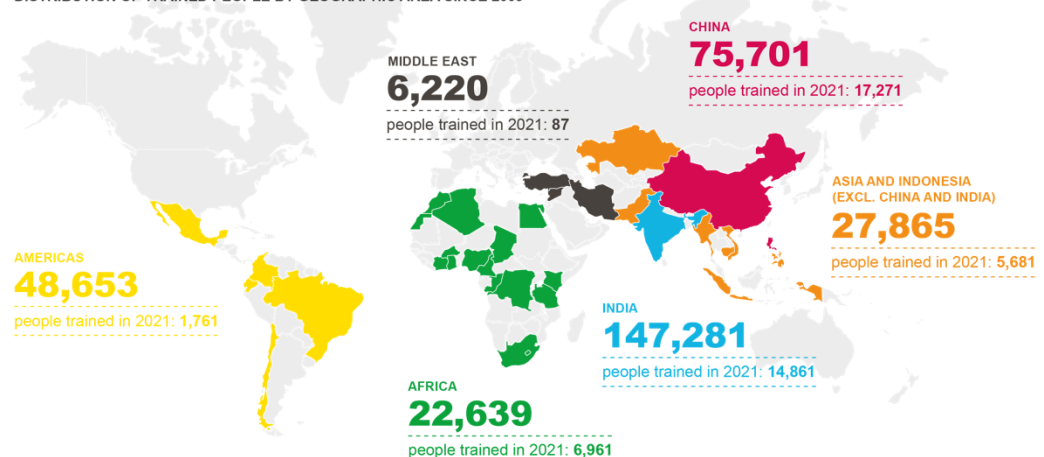
2025 OBJECTIVE: 10,000

4,789

entrepreneurs supported since 2009

2025 OBJECTIVE: 10,000

DISTRIBUTION OF TRAINED PEOPLE BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA SINCE 2009



2.2. Championing innovation and supporting young project leaders

The Schneider Electric Foundation invests in international innovation and transition programs by sharing **its energy management expertise with its partners**, notably through donations of equipment, soft skills and training.

For example, the Foundation has made a four-year commitment to the Solar Impulse Foundation to help it implement +1,000 clean and profitable solutions on a large scale. The Foundation's Founder & president, Bertrand Piccard, advocates the selected solutions to leaders and policymakers around the world.

Atelier 21 and its community-based initiatives

The Schneider Electric Foundation supports the initiatives of community-based workshop Atelier 21, which leads a number of projects to advance the energy transition and, in the words of founder Cédric Carles, offer young people around the world *"a positive story, a story of possibilities in the face of climate challenges"*.

Projects supported by the Foundation include:

- **the Solar Sound System project**, a solar and bike-powered sound system for events which has received two Solar Impulse Efficient Solution labels and already has a presence in Hong Kong, Tel Aviv, Berlin, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Marseille and Paris. *"We're financing research through partying,"* says Carles;
- **the Paléo-Énergétique project**, which searches for forgotten inventions that could lead to a more energy-efficient future. One of its first successes is the eco-friendly, future-proof **Regenbox**, the first DIY battery regenerator for supposedly *"non-rechargeable"* alkaline batteries. It is also an educational tool, raising awareness of how batteries can be used differently, in order to reduce the huge amounts of electronic waste thrown away every day;
- the launch of a **container school**, where students can train in renewable energy-related professions on the site of the Ecole Nationale des Arts et Métiers in Conakry, Guinea.

Supporting the low-tech trend

The path to achieving a successful transition lies neither in high-tech nor low-tech solutions alone, but rather a mix of the two.

That's why the Schneider Electric Foundation also works with the **Low-Tech Lab**. Since 2013, this organization has been working to *"share low-tech solutions and the low-tech spirit with as many people as possible, to give everyone the desire and the means to live better with less."*

The Low-Tech Lab has four main objectives:

1. Seeking out low-tech solutions and projects around the world
2. Experimenting with these solutions to demonstrate their usefulness
3. Documenting open-source, low-tech solutions and their potential implementation
4. Sharing and transferring knowledge, getting the ball rolling through collaborative and community-based tools

How art and artists boost innovation

Artists incite emotions through their works that can be leveraged to raise young people's awareness of the green transition.

Since its launch in 2014 ahead of COP21 in Paris, **Art of Change 21** has played a key role at the Climate COPs, supported by the Schneider Electric Foundation. **Art of Change 21** uses a variety of methods to promote the role of artists and creativity in the ecological transition. These include

exhibitions, prizes, the international collaborative Maskbook project. Maskbook is an international participatory and artistic project which aims to mobilize the creativity of individuals across the world on the important issue of climate change and pollution.

2.3. Our employees, at the heart of the Foundation's action

Our employees play a key role in all Schneider Electric Foundation initiatives around the world, particularly those aimed at young people.

A network of 100 Foundation delegates in nearly 80 countries

The fuel the Schneider Electric Foundation's projects relies primarily on a network of around 80 Schneider Electric employee volunteers, also called Foundation delegates, across 100 countries.

Their role is to select local partners for vocational training in the energy sector, as well as in entrepreneurship, to raise public awareness of sustainable development and to encourage Schneider Electric employees' engagement. After projects are launched, they continue to monitor their progress. Before funding is given, the administrative and financial aspects of each project are reviewed by the Schneider Electric Foundation and then by Fondation de France.

50,000 volunteer days as of 2017

- Progress in 2021: 27,981
- 2025 target: 50,000

In 2021, Schneider Electric employees significantly increased their involvement in the Foundation's activities. All over the world, the successive COVID-19 lockdowns called attention to many vulnerabilities in our society. In these difficult times, Schneider Electric volunteers stepped up their contribution to the Foundation's initiatives, particularly in education. Mainly through remote digital assignments, they proved they were able to adapt and continue to provide support and coaching to some of the most vulnerable members of our society, with a particular focus on young people. With more than 25,000 volunteer days given in 2021, over 50% of the 2025 target for this indicator has already been reached.

Schneider Electric VolunteerIn: an NGO dedicated to boost engagement within Schneider Electric

Another of the Foundation's key initiative is the NGO **Schneider Electric VolunteerIn** lead by our Chief Human Resources Officer Charise Le. Since 2012, this program has brought together all the Foundation's local and international volunteering opportunities, enabling employees to become active participants and ambassadors of the Group's societal commitments.

Wherever Schneider Electric is present, **VolunteerIn** encourages employees to donate their time and skills to advance and advocate the Group's societal commitments in fields including education, access to energy and the fight against fuel poverty. Partner organizations can use the platform to find people with the skills they need for their work, specify what they're looking for and guide the volunteers in their assignments.

Each year, around 35,000 employees in 50 countries take part in these campaigns.

A dedicated platform, available in eight languages, allows employees to support our partners and their beneficiaries by applying for the various volunteer assignments that the Foundation offers.

On the ground

Coaching and volunteering in India

In 2021, Schneider Electric India Foundation employee volunteers took action to support the Foundation's causes, such as youth coaching through teaching assignments, tree planting, and donations. In total, they devoted 413 days to volunteering, including 264 teaching assignments, during which they shared their knowledge and skills with young people training to become electricians. Most of these teaching assignments were carried out remotely via a digital platform, due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Giving back to the community in North America

In North America, the Schneider Electric Foundation has a number of programs that enable employees to give back to their communities. For example:

- Matching Gift matches employees' charity donations
- Dollars for Doers provides funding to non-profits where employees volunteer
- Sponsorship Grants offer financial and product donations to sponsor events, capital projects and employee missions
- The New Hire Program welcomes new employees with a gift to donate to a non-profit of their choice
- Service Days and Volunteer events allow employees to give back to their communities during working hours.

Spotlight on the Tomorrow Rising Fund to address the COVID-19 emergency

In April 2020, the Schneider Electric Foundation set up the Tomorrow Rising Fund in response to the health crisis. This global initiative aims to provide local responses to the challenges posed by the emergency. It has a particular focus on supporting the recovery of education and vocational training for the most vulnerable young people, by continuing to carry out training and awareness-raising activities via digital technologies. In China, for example, a project was set up to help low-income students in technical schools better cope with the crisis. And in Brazil, support was provided for a project equipping young people with tablets and internet access.

Mentoring, a tool to promote equal opportunities in education

Schneider Electric and its Foundation have been supporters of the Télémaque project since its launch, encouraging Group employees to get involved in fostering equal opportunities in education. Since 2005, Télémaque has been bringing together mentors from business and academia to support hard-working young people, giving them the best chance to achieve their full potential through a hybrid "school-workplace" mentorship program.

- 1,650 young people supported since 2005
- 2,200 mentors signed up since 2005
- 176 partner companies and communities
- 213 partner high schools and apprenticeship centers

In the same spirit, in North America, the Schneider Electric Foundation has entered into partnerships with:

- FIRST Robotics, which inspires future leaders through education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), with the Schneider Electric Foundation providing financial support and employees as mentors
- the National Merit Society, which invests in the future by offering scholarships to the children of employees.

Systematic measurement to improve social impact

The Schneider Electric Foundation is a pioneer in measuring the social impact of the work it supports. By identifying areas for improvement, the idea is that partners will be better able to achieve their goals. The Schneider Sustainability Impact (SSI) dashboard demonstrates that rapid and disruptive change is possible to create a more sustainable world in a range of complex areas. We are committed to taking urgent action to build a better future in line with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to measuring our impact transparently.

Schneider Electric Foundation

For over 20 years, the Schneider Electric Foundation has deployed the Group's philanthropic activities in line with its sustainable development commitments. It contributes directly to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDGs 1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13 and 17.

The Schneider Electric Foundation has established partnerships with 90 NGOs and non-profits in 38 countries, and collaborates with ministries of education in 13 countries, including France, Cambodia and South Africa.

In 2021, the Foundation supported more than 100 projects and 46,817 young people through 9,512 volunteer days. With an annual budget of €4 million, the Schneider Electric Foundation contributes to partnerships that also receive more than €15 million in support from Schneider Electric entities and employees. In total, more than €19.5 million is invested in local communities across the world.

<https://www.se.com/ww/fr/about-us/sustainability/foundation/>