



Progress beyond

Solvay joins forces with UNESCO to promote education for all

Together with UNESCO, the City of Paris, Paris Habitat and Street Art for Mankind, Solvay is supporting the creation of a new street art mural, “Transforming Education”.

Paris, June 28, 2022

The first of a series of murals to be created in major cities across the world aimed at raising awareness about everyone’s right to quality education and triggering action is to be unveiled today in Paris.

The initiative is part of a global effort led by UNESCO and Street Art for Mankind (SAM) to transform education, raise awareness and mobilize action, solutions and solidarity to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030 and equipping children and youth for the future. The mural will stand as a legacy landmark for generations to come, helping to inspire and unite, and giving power to children, young people, parents and teachers to make their voices heard and join forces to transform education for all.

There are 258 million children and young people across the world who do not attend school. Millions more fail to acquire basic foundational skills, such as reading and mathematics, when they are in school. There are also still 773 million illiterate adults. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified inequalities, making it more urgent than ever that we improve inclusion and better gear education to meet contemporary global challenges, such as the climate crisis and the digital revolution.

The initiative kicks off on June 28, in Paris, where the “Transforming Education” mural has been painted by artist Victor Ash on the wall of 232 rue de Tolbiac, in the 13th arrondissement. The inauguration of the mural takes place during UNESCO’s Transforming Education Pre-Summit, which is designed to generate momentum in the lead up to the Transforming Education Summit that will take place in September, during the 77th UN General Assembly in New York. The Summit aims to find solutions that will uplift individuals and change societies through the power of education.

The mural was created with the support of Paris Habitat, who donated their wall, the 13th arrondissement of Paris, which supported the initiative, Le Comptoir Seigneurie, which provided the acrylic paint, and Solvay, a UN Global Compact member.

“This art mural powerfully captures the essence of education: to unlock everyone’s potential, to open up the imagination, to fulfill aspirations and dreams. Education today is failing to represent this for too many children and youth,” said Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education. “The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened the education crisis. We not only need every



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government to make the right to education a top priority. We need a societal movement to raise awareness about the unique role that education has to play in building more sustainable, caring and just societies, and fighting all forms of discrimination.”

“At Solvay, we have a long tradition of bonding with future generations through educational initiatives, particularly those based on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM),” said Ilham Kadri, Solvay CEO. “Education has a crucial role to play in reinventing progress and should be a lifelong human right for all, regardless of gender, race, creed, ethnicity or nationality. Through education we gain the tools to move from poverty to prosperity, to reach gender parity by empowering women and girls, and to touch not just one generation but many more. As this new mural shows, street art is a unique, accessible and powerful vehicle through which we can communicate with children and adults alike and inspire change that benefits us all.”

“For many years now, the 13th arrondissement has been committed to promoting and facilitating access to culture to the broadest public. That Ash’s mural had to be done here was an obvious choice as murals by French and international artists have been created all over the district, including in schools,” said Jérôme Coumet, maire du 13e arrondissement, Paris. “Moreover, it is only fitting that this mural found a home here, as our arrondissement is often said to be the new « quartier latin » since we are lucky enough to host several higher education institutions as well as the largest share of Paris’ student population. Culture and education are at the heart of our mission and this mural portrays it in a powerful way.”

“Paris Habitat is proud to contribute to the promotion of art in the public space, thus participating in the embellishment of its heritage.” said Martial Herblot, Paris Habitat Territorial Director.

“We are proud to partner with UNESCO and contribute, through our art, to the transformation of education. This mural is about giving access to quality education to all (SDG4). It is about dreaming big and reaching for the stars thanks to education, but also a reminder of education’s key role in amplifying diversity and girls’ empowerment,” said Audrey and Thibault Decker, co-founders of Street Art for Mankind. “We hope that this multilayered and powerful masterpiece from Victor Ash will inspire generations here in Paris, in France but also across the world to take action so that every child, everywhere, gets a chance to *reach the moon*”.

A free mobile app called Behind the Wall® has been produced by SAM, enabling the public to hear the story behind the mural, learn about the artist and take action from anywhere.



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About the UNESCO Transforming Education Summit

The United Nations Secretary-General is convening the Transforming Education Summit (TES) during the 77th UN General Assembly. Learn more at

<https://www.un.org/en/transforming-education-summit>

About the artist Victor Ash

Victor Ash is a Danish-French artist, originally from Portugal, who lives in Copenhagen. His murals or stencil canvases show that, to him, the main danger comes from the growing disconnection between the countryside and cities, nature and culture. His studio works, as well as his mural paintings, aim at alerting the viewers. Victor Ash has done his first exhibition in 1989, invited by the French fashion designer Agnes b. Since then, his work has been exhibited around the world, including New York, Miami Art Basel, London, Seoul, and Tokyo. He is particularly well known for his gigantic 'Cosmonaut' in Berlin.

About Street Art for Mankind (SAM)

Street Art for Mankind (SAM) is a French-American non-profit organization working with prominent street artists to create large murals all around the world. Its goal is to raise awareness on social justice and environmental issues, and to give the public the means to become actors of change.

Learn more at StreetArtMankind.org

About Solvay

Solvay is a science company whose technologies bring benefits to many aspects of daily life. With more than 21,000 employees in 63 countries, Solvay bonds people, ideas and elements to reinvent progress. The Group seeks to create sustainable shared value for all, notably through its Solvay One Planet roadmap crafted around three pillars: protecting the climate, preserving resources and fostering a better life. The Group's innovative solutions contribute to safer, cleaner, and more sustainable products found in homes, food and consumer goods, planes, cars, batteries, smart devices, health care applications, water and air purification systems. Founded in 1863, Solvay today ranks among the world's top three companies for the vast majority of its activities and delivered net sales of €10.1 billion in 2021. Solvay is listed on Euronext Brussels and Paris (SOLB). Learn more at www.solvay.com.