



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Institute  
for Lifelong Learning

# Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning (GAL)

Report of the General Meeting on 28 and 29 October 2020

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## Table of contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>Purpose .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Objectives .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Participation .....</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>Day 1: Wednesday, 28 October 2020 .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Opening session .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Session 1: Global and national scenarios of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on education and youth and adult literacy .....</b>	<b>5</b>
	1. African Union Strategy for Literacy.....	5
	2. Outcomes of the Global Education Meeting .....	5
	3. Cost of achieving SDG target 4.6 in the 29 GAL countries in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.....	6
	4. Ministerial panel.....	7
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Session 2: Forging partnerships for advancing youth and adult literacy in GAL countries beyond the COVID-19 crisis and towards the SDGs .....</b>	<b>8</b>
	1. UNESCO-led Global Education Coalition .....	8
	2. Partnerships for innovation and quality: Microsoft .....	9
	3. Partnerships for innovation and quality: Pix .....	9
	4. Comments and Q&A.....	10
	<b>Day 2: Thursday, 29 October 2020 .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Session 3: GAL strategic goals: Review and future directions (1).....</b>	<b>10</b>
	1. Opening remarks .....	10
	2. Policy and planning.....	11
	3. Equity and inclusion .....	12
	4. Data and monitoring .....	13
	5. Country perspectives.....	14
	6. Comments and Q&A.....	15
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Session 4: GAL strategic goals: Review and future directions (2) .....</b>	<b>15</b>
	1. Innovation.....	16
	2. Country perspectives.....	17
	3. Comments and Q&A.....	18
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Conclusion and the way forward .....</b>	<b>19</b>
	Annex 1: List of participants .....	21
	Annex 2: Agenda.....	26
	Annex 3: Online comments and Q&A.....	28

## I. Purpose

The Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning (GAL), launched in 2016, consists of the 20 countries in the world where the literacy rate is below 50%, and the high-population E-9 countries, where the largest numbers of non-literate adults are found. The 2020 General Meeting is the fifth of its kind and aims to review the progress, dimensions and challenges of literacy promotion across the 29 GAL member countries.<sup>1</sup> The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), serving as the GAL Secretariat, organized this meeting in close collaboration with the UNESCO Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development (YLS).

This meeting took place at a defining moment in history, as the world seeks ways to cope with the COVID-19 crisis and develop new strategies for learning, work and civic life. Understanding the impact of the crisis on literacy provision, as well as the role of literacy in addressing it, will inform the agenda of learning and education as they evolve into new patterns.

## II. Objectives

The objectives of the meeting were as follows:

- To review the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on youth and adult literacy;
- To review national education response plans and strategies in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond;
- To identify areas of support and specific initiatives to respond to new realities in the context of GAL's strategic goals;
- To establish the composition of the new Steering Group and the co-chairs.

## III. Participation

Owing to the prevailing circumstances caused by COVID-19, the meeting was held online (via Zoom). A total of 86 participants attended the meeting; 24 GAL countries were represented and 14 GAL associate members took part. Over the course of the two days, the participants included six ministers and deputy ministers; 30 government representatives; 10 representatives of international bodies and networks; six participants from UNESCO field offices; eight participants from civil society; one from universities; two from the private sector; and 23 directors, programme and support staff, including a consultant representing UNESCO and UIL, with the latter carrying out the tasks of the secretariat for the meeting. **Annex 1** provides a complete list of the meeting participants.

This report follows the structure and sequence of events as shown in the agenda in **Annex 2**. It provides highlights of each presentation and discussion. Some of the presentations can be viewed in full; the links are available [here](#). During the Zoom meeting, participants had the possibility to pose questions and comments via the live chat; answers to the questions were

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<sup>1</sup> The 20 countries with literacy rates lower than 50% are Afghanistan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iraq, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and South Sudan. The E-9 countries are Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan.

given immediately. The transcript of these comments, questions and answers are summarized in **Annex 3**. Attribution is made to the country or organization, but not to the individual.

This report is produced by the GAL Secretariat with the support of an international consultant and in close consultation with the UNESCO Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development (YLS).

## Day 1: Wednesday, 28 October 2020

### IV. Opening session

After welcoming the meeting participants, **Mr Borhene Chakroun, Director of the Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO**, expounded on the ongoing challenges of promoting youth and adult literacy around the world. He spoke about the advocacy role played by GAL on behalf of the 773 million non-literate youth and adults and the 617 million children who fail to achieve minimal proficiency in literacy. He further underscored the increased challenges and disruption to the continuity of literacy provision brought by the COVID-19 crisis.

Opening the meeting, **Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Priority Africa and External Relations** noted the important role GAL plays in key UNESCO actions on literacy and education, including:

- the [UN Secretary-General's report on 'Literacy for life, work, lifelong learning and education for democracy'](#);
- organizing the Extraordinary Session of the [Global Education Meeting \(2020 GEM\)](#);
- facilitating the achievement of the Education 2030 Agenda;
- the [UNESCO Strategy for Youth and Adult Literacy 2020–2025](#), with which the five GAL strategic priorities are aligned.

Highlighting the challenge of ensuring learning continued in spite of the COVID-19 crisis, Mr Matoko drew attention to a UNESCO exploratory survey in August 2020, which showed that, out of 49 literacy programmes, 90% were suspended. UNESCO has since launched a Global Education Coalition in order to address all aspects of educational deprivation caused by the pandemic.

**Mr David Atchoarena, Director of UIL**, and on behalf of the GAL Secretariat, introduced the background to the meeting and its agenda. He first recalled the devastating impact of COVID-19 on education, including literacy programmes: only seven of the 29 GAL member countries included youth and adult literacy in their initial national education response plans. To meet the challenges posed by this and similar crises in the future, he argued, we must prioritize the following: (1) increasing open and distance learning opportunities; (2) fostering new partnerships to sustain learning; and (3) equipping educators with skills necessary for effective use of distance education technologies.

Mr Atchoarena drew attention to the [GAL Strategy for 2020–2025](#), adopted in April 2020, and stated that this General Meeting is the first after the adoption of the strategy. This new strategy sets out five strategic goals – policy and planning, equity and inclusion, innovation, data and monitoring, and partnerships and cooperation – to enable youth and adults from the most disadvantaged backgrounds to develop the literacy and numeracy skills that they need to find decent work, earn a living, contribute to their communities and societies, and fulfill their potential.

Mr Atchoarena closed the opening session by thanking members of the previous GAL Steering Group, who had completed their term, as well as those countries ready to participate in the next term of the Group.

## V. Session 1: Global and national scenarios of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on education and youth and adult literacy

Mr David Atchoarena moderated this session, which aimed to explore and understand the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on literacy, and to present the steps being taken to address it.

### 1. African Union Strategy for Literacy

Speaking on behalf of the African Union (AU) and expressing her appreciation of its new status as a GAL associate member, **H.E. Ms Sarah Anyang Agbor, AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Sciences and Technology**, underlined the negative impact the COVID-19 crisis has had on learning systems in Africa, noting the importance of literacy for providing people with an opportunity to benefit from the digital age and safeguard their health. The AU's [Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025 \(CESA 16–25\)](#) promotes access to comprehensive literacy programmes and the development of learning cities, a culture of reading and peace, along with the need to allocate sufficient resources for public libraries and digital materials.

Conscious of the copyright issues resulting from putting documents online, Ms Agbor cited an example from Rwanda, one of the AU Member States, which purchased the copyright of educational books in order to put them on a national digital platform. The [AU Agenda 2063](#) provides a framework for educational development, considered a key investment in Africa's economic progress. Equity and inclusion must be the watchwords of literacy and lifelong learning systems focusing on disadvantaged groups, girls and women.

### 2. Outcomes of the Global Education Meeting

To address the educational concerns brought by the COVID-19 crisis, **Mr Kazuhiro Yoshida, Co-chair of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee**, introduced the purposes and outcomes of the [Global Education Meeting \(GEM\) held on 20 and 22 October 2020](#). Consisting of technical and high-level segments, the GEM resulted in the [2020 GEM Declaration](#), which Mr Yoshida summarized.

Prominence will be given to four key priority actions to accelerate progress towards SDG 4 in the context of COVID-19 and beyond, he explained. These four actions comprise (1) safely

reopening education institutions, (2) supporting all teachers in their new and additional roles and safeguarding their health, (3) investing in skills development, and (4) narrowing the digital divide. Of key concern is the need for new educational strategies, protection of national and international education financing, and ensuring equitable access for women and marginalized groups. To address these concerns, Mr Yoshida concluded by pointing to three areas that must be part of the way forward: monitoring implementation of the commitments made, continuing to assess the impact of COVID-19 on education, and strengthening the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee to address challenges. These goals can only be met, he said, through multi-sectoral partnerships.

### 3. Cost of achieving SDG target 4.6 in the 29 GAL countries in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond

**Ms Rakhat Zholdoshalieva, a Team Leader at UIL**, presented a detailed analysis of the projected costs of achieving SDG 4.6 based on projected needs, quantified literacy targets and projections of the effects of COVID-19 on GDP per capita. Without increased investment, the E-9 countries will see reductions in their non-literate populations of 18.8% by 2030, while the other 20 countries will see an increase from the 2017 base of 1.1% in the non-literate population over the same period.

Estimated costs depend on how SDG Target 4.6 is interpreted: it clearly aims to achieve 100% youth literacy, but it also speaks of a vaguer ‘substantial’ increase in adult literacy. Ms Zholdoshalieva therefore presented three possible projections for this target: (1) 50% adult literacy in the 20 GAL countries and 60% in the E-9 countries; (2) 70% and 75% adult literacy in the 20 GAL and E-9 GAL countries, respectively; and (3) 100% adult literacy for all regions and groups. In addition, Ms Zholdoshalieva postulated four possible post-COVID-19 GDP per capita scenarios:

- ‘As is’, i.e. as if COVID-19 never happened;
- ‘Back to normal’, i.e. reduction of GDP per capita in 2021, then recovery;
- ‘New normal’, i.e. reductions in GDP per capita up to 2030;
- ‘Intermediate’, i.e. double drops in GDP per capita until 2025, then recovery.

Indicating that the total cost of achieving SDG target 4.6 globally by 2030 is estimated to be USD 190 billion, Ms Zholdoshalieva differentiated between the E-9 and remaining 20 GAL countries, noting that 80% of the total cost would belong to the E-9 countries. She concluded that a funding gap, in the best-case scenario, would amount to USD 17 billion, of which USD 12 billion would be required in the 20 low-literacy GAL member countries. This scenario, Ms Zholdoshalieva noted, implies that the E-9 countries allocate at least 3% of their education budgets to youth and adult literacy. The implication of this analysis is that both governments and their international partners should increase their funding to education in general and to youth and adult literacy in particular.

## 4. Ministerial panel

### *Afghanistan*

**Mr Sardar Mohammad Rahimi, Deputy Minister of Education for Literacy, representing the Minister of Education, H.E. Ms Rangina Hamidi**, painted a contrasting picture of education and literacy in Afghanistan: although enrolment in school reached 9.6 million in 2018 and the overall literacy rate rose from 18% in 2002 to 43% in 2019, 3.7 million children are still not in school and around 12 million youth and adults still lack literacy skills – 60% of whom are female. All learning facilities in the country closed as a result of the pandemic. The subsequent response plan included lessons via TV and radio, small groups of learners, home-based family literacy and educator self-development. There are fears that, as a result of the school closures, the rate of dropout will increase, resulting in more demand for adult literacy programmes and a greater need to introduce digital- and distance-learning options and intergenerational approaches. Afghanistan looks for further support from international donors, a process which GAL could facilitate. Later in the meeting, the Minister of Education intervened briefly to give her backing to efforts in youth and adult literacy and to addressing gender imbalance in her country.

### *Burkina Faso*

**H.E. Mr Stanislas Ouaro, Minister of National Education, Literacy and Promotion of National Languages**, noted the serious repercussions COVID-19 has had on security (in some regions of the country), and education, including literacy. Once pandemic-response committees were set up, children tested and, if necessary isolated, schools were able to re-open. Many schools now operate double shifts to accommodate learners, and the government is working on digitizing learning materials. Mr Ouaro emphasized the need to use local languages so that messages are well understood. Non-formal education has been badly affected by the pandemic, as many facilitators lack digital skills. He concluded by expressing the need for donor support, as financial constraints limit the country's response to COVID-19.

### *Côte d'Ivoire*

In light of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on education, **H.E. Ms Kandia Kamissoko Camara, Minister of National Education, Technical Studies and Vocational Training**, explained the strategy adopted by Côte d'Ivoire to cope with the closure of literacy centres and a 'dramatic drop' in the number of learners. Ms Camara detailed several actions the country has taken, including provision of health kits for literacy centres, boosting distance learning and working, adapting teaching approaches to use information and communication technology (ICT) tools, as well as using other media (TV, radio, Facebook, video). The Ministry of National Education, Technical Studies and Vocational Training also developed two digital platforms and is working on increased digitization of learning programmes. Ms Camara noted, however, that further training will be needed to enable educators to use these tools effectively. Also worthy of mention, she said, is how the pandemic led to the reestablishment of certain literacy initiatives, such as transition classes, functional literacy projects, literacy via mobile phone, and the country's Institutions de Formation et d'Éducation Féminine (Women's Training and Education Institutions, IFEF). However, connectivity in rural areas and the high cost of devices remain as challenging issues in the country.

## The Gambia

From the Gambia, **H.E. Ms Claudiana Ayo Cole, Minister of Basic and Secondary Education**, stressed the central role of education and literacy in this time of COVID-19 crisis. She acknowledged the support of UIL in implementing the Family and Intergenerational Literacy and Learning Programme (FILL), which has strengthened adult and non-formal education, enabling participants to share learning with their children and to use mobile texting, among other skills. Prior to the pandemic, the Gambia had 177 literacy centres, a number that must now increase to cope with an increased volume of dropouts from formal education as a result of the crisis. As these initiatives take place, ICTs must be part of literacy programmes and educators will need greater capacity to use them. As Ms Ayo Cole concluded: ‘Those who left school must not be left behind.’

## VI. Session 2: Forging partnerships for advancing youth and adult literacy in GAL countries beyond the COVID-19 crisis and towards the SDGs

Moderated by **Mr David Atchoarena, Director of UIL**, the session examined recent initiatives to address the COVID-19 crisis, with a focus on global partnerships.

### 1. UNESCO-led Global Education Coalition

A major response by UNESCO to the COVID-19 crisis in education is the Global Education Coalition ([GEC](#)), a mechanism to promote cooperation and coordinated action to protect the right to education during and beyond the pandemic. **Mr Hervé Huot-Marchand, Chief of the UNESCO Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development (YLS)**, highlighted the GEC’s success in bringing together over 150 partners from multilateral agencies, the media, civil society, networks and associations, and the private sector. The huge impact of COVID-19 – 1.6 billion students affected by school and university closures during this year’s lockdowns, almost 24 million children and youth at risk of dropout in 2020, as well as the pre-existing funding gap – motivated GEC’s **four objectives**, which are to:

- respond to educational disruption caused by school closures;
- scale up distance learning and connect every learner and education institution to the internet;
- manage effective recovery and the return to school and learning;
- advocate and collect data, and build and share knowledge to strengthen the resilience of education systems and reimagine the future.

Working in 70 countries and targeting 400 million learners and 12.7 million teachers, the GEC has **three pillars** (country-level engagement; inter-country interventions; developing policy, advocacy and monitoring tools) and **three global initiatives**: (1) equipping 1 million teachers with ICT skills (‘Global Teacher Campus’); (2) equipping 1 million young people with digital skills for employability and digital skills (‘Global Skills Academy’); and (3) closing skills gaps for 1 million learners from marginalized groups through free on- and offline tutoring (‘Global Learning House’).



It does this through a **four-strand strategy**; that is: (1) mobilizing actors and resources; (2) coordinating and targeting action; (3) matching needs with global resources; and (4) providing distance education through high/ low/ no-technology approaches.

Through the action areas identified during the UNESCO International Literacy Day (ILD) 2020 and World Teachers' Day, including incorporating literacy in pandemic response plans; and facilitating distance learning and integrated approaches to literacy, health and skills development, UNESCO will join together the GEC and GAL in a new initiative to contribute to the professionalization and building of capacities of youth and adult literacy educators and to establish a relevant knowledge base in selected GAL countries. The GAL Secretariat and YLS have already initiated the development of the concept note and have started approaching some GEC partners.

## 2. Partnerships for innovation and quality: Microsoft

**Ms Alexa Joyce, EMEA Future-Ready Skills Director, [Microsoft](#)**, opened her presentation by observing how COVID-19 obligated learners and educators to adapt to new modes of learning, particularly distance learning based on technology. She noted, however, that this also highlighted certain challenges, including lack of connectivity and devices, low digital skills, risk of social isolation and school dropout, as well as reduced or no contact between learner and teacher. Microsoft recognizes the need for equipping people with literacy skills so that they can benefit from technology. In response to the situation created by COVID-19, Microsoft proposes two tools:

- **[Microsoft Immersive Reader](#)**: Free to use across all platforms, this application enables learners of all abilities to comprehend texts, improve their grammar and learn new languages. It includes a dictionary and can read texts aloud;
- **[Microsoft Teams for Education](#)**: Designed to facilitate teacher/ learner interaction and to accommodate a range of contexts through low-bandwidth operation.

Microsoft expects to collaborate with the GEC to facilitate pedagogical and technical training associated with the use of these tools.

## 3. Partnerships for innovation and quality: Pix

**Mr Benjamin Marteau, Director of [Pix](#)**, a non-profit organization in France, gave a presentation on the organization, which provides an online platform where users can assess, develop and certify their digital skills. Through collaboration with the French ministries of education, higher education and labour, Pix has been able to offer learners an opportunity to test their digital competences across five domains, 16 skills and eight levels, with a focus on how to operate and successfully use ICTs. Pix is conceived as a lifelong learning tool, for all ages and for students as well as teachers and other professionals. The tests are a means of learning and improvement, as the results show where further skills are needed. Pix can also be used as a recruitment screening tool. Operating extensively in France, it is also in use in seven other countries, with an English version to be launched in near future.

#### 4. Comments and Q&A

Using the Zoom Q&A function, participants had the opportunity to raise questions in parallel with the presentations. Some of these questions were answered in writing by UNESCO staff; a few participants were asked to repeat their questions during the live Q&A session on Day 2. Three questions were posed to the panelists of Session 2 on forging partnerships for advancing youth and adult literacy in GAL countries beyond the COVID-19 crisis and towards the SDGs:

1. A representative of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) asked, How do we reach those people who have never used or lack motivation to use ICTs?

*(Joyce) This is certainly a challenge, but COVID-19 has clearly shown that ICTs must have a place. Microsoft addresses this challenge by providing multi-language, free software, broken down into manageable steps and easy to use.*

*(Marteau) In a digital world, we need methods to reach those with no digital skills – by creating a motivating user experience, demystifying the technology and providing certification of skills.*

2. A participant from Mali asked, What can we do to improve technology in areas where there are problems of electricity or internet access?

*(Joyce) GEC's telecom partners are working on connectivity, and some governments provide free devices, but there is no easy solution for areas that are hard to reach.*

#### Day 2: Thursday, 29 October 2020

### VII. Session 3: GAL strategic goals: Review and future directions (1)

#### 1. Opening remarks

The **UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, Ms Stefania Giannini**, set the tone for the deliberations of the second day of the meeting by recalling some fundamentals of UNESCO's commitment to literacy and highlighting key messages from the discussions on Day 1.

In the context of COVID-19 and the need to keep literacy provision at the heart of response plans, Ms Giannini stressed the commitment of UNESCO to address the literacy needs of the 773 million youth and adults without basic skills, for which GAL is the principal means of action. She further underlined that literacy is 'a matter of dignity that upholds human rights'. Ms Giannini focused on six key messages from the discussions on Day 1:

1. Youth and adult literacy provision from a lifelong learning perspective must figure in national education response and recovery plans;

2. The current crisis highlights the need for new modes of learning, with expansion of the use of ICTs;
3. Educators play a critical role and will need new professional skills to help ‘reinvent learning’. GAL and the GEC will focus attention on this aspect through its new initiative;
4. Literacy in multilingual contexts needs greater attention, with the production of materials in a higher number of languages and in training educators;
5. Learning assessment serves not only for certification but also for monitoring the quality of educational provision;
6. Complexity of the current context: the challenges of COVID-19 are rendered more difficult in some cases by security concerns.

Ms Giannini also thanked Afghanistan, Côte d’Ivoire and Nigeria for volunteering to be part of the next GAL Steering Group.

Following these opening remarks, the session was moderated by **Mr Hervé Huot-Marchand, Chief of Section, Youth, Literacy and Skills Development, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO**, and focused on a number of GAL’s strategic goals; namely, policy and planning, equity, and data and monitoring.

## 2. Policy and planning

### *GAL survey of policies and programmes*

In 2019, UIL conducted a survey to identify the challenges and effective practices which condition efforts to improve literacy competencies and promote ‘sustainable literacy’ in GAL countries. **Mr Nicolas Jonas, Programme Specialist at UIL**, explained that the survey addressed both national literacy policies and youth and adult literacy programmes (from governments or NGOs). Responses were received from 24 GAL countries and 32 NGOs from 29 GAL countries. The full report will be published in English and French by the end of 2020.

Mr Jonas made a detailed presentation covering results from 12 areas of the survey, including, among others, policy and targets, funding, curriculum and language of instruction, learning resources, the professionalization of facilitators, and monitoring and evaluation.

The main findings of the survey include:

1. Most participating GAL countries have literacy policies; however, four countries (Central African Republic, Comoros, Haiti and Iraq) are reportedly without literacy policy, and several national strategies are clearly outdated.
2. Participating countries show a positive trend of taking forward a political commitment to strategic planning, even if limited funding was cited by 85% of GAL countries as the major challenge to implementing literacy policy.
3. The majority of programmes surveyed said they use planned curricula provided by the national government or NGOs’ learning materials. Most of these are printed learning

materials and are produced in the learner's mother tongue (a little over half said they use digital technology); however, 40% of the programmes surveyed said these printed materials were inadequate.

4. A main challenge to literacy participation reported by programme respondents is competing family responsibilities, which drives the learner dropout rate in GAL countries.
5. The survey also demonstrates the precariousness of the facilitators' situation: 83% of programme providers that responded said that facilitators are paid for their work, which also means 17% are not. In addition, over three-quarters of literacy programmes said they pay facilitators less than teachers make in public schools at the primary level. More generally, only about one in four programmes said they require facilitators to be certified to teach youth and adult literacy.

Analysis of the data led to four key recommendations:

1. Support for some GAL countries is needed to enable a review of the literacy situation and design literacy policy, planning, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools;
2. The funding base must expand and be consistent to establish a sustainable literacy education system;
3. Career development and professionalization for facilitators/educators are needed;
4. Non-formal educational programmes should offer verifiable credentials.

### 3. Equity and inclusion

#### *Literacy issues of refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs)*

Millions of refugees are among the 1.6 billion learners whose education has been disrupted by COVID-19, explained **Mr Matt Byrne, UNHCR Senior Education Officer, Division of Resilience and Solutions**. He went on to note that 50% of refugee girls in secondary education may not return when classes reopen and that 48% of all refugee children are out of school. Mr Byrne highlighted the UNHCR principle that refugees should be included in national education systems. After outlining [UNHCR's global approach](#), the right to education and the barriers that refugees face, he underscored the life-changing impact of secondary education on adolescent girls. Mr Byrne stated that the reopening of schools provides an opportunity to develop more inclusive and equitable educational provision, but that this is dependent on four key perspectives:

- Teachers and school principals are at the heart of quality education;
- In a safe learning environment, skilled and motivated teachers, instructing in languages young people can understand, are vital;

- Teachers should be proficient in the second language, understand the challenges students face when learning second languages, and use second language teaching methods;
- More female teachers will encourage adolescent girls' retention in secondary schools.

Mr Byrne concluded by emphasizing that all young people should be enrolled in formal schooling in order to gain foundational and transferable skills up to the secondary level. UNHCR joined GAL as an associate member in September 2020.

### *Linkages between language, health and literacy*

**Mr Ian Cheffy, Senior Literacy and Education Consultant with [SIL International](#)**, a global non-profit organization that works with local communities around the world to develop language solutions, unpacked the concepts of literacy, language and health by stressing the foundational nature of language as the basis of communication, literacy and learning. All communication takes place in a particular language, he explained, and the language that a learner knows provides the best opportunity to learn. SIL works with communities in almost all the GAL member countries to support language and literacy development. In addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, SIL International has produced health booklets and materials in more than 900 languages in 80 countries, including most of the GAL member countries.<sup>2</sup> Mr Cheffy underlined the need for educators, health experts and language and literacy specialists to work together so that health and literacy are addressed in an integrated way, enabling communities to address their own health needs. Furthermore, he highlighted the links between SDG 3 and SDG 4, which, when pursued collaboratively, promote 'health literacy'. Mr Cheffy concluded by noting that most of the GAL member countries are multilingual, necessitating close and active cooperation between relevant partners. SIL International also joined GAL as associate member in September 2020.

## 4. Data and monitoring

### *RAMAA harmonized competency framework*

**Ms Madina Bolly, Senior Programme Specialist at UIL**, introduced [RAMAA](#) (Recherche-action sur la mesure des apprentissages des bénéficiaires des programmes d'alphabétisation in French; Action Research: Measuring Literacy Programme Participants' Learning Outcomes in English) as a means of obtaining more reliable and timely data on the outcomes of literacy programmes by fully engaging programme actors and beneficiaries. In the 12 African countries currently participating in RAMAA, special account has been taken of contextual factors. Ms Bolly indicated that a harmonized competency framework has been developed in addition to assessment tools and data-gathering instruments, resulting in both qualitative and quantitative data from literacy curricula, policy documents and interviews with the literacy

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<sup>2</sup> See *Confronting COVID-19 in Local Language Communities*. Dallas, SIL International. [online] Available at: <https://www.sil.org/about/news/confronting-COVID-19-local-language-communities> [Accessed 19 November 2020].

participants and teaching staff. The results of this analysis are presented as follows in the [harmonized competency framework](#):

Instrumental competencies:

- Speaking, listening, oral communication;
- Reading, writing, written communication;
- Calculating and using numerical measures and quantities;
- Spatial understanding, temporal understanding, and problem-solving.

Knowledge:

- Socio-educational: health, well-being, citizenship education, environment, communication and digital media, digital work environment (smartphones/computers/ the internet);
- Professional: income-generating activities

Ms Bolly concluded by observing that the framework and processes of RAMAA may be used in other GAL countries to document the progress of learning as a result of participating in literacy programmes. Such data could also help improve the quality of literacy programmes.

## 5. Country perspectives

### *Indonesia*

The Indonesian Government has developed policies to address literacy challenges as well as the learning needs of out-of-school children, said **Mr Cecep Suryana, Coordinator of Literacy Education in the Indonesian Directorate of Community and Special Education**. He highlighted the country's community reading centres (CRCs) and 'literacy villages', both nationwide strategies implemented to promote literacy, and pointed to challenges among people aged 60+ and those with disabilities. COVID-19 has seriously disrupted education services and financing in Indonesia; several actions are therefore necessary to address this, including the promotion of not just individual learning, but small-group learning; retraining of educators, especially in the provinces with heavy concentrations of non-literate youth and adults; development of a national literacy data collection system; and a means of donating books online for distribution among the CRCs. In conclusion, Mr Suryana expressed the need for improved coordination of literacy promotion by local governments, for volunteers to be active in the CRCs, and for revitalizing the literacy villages and online book donation scheme.

### *Nigeria*

**Mr Abba Haladu, Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC)**, said that, out of a total population of 190.9 million (2017), 40 million youth and adults in Nigeria lack literacy competence, and that 10.5 million children are out of school. In this context, the NMEC has developed policy, curricula, learning materials and educator guides, and has extended literacy provision to nomads and people with

disabilities. NMEC is represented in 10 Nigerian States and cooperates with civil society organizations. Mr Haladu spoke about the challenges to promoting literacy in Nigeria, which includes low political will and, consequently, inadequate funding; in terms of professionalism, there is little opportunity for educator training and limited capacity for data collection on literacy programmes. In light of this, Mr Haladu expressed a number of recommendations, including the need for government commitment, stronger coordination, mass production of literacy materials, capacity-building of educators, and greater integration of ICTs. Chief among Mr Haladu's conclusions is the scale of the effort required in view of the high proportion of non-literate people in the country.

## 6. Comments and Q&A

1. A participant from Guinea explained that the country has a literacy rate of 40% (the target is 65% by 2030), with over 3 million people who must be reached. Guinea has a 10-year plan to increase its literacy rate, and is a GAL country. How can digital means improve literacy rates?

*(Haladu) Initial basic literacy instruction is face-to -face, but newly literate groups can use digital resources to improve skills and acquire new knowledge.*

2. A participant from Niger asked, What money is available from funding agencies for literacy? What are the alternatives to ICT use for non-literate populations?

*(Jonas) Financial support often depends on national commitment – for literacy, the benchmark is 3% of the national education budget for non-formal education, including literacy. Resources are therefore clearly inadequate and financial partnerships are necessary.*

*(ICAE) UIL should facilitate the exchange of low /no-tech solutions and blended solutions, as many are left behind by ICT tools.*

3. A participant from Afghanistan asked, How can UNESCO and UIL advocate for greater inclusion of literacy in national education plans?

*(Zholdoshalieva) International financing complements national financing, as shown in the Education Sector Plans (ESP). It is therefore critical that national governments ensure that the ESP has a literacy component, since funders – for example, the Global Partnership for Education –base their input on that plan and the ministries of education work closely with such international funding agencies directly. UNESCO will also continue its global advocacy for an increase in international financing of literacy, especially in the 20 GAL countries.*

## VIII. Session 4: GAL strategic goals: Review and future directions (2)

Under the moderation of **Ms Rakhat Zholdoshalieva**, the session examined the fourth strategic goal of GAL – innovation – and presented further country perspectives to illustrate this goal.

## 1. Innovation

### *Technologies for literacy*

**The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)**, as a new GAL associate member, represented by its President and CEO, Ms Asha S. Kanwar, works in 54 countries to expand access to education and training, in particular through distance and online learning. ICTs have risen to unprecedented prominence in the COVID-19 crisis, although all media, including print, have a place in developing education. Adopting technology should not exacerbate inequalities and should always be planned with the most marginalized in mind. In this regard, COL has developed a low-cost server for remote locations, which can be accessed by mobile devices, as well as interfaces for low-bandwidth situations. It is essential to take full account of context, to put the learner at the centre in identifying content and to set the acquisition and use of literacy within holistic socio-economic development. In this way, any use of technology becomes domesticated; Ms Kanwar drew three lessons from the COL experience:

- Technology will only promote literacy if it is placed in an appropriate social, political and economic context;
- Literacy must be understood as part of the whole development process;
- The social capital of learners is critical to successful learning.

### *Integrating literacy and skills development*

**Ms Christine Hofmann, Team Lead on Skills for Social Inclusion, Skills and Employability Branch at the International Labour Organization (ILO)**, outlined the programmes, major activities and products that address learning and literacy in pursuit of the ILO's efforts to promote skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market. Literacy is seen as a key skill for enabling workers to adapt to the changing world of work and the demands of employment, she said, and underscored the following:

- The future of work calls for increased attention to literacy as a key skill for improving employability in the labour market;
- Other actors, such as ministries of labour, employment and skills agencies, and social partners, are important for activating a lifelong learning ecosystem;
- Embedding literacy into skills development programmes and work-based learning can improve access to and quality of literacy training. Literacy is more relevant and useful when learning is embedded in real-life contexts;
- For disadvantaged groups, linking literacy to productive work in the local community and informal training can enhance employability and lifelong learning;
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), including literacy, is essential for creating pathways to employability, particularly for migrant workers and those in the informal economy.

Ms Hofmann saw positive opportunities for further cooperation with UNESCO, UIL and GAL; for example, in promoting lifelong learning, skills for disadvantaged groups or digitization of training, among other areas. ILO became a GAL associate member in September 2020.



### *Strengthening literacy through reading strategies and programmes*

**Representing the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), Mr Stephen Wyber, Manager of Policy and Advocacy**, first noted that libraries – 430,000 public libraries globally – are organically linked to literacy, producing advantages such as engaging more adults in lifelong learning, putting school students ahead in their reading ability, and providing a resource that disadvantaged children rely on. Libraries are a place of using and improving literacy, for all ages and across contexts, alongside schools and other community institutions. Librarians are key actors in promoting literacy, making both print and digital resources available, with the possibility that libraries can be a ‘one-stop shop’ for other services (government functions, childcare, etc.). As IFLA, an associate member of GAL, seeks ways to promote literacy, it will be useful to explore what works in coordinating library activities around literacy, as well as to understand better how a renewed focus on literacy can strengthen library services. In the context of COVID-19, Mr Wyber concluded by recommending that all libraries should move online to help more users to access online resources.

### *Family learning and other alternative approaches to literacy*

**The Secretary-General of the European Basic Skills Network (EBSN), Ms Graciela Sbertoli**, explained the mission of the network; namely, to promote excellence at the policy level for basic education (understood broadly as literacy, numeracy, digital skills, and second-language learning for immigrants). EBSN has 82 members in Europe and nine elsewhere, and cooperates with the European Commission.

The focus on family and intergenerational learning, one of the areas of the capacity-building series and a thematic group within the network, is based on the synergy between parents and children, where learning goes in both directions – for example, children and young people may teach digital skills to their parents, or literacy to their grandparents, while adults may be more motivated to attend literacy classes when they are linked to the schooling of their children. It is well known that the literacy of parents is a factor in a child’s success in literacy.

Ms Sbertoli noted that it is important to reach those who need initial literacy, hard though that may be. She stressed the need for customized and flexible provision, meeting the learner where they are and taking full account of their context, to make learning relevant. She concluded by introducing EBSN’s capacity-building resources: case studies on family literacy, a blog on outreach strategies, a curated collection of open education resources, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) with expert moderation, and other resources available through its collaboration with the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE). The EBSN resources are aimed at policy-makers and adult education authorities through joint creation of knowledge, dialogue, consultation and support for decision-making.

## **2. Country perspectives**

### *Haiti*

**H.E. Mr Hervé Saintilus, Secretary of State for Literacy in the Haitian Ministry of Education and Professional Training**, opened his presentation by listing the challenges that Haiti faces in further expanding access to literacy, including the need for a database to provide reliable

data on the literacy situation and for a clear national policy for literacy promotion; low budgetary provision and the consequent need for financial partners; and the current health crisis brought by COVID-19. To address these challenges, Mr Saintilus went on to present Haiti's current efforts in literacy. These include the ambitious aim of launching a 'vast literacy campaign' by the end of 2020, backed by high-level government commitment. This will entail new and stronger partnerships in order to bring ICTs into the literacy process, to build a regional and international network of support, and to develop a legal framework for implementing literacy programmes. Mr Saintilus concluded by expressing the confident hope that GAL will support Haiti in these ventures in the coming months and evinced the desire to take part more actively in the GAL network.

### Egypt

Fifty thousand adult learning and literacy classes have closed, and activities of the Adult Education Authority (AEA) have been delayed: this was the impact of COVID-19 described by **Mr Ashour Ahmed Amry, Chairman of the Egyptian General Authority for Adult Education**. He saw this as both a challenge and an opportunity: the challenge is the lack of a technological infrastructure, while the opportunity is to find new and creative ways of addressing the crisis. In this regard, as Mr Amry explained, the AEA is taking specific measures, starting with establishing a 'technological development unit', which will build a digital platform for distance learning; digital materials and curriculum; as well as online training programmes for literacy educators and trainers. A regulatory framework and a guide for distance education will underpin these initiatives, supported by international and civil society partnerships. Mr Amry gave a positive assessment of future prospects for adult education as the use of ICTs is expanded and educators/ teachers acquire the capacity and the commitment to function in this new environment.

### 3. Comments and Q&A

1. A participant from the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO asked the EBSN, How were they able to form a network and get governments involved?

*(Sbertoli) EBSN began from a strong commitment to bring basic education institutions together across Europe and, after some initial setbacks, the European Commission agreed to fund the network through its existing mechanisms.*

2. Organisation internationale de la francophonie (International Organisation of La Francophonie, OIF)

*The OIF intervened to introduce its programme 'Institut de la Francophonie pour l'éducation et la formation' (Francophone Institute for Education and Training, [IFEF](#)), which has four priorities: educator training, gender equality, education in multilingual contexts, and alternative programmes for out-of-school children. Literacy is also a key priority, and IFEF cooperates with the *Conférence des ministres de l'Éducation des États et Gouvernements de la francophonie* (Ministers of Education of French-speaking Countries, CONFEMEN), the *Global Partnership for Education* (GPE), RAMAA and GAL. IFEF has joined GAL as an Associate Member in September 2020.*

3. A participant from Benin addressed a question to COL: Are there programmes to help with technology in literacy programmes?

*In the absence of COL, Mr Atchoarena of UIL was invited to respond. He announced that work on technological tools to support literacy will follow this meeting, collaborating with partners including COL. He noted that an increasing number of tools are becoming available for situations of low/ no connectivity, with increasing use of mobile phones/smartphones for reinforcing literacy skills and providing content relevant to learners' socio-economic and health needs.*

## **IX. Conclusion and the way forward**

Bringing the meeting to a close, **Mr David Atchoarena** took the floor to summarize the outcomes and propose follow-up steps, underscoring the importance of the following:

- New approaches in policy and planning are needed in this time of the COVID-19 crisis; the UIL/ IIEP online course in planning non-formal education is a tool for this process;
- Lack of finances is an ongoing concern for many countries. The need to secure and maintain adequate financing for education as a whole is essential, as the report on the GEM reminded us, but the inclusion of adequate resources for literacy within that must constantly be stressed;
- Enabling learners to access and benefit fully from literacy and other learning entails the use of learners' languages in their own context;
- Multi-sectoral partnerships (e.g. UNHCR, WHO, ILO) have a key role to play in professionalization, socio-economic engagement and – in the current situation particularly – reinforcing health messages;
- Two topics emerged that will merit further discussion among partners: first, the use of technology and promotion of digital learning; second, the training and professionalization of educators/ teachers. The GEC and GAL provide a platform for a possible joint initiative in these two areas, which will be shaped and operationalized in consultation with the GAL member countries and its associate partners;
- The importance of reading and books, in both print and digital form, and their promotion is a further area that will benefit from collaboration among GAL associate members (e.g. IFLA, EBSN, COL).

Mr Atchoarena looked forward to the constitution of the new GAL Steering Group and thanked Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria for volunteering to be part of it. He invited other GAL member states to put their names forward.

He further expressed satisfaction at the large number of partners becoming associate members of GAL and thanked them for their involvement in this meeting.

Finally, Mr Atchoarena expressed his heartfelt thanks to the ministers and representatives of GAL member countries and to GAL associate members, as well as to those, both far and near, who supported the organization of the meeting.

## Annex 1: List of participants

Nr.	Sal.	First name	Surname	Position	Department/ Ministry/ Organization	Country
<b>GAL MEMBER COUNTRIES</b>						
1	H.E. Ms	<b>Rangina</b>	<b>Hamidi</b>	Minister	Ministry of Education	Afghanistan
2	Mr	<b>Sardar Mohammad</b>	<b>Rahimi</b>	Deputy Minister	Literacy Department, Ministry of Education	Afghanistan
3	Mr	<b>Mohammad Yasin</b>	<b>Samim</b>	Senior Technical and Policy Advisor	Ministry of Education	Afghanistan
4	Mr	<b>Abdul Bashir</b>	<b>Khaliqi</b>	Managing Director	Afghan National Association for Adult Education (ANAFAE)	Afghanistan
5	Mr	<b>Alamgir</b>	<b>Hossen</b>	Deputy Director, Data Management and Member-Secretary, SDG Cell	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) Statistics and Informatics Division (SID), Ministry of Planning	Bangladesh
6	Mr	<b>Zinsou Marcellin</b>	<b>Hounzangbe</b>	Director-General	Literacy and Education in National Languages Support Fund, Ministry of Education	Benin
7	Ms	<b>Vanessa</b>	<b>Carneiro Rezende</b>	UNESCO Focal Point	International Affairs Office, Ministry of Education	Brazil
8	Mr	<b>Alexandre</b>	<b>Piana Lemos</b>	Second Secretary	Permanent Delegation of Brazil to UNESCO	Brazil
9	H.E. Mr	<b>Stanislas</b>	<b>Ouaro</b>	Minister	Minister of National Education and Literacy	Burkina Faso
10	Mr	<b>Rémy</b>	<b>Habou</b>	Technical Consultant	Ministry of National Education and Literacy	Burkina Faso
11	Ms	<b>Catherine</b>	<b>Kabore</b>	Technical Advisor	Ministry of National Education and Literacy	Burkina Faso
12	Mr	<b>Golo</b>	<b>Lazare</b>	Inspector, Literacy Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Head of the Monitoring and Statistical Data Analysis Division	Directorate of Literacy and Promotion of National Languages, Ministry of National Education and Civic Promotion	Chad
13	Mr	<b>Wang</b>	<b>Li</b>	Deputy Director	UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED)	China
14	Mr	<b>Chebanni</b>	<b>Ben Said</b>	Director-General	Literacy and Language Promotion, Ministry of Education	Comoros
15	H.E. Ms	<b>Kandia</b>	<b>Camara</b>	Minister	Ministry of National Education, Technical Education and Professional Training	Côte d'Ivoire
16	Mr	<b>Ngolo Aboudou</b>	<b>Soro</b>	Secretary-General	National Commission of Côte d'Ivoire for UNESCO	Côte d'Ivoire
17	Mr	<b>Brahima</b>	<b>Sangaré</b>	Assistant to the Minister	Ministry of National Education, Technical Education and Professional Training	Côte d'Ivoire
18	Mr	<b>Ashour Ahmed</b>	<b>Amry</b>	Chairman	General Authority for Adult Education	Egypt

19	H.E. Ms	<b>Claudiana</b>	<b>Ayo Cole</b>	Minister	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education	Gambia (the)
20	Mr	<b>Lamin</b>	<b>Jarjou</b>	Senior Programme Officer and ASPnet National Coordinator	Gambia National Commission for UNESCO	Gambia (the)
21	Mr	<b>Saikou</b>	<b>Dibba</b>	Principal Education Officer	Adult and Non-Formal Education Unit, Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE)	Gambia (the)
22	Mr	<b>Cheick</b>	<b>Diallo</b>	Head of the Basic Literacy Division	National Direction of Literacy of Formal and Non-Formal, Ministry of National Education and Literacy	Guinea
23	H.E. Mr	<b>Hervé</b>	<b>Saintilus</b>	Secretary of State for Literacy	Ministry of Education and Professional Training	Haiti
24	Mr	<b>Jean Grégory</b>	<b>Calixte</b>	Technical Director	Secretariat of State Ministry of Education and Professional Training	Haiti
25	Mr	<b>Arif</b>	<b>Saeed</b>	First Secretary	Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO	India
26	Mr	<b>Cecep</b>	<b>Suryana</b>	Coordinator of Literacy Education	Directorate of Community Education and Special Education Ministry of Education and Culture	Indonesia
27	Mr		<b>Ngadirin</b>	Sub-coordinator of Assessment	Directorate of Community Education and Special Education Ministry of Education and Culture	Indonesia
28	Ms	<b>Mathal</b>	<b>Alazzawe</b>	Director	Research and Documentation Department in the Literacy Executive, Ministry of Education	Iraq
29	Mr	<b>Gouro</b>	<b>Diall</b>	National Director	Dept. of Non-Formal Education and National Languages, Ministry of Education	Mali
30	Ms	<b>Houretou</b>	<b>Diallo</b>	General Administrator	Fondation Karanta	Mali
31	Mr	<b>Cheikhna</b>	<b>Tourad</b>	Director of Strategy and Planning	Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Original Education	Mauritania
32	Ms	<b>María</b>	<b>de Lourdes Aravedo Resendiz</b>	Academic Director	National Institute for Adult Education (INEA)	Mexico
33	Ms	<b>Kouriram</b>	<b>Hatchabi</b>	Director General of Adult Literacy and Informal Education	Ministry of Education, Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages	Niger
34	Mr	<b>Abba</b>	<b>Haladu</b>	Executive Secretary	National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education	Nigeria
35	Ms	<b>Shaista</b>	<b>Bano</b>	Deputy Director	Academy of Educational Planning and Management	Pakistan

36	Ms	<b>Ndeye Name</b>	<b>Diouf</b>	Director of Literacy and National Languages	Ministry of National Education	Senegal
37	Ms	<b>Fatmata</b>	<b>Kaiwa</b>	Director of Science Education	Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE)	Sierra Leone
<b>GAL ASSOCIATE MEMBERS</b>						
38	H.E. Ms	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Anyang Agbor</b>	Commissioner	African Union	AU
39	Mr	<b>Nicholas</b>	<b>Ouma</b>	Senior Youth Advisor	African Union	AU
40	Mr	<b>Kazuhiro</b>	<b>Yoshida</b>	Co-chair	Education 2030–SDG4 Steering Committee	Japan
41	Ms	<b>Cecilia</b>	<b>Soriano</b>	Programmes and Operations Coordinator	Asia Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education	ASPBAE
42	Ms	<b>Asha</b>	<b>Kanwar</b>	President and Chief Executive Officer	Commonwealth of Learning	COL
43	Mr	<b>Abdel Rahamane</b>	<b>Baba Moussa</b>	Secretary-General	Conference of the Ministers of Education of French speaking countries	CONFEMEN
44	Ms	<b>Graciela</b>	<b>Sbertoli</b>	Secretary-General	European Basic Skills Network	EBSN
45	Ms	<b>Katarina</b>	<b>Popovic</b>	Secretary-General	International Council for Adult Education	ICAE
46	Ms	<b>Maimouna</b>	<b>Sissoko Touré</b>	Programme Specialist	Institut de la Francophonie pour l'éducation et la formation	IFEF
47	Mr	<b>Stephen</b>	<b>Wyber</b>	Manager, Policy and Advocacy	International Federation of Library Associations	IFLA
48	Ms	<b>Christine</b>	<b>Hofmann</b>	Team Lead	Skills for Social Inclusion, International Labour Organization	ILO
49	Ms	<b>Alexa</b>	<b>Joyce</b>	Director	EMEA Future-Ready Skills Microsoft	Microsoft
50	Mr	<b>Benjamin</b>	<b>Marteau</b>	Director	Pix	Pix
51	Ms	<b>Carole</b>	<b>Avande Houndjo</b>	Coordinator of Pamoja West Africa	Pamoja West Africa	Pamoja West Africa
52	Ms	<b>Ethel Agnes</b>	<b>Valenzuela</b>	Secretariat Director	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization	SEAMEO
53	Mr	<b>Raphael</b>	<b>Cada</b>	Senior Associate	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization	SEAMEO
54	Ms	<b>Barbara</b>	<b>Trudell</b>	Senior Literacy and Education Consultant	SIL International	SIL
55	Mr	<b>Ian</b>	<b>Cheffy</b>	Literacy and Education Consultant	SIL International	SIL

56	Mr	<b>Matt</b>	<b>Byrne</b>	Senior Education Officer	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR
57	Ms	<b>Anna</b>	<b>Robinson-Pant</b>	UNESCO Chair	UNESCO Chair in Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation, University of East Anglia, UK	UNESCO Chair
<b>UNESCO HEADQUARTERS</b>						
58	Ms	<b>Stefania</b>	<b>Giannini</b>	Assistant Director-General	For Education, UNESCO	UNESCO
59	Mr	<b>Firmin</b>	<b>Matoko</b>	Assistant Director-General	For Priority Africa and External Relations, UNESCO	UNESCO
60	Mr	<b>Borhene</b>	<b>Chakroun</b>	Director	Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems (PLS), UNESCO	UNESCO
61	Mr	<b>Hervé</b>	<b>Huot-Marchand</b>	Chief of Section	Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development (YLS), UNESCO	UNESCO
62	Ms	<b>Mari</b>	<b>Yasunaga</b>	Programme Specialist	Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development (YLS), UNESCO	UNESCO
63	Mr	<b>Antoine</b>	<b>Cardey</b>	Associate Project Officer	Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development (YLS), UNESCO	UNESCO
64	Ms	<b>Jaya</b>	<b>Conhye-Soobrayen</b>	Programme Specialist, Partnership	Unit for Relations with African Member States and Partnerships	UNESCO
65	Mr	<b>Valtencir</b>	<b>Maldonado Mendes</b>	Senior Project Officer	Unit for Technology and AI in Education, UNESCO	UNESCO
66	Mr	<b>David</b>	<b>Manshreck</b>	Intern	Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development (YLS), UNESCO	UNESCO
<b>UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND GAL SECRETARIAT</b>						
67	Mr	<b>David</b>	<b>Atchoarena</b>	Director	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)	UIL
68	Ms	<b>Rakhat</b>	<b>Zholdoshalieva</b>	Team Leader	UIL	UIL
69	Ms	<b>Madina</b>	<b>Bolly</b>	Senior Programme Specialist	UIL	UIL
70	Ms	<b>Bettina</b>	<b>Reiss</b>	Senior Assistant to the Director	UIL	UIL
71	Mr	<b>Nicolas</b>	<b>Jonas</b>	Programme Specialist	UIL	UIL
72	Ms	<b>Sofia</b>	<b>Chatzigianni</b>	Assistant Programme Specialist	UIL	UIL
73	Ms	<b>Annapurna</b>	<b>Ayyappan</b>	Assistant Programme Specialist	UIL	UIL
74	Ms	<b>Katja</b>	<b>Römer</b>	Communications Specialist	UIL	UIL
75	Ms	<b>Ana</b>	<b>Basoglu</b>	Project Secretary	UIL	UIL
76	Ms	<b>Lambrini</b>	<b>Rapti O'Hanlon</b>	Project Secretary	UIL	UIL
77	Ms	<b>Patricia</b>	<b>Rouland</b>	Project Secretary	UIL	UIL



78	Ms	<b>Nora</b>	<b>Lorenz</b>	Consultant	UIL	UIL
79	Mr	<b>Boxuan</b>	<b>Tu</b>	Trainee	UIL	UIL
80	Mr	<b>Clinton</b>	<b>Robinson</b>	Consultant	UIL	UIL
<b>UNESCO REGIONAL BUREAUX, CLUSTER AND COUNTRY OFFICES</b>						
81	Mr	<b>Albert</b>	<b>Mendy</b>	Programme Specialist	UNESCO Addis Ababa	FU/ADI
82	Mr	<b>Saip</b>	<b>Sy</b>	Project Officer	UNESCO Bamako	FU/BAM
83	Mr	<b>Sameer</b>	<b>Luqman</b>	Project Officer Education	UNESCO Islamabad	FU/ISB
84	Ms	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>El Attar</b>	Project Officer	UNESCO Kabul	FU/KAB
85	Ms	<b>Huhua</b>	<b>Fan</b>	Associate Project Officer	UNESCO Kabul	FU/KAB
86	Mr	<b>Mohamed</b>	<b>Alaoui</b>	National Professional Officer	UNESCO Rabat	FU/RAB

## Annex 2: Agenda

Day 1: Wednesday, 28 October 2020	
<b>10:00 – 10:20</b>	<p><b>Opening session</b></p> <p><b>Welcome remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr Borhene Chakroun, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Systems, UNESCO</li> </ul> <p><b>Opening speech</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko, Assistant Director-General, Priority Africa and External Relations, UNESCO</li> </ul> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr David Atchoarena, Director, UIL</li> </ul>
<b>10:20 – 11:20</b>	<p><b>Session 1: Global and national scenarios of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on education and youth and adult literacy</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr David Atchoarena, Director, UIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>African Union Strategy for Literacy:</b> H.E. Ms Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner, Human Resources, Sciences and Technology, African Union</li> <li><b>Outcomes of the Global Education Meeting:</b> Mr Kazuhiro Yoshida, Co-chair of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, Japan</li> <li><b>Cost of achieving SDG target 4.6 in the 29 GAL countries in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond:</b> Ms Rakhat Zholdoshalieva, Team Leader, UIL</li> </ul> <p><b>Ministerial panel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>H.E. Ms Rangina Hamidi, Minister of Education, Afghanistan</li> <li>Mr Sardar Mohammad Rahimi, Deputy Minister of Education for Literacy, Afghanistan</li> <li>H.E. Mr Stanislas Ouaro, Minister of National Education, Literacy and Promotion of National Languages, Burkina Faso</li> <li>H.E. Ms Kandia Kamissoko Camara, Minister of National Education, Technical Study and Vocational Training, Côte d'Ivoire</li> <li>H.E. Ms Claudiana Ayo Cole, Minister of Basic and Secondary Education, the Gambia</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments and Q&amp;A</b></p>
<b>11:20 – 12:15</b>	<p><b>Session 2: Forging partnerships for advancing youth and adult literacy in GAL countries beyond the COVID-19 crisis and towards SDGs</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr David Atchoarena, Director, UIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>UNESCO-led Global Education Coalition:</b> Mr Hervé Huot-Marchand, Chief of Section, Youth, Literacy and Skills Development (YLS), UNESCO</li> <li><b>Partnerships for innovation and quality</b>  <b>Microsoft:</b> Ms Alexa Joyce, EMEA Future-Ready Skills Director  <b>Pix:</b> Mr Benjamin Marteau, Director</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments and Q&amp;A</b></p>

Day 2: Thursday, 29 October 2020	
14:00 – 14:10	<p><b>Opening remarks</b> Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO</p>
14:10 – 15:10	<p><b>Session 3: GAL strategic goals: Review and future directions (1)</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Mr Hervé Huot-Marchand, Chief of Section, Youth, Literacy and Skills Development (YLS), UNESCO</p> <p><b>Policy and planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GAL survey of policies and programmes:</b> Mr Nicolas Jonas, Programme Specialist, UIL</li> </ul> <p><b>Equity and inclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Literacy issues of refugees, migrants and IDPs:</b> Mr Matt Byrne, Senior Education Officer, Division of Resilience and Solutions, UNHCR</li> <li>• <b>Linkages between language, health and literacy:</b> Mr Ian Cheffy, Senior Literacy and Education Consultant, SIL International</li> </ul> <p><b>Data and monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RAMAA harmonized competency framework:</b> Ms Madina Bolly, Senior Programme Specialist, UIL</li> </ul> <p><b>Country perspectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Cecep Suryana, Coordinator of Literacy Education, Directorate of Community Education and Special Education, Indonesia</li> <li>• Mr Abba Haladu, Executive Secretary, National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), Nigeria</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments and Q&amp;A</b></p>
15:10 – 15:30	<p><b>Break</b></p>
15:30 – 16:30	<p><b>Session 4: GAL strategic goals: Review and future directions (2)</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Ms Rakhat Zholdoshalieva, Team Leader, UIL</p> <p><b>Innovation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Technologies for literacy:</b> Ms Asha S. Kanwar, President and CEO, Commonwealth of Learning (COL)</li> <li>• <b>Integrating literacy and skills development:</b> Ms Christine Hofmann, Team Lead on Skills for Social Inclusion, Skills and Employability Branch, International Labour Organization (ILO)</li> <li>• <b>Strengthening literacy through reading strategies and programmes:</b> Mr Stephen Wyber, Manager, Policy and Advocacy, International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)</li> <li>• <b>Family learning and other alternative approaches to literacy:</b> Ms Graciela Sbertoli, Secretary-General, European Basic Skills Network (EBSN)</li> </ul> <p><b>Country perspectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H.E. Mr Hervé Saintilus, Secretary of State for Literacy, Ministry of Education and Professional Training, Haiti</li> <li>• Mr Ashour Ahmed Amry, Chairman, General Authority for Adult Education, Egypt</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments and Q&amp;A</b></p>
16:30 – 16:50	<p><b>Conclusion and the way forward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr David Atchoarena, Director, UIL</li> </ul>

### Annex 3: Online comments and Q&A

1. Afghanistan: In the transition to blend online and offline education, how are education systems delivering much-needed literacy (linked to ICTs, livelihoods/ decent work, participation health for marginalized women, youth and adults)? How are governments including the non-formal education and community learning centres (providers of literacy programmes) to build resilient and responsive education systems? How are community literacy educators being trained to respond to literacy needs of learners amid the pandemic?
2. UNESCO Chair in Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation, University of East Anglia, UK: Regarding the very limited proportion allocated to adult literacy within most state educational budgets over the decades, do ministers feel adult literacy/ education will be even less of a financial priority due to the current pressing challenges within formal schooling that have been reported in this meeting?
3. Comoros: Would it be possible to set a link for direct contact between education ministers and GAL members under UIL auspices for greater exchange with each other?
4. SIL International: As the ADG/ED said, teachers are increasingly important for learning in COVID-19/ post-COVID-19 times, and this was also reflected in the GEM last week. Digital modes of learning are also expected to increase, yet digital learning has previously been seen as something a learner would do without needing a teacher. Can these two trends – the increased importance of teachers and increased use of digital learning – be aligned?

*Response: The notion that those without digital skills would be able to use technology for learning, as independent learners, is not confirmed by empirical evidence. Teachers' support remains essential for developing digital literacy. At the same time, teachers' competencies must include digital skills and the capacity to use technology for teaching and supporting independent learning. There is therefore a two-fold challenge to address.*

5. Afghanistan: The ADG/ED talked about the need to fill the funding gap for literacy, particularly in the 20 GAL and E-9 countries. What, specifically, has UNESCO done to encourage governments and donors to prioritize literacy?

*Response: UNESCO encourages governments to integrate youth and adult literacy into national policies and plans, and UIL, jointly with IIEP, offers an online course to build national capacities to this effect. UNESCO also enhances the evidence base (e.g. costing study to achieve SDG Target 4.6), and advocates for increased support using multiple platforms (e.g. GAL, the SDG 4 mechanisms, global meetings such as the 2018 Global Education Meeting, the 2019 High-level Political Forum (HLPF), and the G7 France/UNESCO International Conference; International Days). UNESCO will continue advocating for improved financing for adult education and literacy; each GRALE survey helps document change in this area.*

6. Afghanistan: Afghanistan is among the countries with a substantial number of refugees and IDPs. We have defined IDPs and returnees as first priority groups in our National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2030. Does UNHCR have any intervention for this purpose, particularly for those aged between 15 and 45?

*Response: Afghanistan is a great example of inclusion, through its prioritization in the NESP. The main platform of UNHCR in the region is the SSAR (Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees), covering Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and it has literacy indicators for one or more of the countries. However, it is essential that states and civil society request UNHCR to engage as much*

*as possible to support education and literacy. UNHCR is shifting focus to ensure more long-term programming for refugees, IDPs and stateless persons in protracted contexts.*

7. Senegal: The RAMAA competency guide is an opportunity for countries to strengthen linguistic research so that the terminology reflects current realities.

*Response: When the competency guide is used in countries and in literacy programmes, it should be translated into local languages, through cooperation between linguists and literacy researchers.*

8. UNESCO Paris: UNHCR sees expanding the vision of literacy including 'digital literacy' as crucial. What are some examples of digital literacy and literacy tools/ apps used in UNHCR fieldwork?

*Response: UNHCR has a partnership with the Vodafone Foundation to roll out Instant Network Schools and is assessing the effectiveness of this related to teacher skills, digital literacy, community support and identifying best practice, and is also rolling out the Kolibri platform, with teacher assessments. UNHCR also makes use of content from Microsoft and HP.*

9. Pamoja West Africa: What are the next steps for RAMAA? When will the competency guide be generalized in the 12 RAMAA countries?

*Response: UIL will validate the elements this year; the pilot survey will take place next year, pandemic permitting. The guide is already available and the electronic version can be downloaded at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374209>.*

10. Burkina Faso: The pandemic has taught us that distance education is an effective alternative for continuing learning: Could GAL support countries to develop digital literacy learning in specific ways?

*Response: The initiative which aims to support GAL countries in strengthening the digital capacity of educators/ trainers is designed with this in mind. More detailed discussions with partners from GEC and GAL members will serve to give the initiative specific shape and content.*

11. ICAE: UNESCO should support inclusion of adult literacy of programmes from different organizations. It's the precondition to achieve other goals: poverty reduction, equality, sustainable development. Literacy is not merely just another area, but the 'entrance door' to many of them.

*Response: UNESCO has been advocating for literacy as a vehicle to achieve not only SDG 4, but also the other SDGs, indicating reciprocal relations between literacy and other areas of development. On the one hand, literacy is required for development in other areas (e.g. health, agriculture) and, on the other, development in other areas can motivate learners to acquire and further develop literacy skills. UNESCO believes that mainstreaming literacy development efforts in development aid and in national public policies is key.*

12. Gambia: Does EBSN partner or plan to partner with organizations outside of Europe?

*Response: EBSN is very open for informal cooperation with institutions outside Europe and can absolutely consider some form of cooperation. Contact EBSN at: [gs@basicskills.eu](mailto:gs@basicskills.eu).*

13. UNESCO Office in Bamako: Which actions or initiatives are planned or already realized to benefit illiterate populations in the conflict areas in Burkina Faso?

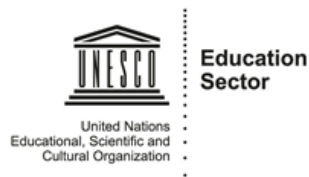
*Response: With the establishment of the technical secretariat for education in emergency situations, a number of actions have been undertaken with partners to continue teaching/ learning in areas with high-security challenges: e.g. the development and the adoption of a national strategy for education in emergency situations; educational alternatives such as the strategy for*

*accelerated education/ pathways, mobile literacy centres; the vocational training for young people in the Sahel (407 talibés, i.e. boys in Quranic schools), the East (469 internally displaced young people) and in the North-Centre (1,170 internally displaced youth and local population). Some of these trainings have received implementation kits. The Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de l'Alphabétisation et de la Promotion des Langues Nationales (Ministry of National Education, Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages, MENAPLN) is also mobilizing resources to increase the capacity of the reception areas to ensure the education continuity of displaced students. An SME 2020–2021 (small- and medium-sized enterprise) action plan regarding education and training in areas with high-security challenges is being implemented by the ST/ ESU (Secrétariat Technique de l'Éducation en Situations d'Urgence) and its partners. In addition, the digitization of content, and its distribution through audio-visual media, supports education continuity. These are some of the activities developed for the education of children, teenagers and young adults in areas with high-security challenges.*

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### UNESCO Education Sector

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.



### The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

