



GLOBAL EDUCATION COALITION

April 2021



M2020/Shutterstock.com

Dear Partners,

This issue of the newsletter occurs at the one-year mark since we launched the Global Coalition led by UNESCO. Although the impact of the pandemic has been incredibly challenging for schools and education systems to deal with, looking back I'm extremely impressed with how we have collectively responded to global school closures. Over the last year, we've seen unprecedented willingness on the part of public and private sector to come together to support students, teachers and leaders.



Thanks to our joint efforts, we've seen digital transformation of schools accelerate in a way that was unimaginable before the arrival of the pandemic. Through partners in the Coalition, governments around the world are moving quickly to bridge the digital divide through the provision or scaling up of teaching and learning platforms.

As part of our own efforts, we are offering free access and technical deployment support to Ministries of Education in deploying Office 365 for education in countries as diverse as Senegal, Cabo Verde and Curuçao. Training programs are ensuring teachers and students get the support they need to use Teams for Education as a hub for learning and teaching, even in low bandwidth environments.

Although the crisis drags on, we need to keep the level of commitment and sense of urgency high: we need to continue to help students to learn no matter what their circumstances.

Thank you for all the incredible work you do to support schools and empower students to ensure learning never stops.

Best wishes,

Anthony Salcito, Vice President Education Industry, Microsoft

Featured project

Read the GEC Annual report 2021- [Supporting learning recovery one year into COVID-19](#)

The path forward for digital learning

Research and innovation to accelerate the adoption of innovative solutions for teaching and learning, towards the digital transformation of education

Regulatory framework for learning in the digital age to ensure compliance with international rules, the safety and privacy of users as well as ethical use of digital systems

Universal access to fulfil the Sustainable Development Agenda and build an Information Society that meets the needs of all

Tackling digital divide to foster greater inclusion and equality in access to learning resources including the most marginalized

Proper investment in next generation technologies and infrastructures, as well as in digital competences for both students and teachers

Public-private partnership to allow more flexible and innovative funding approaches

Science learning without limits

LabXchange creates free, open online platform for science education



MT-R/Shutterstock.com

LabXchange, a free, open online platform for science education – and a joint initiative between Harvard University and Amgen Corporation – launched on January 22, 2020 as COVID-19 was emerging in many countries worldwide. To make teaching easier and keep learning alive, even when learners were stuck at home, LabXchange added 73 content sources to their library, created over 40 interactive and 13 virtual simulations, and curated numerous learning pathways and clusters. They also created several educational resources about COVID-19, including [Coronavirus: From Bats to Humans to Pandemic](#) and [How Could You Make a Coronavirus Vaccine?](#)

LabXchange team members trained over 1,000 educators from around the world on using these tools through 65 workshops and webinars. Over 96% of participants said the workshops met or exceeded their expectations, and more than 90% said they would recommend LabXchange to their colleagues and community.

Over 6.7 million people have visited LabXchange to date, logging 147,203 total learning hours, creating 2,532 LabXchange classes and enrolling 26,166 learners. Most recently, LabXchange has become one of the principal platforms for the Global Learning House, one of the three missions of GEC, that aims to mitigate COVID-19 induced learning losses by providing high quality, cost-free, complementary lessons and tutoring to one million learners.

Supporting young people in their learning and professional journey

Pix and UNESCO are coming together to promote digital literacy

The pandemic has exacerbated the increasing need for digital skills in all aspects of today's life: to work, to learn, and to communicate.

In order to support young people around the world in their learning and professional journey, [Pix, the French online platform](#) open for everyone to assess, develop and certify their digital skills, joined the Global Skills Academy as one of its founding partners in July 2020.

As part of the Global Skills Academy, one of the three missions of the GEC, Pix is making its original platform available free of cost to support the evaluation and development of digital skills and is working closely with trainers from TVET institutions in five African countries.

Through an interactive platform, Pix ensures that learners receive a tailor-made training based on previously assessed skills. Pix provides key insight on the strengths and weaknesses of their trainees to help them adapt their teaching and target the areas where their learners need to improve. Thanks to clues and tutorials available on the platform, trainees can also learn while testing their skills across five areas of digital competence: information and data; communication and collaboration; content creation; protection and security; and digital environment.

#OnlineTogether during the COVID-19 pandemic

EDEN continues support to the global digital learning community

The European Distance and E-Learning Network (EDEN) is committed to providing free, continuous and high quality online support for the international open, distance and e-learning community of education.

One of the ways EDEN has done so is by a series of webinars about the emerging needs, demands, and relevant solutions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic for digital pedagogy, organization and delivery of learning. When the pandemic first hit in 2020, EDEN launched the [#onlinetogether Education in time of a pandemic](#) spring webinar series. These weekly, one-hour webinar sessions took place every Monday, starting in March 2020. Eleven webinars with 35 speakers and moderators – experts and experienced practitioners within the field of open, distance, and e-learning – attracted more than 3,500 participants globally.

This initiative was followed by the autumn [Education in time of a new normal](#) series, with six webinars, 22 speakers and nearly 1,000 participants from 89 countries all over the world. It was a meaningful and educating initiative for the EDEN and global education community to share, to discuss, and to engage with each other, forming a strong alliance in support of educators worldwide in their pivot to online learning.

The [EDEN Annual Conference, Timișoara](#) in June 2020 (held fully online, with over 800 participants) as well as the [EDEN 11th Research Workshop](#) (held online from Lisbon last October, with 200 participants) also helped draw the wider community to the conclusion that quality, integrity and equity of the online learning process is a key concern for us all.

Building digital skills for the future

Virtual Hackathons by Microsoft on AI and Chainlink for social impact

Closing the digital divide can help address the immediate disruption to education systems around the world, but it also exposes the gaps needed by young people to build future digital skills.

In March and April, through GEC partnerships, several virtual hackathons were held. These hackathons created the opportunity to develop creative solutions for sustainability and social impact. They also opened new doors for learners to build and expand digital skills in block chain and artificial intelligence (AI).

As part of the GEC, Microsoft partnered with UNESCO to organize a [two-day virtual hackathon](#) for 80 secondary school girls from 11 countries in Africa, the Arab States and Europe. Across the two days, participating girls undertook practical exercises focused on how artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to better understand sustainability – particularly climate change and biodiversity loss.

From 15 March through 11 April, Chainlink, a block chain oracle solution, partnered with UNESCO as part of the GEC to sponsor a new Social Impact Prize at the [Spring 2021 Chainlink Virtual Hackathon](#) that has over 2,300 engineers registered participating from 100+ countries. The prize will be awarded to the hackathon project that uses Chainlink-powered smart contracts with the highest potential to deliver meaningful social impact within the GEC's three flagships: connectivity, teachers and gender.

A call for research



Thanakorn.P/Shutterstock.com

UNESCO is calling for contributions from partners for a policy brief we are developing on effective strategies to mitigate learning losses and bridge learning gaps. We are compiling success stories and lessons learnt.

If you have research findings, case studies or documented experiences of learners or educators on any of the below, we would be delighted to receive them:

- The extent of learning losses (or learning gains) observed and/or predicted
- The impact of COVID-19 on students' learning
- Ways to mitigate student learning losses
- Design and implementation of catch-up programs
- Ways to scale up catch-up programs for maximum benefit and results
- Factors to consider in order to ensure equal access to catch-up learning programs

For submissions or enquiries, please send them to globallearninghouse@unesco.org by **20 April 2021**.

Events

Scaling Up Digital Learning to Accelerate Progress Towards SDG4 – Virtual Consultation Meeting with Education Ministers of the E9 Countries – 6 April

The Government of Bangladesh and UNESCO convened a virtual consultation meeting with the Ministers of Education of nine of the world's most populous countries (the "E9": Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan). The meeting featured the participation of the UN Deputy Secretary-General, UNESCO, UNICEF, Generation Unlimited, the Malala Fund and a number of stakeholder representatives, including the private sector partners of the Global Education Coalition.

The ministerial meeting took place with a marketplace segment that showcased promising solutions on digital learning in diverse contexts and facilitated initial dialogue on the opportunities for partnerships and collaboration for rapid scaling in the E9 countries. Some GEC members hosted virtual booths to present their solutions and exchange experiences on behalf of GEC's four missions: Pix supporting the Global Skills Academy (GSA), Blackboard and ProFuturo supporting the Global Teachers Campus, LabXchange supporting the Global Learning House and Technovation Girls for Gender Flagship.

For more information on this event, [please visit its official webpage](#).

Global Learning House, 1st partner meeting – date to be confirmed for 19-23 April

Global Learning House (GLH), one of the three missions of GEC, aims to mitigate COVID-19 induced learning losses by providing high quality, cost-free, complementary lessons and tutoring to one million learners.

The Global Learning House team will be hosting the first meeting with partners to:

- Present the GLH's implementation framework and a roadmap which may stimulate further commitment from partners to the GLH's mission.
- Explore learning innovations and solutions offered by GEC partners that might be deployed with speed and at scale to target those most vulnerable to learning losses.
- Engage more partners in providing equitable access to quality, cost-free supplementary learning through the GLH initiative.

The Global Learning House will enter its pilot phase in May, expecting more partners joining the efforts for its operations in subsequent phases. Participation in the meeting is by invitation only, but outcomes of the meeting and direction of the Global Learning House will be shared with all partners in the coming months.

For more information, contact: globallearninghouse@unesco.org

International Declaration on Connectivity for Education, UNESCO advisory group – 27 April

The UNESCO advisory group on an International Declaration on Connectivity for Education will meet for the second time on 27 April to review a zero draft of the declaration.

The declaration is intended to establish normative understandings and principles about the relationship between connectivity and education, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the global pivot to distance learning.

The advisory group is composed of over 20 experts from around the world representing international organizations, private sector companies and non-profit and civil society organizations.

Global Skills Academy, Partner meeting series – dates to be confirmed for April

Under the GEC's connectivity flagship, the Global Skills Academy mission was launched to equip one million youth with employability skills. The Global Skills Academy team will be hosting a series of meeting in April with the aim of bringing partners together to:

- Present their contribution to education institutions
- Exchange bilaterally with countries to shape their contribution
- Show staff from interested institutions how to use their platform

For more information or to join the Global Skills Academy partners, contact gsa@unesco.org

Welcome to new members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following members that recently joined the Global Education Coalition. A full listing of all Coalition members is also [available online](#).



Contact

For more information - or should you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please reach out via email to [the Global Education Coalition team](#). For additional news, you may also refer to the [Global Education Coalition website](#).