



GLOBAL EDUCATION COALITION

March 2021



Dear Partners,

This year, International Women's Day coincides almost exactly with the anniversary of schools closing in almost every country, due to COVID-19: a time of unprecedented challenge for many girls and young women.

But instead of focusing on that grim milestone I want to celebrate the girls' determination to pursue their education even in the most forbidding of circumstances. At Malala Fund, we hear their inspiring stories all the time. Girls who overcome the effects of natural disasters, climate-related events or conflict to go to school. Girls who have refused early marriage or defied parental opposition to get an education.

We also take heart from the many organisations and individuals working tirelessly to innovate, create and provide education solutions to help girls through difficult times. This newsletter showcases examples of such efforts within the Coalition, ranging from government-led projects like the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Girls' Education Challenge's Quality Teaching Framework which outlines factors that determine quality teaching for marginalized adolescent girls, to private sector initiatives such as Dior's Dream for Change awards. All of these aims to help girls learn, aspire and thrive in our ever-changing world.

Although those of us living in richer countries may be lucky enough to see light at the end of the tunnel, COVID-19 hasn't gone away and for girls around the world it continues to throw up new challenges. Understanding their perspectives has never been more important, so I urge you all to share any research undertaken on girls' experiences during this first phase of the pandemic. And let's all continue to work together to ensure that for girls #LearningNeverStops for this and all future International Women's Day celebrations.

Best wishes,

Lucia Fry, Director, Research and Policy, Malala Fund



Featured projects

'Keeping Girls in the Picture' assets

[Homepage](#)

[Social Media pack](#)

[Signature video](#)



[Girls back to school guide](#)

[Youth advocacy toolkit](#)

[Community radio toolkit](#)

[What can I do to help advance girls' education?](#)

[Issue note](#)

[YouTube playlist with stories from Afghanistan, Kenya, Nepal and Somalia](#)

Keeping Girls in the Picture: National campaigns take off



As reported in our February Newsletter, the global [Keeping Girls in the Picture campaign](#) has had a potential reach of more than 360 million people, who are now sensitized to the importance of girls' education and return to school.

Following its success at the global level, the campaign's second and important phase is a roll out in regional and national contexts – where the campaign is most needed.

In Nepal, a radio campaign was launched by UNESCO through its partnership with Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Nepal (ACORAB), entitled “पढ्न देउ, अघि बढ्न देउ” (Let Us Learn, Let Us Grow) targeting young and adolescent girls, parents and caregivers of these learners, and policymakers. Radio dramas and interviews discuss topics such as early marriage and its impact on girls' education, how to ensure girls continued learning during school closures, violence against girls, and the role of parents to ensure their daughter's education. The weekly programme is broadcasted across 26 community radios in five districts, with an estimated reach of 1.8 million people. More than 60 radio stations across the country have voluntarily broadcasted these weekly shows.

In Viet Nam, online and offline activities are foreseen throughout the year to encourage girls' learning and return to school and to reaffirm the importance of girls' education with youth. Here, youth are expected to play a leading role in disseminating messages and engaging parents and communities.

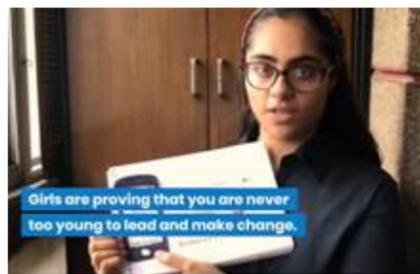
With a focus on sub-Saharan Africa, UNESCO and partners are working to adapt the materials of the campaign to various contexts to make an impact nationally and within communities.

Other activities are being planned at national level and with partners such as the Prada Group to ensure every girl continues learning through the delivery of online and off-line learning opportunities and community advocacy.

Are you interested in supporting the campaign's rollout at the country level? Contact the GEC's Gender Flagship team at: gender.ed@unesco.org

Building girls' digital skills: 2021 Technovation Girls

Technovation and various GEC partners support girls' development in technology



Technovation is again joining forces with other GEC partners to support girls to learn and apply the skills needed to solve real-world problems through technology.

Over 10,000 girls aged 10-18 from under-resourced communities around the world are being mobilized to follow the multi-week [Technovation Girls](#) programme. GEC members Ericsson, Qualcomm, and SAP, will serve as mentors, while Siemens Stiftung, the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, and UNESCO

Field Offices are joining recruitment efforts. 3,600 educators, parents, and mentors will also be engaged to support the girls as they learn, and will be provided with capacity-building training.

This cooperation builds on [Idea Lab](#), a five-week online programme piloted by Technovation in 2020 to scale up girls' complex systems thinking and problem-solving skills and help them to learn to build with technology. The programme engaged 1,500 girls aged 10-18 in Brazil, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan, with support from Ericsson, SAP, Uber, Google, and the Micro:bit Foundation. Check out [this video](#) to see how girls are using AI to change the world.

Technovation will support current partners and connect with potential new partners for the remainder of 2021. This support includes helping girls and communities celebrate their learning journeys at the end of the Technovation Girls season through regional celebration events, and improving the 2022 Technovation Girls curriculum based on partner and participant feedback.

March 12 is the last day to register as a student or mentor for Technovation Girls. Finalists and regional winners will be announced in late June/early July, with the Technovation World Summit to celebrate the hard work of all the teams taking place in August.

Are you interested in supporting the Technovation Girls 2021 edition? Contact the GEC's Gender Flagship team at: gender.ed@unesco.org

Photo credit above: ©Technovation



Enabling teachers, empowering girls

The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Girls' Education Challenge launches framework for teachers

The role of teachers in continuing girls' engagement with learning, supporting the most marginalized to catch up when they return to school, and creating safe, inclusive environments, is more important than ever. Equally important is the need to focus on supporting teachers and their professional development, bearing in mind the stressors that teachers themselves may be facing due to COVID-19 and as schools re-open.

The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Girls' Education Challenge recently launched a [Quality Teaching Framework](#) which outlines factors that determine quality teaching for marginalized, adolescent girls based on practitioner experience from GEC projects.

Adolescence is a key moment during which marginalized girls may face increased health, social and protection challenges, which can put their education at risk.

The Framework is a tool to help practitioners and policy-makers working with marginalized girls to think through and adapt their approaches to teacher professional development, including organisation and delivery, content and support mechanisms.



Global Skills Academy upgrades girls' and women's employability skills

UNESCO and various GEC partners: The contributions of the Global Skills Academy to women and girls' continued upskilling

The Global Skills Academy (GSA) continues to work towards its mission of helping young people build employability skills and resilience, with more than 23,000 women and girls in 22 countries receiving access to the GSA's contributions as of February 2021.

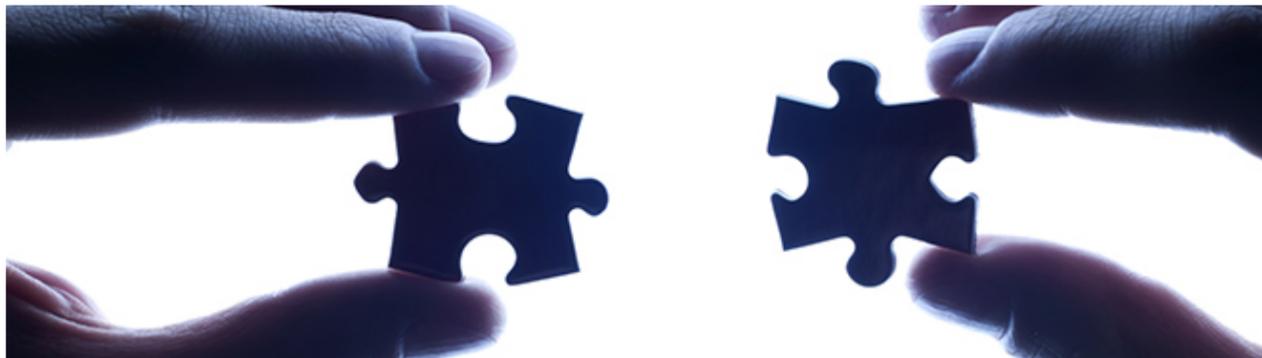
Under the umbrella of the Coalition, the GSA offers high-quality free online trainings to respond to the growing consequences of COVID-19 on skills development and youth employment around the world, with a priority focus on the least developed countries. Women and girls are among those who have been affected the most by the crisis, which has resulted in economic recession and unprecedented disruptions in the labour market and halted skills development.

Training opportunities cover a variety of areas including digital, entrepreneurial and leadership skills and are provided in various languages including English, French and Spanish, targeting not only students, young job seekers and entrepreneurs, but also education professionals such as teachers, trainers, instructional designers and administrative personnel. As part of UNESCO's efforts to cater to different context-specific skills needs, beneficiaries are identified with the help of the global [UNEVOC network](#) to ensure relevant matching the demand and supply.

GSA's current courses providers include members such as Coursera, Dior, Festo, Huawei, IBM, Microsoft, Orange Digital Centres, PIX, and Telefonica. International Organizations such as ILO,

OECD, UNITAR, ITU and WHO will also contribute to the GSA including through skills needs mapping, monitoring tools and resources.

A call for research



As many of you are researching the effects and responses to COVID-19 and its effects on education, we'd like to collect this information to create a mapping that will be widely accessible and shared centrally with all partners.

If you have, or are in the process of, conducting such research that we could add to the repository, we would be delighted to know. You may send the information to your portfolio manager.

We are currently compiling research related to comparing and benchmarking countries' experiences and trends around the following topics:

- Hybrid learning to ensure smooth school reopening and strengthen the resilience of education systems
- Innovative financing to achieve SDG4's lifelong learning agenda in the face of budgetary constraints and ODA contraction
- Catch-up learning programme to mitigate learning loss and gaps and to ensure equal learning opportunities
- Options and innovations in learning assessment in the era of COVID-19 and beyond
- Gender dimensions of COVID-19 school closures (see below for more details).

Depending on the interest of partners, we can develop differential collaborative research work.

Gender dimensions of COVID-19 school closures:

The Gender Flagship, with funding from the Global Partnership for Education, is undertaking a global study on the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 school closures. It considers the gendered ways in which the school closures have affected outcomes in education, health, nutrition, food security and well-being among children and adolescents. It also reviews policies and programmes established to mitigate these effects, and national responses taken to reduce the adverse effects of the school closures. The study includes a literature and data review; quantitative primary data sources to understand programmatic responses; interviews with global actors and policy-makers; and mixed methods country case studies in Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mali and Pakistan. The study, which will leverage the groundbreaking education and gender resource [EGER](#), will be published in August/September 2021, along with other knowledge products.

Are you interested in supporting this research? Contact the GEC's Gender Flagship team at: gender.ed@unesco.org

We will be in contact in due course with further details on accessing the mapping of research collected.

Events

Imagine Cup Junior Virtual AI Hackathon, Girls Edition – 13-14 March

Microsoft and UNESCO will hold a Virtual Hackathon to help girls become AI protagonists: understand what Artificial Intelligence (AI) is, learn how to adapt to a constantly-changing AI landscape, and take ethical control of the development and use of AI.

The Hackathon will bring together 150 high school girls and 30 educators from 18 countries in Africa, the Arab States and Europe. Students and teachers will be taken on a practical journey into the heart of AI. Using a set of collaborative tools, girls will develop widely-applicable machine learning skills and knowledge, with activities to be set in the context of sustainability, biodiversity loss and climate change mitigation. In particular, they will learn to identify ways in which AI is contributing to their lives today, which applications AI should be used for, and how it can be used to address some of the biggest challenges we face.

Through this partnership under the GEC's Gender Flagship, Microsoft and UNESCO are seeking to promote innovation, contribute to closing the gender digital divide, and leverage the creativity of young women developers, designers and data scientists to come up with solutions to local and global challenges.

For more information, contact the GEC's Gender Flagship team at: gender.ed@unesco.org



SAVE THE DATE: Global Skills Academy (GSA) Partners Roundtable – 17 March

The [Global Skills Academy](#) (GSA) is convening the first partners meeting on 17 March 2021. It will take stock of progress, but also explore how the GSA can evolve beyond the pandemic and ensure significant upskilling and reskilling opportunities for youth in the labour market, with a view to embedding the Academy in the broader TVET strategy. For instance, UNESCO is currently looking at ways for the GSA to support the implementation of the Pan African Initiative for the Digital Transformation of TVET. The Pan African Initiative strives to create an ecosystem that will enable digital transformation of TVET and Skills Development in Africa in the coming years. The initiative is planned to be launched on 9 March 2021. More information about the partners meeting will be shared soon with the GSA members.



SAVE THE DATE: Gender Flagship Event | Girls and Women: Leading the Charge to Ensure #LearningNeverStops – 24 March, 9:00 am to 10:30 am EST (New York)

GEC partners are invited to join this Gender Flagship event, being organized together with the UN Group of Friends for Education and Lifelong Learning, and with GEC partners Plan International and the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI).

Held on the occasion of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the event will provide an intergenerational space for dialogue, and profile the extraordinary steps taken by extraordinary girls and women of all ages and in different contexts to support girls' continuity of learning during the school closures and the return to school. Ministers, Ambassadors and other partners will also join forces with young activists to share knowledge on how to "build back equal" through gender-transformative education systems that enable girls and boys to create a more equal world tomorrow.

Simultaneous interpretation are provided in English, French and Spanish.

Register [here](#) or follow the event on [UNWebTV](#). Have questions on the event? E-mail the Gender Flagship team at gender.ed@unesco.org



SAVE THE DATE: One year into COVID: Prioritizing education recovery to avoid a generational catastrophe – 29 March, 10:00 EST (New York) / 14:00 CET (Paris), a high-level Ministerial on-line event

As the world enters a second year living with the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO will convene a high-level ministerial event on 29 March to take stock of lessons learnt, the greatest risks facing education and strategies to leave no learner behind, building on the actions of the Global Education Coalition (GEC) established in March 2020 that marks its first anniversary.

The meeting will provide the global education community with a space for policy dialogue to assess lessons learnt and the most pressing current challenges, informed by the presentation of key data sets. Main participants will be Ministers of Education, high-level representatives of partners within the GEC and of sister agencies. The debate will be framed around three key topics related to:

- **School dropout & learning loss:** what are the top policy measures taken to mitigate against school drop out? What remedial actions have been most successful so far to make up for learning loss?

- **Keeping schools open, prioritizing and supporting teachers:** how to keep schools open as a priority and ensure a safe learning environment? How to ensure that teachers are safe, considered as frontline workers and supported to adapt to a new learning reality?
- **Digital transformation and the future of education:** what are the key strategies for digital transformation of education systems? How can public-private partnership contribute to advancing the digital transformation? How has COVID-19 impacted the future of education?

UNESCO will be contacting Ministers of Education, through Permanent Delegations, to secure their participation.

Dream for Change e-Conference – 31 March

On 31 March, **Christian Dior Couture** and **UNESCO** will co-organize the 'Dream for Change' e-conference under the umbrella of the Global Skills Academy, rewarding the best projects from last year's Dior mentorship programme while launching the new promotion. This year, 200 girls from 20 countries (including four of the world's nine most populous countries) will profit from the Academy's offer through the Dior mentorship programme. The programme provides the opportunity to attend more than 15 courses on Autonomy, Inclusion, Creativity and Sustainability, culminating in each mentee creating a local project that supports girls' empowerment.

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](#).