



# GLOBAL EDUCATION COALITION

May 2021



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Dear Partners,

This newsletter is issued as the month of May starts, marked by the International Labour Day, the day of labour and solidarity. As the crisis brought upon by Covid-19 still looms large over the career perspectives of millions of young people, the ILO reaffirms the value of access to decent work and of solidarity as key components of a successful recovery.



Tremendous efforts have been made by teachers, trainers and education staff to sustain learning for young people, through an enhancement of digital learning offer both in general education and vocational training. This effort needs to be solidary. We must strive to support the most vulnerable learners, including women and girls, young migrants, learners in informal sectors, the persons with disabilities, the less affluent, as well as the ones who have reduced access to digital solutions. Teachers and trainers also require adequate resources and skills to perform their role successfully. It is therefore important to continue investing into education and skills development, including through public-private partnerships for the development of telecommunication infrastructure, access to digital equipment, bandwidth, as well as development of learning platforms and contents.

Access by young people to the labour market and the perspective of a secure livelihood with professional and personal realization also need to be a reality. Helping youth seize the opportunities associated with the growth of a new economy based on digital work, creativity and environmental sustainability is fundamental.

Members of the Coalition should intensify their efforts to offer support to students and trainees in understanding the skills of the future and develop the skills they will require to navigate a dynamic labour market and integrate into diverse and sustainable workplaces.

The ILO, in its contribution to these joint efforts, is supporting processes for the digitalization of national skills systems, providing access to digital skills development tools to forcibly displaced youth and rural populations as well as tracing our impacts through mobile solutions to empower trainees and graduates to speak about their needs.

In this May of 2021 the ILO invites all Members of the Coalition to stand in solidarity for a brighter future for all the young people preparing to enter the world of work.

With Best wishes,

Alette Van Leur, Director, Sectoral Policies Department, ILO

## Featured project

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

### Global Skills Academy Results

Overall number of beneficiaries reached

**142,000**

Number of TVET institutions mobilized

**150 TVETs in 56 Countries**

Number of GSA partners

**13 partners**



### Global Skills Academy

Targeting one million beneficiaries, to adapt to changes in the workplace and impacts of rapid digitalization



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In celebration of Labor Day, the Global Education Coalition (GEC) is showcasing the progress of [Global Skills Academy \(GSA\)](#), one of three missions launched under the umbrella of the GEC in the second half of 2020, along with the [Global Teacher Campus](#) and the [Global Learning House](#).

#### What is the Global Skills Academy?

The Global Skills Academy (GSA), was launched in July 2020 on World Youth Skills Day with the goal to help **one million young people build skills for employability and resilience by July 2021**. Today, this pilot project is accelerating its implementation phase and slowly planning to go beyond the originally urgent response to the pandemic.

The GSA is currently made up of 13 partners who include both private sector and international organisations. It offers high-quality free online trainings to respond to the growing consequences of COVID-19 on skills development and youth employment, with a priority focus on the least developed countries, women, young people and non-formal workers, who have been affected the most by the crisis.

#### Who does the GSA reach?

Training opportunities target students, young job seekers and entrepreneurs, but also education professionals such as teachers, trainers, instructional designers and administrative personnel.

#### How does the GSA work?

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. New channels are currently being explored to reach more beneficiaries. While most of the GSA partners' contributions revolve around training for youth and adults, some key partners offer quantitative and qualitative measurement tools and important networks. Additional partners from the GEC are encouraged to join the GSA.

#### What is the value of this multi stakeholder partnership?

The pandemic highlighted the urgency of digital learning and equipping youth with the right skills to improve their employability and the transition to a disrupted world of work. To build more inclusive, sustainable and resilient economies and societies, a massive investment in education and skills training is required to respond to these challenges. This expanded and multi-sectoral partnership can help narrow the gap between demand for skills and the workplace.

Skills development through the GSA partnerships

## Key competencies for transitioning to and navigating a complex labor market

Alongside the need for essential digital skills, young people also need a cognitive, creative, social and emotional skillset to successfully transition to and navigate today's labor markets. As a consequence, the GSA offers a rich variety of these key competencies as part of its portfolio, which can be categorized under three thematic areas – employability, digital, and leadership skills.

Partner contributions supporting the development of foundational digital skills are [PIX](#) and [IBM's Open PTECH program](#), while others geared towards professional digital competencies are [IBM's Skills Build program](#), [ITU Academy](#), [Coursera for Campus](#), [Huawei ICT Academy](#), [Microsoft's Learn platform](#) and Fundación Telefonica's [Conecta Empleo Platform](#). Learners can benefit from these courses regardless of their digital proficiency. However, since employability skills require soft skills the digital courses include elements such as critical thinking, digital communication, digital pedagogy, content creation, cybersecurity, programming, big data, Cloud computing or Artificial Intelligence, among others.

*“Digital skills are the workplace tools now and in the future. Everyone must develop these skills in order to be able to either access training remotely, navigate in their everyday life where services for citizens are digitized, and have more opportunities for employment, since digital technology is present in almost all economic sectors and occupations.” - Ms Aicha Zemni, Project Manager at the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Professional Integration, Tunisia referring to the GSA's work with Pix*

### Most recent partner contributions:

- [Conecta Empleo](#) by Fundación Telefónica is a free training program in digital skills for employment and entrepreneurial thinking (hard and soft skills). It is offered in Europe and Latin America. Their aim is to connect users with the new work reality and prepare them for the most in demand digital jobs through free quality training, career guidance, free MOOC courses and tools, such as the Virtual Professional Counsellor, and the Employment Map to enhance key ICT skills to adapt to the new challenges of the digital age.
- The [OECD Skills for Jobs Database](#) provides country-level information on the alignment between the demand and supply of a wide range of skills. This includes cognitive, social and physical skills which are disaggregated into more than 150 job-specific knowledge areas, skills and abilities, in more than 40 OECD countries and emerging economies.
- The ILO has recently been working on a tracking system for graduates of Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET), to capture trainees and graduates' views on their skills training programmes, and to collect data on their employment outcomes after completing a training programme. As part of the ILO contribution to the Global Skills Academy, the [Skills Tracker](#) could prove to be a valuable tool providing relevant information about the impact on the GSA beneficiaries.
- The [Women@DIOR](#) mentorship program aims to empower young female students around the world by supporting them in developing their leadership skills so that they can be agents of change. Previously only available in a handful of countries, DIOR has geographically expand its talent pool to provide even the most disadvantaged female students an opportunity to receive courses on leadership and inclusion. [Watch this video from the launch event.](#)
- Partners such as [Festo](#) and [Siemens Stiftung](#) provide Open Educational Resources (OERs) on Water Technology and STEM respectively, helping individuals gain an understanding of the global natural challenges, relevant for responsible citizenship. The [WHO Academy](#) is currently developing a course to be offered through the GSA centered around the various impacts of climate change on health.

## Outcomes of the Global Skills Academy's first partners' meeting

### *A quest for scaling up the Global Skills Academy to support skills development*

UNESCO organized the first partners' meeting of the GSA on 17 March 2021. The online partners meeting provided a space to take stock of progress and discuss among partners the next steps of the GSA, with a view to improve and accelerate the implementation of the pilot phase.

Partners provided essential feedback to help tackle some of the challenges encountered during the pilot phase, and provided input on how the GSA can transition to support learners in the upcoming recovery phase.

Key elements that will be required to scale up the GSA beyond the pilot phase:

- Harnessing the full potential of UNESCO’s internal global network of offices, an ideal entry point at national level to reach a greater number of education institutions, as well as the networks of partners from international organizations to ensure the widest possible reach of beneficiaries.
- Tracking of beneficiaries and monitoring of implementation. This will allow for adequate follow-up and impact evaluation.
- Understanding and obtaining a better overview of skills needs at country level so that the GSA can effectively cater to them.

Read the web article from the meeting [here](#).

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## The Future of the Global Skills Academy

### *Building a sustainable vision of the GSA to meet current and future skills needs*

The need for readily accessible quality training content will not fade away with once the pandemic ends. Many institutions and individuals are facing important challenges, whether they are related to the lack of technology infrastructure, the accessibility of distance learning platforms, teachers' capacity to support distance learning, or financial resource constraints.

The GSA's team is currently working on a new strategy to reach as many learners as possible so that they can benefit from the partners' contributions and have the opportunity for upskilling and reskilling.

As new channels of implementation are currently explored, UNESCO also wishes to engage with partners to collaboratively define relevant monitoring mechanisms.

Therefore, UNESCO encourages the GSA's partners to collaborate further and support the shaping of a sustainable version of the GSA, both driven by the current and future skills needs.

## A call for research



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COVID-19 has intensified the need for reskilling and upskilling the workforce. Workers in a range of sectors – such as tourism, retail, manufacturing and healthcare – have seen their jobs radically change in the past few years, and this has accelerated during the pandemic.

We call on GEC members to join forces to map major reskilling and upskilling programmes, identify the most effective public-private partnerships, appropriate sources of funding and data to track at national, regional and global levels progress.

Please contact us at the [Global Education Coalition team](#)

## Events

### **SAVE THE DATE: Celebrating Africa Day with an on-line event “The Digital Learning Wave in Africa: The Role of Local Ecosystems” – 25 May, 10:00 CEST**

In celebration of Africa Day, UNESCO will convene an event on 25 May to discuss how to advance digital learning in Africa by building on the actions of the Global Education Coalition (GEC) and exploring opportunities to further invest in technology --including open education resources -- to ensure continuous and equitable learning in Africa.

The increased interest in investment in leveraging technology to support education systems is an opportunity to create diverse cross-sectoral partnerships to build a new future of education for the continent building on goals from Africa 2063, Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) and SDG4.

The UNESCO hosted event will bring together a cross section of actors from the African Union, multilateral organizations, private sector, EdTech organizations and Tech funds.

The event will aim to answer and propose tangible actions to the following questions:

- Ensuring Digital Learning – especially for the most marginalized: What needs to be done to accelerate progress on digital learning and close the digital divide in terms of support, collaboration and knowledge sharing? How can Global Education Coalition partners support this acceleration?
- Developing thriving digital learning local ecosystems: What effective strategies should be in place? What capabilities are required? How to attract and mobilize funding? How should partners coordinate to support local ecosystems?

More information on the meeting and how to prepare to participate will be forthcoming.



### **SAVE THE DATE: Leveraging frontier technologies and enhancing local education ecosystems: Building on Alan Turing's legacy to support the continuity of learning – 23 June, 13:00 CEST**

The Global Education Coalition will hold a virtual Forum to discuss how to advance digital learning on Monday, 23 June 2021, Alan Turing's birthday. One of the 20th century's great mathematicians, Turing made profound contributions to a wide range of fields including computer science, artificial intelligence and engineering. What would he have invented if faced with pandemic-disrupted education systems today?

In advance of this event, UNESCO is **collecting information** about the EdTech responses that have facilitated hybrid learning during COVID-19 and have empowered local learning ecosystems. Please contact us at the [Global Education Coalition team](#) for submissions and more details.

Discussions at the forum will draw lessons from education responses during the past year and explore opportunities – and obstacles - to leverage frontier technology to ensure continuous and equitable learning globally. By the end of the Forum, concrete proposals on how to support hybrid-learning ecosystems are expected, arising from active participation of GEC members.

More details will be shared closer to the event date.

## Welcome to a new member

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following member 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](#).