



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Education  
Sector

# Supporting learning recovery one year into COVID-19

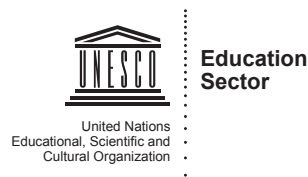
The Global Education Coalition in action

March 2021

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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.



## Global Education Coalition

The Global Education Coalition launched by UNESCO is a platform for collaboration and exchange to protect the right to education during this unprecedented disruption and beyond. It brings together 175 members from the UN family, civil society, academia and the private sector to ensure that #LearningNeverStops.



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**“Launched at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Education Coalition has become a force for change. Based on solidarity and innovation, it exemplifies the new model of cooperation we need for our education systems. Its 175 members, active in more than 100 countries, contribute to ensure continuity of learning in all circumstances, as we look to transform and reimagine the education of the future.”**

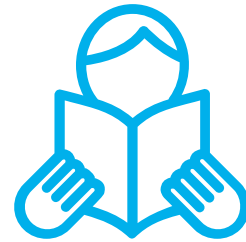
**Audrey Azoulay,**  
*UNESCO Director-General*



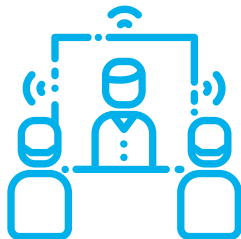
# Key highlights



**175 Global Education Coalition** members are currently planning actions in, or already supporting, **112 countries**



At least **400 million learners** and **12 million teachers** are benefiting directly or indirectly from Global Education Coalition actions



**Digital learning** is at the centre of Global Education Coalition actions, including online platforms, education resources, digitized curricula and assessments



**233 projects** have been implemented since the launch of the Global Education Coalition, ranging from standalone actions to comprehensive initiatives



Joint series of knowledge sharing events hosted, including **11 webinars** broadcast between June 2020 and February 2021, which reached almost **30,000 individuals** from at least **151 countries**



**5 global surveys** conducted to collect data on education responses to COVID-19 and produce comparative data



**4 large-scale missions** aimed at equipping **1 million youth** with employability skills, providing **1 million teachers** with remote learning skills, helping **1 million learners** benefit from remedial learning in STEM, and supporting **5 million girls** to fulfil their right to education in the 20 countries with the greater gender disparities in education



**3 large campaigns launched** to ensure learning never stops and protect disadvantaged groups, including the *Save our Future campaign*, a campaign for teacher protection, and the *Keeping Girls in the Picture campaign*



Innovative responses through **unique partnerships** between multilateral organizations, the private sector, non-profits and civil society, networks and associations, and the news media







## Introduction

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, UNESCO launched the Global Education Coalition (GEC), an international multisectoral partnership. The Coalition was established to meet the urgent and unprecedented need for continuity of learning as the pandemic disrupted education systems across the world. This situation has dramatically exacerbated inequalities in access to educational opportunity and in some cases, caused significant interruptions to teaching and learning. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that over 1.5 billion learners — representing 91 per cent of the world’s school population — were affected at the peak of the crisis.

To address this challenge, the GEC has brought together key education actors. [Leaders around the world have responded positively to the GEC’s mission.](#) Heads of UN agencies, chief executives, foundation heads and civil society leaders recognized that they share the common goal of forging cross-sector and multi-stakeholder cooperation, with the guiding principle of leaving no one behind. The Global Education Coalition currently has 175 partners. The Coalition is operating in **112 countries**, deploying large cross-country missions such as the Global Skills Academy, which aims to equip one million youth with employability skills, and conducting large-scale data collection and advocacy such as the joint global survey on education response (UNESCO, United Nations Children’s Fund, World Bank, and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development).

One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, even with efforts around the globe to support school reopening, education and training systems still face significant disruptions.<sup>1</sup> Ensuring the continuity of education, including blended learning, remains a top priority.

In 2020, the GEC worked to **Respond** to the crisis: creating innovative partnerships and engaging in concrete initiatives and global missions. In 2021, building on its achievements and innovative partnerships, the GEC will focus on **Recovery**. While there are a wide range of issues and challenges that education systems are facing in recovery, the urgency is to invest to offset the learning losses, minimize drop-out rates, and mitigate the potential downstream economic, labour market and social impact. GEC partners will work to support countries to reopen schools safely, bring all learners back to school, organize effective remedial learning, support learners' well-being, train teachers, fill digital divides and equip youth with the skills for work.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-figures-show-two-thirds-academic-year-lost-average-worldwide-due-covid-19-school>

# Objectives

The GEC is a partnership effort that aims to help countries to:

**1**

Respond to educational disruption caused by school closures

**2**

Scale up distance learning and connect every learner and education institution to the Internet

**3**

Manage effective recovery and the return to school and learning

**4**

Advocate, collect data, and build and share knowledge, to strengthen the resilience of education and learning systems and reimagine the future.



The Coalition is committed to equity and inclusion in access to quality education and lifelong learning for all, in line with the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4), leaving no one behind.

## Our stakeholders

### *Coalition members*



The Coalition now counts 175 institutional partners representing a wide range of expertise and competencies, including multilateral organizations, the private sector, non-profit organizations and civil society, networks and associations, and the news media. As part of its membership, each partner organization makes an in-kind commitment of resources and services to the COVID-19 education response.

The GEC is an open platform with agile coordination methods. UNESCO's role is to broker and facilitate cooperation, build synergies, and help match country needs with the resources and services of Coalition members.

Member profiles and their commitments can be searched on [the GEC website](#).

### *National governments*



Governments can request assistance from the Coalition via formal correspondence with its Secretariat. They can also inform the Coalition of their engagement to ensure that partners' responses are coordinated.

### *Beneficiaries*



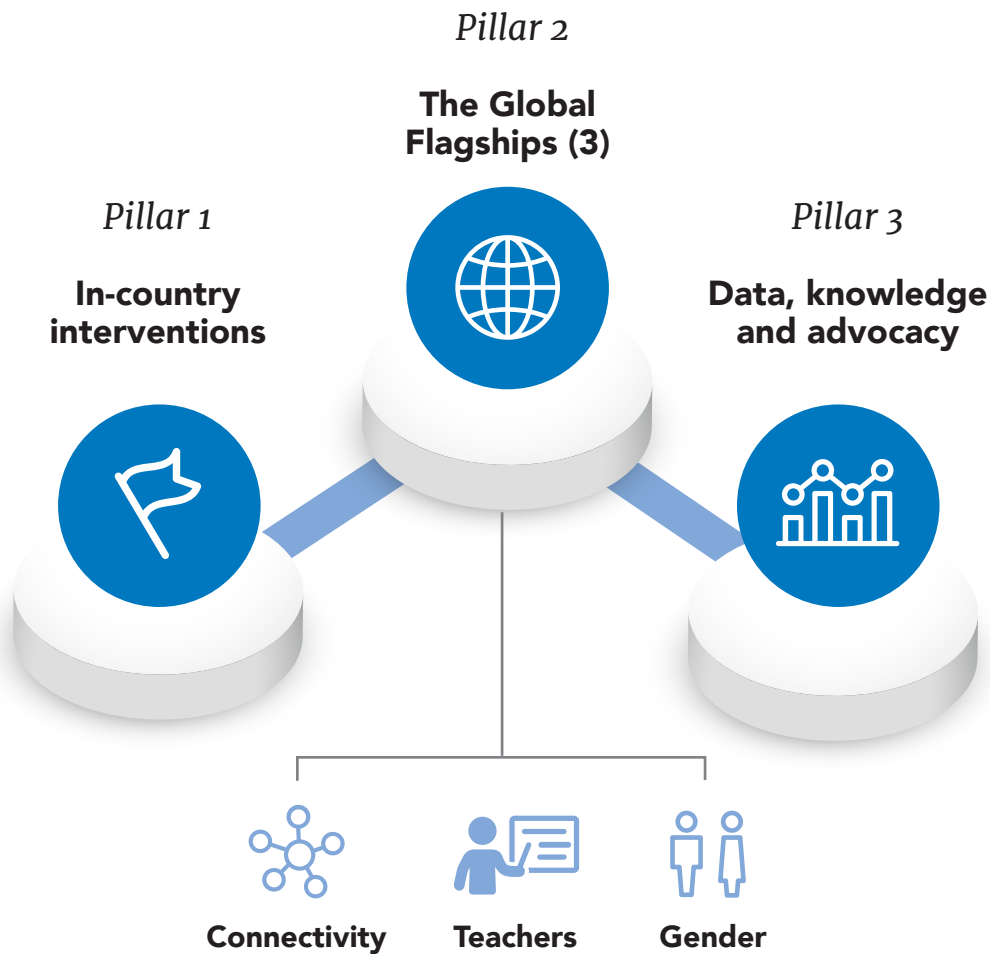
Those benefiting from the contributions of Coalition members include government departments in charge of education and training services, as well as education actors at central, regional and local levels. Depending on the nature and scope of the programme being launched, this might include planners, schools, teachers, and/or learners.

### *Donors*



Multilateral and bilateral organizations, governments, philanthropies and other donors can provide funding to support Coalition actions and to complement or expand the member contributions.

## How the Coalition operates



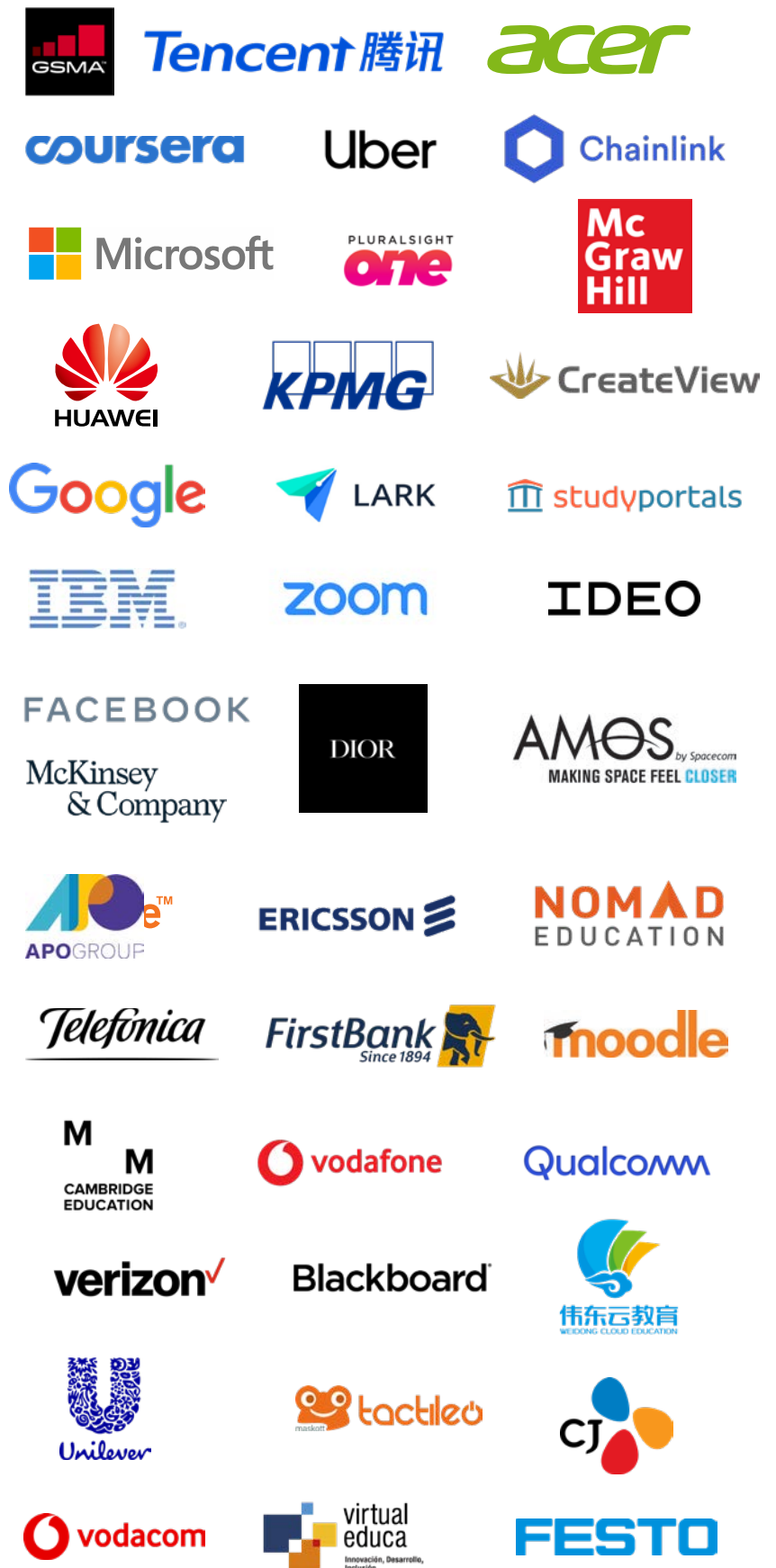
## This report

This is an annual report of the Coalition and builds on the [inaugural report](#) published in September 2020. To prepare this report, we analyzed programmes implemented since the founding of the Coalition in March 2020 and engaged Coalition members in sharing their experiences and initiatives. This report covers activity between March 2020 and March 2021, with special focus on the six-month period since the last report.

## Multilateral partners



## Private sector



# Civil society and non-profit organizations



## Network and associations



## Media partners









# The GEC's model of global cooperation

GEC partners collaborate with one another under the umbrella of the Coalition to achieve shared goals. UNESCO serves as a convening, coordinating and link-making founding member. GEC members are currently planning actions or already supporting **112 countries** in the three pillars in all regions of the world. Actions underway differ by country in terms of scope and mobilization of partners and cover a wide range of activities, from implementation of full work plans to standalone activities aligned with GEC's mission.

Projects  
in Action

**167**

Projects  
Completed

**66**

Total  
Countries

**112**

Total  
Partners

**175**

Total  
Projects

**233**

Most GEC programmes engage two or more members. The benefit of this model is the scaling up of programmes that would not be possible with single-partner projects.



### **Mobilize**

actors and resources to develop effective and unified responses



### **Coordinate**

action to maximize impact and avoid overlap and reach the disadvantaged



### **Match**

on-the-ground needs with local and global solutions



### **Provide**

distance education, leveraging hi-tech, low-tech and no-tech approaches

Decisions about how and where to deploy assistance are based on three factors: (a) country needs on the ground, (b) resources of Coalition members, and (c) the potential for impact with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups. UNESCO assesses all requests received from countries and works to match them with commitments and offers of assistance from Coalition members. All deployments are demand-driven.

## A proven, mission-oriented solution

Examples throughout this report demonstrate that the new model for education response embodied by the Coalition provides two key benefits in the way its projects are implemented:

- They are fast, efficient, and able to leverage resources not normally available.
- They deliver results and yield impact.

In the short term, GEC contributions do not replace national infrastructure that education systems have built over decades. Instead, the Coalition engages new actors that would not have been obvious partners, such as telecommunication companies, the education technology industry and media organizations, to complement and support national efforts to ensure continuity of learning. This unique model of collaboration has been mirrored at the national level, with Peru, for instance, creating a local chapter with 42 members across sectors who have already implemented 73 initiatives, with 63 new initiatives soon to start. In the longer term, the proven innovative solutions tested in the context of the Coalition's work will be reviewed and harnessed to support national efforts and nurture local ecosystems to advance education systems' resilience and transformation.



# The Coalition in action

- The Global Education Coalition works to support member states in close coordination with education development partners as well as the private sector, and other partners focused on health, food security, nutrition and other communities.
- The Coalition works within established mechanisms, such as UN country teams, local education groups, and education clusters, and mobilizes other stakeholders, including telecommunication operators and the mass media.
- The Coalition takes an intersectoral approach involving coordination beyond education ministries and institutions to ensure access to distance learning and open education resources.

Three broad areas of support are offered:



**In-kind support** such as resources, technical expertise, tools or other non-financial support is deployed to enable a country's response plan to be implemented.



**Financial resources** are committed by some Coalition members to support implementation of countries' response plans in three focus areas, or flagships.



**Further engagement** of non-GEC partners: several non-GEC partners are engaged and contribute to some of the Coalition programmes, in particular the Gender Flagship and the Teacher Flagship.

## *In-kind support*

### **GEC partners pledge staff support**



GEC partners KPMG, Microsoft, and the World Food Programme have each provided UNESCO with critical staff resources to support the Coalition's operations and to further its mission. These staff members, provided pro-bono from partner organizations for a period of up to six months, have helped in the development of internal database creation and reporting, communications strategies, and overall partner support and project management. Team members represent a variety of regions and were deployed by KPMG International, KPMG in the Cayman Islands, KPMG in East Africa (Kenya office), Microsoft's Education team, and by World Food Programme's headquarters in Europe.

## *Financial resources*

### **GEC partners are contributing financial resources to support Coalition actions**

#### **Consortium of UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank, funded by a GPE grant**



UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank have joined together to help countries eligible for education sector programme implementation grants (EPSIG) from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to adopt evidence-based measures to respond to the pandemic.

The consortium is supported by a US\$25 million grant that prioritizes cross-country approaches ensuring access to learning for the most marginalized children, such as girls and children with special needs and disabilities. The response is clustered around three areas: enabling global and regional coordination; ensuring continuity of learning at scale that reaches the most marginalized; and monitoring and evaluating impact. The consortium's actions complement and strengthen the GPE catalytic funding provided to countries.





**Education Above All Foundation:** The Education Above All Foundation provided US\$10 million funding in September 2020 to cover the rehabilitation of education institutions in Beirut and surrounding cities following the Beirut port explosion.

**Huawei:** Huawei donated a total amount of US\$5 million, which aims both at supporting beneficiary countries in responding to the COVID-19 crisis and building resilience and sustainability of education and training systems by mainstreaming digital technologies in Africa.

**GIZ (German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH):** GIZ supports the Global Education Coalition through a contribution of €300,000 for the development of quality distance education and training in Latin America and the Caribbean, offering coordinated support to 21 countries.

**Dubai Cares:** Dubai Cares provided US\$700,000 to support the preparation and adoption of an International Declaration on Connectivity for Education.

## Further engagement

### Non-GEC partners' contributions



**Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation:** In 2021, the Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation for Distinguished Academic Performance will support the Global Teacher Campus to expand its operations and reach-out to a larger number of beneficiaries.

## *Pillar 1: Country-level engagement*

The GEC's in-country engagement and interventions have been developed and deployed in response to government action plans and critical needs. The GEC has prioritized Africa in its initial operations. In many cases, countries' interventions intersect with the flagships. Actions are structured around the following priorities:

1

The first priority to support overall coordination, **policy planning, and monitoring** is focused on helping countries develop adequate policies and strategies to ensure learning never stops. This work also includes supporting countries in building towards universal access to quality inclusive education and gender equality, skills development and lifelong learning opportunities — in particular for the most disadvantaged groups affected by COVID-19. Areas of emphasis under this priority include sector management and governance, as well as monitoring and evaluation systems including Education Management Information Systems (EMIS).

2

The second priority which focuses on curriculum, **online and distance learning, including television and radio** is dedicated to supporting countries in developing remote learning leveraging high-, low- and no-tech solutions, as well as in undertaking curriculum adjustments and assessments. This also extends to addressing the challenges of the digital divide: raising awareness, developing digital literacy and aiding the learning journeys of those who are not connected. This priority ensures that technology and innovation are leveraged to bridge the **digital divide** through methodological guidance, technical support, resource and platform development, and capacity development.

3

The third priority to **support teachers and capacity development** recognizes that the response to education crises, the development of remote learning, and resilience in education recovery, requires that capacity be built in a wide range of stakeholders and that support be provided to local ecosystems development.

4

The fourth priority relates to **keeping schools open and ensuring the health and well-being** of learners and teachers. It covers actions to keep schools open as a priority and ensure a safe learning environment, including ensuring that teachers are safe, considered as frontline workers and supported in vaccination and testing.

## Scope of projects in action

Adapting curriculum content	Supporting overall coordination
57	52
Online learning platform	TV or radio
112	62
Health and well being	Planning distance learning
74	77
Curriculum transition	Supporting teachers
48	83

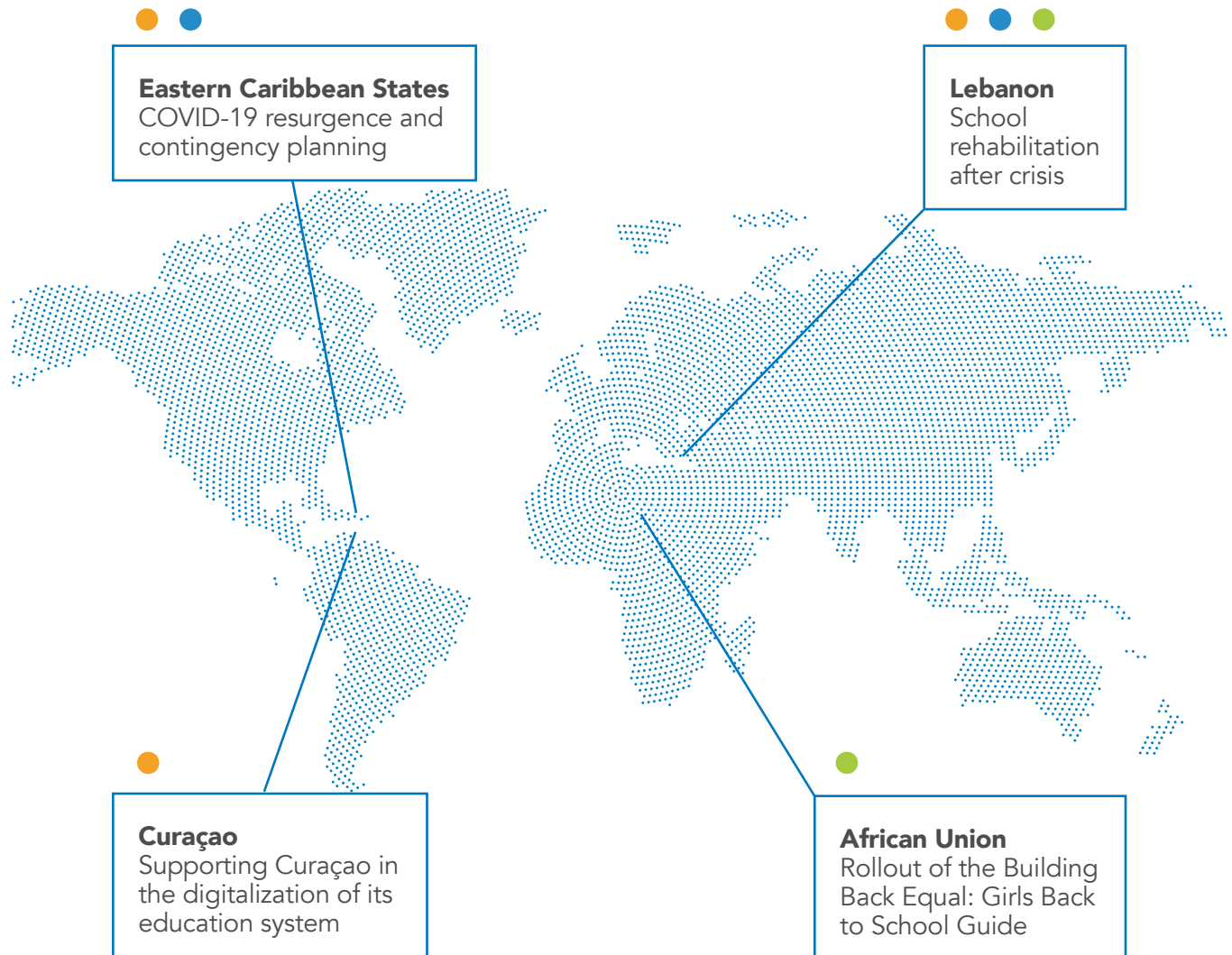
*Certain projects incorporate multiple areas of scope.*

## *Policy planning and monitoring*

### **GEC actions in this area included:**

- 1** Technical assistance to education authorities at national and regional levels in identifying needs, developing plans and adopting appropriate solutions regarding remote learning strategies and platforms, including the mix of technology to be adopted (online, television, radio and other means) and efforts needed to close the gender digital divide and other barriers to remote learning.
- 2** Policy advice and dialogue regarding decision-making on key issues including high-stakes exams, school reopening, monitoring of distance learning and formative assessment, teacher support and development, and the integration of gender and equity in the education response.
- 3** Support for coordinated response planning and partnership development to design and implement the education response to the pandemic, at national, subnational, community and school levels in a way that is gender-responsive and aims to build back equal.
- 4** Support for rapid analysis and impact assessment regarding equity, including identification of vulnerable groups and sources of exclusion, such as connectivity, equipment, gender norms and expectations, health and nutrition and socio-emotional challenges.
- 5** Support for specific subsectors including technical and vocational education and training, adult learning and literacy, and higher education.
- 6** Support for government and ministry communication plans.
- 7** Development of appropriate monitoring systems for response, including data collection and analysis, based on global monitoring and tools developed and support to local data collection and use.

## Key results and examples of achievements



**Teacher  
Flagship**



**Connectivity  
Flagship**



**Gender  
Flagship**



### Curaçao — Supporting Curaçao in the digitalization of its education system



As part of the Global Education Coalition launched by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Curaçao (MinESCS) and Microsoft signed a Memorandum of Understanding to support Curaçao in its digitalization process of the education system. The UNESCO Office for the Caribbean initiated consultations and bilateral dialogue between member states in the Caribbean and Microsoft to identify needs, challenges, and priorities for resource mobilization to empower teachers, enable connectivity to close the digital divide, and assure gender equality in the Caribbean region. As a result, the new partnership will implement the Microsoft 365 Education to the entire MinESCS, school boards and schools in Curaçao. This will be executed in collaboration with Inova Solutions, as the largest trusted gold partner of Microsoft in the Caribbean region and NetPro Group, as the Microsoft local partner to empower local communities and businesses. With the signing of this MOU, the MinESCS seeks to offer equal opportunities for all students in all schools by providing a modern personal e-learning environment for each student and a modern digital management environment for all schools.



### Lebanon — School rehabilitation after crisis



التعليم | education  
فوق | above  
الجميع | all



In response to the deadly explosion that rocked Beirut in August 2020, GEC members mobilized commitments of US\$11,300,000, as well as in-kind technical assistance and capacity-building support. These are being used to rehabilitate damaged schools, provide technical assistance to teachers, ensure access to distance learning platforms, provide content for distance learning and support higher education.

One such project is Education Cannot Wait's "School Rehabilitation in Lebanon", which aims to increase the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in Lebanon to accommodate children and youth from the most affected communities by the Beirut blasts to access basic and post-basic education in safe learning spaces.

The project will allow vulnerable children and youth to access and complete their education, while gaining the skills that are necessary for their physical, emotional,

and social wellbeing. It specifically seeks to support the rehabilitation of 40 schools through the rehabilitation and provision of essential facilities and services (including equipment). To date, rehabilitation works have been identified and contractors deployed in 15 private and 16 public school. The remaining nine schools are still in the field assessment/validation phase as a result of various lockdown measures.

An inclusive and gender-sensitive approach is prioritized throughout all phases of project implementation. The project's intended outcome will support the educational inclusion of an estimated **27,000 vulnerable learners**, including Lebanese and Syrian refugees.

Also, in response to the catastrophic blast, UNESCO and the Education Above All Foundation signed an agreement in September 2020 to cover the rehabilitation of 55 public schools, 20 public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, and three universities in Beirut and surrounding cities. Rehabilitation works are in various stages of consultation or completion, with target finalization dates of mid-2021 pending the easing of lockdown measures.



### African Union — Rollout of the Building Back Equal: Girls Back to School Guide



Following the release of the [Building back equal: Girls back to school guide](#) developed by Malala Fund, Plan International, UNESCO and UNGEI and published in August 2020, Global Education Coalition partners have been supporting the rollout of the Guide in different contexts. This includes the Pan-African launch of the Guide undertaken with the African Union (AU) on 9 December 2020. The [virtual event](#) reached representatives of ministries of education across the **55 AU Member States**. In the words of Sarah Anyang Agbor, African Union Commissioner, during the event, “The fight against COVID-19 requires an inclusive, participatory approach of the countries’ populations with a special attention to the specific needs of the most vulnerable, especially women, children and elders.” Estimates reveal that **one million girls** in sub-Saharan Africa may never return to school once they reopen due to policies and practices that ban pregnant girls and young mothers from resuming school.

Funds have been secured from government partners to support the Guide’s rollout in a number of countries across Africa and Asia where gender disparities are the widest, on a demand basis.



### Eastern Caribbean States — COVID-19 resurgence and contingency planning

McKinsey  
& Company



unicef 

GPE  Transforming  
Education

In February 2021, a series of workshops were organized with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) for its member countries. **More than 100 participants** from **nine countries** joined the workshops on COVID-19 Resurgence and Contingency Planning, using the COVID-19 Response Toolkit as one of the key resource materials.

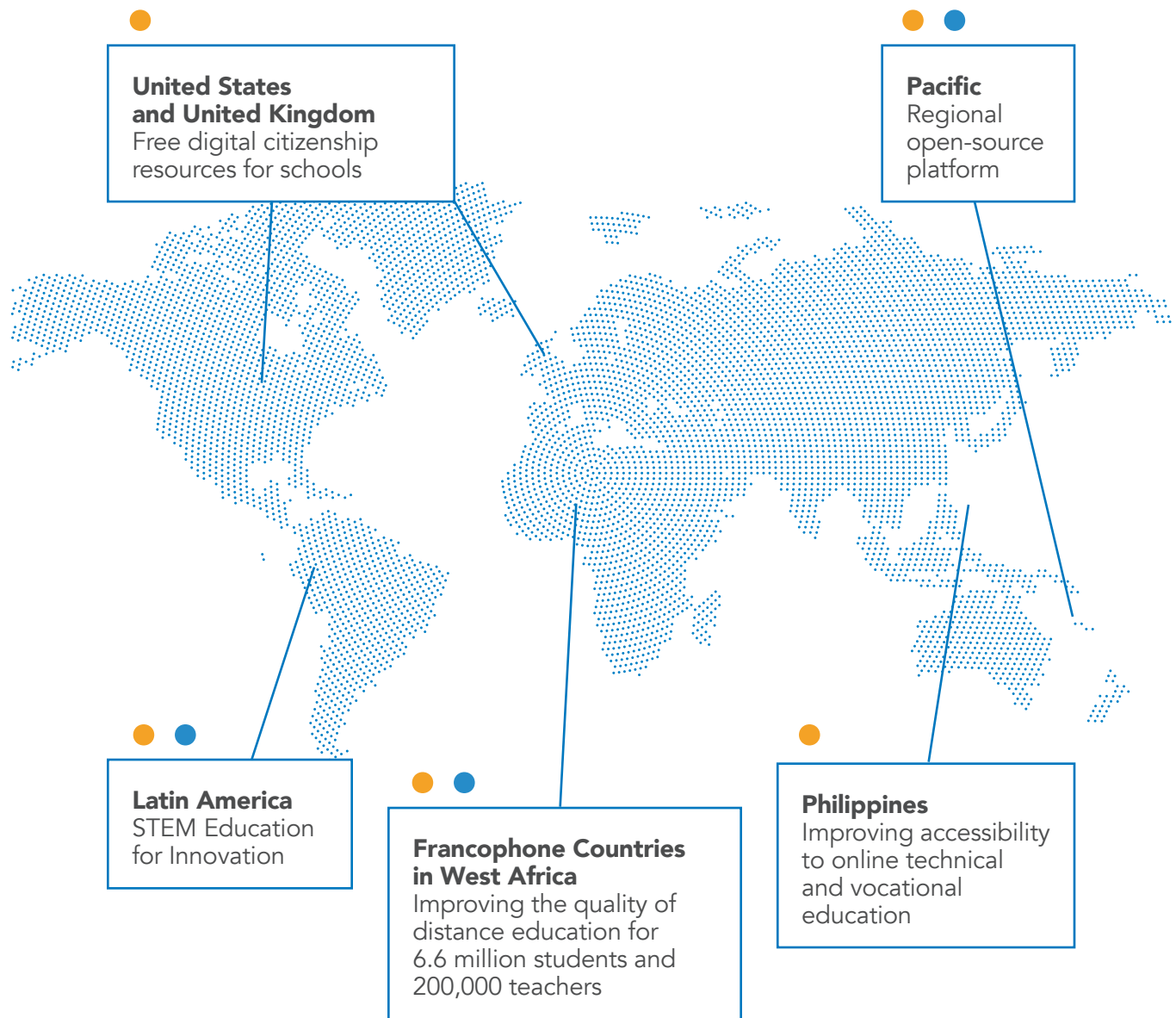
## Curriculum, online and distance learning including television or radio

### GEC actions in this area included:

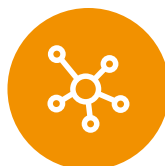
- 1 Design and preparation of alternative education delivery systems, including mobilizing resources and support options from global Coalition partners and accelerating the deployment of gender-responsive distance learning approaches and girls' digital skills development to narrow the gender digital skills divide.
- 2 Gap analysis and assessment of curriculum and available digital resources.
- 3 Support for teaching and learning platform development.
- 4 Digitization of curriculum and educational resources, including production of additional education resources, TV and radio programmes, and textbooks.
- 5 Organization of assessment and high-stakes exams.
- 6 Coordinated and targeted advocacy to support continuity of learning during COVID-19 and return to school, in particular, in countries with the greatest gender disparities in education.



## Key results and examples of achievements



**Teacher  
Flagship**



**Connectivity  
Flagship**



**Gender  
Flagship**



### Francophone Countries in West Africa — Improving the quality of distance education for 6.6 million students and 200,000 teachers



The French-speaking African regional online learning platform [ImaginEcole.africa](https://www.imaginecole.africa) was launched on 21 December 2020 as a key component of a Global Partnership for Education (GPE) project to improve the quality of distance education in **ten countries**: Benin, Burkina, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Chad and Togo.

ImaginEcole offers a large-scale experience in distance education for **6.6 million students** and **200,000 teachers** with over **600 educational resources** and growing. ImaginEcole will be enriched in the coming months with locally produced content by teams working with UNESCO and GEC partners to improve their skills. Resources range from high-quality educational videos and interactive lessons to downloadable printouts. It covers a comprehensive emergency response for learning both in connected and disconnected locations.



### East Africa — Smart Classrooms



Since the beginning of the pandemic, Weidong Cloud Education Group has worked closely as part of the Global Education Coalition. Weidong has implemented projects at the country level together with UNESCO in Mauritius, Rwanda, Djibouti, Comoros, and other countries and has provided package solutions including Smart Classrooms, training resources in English and French, LMS and platform.



### Democratic Republic of Congo — Remote learning via radio



In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Education Cannot Wait and UNESCO's Capacity Development for Education Programme are co-financing COVID-19 education response activities. With the country's Internet coverage estimated to be less than 20 per cent, these joint interventions focus on remote learning via radio, especially community radio, with the aim of **reaching over four million learners**. UNESCO and Education Cannot Wait are adapting the primary education curriculum, as well as year 8, into radio lessons. The programme is also helping strengthen the capacities of 120 community radio stations and 240 community radio staff to broadcast the lessons.



### Pacific — Regional open-source platform



Funded by the GPE, in the context of the UNESCO-World Bank-UNICEF Consortium, UNESCO is supporting an open source platform, based on Moodle, for home-based distance learning and a regional repository of curriculum aligned resources for learners and teachers in Kiribati, Marshall Islands (Republic of), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. It will include a regional repository of curricula-aligned resources for Mathematics or Science, English, and training resources for teachers, as well as Information Technology (IT) support for staff, teachers and educators. Additionally, the development of audio resources for podcasts and radio is also underway as offline alternatives.



### Philippines — Improving accessibility to online technical and vocational education



In the context of its contribution to the Global Skills Academy, Microsoft is currently in discussions with the Philippines' Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) regarding embedding Microsoft's core learning platform "Learn" in the TESDA Online Program. The TESDA Online program is an online educational resource created by TESDA that aims to make technical education more accessible to Filipino citizens through the use of information and communication technology. Additionally, Microsoft will cater to TESDA's needs in terms of TVET online training.



### El Salvador — Equipping students for online education



In the framework of Huawei's membership of the Global Education Coalition, Huawei donated approximately 200 tablets and mobile phones to the Ministry of Education in El Salvador to support children who do not have any devices to follow online education.



## Global — Supporting the learning journey of those not digitally connected

التعليم | education  
فوق | above  
الجميع | all



The Education Above All Foundation (EAA) has developed several responses to address community needs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Most notably, EAA's Digital School Programme developed the [Internet Free Education Resource Bank \(IFERB\)](#) to support those not digitally connected in their learning journey. The IFERB is a growing collection of over 120 Project-based Learning (PBL) resources and an Activity Bank for students with Disabilities (ABD) that can be implemented using minimal materials while requiring virtually no Internet connection. It contains a range of interdisciplinary projects to meet the learning needs of learners aged 4 to 14, in subjects including science, mathematics, language arts, social sciences, economics and environmental studies. Most of the projects include activities that build 21st century skills including critical thinking, creativity and communication. IFERB resources are implemented using a variety of media depending on the context, including phone calls, SMS or other text-messaging applications using feature phones or smartphones, radio, and in-person classes. The **120,000+ students in five pilot countries** (India, Pakistan, Zambia, Kenya and Lebanon) experienced up to 18 per cent growth in academic and non-academic skills, reporting up to 90 per cent satisfaction. IFERB won the first Award in the Crisis and Conflict Category by mEducation Alliance and was published in the [OECD](#), the World Bank, Harvard and HundrED continuing education blog series.

Additional EAA projects include [online resources](#), developed in partnership with UNESCO-IIEP, to assist in education planning and curriculum for safety, resilience, and social cohesion. EAA is also delivering online classroom solutions and on-the-ground relief to ensure education continuity in Palestine, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Qatar.



### Global — All Girls AI Hackathon



On 13-14 March 2021, GEC partner **Microsoft** partnered with UNESCO through the Gender Flagship to organize a two-day Imagine Cup Junior Virtual Hackathon for **80 high school girls** aged 14 to 18 in **11 countries** in Africa, the Arab States and Europe. Under the overall theme of “Artificial Intelligence for Earth,” teams of five girls, guided by mentors, were taken through a practical journey into the heart of artificial intelligence (AI). In addition to having a clearer understanding of potential AI-related career paths, students developed widely applicable machine learning skills in the context of sustainability, biodiversity loss and climate. Through the Hackathon, the girls built skills that will allow them to take ethical control of the development and use of AI. They gained confidence with technology, identified ways in which AI contributes to their lives today, and learned how AI can be used to address some of the world’s biggest challenges. The highlight of the event saw the girls designing the outline of a product that applies AI to a sustainability problem and “pitching” their to a group of “investors.”



### Senegal — Expanding access to distance learning platforms



The Ministry of Education of Senegal, UNESCO, Microsoft, and Huawei have joined forces to support tens of thousands of teachers and students in an effort to continue learning during the COVID-19 crisis. The Ministry Distance Learning Platform has enrolled **82,000 teachers** and **500,000 learners**, who have started learning. With support from Microsoft, **1.5 million learners and teachers will be added**. UNESCO is supporting training for 200 teachers to be “master trainers.” A cascading approach, in which teachers train other teachers, will soon be adopted. Devices to improve connectivity of the 200 master trainers were distributed by Huawei in June 2020.



### Technovation Girls



**Technovation** is again joining forces with other members of the Global Education Coalition to engage and support some **10,000 girls** aged 10-18 from under-resourced communities, as they participate in a multiweek technology entrepreneurship programme – Technovation Girls. To help ensure that girls learn and receive the community support they need, **3,600 educators, parents and mentors** will be provided with capacity-building training. Technovation is also currently supporting students through [live online classes](#) and educators, mentors and parents through regular webinars, office hours, community forums and a global parent community. GEC partners for the 2021 edition include Ericsson, Siemens Stiftung and Qualcomm. The UNESCO Associated Schools Network is also joining recruitment efforts. This cooperation builds on the 2020 IdeaLab, a five-week tech education programme for girls in six countries (Brazil, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan) organized by UNESCO and Technovation, with support from mentors from GEC partners Ericsson, Google and Uber, and prizes being awarded by Micro:bit Educational Foundation. See more [here](#).



## Latin America — STEM Education for Innovation

SIEMENS | Stiftung



Siemens Stiftung launched the education initiative “STEM Education for Innovation” in **seven Latin American countries**: Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador. The initiative develops digital and analogue education materials (blended learning) for teachers and students on STEM subjects such as science, technology, sustainability, climate change, health, and digitalization.

Working within regional networks, the initiative is a collaboration with local partners on conceptualizing, developing, and circulating STEM education services and materials that are both innovative and permanent. Fourteen projects in Latin America were established to create innovative education formats such as virtual seminars for teachers, digital lessons in STEM, interactive climate change maps, and videos or podcasts about health and hygiene. The initiative's education materials are available online and offline, and have improved teacher certification and advanced training programmes with blended learning concepts. All projects are designed as interregional collaborations, with education institutions and project partners across borders establishing permanent channels of communication and cooperation about STEM.



## Africa — Interactive storybooks



Curious Learning, together with Ubongo, published a series of [interactive storybooks](#) in English and Kiswahili aimed at giving children the opportunity to learn to read on mobile devices. A Curious Reader book is an eBook augmented with additional features to make the story more engaging and educational. This type of content has become particularly relevant over the last year when access to school has been limited. Together with the support of the UNESCO, the apps have been translated into French, with Portuguese and Malgache versions coming out in 2021. So far, over **100,000 learners have come online**, with installs (and learning) increasing daily. Multiple partners are using the apps with dedicated devices in schools and learning centres.





## United States and United Kingdom — Free digital citizenship resources for schools



common sense education®

Common Sense launched several initiatives with partners including [Wide Open School](#), a free destination for families and educators that debuted in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing United States nationwide shift to distance learning. The Wide Open School site is designed to supplement distance learning, support working parents with daily structure and a suggested schedule of activities for their kids at home, and present a diverse set of offerings that will appeal to every kid, from preschool through high school. Common Sense has also made their resources available to teachers and students in the United Kingdom in 2021.

A partnership between Common Sense, Learning Equality and the Endless OS Foundation also resulted in the development of the Endless Key (the “Key”) as a solution specially created for students and families as an offline resource. The Key is a high-performance USB drive that is designed to provide a robust, universal and safe digital learning environment with high-quality and engaging learning materials, resources and apps that can be accessed offline by students using Mac or Windows computers.

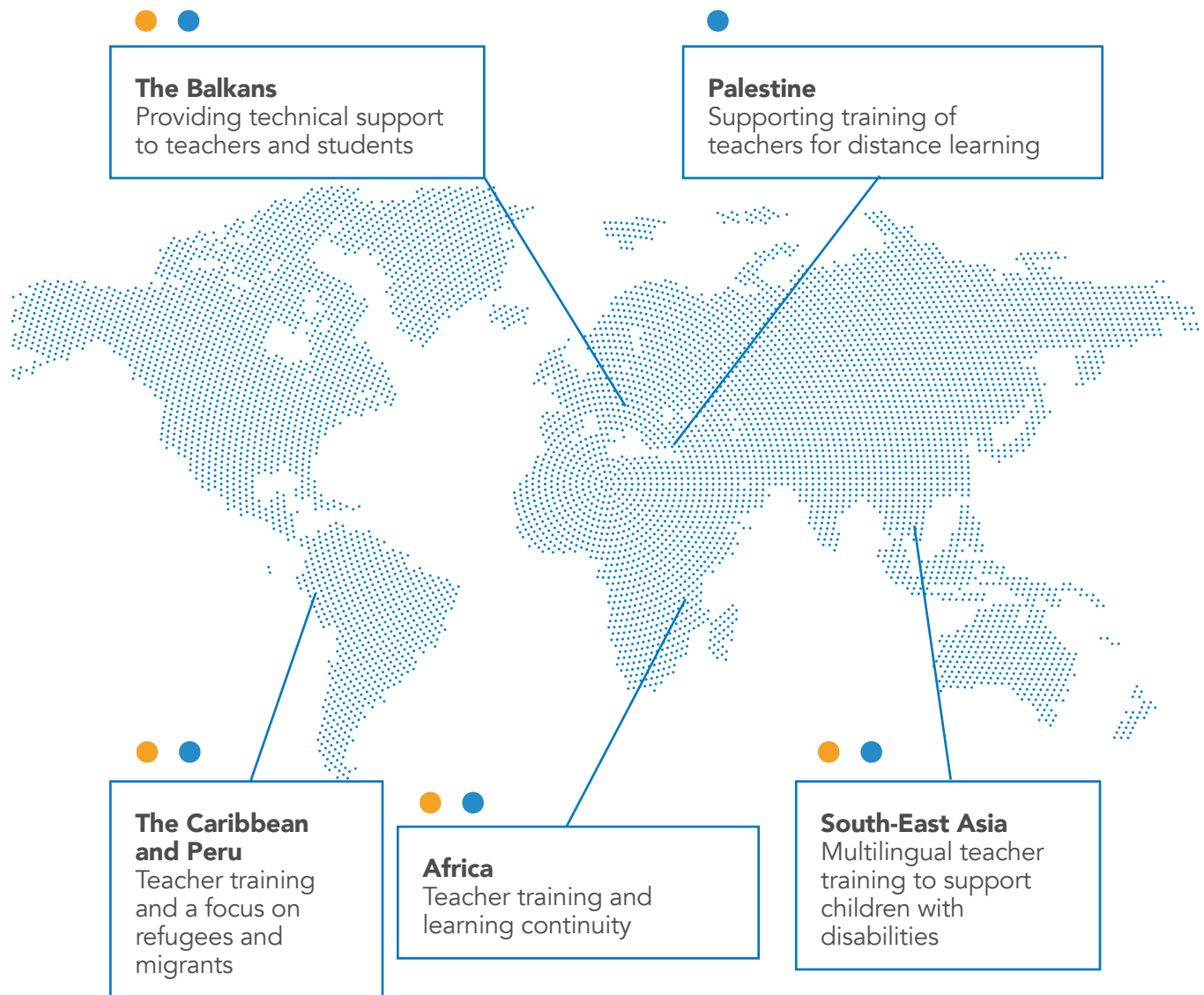
The 64-gigabyte Endless Key features leading learning materials such as Blockly, Khan Academy, PhET, Sikana, and Ubongo through Learning Equality's Kolibri platform, and the Kiwix reader which provides a searchable offline Wikipedia.

## *Capacity development*

### **GEC actions in this area included:**

- 1** Professional development for teaching staff to ensure inclusive and equitable education targeting disadvantaged groups.
- 2** Country-based training and professional development of teaching staff, including digital skills, digitization of content, remote learning and pedagogies, and online assessment.
- 3** Assistance in establishing support systems for education planners and decision makers.

## Key results and examples of achievements



**Teacher  
Flagship**



**Connectivity  
Flagship**



**Gender  
Flagship**



### South-East Asia — Multilingual teacher training to support children with disabilities



As part of the GPE-funded consortium, UNESCO, in partnership with the South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), a member of the GEC, are undertaking activities to create an online, multilingual regional teacher training course that will develop teacher capacity to adequately support children with disabilities. The online teacher training course will be adopted and piloted in **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and Timor Leste**. Based on the module prototype, a script for supplementary audio/video resources is being developed, as well as new calls for proposals for the creation of accessible reading materials for children with disabilities. Additionally, a partnership was created with the Global Digital Library (GDL), part of an existing collaboration, the [Translate a story initiative](#).



### Africa — Supporting teacher training and learning continuity

**ProFuturo**

A PROGRAMME OF  
*Telefonica*  
FOUNDATION



**Teach For All**  
A Global Network

ProFuturo strengthened its support and training to teachers, who during the pandemic became critical for the resilience of the education system. In partnership with Empieza por Educar, Teach for Liberia, Teach for Nigeria and Teach for Tanzania, all members of the international Teach for All network, ProFuturo implemented a teacher professional development project that trained over **15,000 teachers** in the three African countries. While schools were closed in the different countries, the trainers accompanied and trained the teachers virtually through Google Classroom, WhatsApp, videoconferencing and sharing interactive presentations, videos, podcasts and workbooks. When schools reopened, the on-site trainings returned with corresponding safety measures and social distances. Combining the on-site and online elements created a critical mass of trained teachers, and the programme is preparing for the next year with new countries to scale up the impact and apply lessons learned.



## The Caribbean and Peru — Teacher training and a focus on refugees and migrants



Blackboard™



Based on the GEC and Blackboard pilot project “Professional Development for Teachers for Blended Learning and Online Strategies,” with GIZ’s support, UNESCO is launching a teachers’ training programme for **20 Caribbean countries** and a digital and socio-emotional skills training for migrants and refugees in **Peru**.

The Caribbean initiative aims to develop teaching capacity for **10,000 teachers** in the new learning reality of distance education. The emphasis is on digital skills and blended learning solutions, as well as increased access to professional development opportunities for teachers in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) countries. Following the conclusion of the pilot project by UNESCO Caribbean in early 2021, work has begun to further refine the strategy based on lessons learned from the pilot, such as inclusion of a local partner — the University of the West Indies — and the creation of a teacher reference group with the Teacher Task Force. In the months to come, content will be developed, and studies planned to determine to which extent the ICT Competency Framework for Teachers can be applied to subsequent training sessions. By June 2020, a target group of 40 master trainers will have initiated trainings for 400 teachers and, by the end of the project in November 2021, a total number of **10,000 teachers will be trained across 20 countries in the region**.

The Peruvian component focuses on offering distance learning and training through a non-formal virtual course on digital skills, as well as socio-emotional well-being content for **3,000 migrants and refugees** in Peru. This intervention will be developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of Peru, the Global Education Coalition Peruvian chapter, and other GEC members such as GSMA (via its mSchools programme). Its ultimate goal is to seek a pathway to students to access or return to the formal national education system. At least 16 tutors will support, in different turns, 1,000 of the total 3,000 students. The online lessons used during the course will be uploaded during the length of the project. There have been discussions to collaborate with local projects, like “Horizontes” from UNESCO Lima, who could provide expertise on psychological support to our target group.



### Palestine — Training of teachers for distance learning



The Ministry of Education of Palestine and UNESCO conducted a training workshop with Lark that trained 125 master trainers, including teachers and supervisors from the different directorates in Palestine as well as teachers from private schools and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). It is expected that the master trainers will expand the training to thousands of local teachers.



### The Balkans — Providing technical support to teachers and students



UNESCO, along with various partners, is providing technical support to **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, and **Moldova**, to implement teacher training and upskilling on the use of digital technologies for teaching and learning. Among the partnerships that have been established is a collaboration with Microsoft, whereby Microsoft is offering free licences and training on Microsoft Teams to students and teachers.



### Global — Crash-course on remote learning pedagogies for teachers



In October 2020 during UNESCO's 'Mobile Learning Week 2020', GEC partner Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University (UAE) provided an online crash-course on remote learning pedagogies in 5 languages (Arabic, English, French, Spanish and Russian). The course reached **334,675 teachers** from over **100 countries** around the world, including Saudi Arabia, Armenia, Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Iraq, Oman, India, Morocco, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria, and Palestine.

## *Keep schools open and support health and well-being*

### **GEC actions in this area included:**

- 1** Supporting planning for recovery, reopening of schools and initiatives to collect and manage information on health and vaccination, to enable the most vulnerable to return to school and to address the health, nutritional and protection issues exacerbated during school closures.
- 2** Supporting learners' and teachers' well-being.
- 3** Supporting teachers in vaccination and testing.
- 4** Establishing a communication plan for teaching staff.

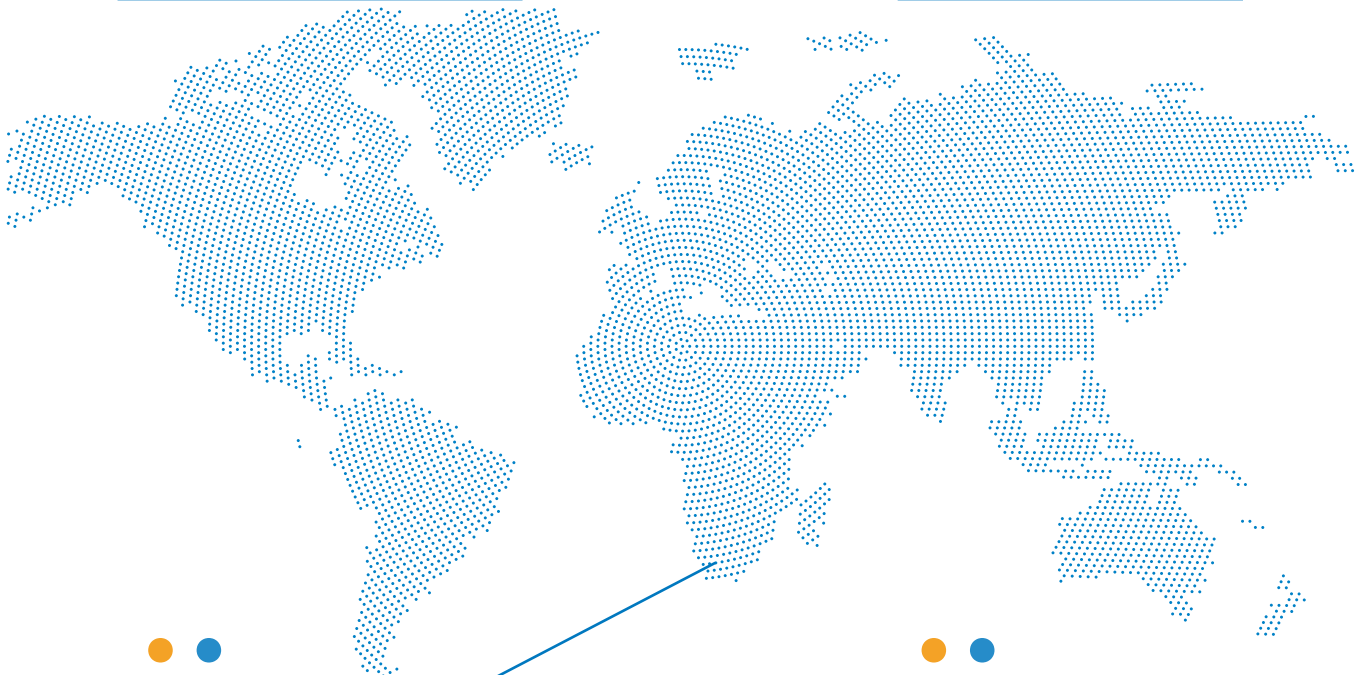
## Key results and examples of achievements

●  
**Global**

One million rides for teachers to get vaccinated

●  
**Global**

OpenEMIS health and vaccination module



● ●  
**South Africa**

Providing live education and health support for all teachers

● ●  
**Global**

Fostering innovation and curiosity in times of crisis



**Teacher  
Flagship**



**Connectivity  
Flagship**



**Gender  
Flagship**





### Global — One million rides for teachers to get vaccinated



Together, Uber and UNESCO aim to remove transportation as a barrier for teachers to accessing vaccinations. Uber is offering **one million rides to teachers** around the world to and from vaccination appointments in support of school reopenings and to protect teachers and their communities.

The rides will be available for teachers in **20 countries**: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, Germany, India, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Uber and UNESCO will partner with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government bodies to distribute rides to teachers in these countries.



### South Africa — Providing live education and health support for all teachers



A WhatsApp-based support service for South Africa's teachers was launched in September 2020 by Praekelt.org, a Business Solution Providers of GEC partner Facebook, the South Africa Department of Basic Education (DBE) and local implementation partner E-Cubed. TeacherConnect is a real-time chat-based learning and mentorship platform for education, **available 24/7 to all teachers**.

To help ensure the wellness and safety of educators and staff, TeacherConnect has integrated HealthCheck, a National Department of Health self-screening initiative, to ensure effective management of COVID-19 in the educational system. This digital risk assessment and mapping tool allows for early detection, mapping, management and pre-screening of COVID-19 cases. TeacherConnect also integrates vaccine support for teachers. Through the application, teachers are informed, can register or screen for vaccination eligibility, and book appointments for vaccination.

To date, TeacherConnect has had over **67,289 users** in South Africa and plans to reach out to **400,000** more teachers in the upcoming months.





## Global — OpenEMIS health and vaccination module



Community Systems Foundation



With the progressive shift from COVID-19 emergency response to recovery phase, reopening schools and education institutions safely and keeping them open as long as possible is more than ever an imperative for all education ministries around the world.

As countries begin to administer COVID-19 vaccines, UNESCO is calling on governments and the international community to consider teachers and school personnel as priority groups in national vaccination efforts.

As a way to empower ministries with quality tools for the management and monitoring of national COVID-19 emergency and recovery plans, both UNESCO and Community Systems Foundation worked together on the release of a [health and vaccination module as part of the OpenEMIS toolkit](#). The health and vaccination module is designed to assist ministries in planning, implementing, and monitoring COVID-19 vaccinations campaigns within their education system and can be used as a stand-alone solution, deployed along with other components of the OpenEMIS toolkit, or used in conjunction with existing data solutions.

Reporting functions provided by the module enable ministries to better plan, organize and prioritize vaccination campaigns based on national policies, risk factors, logistical arrangements, targeted population, etc. As vaccinations are administered, associated personnel health records are updated in real-time, providing ministries with an accurate view of the status of their vaccination campaigns.



## Global — Fostering innovation and curiosity in times of crisis



Microsoft

FACEBOOK



Khan Academy

Facing new challenges to education, Code.org created unique solutions to meet teachers and students in this new normal. They did this by creating three different types of resources: for students to learn remotely, for teachers to continue their training, and for the Hour of Code movement to continue generating excitement globally. For students to continue their learning remotely, Code.org created the [At Home landing page](#) and started global and regional web series like [Code Break](#) and [Hora del Código En Vivo](#). The interactive shows were viewed **over 700,000 times** globally. Each Code Break episode included inspiring guests, minilessons on computer science concepts, and a weekly challenge to engage students of all ages and abilities, even those without computers. Code Break guests included leaders or founders of other GEC members such as Khan Academy, Microsoft, Google, Facebook, and YouTube.

The [Hour of Code](#) campaign continues to generate global interest, and Code.org also created exciting ways for students to participate in the campaign in virtual or alternative classrooms – such as the web series [CodeBytes](#), which debuted during Computer Science Education Week in December 2020. In addition, Code.org created a new video series, [How AI Works](#), in which students could watch asynchronously. Students completed **35 million hours** of coding in 2020. Lastly, without being able to offer in-person training, Code.org offered online professional development for **21,059 teachers** and created a resource guide for teaching in [alternative classrooms](#).

## Pillar 2: Three global flagships

The Global Education Coalition selected three focus areas, or flagships, underpinned by a mission approach based on **connectivity** (to achieve universal connectivity for learning), **teachers** (to enhance the value of teachers' roles and offer them professional development opportunities) and **gender** (to rally Coalition members to address the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 school crisis).

These flagships are based on an analysis of country needs matched against the expertise and support that can be provided by GEC partners.

### Mission approach

The GEC is using a mission approach to achieve large-scale targets and as a way to operationalize actions around the flagships.

Missions are powerful tools. They can provide the means to focus policy commitment and investment to remove key barriers, fast track actions and solve critical problems. Mission-oriented initiatives are large-scale interventions aiming for a clearly defined target, preferably qualified and/or quantified. At the same time, missions require a culture of evidence-based actions, data collection, experimentation and risk-taking, and thinking outside the box to come up with new solutions to address complex challenges. In the second half of 2020, the GEC launched three missions each aiming to reach **one million beneficiaries**:



**Global Skills  
Academy**



**Global Learning  
House**



**Global Teacher  
Campus**



## Total planned and actual beneficiaries of GEC missions (to date)

Planned	Actual
Global Skills Academy <b>1M</b>	Global Skills Academy <b>142K</b>
Global Teacher Campus <b>1M</b>	Global Teacher Campus <b>30K</b>
Global Learning House <b>1M</b>	Global Learning House <b>149K</b>
Gender Mission <b>5M</b>	Gender Mission <b>581K</b>



## Connectivity flagship

The Coalition is working urgently to help ensure connectivity and bridge digital divides. This flagship aims to overcome both human and technical barriers to connectivity, spanning digital skills and literacy, digital learning content, affordability and access to devices.

The goal of this flagship is to achieve universal connectivity for learning, with special attention to including socio-economically disadvantaged populations, rural children, youth, girls and women. This goal includes improving and expanding the reach of transmission; offering free, discounted or enlarged access to existing transmissions (future connectivity use); and waiving fees for transmission or allowing for delayed payment (past connectivity use).

### ***Mission 1 — Global Skills Academy: Building skills for employability and resilience***

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted labour markets and, in many cases, accelerated workplace automation. Skills development is emerging as a priority, as the pandemic causes massive job losses and transforms the world of work. As part of the COVID-19 policy response, short skills development programmes that focus on digital and transferable skills can help individuals adapt to new working conditions and changes in the labour market. All countries — developing and developed alike — will need to reinforce existing skills and provide new skills for all who need it, in particular those faced with unemployment.

As a part of our commitment, GEC launched the **Global Skills Academy (GSA)**; to date, it is the most advanced of the three missions. The Global Skills Academy's mission is to mobilize GEC members' resources and programmes to help large numbers of people, starting with a **target of one million, to adapt to changes in the workplace and impacts of rapid digitalization**. As of March 2021, the overall number of beneficiaries reached is 142,000. Access to the GSA's contributions has been granted to 66,802 individuals in 22 countries, of which 23,364 (35 per cent) are female. Since its launch, the Academy has mobilized more than 150 TVET institutions across 56 countries and the GEC team is actively working so that 75,000 additional students and teachers will benefit from some of the partners' contributions in the coming weeks in 13 countries, seven of which were not previously targeted by the GSA (Cameroon, Chile, China, Cuba, Ireland, Peru and Qatar).

### Current Global Skills Academy partners

While Dior's and PIX's contributions, focusing on leadership and digital skills respectively, are effectively being implemented as of now, the Global Skills Academy is currently identifying beneficiaries of the respective contributions of Coursera, Festo, Huawei, IBM, Microsoft and Fundación Telefónica. Although most of the GSA partners' contributions revolve around training for youth and adults, some key partners will offer quantitative and qualitative measurement tools related to skills and employment. Trainings from partners cover a wide range of skills needed in the modern society: some of those skills are technical, digital or task-oriented but as the pandemic has underscored, developing cognitive, creative, social and emotional skills is just as important.



## ***Mission 2 — Global Learning House: Enabling learners to access cost-free supplemental educational resources and instruction, anywhere, any time***

Amid school closures, access to learning opportunities varies widely. COVID-19 threatens to deepen existing inequalities in learning among and within countries. For the most marginalized learners, learning losses may be even more significant. More than 100 countries have reported that they intend to introduce remedial programmes as part of their school reopening plans. Remediation efforts, such as targeted instruction, are urgently needed to reduce learning loss as students return to school.

In response, GEC launched the **Global Learning House (GLH)**, which aims to mobilize members' resources and programmes and a large network of volunteer teachers and educators to provide **quality, cost-free online and offline lessons and tutoring to one million learners**. The objective is to harness high-, low-, and no-tech solutions to target instruction by students' learning levels, rather than by their age or grade level. The Learning House aims to help students master foundational skills, especially those related to STEM areas. These skills are often the most difficult to recover and their loss can damage learners' lifelong learning opportunities, employment prospects and ability to maintain decent livelihoods.

Through its principal partner LabXchange, 2,523 LabXchange classes have been created, and 26,166 learners have been enrolled in science learning programmes in 2020. To date, **149,000 learners**, aged 13 to 17, have accessed learning resources, interactive lessons and virtual simulations on science subject content. The GLH initiative will enter its pilot phase for matched teaching offers and learning needs in May 2021, expecting to benefit from the support of individual volunteers from selected Teach For All partner organizations in 16 countries for this initial phase (Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Cambodia and Viet Nam). Using the experience gained during this pilot phase, the GLH will refine its process as the initiative evolves and will open to the interest of other volunteers, including from other organizations. Volunteer teachers and tutors will be matched with learners in need of support, particularly those most affected by the learning disruption, in the form of online learning session, phone call, or in-person group workshop using the toolkit provided by the GLH.





## Teacher flagship

The global health crisis underscored that teachers are the backbone of every education system. During the pandemic and beyond, teachers are on the front line to ensure learning continuity while protecting the health, safety and well-being of their students, themselves and their colleagues.

The aim of this flagship is to increase the value of teachers' roles and offer professional development opportunities to strengthen digital and pedagogical skills. Through high-quality, large-scale learning opportunities, the flagship intends to reach one million teachers with training and ensure that quality and equitable teaching can continue.

### **Mission 3 – Global Teacher Campus: Building a sustainable approach to teachers' professional development**

Teachers need quality continuing professional development, in particular on the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to conduct remote teaching as well as in how to perform formative assessments and provide personalized instruction to better support at-risk students and those who have already fallen behind. Teachers need continuing professional development where they may receive adequate preparation for both traditional and remote delivery of instruction through digital and other technologies. In response to these challenges, UNESCO launched the **Global Teacher Campus** in October 2020 during World Teacher Day. The objective is to train **one million teachers in the area of digital skills and the pedagogical use of ICTs in education, as well as remote and hybrid learning**. The Global Teacher Campus, through partners' interventions, has helped **30,000 teachers**.

#### **Current Global Teacher Campus partners**

Current partners of the Global Teacher Campus include:



Blackboard



ProFuturo

A PROGRAMME OF  
Telefónica  
FOUNDATION



pix



## *Gender flagship*

This Flagship is rallying Coalition members to work together to highlight and address the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 school crisis and safeguard progress made on gender equality in education in recent decades.

A small group of Coalition partners with particular expertise in the area of gender and education are serving in an advisory capacity and as a resource to guide and support the work. This reference group includes members of the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Global Affairs Canada, the Malala Fund, Norad, the Obama Foundation, the UN Girls' Education Initiative, UNICEF and the World Bank, as well as education ministry representatives from Peru, the Philippines and Sierra Leone. Since May 2020, the group, which sets strategic directions for the planning and implementation of action, has met virtually on six occasions. The Gender Flagship has also published a [report](#) highlighting progress made in 2020.

### ***Mission 4 — Keep girls learning***

More than **five million girls** in the 20 countries with the greatest gender disparities in education will be supported to fulfil their right to education, with a particular focus on ensuring continuity of learning, building girls' digital skills and bringing the most marginalized girls back to school through a wide range of actions including information and awareness raising, capacity development, support to gender-responsive planning and evidence-based recommendations to decision-makers. A full listing of all members and supporters working to further this mission can be found in [the Gender Flagship report](#).

## *Pillar 3: Monitoring, knowledge-building and advocacy*

This Pillar focuses on developing evidence-based policy tools, collecting data and building knowledge to support education systems in their response to the pandemic, and, finally, on advocating for education. Attention is given to support education decision-makers and improve data quality, collection and use. The Pillar advocates for education and training and builds on large campaigns targeting girls and women, teaching staff and decision makers.

### *Policy tools to support countries*



#### **COVID-19 Education Response Toolkit**

McKinsey  
& Company 

To help education systems respond to the crisis, McKinsey & Company and UNESCO developed the [COVID-19 Response Toolkit](#). The aim is to improve remote learning, set up effective hybrid learning, re-enrol students, catch up on lost learning and organize responses.

The contents of the Toolkit were developed through a series of workshops held in June 2020 focusing on five of the Toolkit topics with participation of education system leaders from **six countries: Canada, Ethiopia, France, the Gambia, Italy, and USA**. Fifteen interviews were held with countries to develop country case studies, showcasing how different countries responded to the education crisis and detailing aspects within their response that can serve as a reference for others. Pilot testing and in-depth country support work occurred in **Pakistan** and **Peru** to explore in depth country- and region-specific application of the framework and the Toolkit.

Since its official launch in October 2020, the Toolkit continues to benefit the Member States to anticipate and respond to the evolving challenges of ensuring learning continuity and enhancing resilience of the education system.

The Toolkit is being translated into French, Russian, Spanish and Arabic.



## The Teacher Task Force (TTF) Guide and Toolkit



Developed by UNESCO and the International Labour Organization, as part of the Teacher Task Force, the [Guidance for policy-makers](#) and [Toolkit for School leaders](#) on reopening schools included recommendations focused around a **seven-dimension framework** that provided guidance to governments and the school community of key policy responses to consider as well as in support of teachers during schools reopening. This featured input from many GEC members, including the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), Save the Children, Teach For All, Varkey Foundation and VVOB – education for development.



## International Declaration on Connectivity for Education



The global disruption of education in 2020 has highlighted the need to rethink connectivity for learning in a transformed global educational landscape. A new project on connectivity for education and learning, supported by Dubai Cares, is underway to develop an International Declaration on Connectivity for Education that is expected to be endorsed by countries at the end of 2021. The initiative will both utilize and strengthen the GEC as a platform for dialogue with education partners and stakeholders, including private sector connectivity companies.

Work on the declaration will be steered by a small international advisory group composed of representatives from over 20 organizations with expertise in connectivity for education. In addition to UNESCO and Dubai Cares, these organizations include the Alliance for Affordable Internet, Center of Studies for Information and Communications Technologies, Ed-Tech Hub, Education International, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Ericsson, GIGA, GSMA, Huawei, International Network on Education in Emergencies, ITU, Mastercard Foundation Regional Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning in Africa, Microsoft, NetHope, Smart Africa, UN Envoy on Technology, UNHCR, UNICEF, World Bank, and the World Economic Forum. UNESCO will coordinate the group and develop reports about opportunities and benefits as well as challenges and risks associated with the digital transformations to education and growing reliance on connectivity.

Developing an International Declaration on Connectivity for Education will involve two complementary strands: a research strand and a country-consultation strand. The two strands will ensure that the declaration reflects the best available research, evidence, and technical expertise, and, simultaneously, carries political support and commitment. UNESCO will work to help Member States establish consensus about the content of the declaration and help countries operationalize the declaration following its endorsement.

## Data and knowledge



### Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures



Now in its third iteration, the “Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures” conducted as a partnership with UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank have now collaborated with the OECD for this third round of the survey. The survey is designed for ministries of education to better understand their responses to school closures, as well as the policies implemented to assess and remediate them, and subsequent reopenings in 2021.

UNESCO administered the previous first two rounds of data collection in 2020. They cover government responses to school closures from pre-primary to secondary education. The first round of the survey was completed by Ministry of Education officials of **118 countries** between May and June 2020, and the second round from **149 countries** between July and October 2020. The key findings of the first two rounds of data collection were published in a [report](#) in October 2020.



## Global study on the gender dimensions of the school closures



UNESCO, with funding from the Global Partnership for Education, has commissioned research on how the COVID-19 school closures are affecting girls and boys, and the strategic educational interventions needed to ensure continuity of learning and the return to school of all learners, including the most marginalized. While the study is global, it will consider the experience in different regions and socio-economic contexts, including crisis- and conflict-affected settings, and shine particular light on countries where the economic hardships are COVID-19 are expected to have the greatest impact on education financing and participation. In particular, the study will identify promising practices undertaken in a wide range of settings to ensure continuity of learning; equitable and safe access to basic services typically provided by schools; support to health, nutrition and well-being including prevention of early and unintended pregnancy, and protection from violence and harmful practices; and the return to education. It will be published in September 2021.

Other partners in the Coalition have also been active in considering particular elements of the impact of COVID-19. For example, decision-makers can access evidence-based recommendations aimed specifically at fostering pregnant girls' and young mothers' return to school, thanks to a report published by World Vision International as a contribution to the Coalition. The [report](#) spotlights the increase in adolescent pregnancy during COVID-related school closures.



## Responses to Educational Disruption Survey (REDS)



UNESCO, in collaboration with the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and the European Commission (EC), launched in August 2020 a joint study entitled [Responses to Educational Disruption Survey \(REDS\)](#) to find out how teaching and learning were affected by the disruptions caused by COVID-19 and how these were mitigated by the implemented measures, across and within countries. Aside from providing insights on the impact of the teaching and learning disruption, the study also aims to investigate the contextual factors, issues and implemented measures that may influence the success of distance learning for students across countries. The study covers the school systems, in particular at the secondary level and focusing on topics around countries' preparedness for distance learning, available IT and educational resources, perceptions on successful strategies for distance learning, student engagement, as well as those around inequalities in educational learning opportunities during the disruptions and options that may be required to strengthen the resilience of education systems.

Countries participating in REDS include **Denmark, Russian Federation, Slovenia, United Arab Emirates** (first wave) and **Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Uruguay, Uzbekistan** (second wave). Data for the first wave of participants are expected to be available at the end of March or beginning of April 2021, and for the second wave, at the beginning of June 2021. Due to school closures still in effect in some countries, data collection started later or took longer than expected, but data analysis and the subsequent international report are expected to be released in October 2021.





### A focus on teacher sentiment



Education Development Trust, as part of the GEC, engaged with UNESCO on a study to explore, in more depth, the impact of school closures on student learning and socio-emotional wellbeing to gain a better understanding of how to assist teachers to support learning recovery. The study also aims to get a better understanding of learning gains that have been reported anecdotally (e.g., enhanced adaptability, flexibility, self-directed learning, time management). The study begins with a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) to search for and review what is already known from the research and policy literatures. The findings of the first phase will feed into a second phase that will look more closely through a series of country case studies at how schools and teachers have responded and how education systems may need to change to accommodate multiple learning pathways. Outputs will be produced at key milestones of the study and will include capacity-building and an experimental impact assessment.



## The Benchmarking Framework for Online, Open, Smart and Technology-enhanced Higher Education



COMMONWEALTH  
of LEARNING



Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University launched a consortium to establish and promote a common understanding and criteria for quality in online and open higher education and facilitate sharing of best practices. In July 2020, the consortium formed its technical committee to facilitate the work. As a result of expert meetings and discussions, in January 2021, the technical committee developed the set of dimensions and indicators for the benchmarking framework and data sources. The first edition of the Benchmarking Framework comprises six dimensions and 39 indicators as well as evidence and data sources that can be used to demonstrate achievements. They take into account unique characteristics of online and open learning and include factors such as creation of innovative e-learning experiences, rich content development and agile delivery mechanisms, outcomes and impact on society, and others. The Framework will assist online and open universities in quality assurance and self-assessment, emphasize exemplary levels of quality and improve the credibility of online higher education. Asia e University, the University of Philippines Open University, International Telematic University UNINETTUNO, Universitas Terbuka and Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University will be piloting the full version of the framework in the second quarter of 2021 and other universities will be testing specific dimensions of the framework.

The Consortium for the Benchmarking Framework and Data Set for Online, Open, Smart and Technology-enhanced Higher Education advocates for inclusive approach and international dialogue. It is open to welcome new members from all regions of the world to provide for diverse representation and global cooperation.

## Advocacy and outreach



### Joint UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank series of webinars on the reopening of schools



This joint webinar series was organized around the framework for reopening of schools, published in April 2020, to help government strengthen distance learning and facilitate the reopening of schools. The series included **eleven webinars** broadcasted between June 2020 and February 2021 and reached almost **30,000 individuals** from at least **151 countries**. Additional support in outreach and translation was provided by the **International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF)**.



### Global Webinar: "Education Disrupted, Education Transformed"



This virtual briefing on 30 June 2020 was organized by the **Group of Friends for Education and Lifelong Learning**, co-chaired by the **Permanent Missions of Argentina, Czech Republic, Japan, Kenya and Norway**, together with **UNESCO**. This event, which was the first UN briefing exclusively dedicated to the education response to COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, provided an opportunity to sensitize the diplomatic corps in New York and the United Nations System on the response so far and the lessons learned. The webinar highlighted the critical importance to reaffirm the centrality of education in global efforts to build back better, as well as engage UN member states with major education stakeholders on the education response to COVID-19. Watched by more than 300 viewers, the discussion featured interventions by the **President of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly**, the **UN Deputy Secretary-General**, **UNESCO**, **UNICEF**, **Global Partnership for Education**, **Education International**, **Orange**, and **Khan Academy**.



## Placing Gender Equality at the Heart of Education Response: Reaching policy-makers



Policy-makers were reached through the [High-Level segment](#) and [Technical segment](#) on inclusion, equity and gender equality of the 2020 Global Education Meeting (22 October), the [Placing gender equality at the heart of education](#) (12 October 2020) online event hosted by UNESCO, the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, and Plan International France, and numerous other events.

UNESCO and UNGEI also launched a collective rallying call to ensure that “girls stay in the picture” through broad support for continued investments in girls’ education and the mobilisation of the education and feminist movements at the inspiring [online event at the Educate4Equality: UNGEI@20 Forum](#) (16 October 2020).

The EdTech community’s awareness of the need for holistic and comprehensive education solutions in the context of the pandemic was raised through an online event hosted by UNESCO, [Building back equal: Addressing the gender dimensions of COVID-19 school closures through technology](#) at the Mobile Learning Week (14 October 2020). The event showcased Global Education Coalition partners’ work, including the Technovation IdeaLab pilot, VSO International’s work on addressing gender-based violence during school closures, and ITU’s [EQUALS Digital Skills Hub](#).



## The Teacher Task Force (TTF) advocacy



The TTF is an international network of over 150 countries and organizations, including many Coalition members, which work together to support the teaching profession.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, TTF's advocacy was centred around the critical role of teachers and teaching to ensure learning continuity. The TTF released a [Call for Action on Teachers](#) which outlined **six main principles** to support and protect teachers through the COVID-19 crisis. Its objective was to influence policy responses to the crisis, in particular by recognizing the critical roles that teachers play in the COVID-19 response and recovery, but as well identifying teachers' needs that, if not addressed, can hamper recovery and ultimately affect education quality. This was supported by short advocacy videos on the role of teachers, both in general and in terms of the COVID-19 crisis. A series of teachers' voices were published to bring to life teachers' experiences around the world. The TTF also drew attention to the plight of contract teachers, many of whom were left without salary payments for months following school closures, in this [COVID-19 contract teachers' blog](#).

## Campaigns



### Keeping Girls in the Picture campaign



Launched on 31 August 2020, the global Keeping Girls in the Picture campaign reached more than **400 million people**, who are now sensitized to the importance of girls' return to school. The campaign targets girls, communities and education stakeholders at country and regional levels, with a specific focus on **South Asia** and **sub-Saharan Africa**.

Campaign materials were developed in **ten languages** and launched through a dedicated [website](#), including a comprehensive [social media pack](#), inspiring videos aggregated in a [YouTube playlist](#), toolkits (for [youth advocacy](#) and [community radios](#)), testimonials from the field, and other resources to engage youth networks and communities and more. H.E Dr Joyce Banda, former President of Malawi, and Nadia Nadim, champion for girls' education and professional football player for Denmark and Paris Saint Germain, also raised their voices for girls' education through a [Facebook Live](#) interview on the occasion of the International Day of the Girl Child (11 October 2020).

Over **30 influencers** from **all five regions** joined the campaign. This includes Nobel laureate and girls' education activist Malala Yousafzai, through **Malala Fund**, calling on girls to go back to school, and on parents, teachers and leaders to help girls re-enrol in a video available in [English](#), [Urdu](#), [Hindi](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Portuguese](#), [Turkish](#), [Arabic](#), [Dari](#), and [Pashto](#).

GEC partners have extensively contributed to the campaign, as highlighted in the last Coalition report. This includes **Gulli Africa**'s [Back to School](#) issue of Gulli MAG and adapted campaign video which reached **1.5 million subscribers**, and **25 countries** in French-speaking Africa. And CJ Group's [KCON:TACT 2020 SUMMER](#) and [KCON:TACT Season 2](#) events which reached 4.05 million and 4.4 million people, respectively, in more than 150 countries with (see [video](#)) and mobilised additional funds.

**Prada** and **UNESCO** held an [online event](#) (29 September 2020) to highlight the importance of girls' education amid a crisis-stricken education system. This event garnered attention in advance of a successful Tools of Memory auction held with Sotheby's (2-15 October 2020). Prada [donated the proceeds](#) from the auction to the Global Education Coalition's Gender Flagship.

The campaign is now being rolled out in regional and national contexts. In Nepal, a radio campaign was launched through UNESCO's partnership with the **Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Nepal**, targeting girls, parents and caregivers, and policy-makers. The programme, which discusses issues such as the impact of early marriage and gender-based violence on girls' education, as well as parents' role in ensuring their daughters' education are reaching an estimated 1.8 million people each week through broadcasts by more than 60 radio stations across the country. In Viet Nam, online and offline activities are foreseen throughout the year to encourage girls' learning and the return to school, and to reaffirm young people's role in disseminating messages and engaging parents and communities on the importance of girls' return to school.



### The Teacher Task Force (TTF) campaign



As part of [2020 World Teacher's Day](#) celebrations under the theme, "Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future", the TTF launched a communications campaign shedding light on teacher leadership during COVID-19. As part of this campaign, 13 blogs based on stories from different member organizations were published. The TTF also teamed up with the OECD and UNESCO to launch the [COVID-19: Share Your InSights campaign](#) as part of the Global Teaching Insights initiative. More recently, the TTF has begun mapping if and how teachers are prioritized in national vaccine rollout plans, as mentioned in a recent [GPE blog](#).



# Voices of the beneficiaries

"The Global Skills Academy has so far been very helpful for me in finding who I am and the potential that I have. It has introduced me to interesting topics such as women's empowerment, sustainable development among other things. Throughout the courses I received many words of encouragement which helped me feel more confident."

**Aida Nabilah from Malaysia**

*A young participant and mentee currently enrolled in Dior's programme under the Global Skills Academy*

"During the project we had to come together as a team. We brainstormed and discussed together how we can contribute and involve girls in sustaining a clean environment.

The project has gone so far as to receiving attention on social media. Being a leader has given me so much confidence in myself, especially learning the sessions on autonomy and self-discovery. This has opened my eyes to the fact that there is so much more to do for the environment, that giving back to society rather than just expecting is important, and that it's important to telling other girls that a clean and sustainable environment matters."

**Chinwendu Ukaha  
from Nigeria**

*Mentee currently enrolled in Dior's programme under the Global Skills Academy*





"The Global Skills Academy has my full support. I am from a small Caribbean island, Grenada, and I didn't know about Dior's programme before I was made aware of the Academy; we don't have any local initiatives that empower and guide young women. As this programme is international, it fosters friendships in a cross-cultural context and allows for supportive sisterhood. I am thankful for this opportunity. My knowledge is greatly expanding and it will help me empower young women as we lack support here in Grenada."

**Kaiya Francis from Grenada**

*Enrolled in Dior's programme under the Global Skills Academy*

"I love how realistic the experience felt, almost like I was in a real lab. You can learn a lot about science and even build your own curriculum on this website, features that are amazing for a curious person like myself."

**Alexia V., high school student from Romania**

*on the Global Learning House LabXchange science programme*

"The hackathon really opened my mind in terms of how big a part AI will be in our life. [It] helped me realize that AI is something I want to study at university."

**Female high school student from Cyprus**

*on the Microsoft-UNESCO Virtual AI Hackathon (13-14 March 2021)*

Melinda Nagy/Shutterstock.com

"When the schools closed, we did not think about how this might lead to new challenges for girls. This interaction has helped us and the local government, to reflect on these issues and think about ways to support them with a focus on creating an enabling environment for their safe return to school."

### **Maya Kunwar**

*Deputy Chief of Chaurpati Rural Municipality of Achham district in Nepal, speaking about radio programmes being launched as part of the Gender Flagship's Keeping Girls in the Picture campaign*

"Digital skills are the work-place 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."

### **Aicha Zemni**

*A project manager at the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Professional Integration in Tunisia in charge of the management unit of the national vocational training reform programme, and the national focal point for the implementation of the Pix partnership in Tunisia under the Global Skills Academy*

"As a mentor, I want to support as many mentees as possible to realize their dreams of exploring the world of technology. I was glad to see a lot of energy from the girls, and the flexibility of remotely supporting them from different countries definitely motivated me."

### **Sunday Orjingere**

*An Idea Lab mentor and IP Solutions Engineer at Ericsson*

"When I go back to school, I can be stronger and work harder because I am in a better position than those who have not been attending the learning groups."

### **Coventry**

*Age 14, supported in a World Vision International project using WhatsApp groups for learning*



# Voices of the beneficiaries

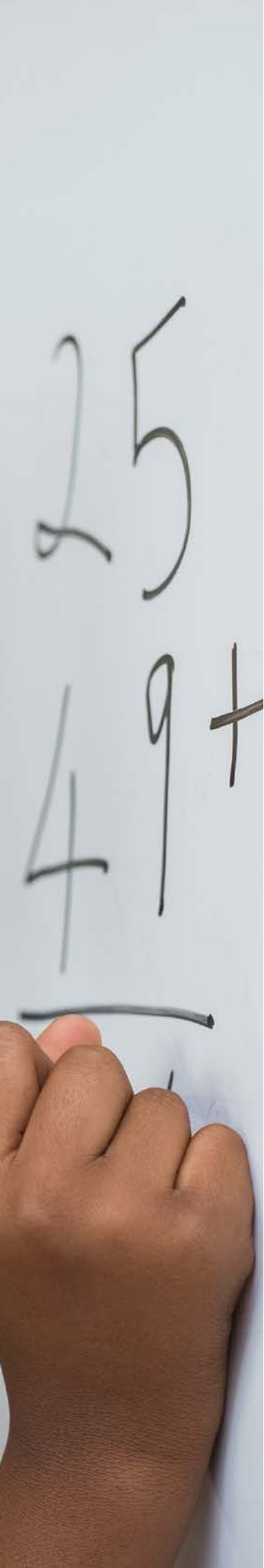
L. Julia/Shutterstock.com

"The hackathon helped me to realize that the AI is going to be one of the biggest areas in the future economy and that I want to be part of it."

**Female high school student  
from Bulgaria**

*on the Microsoft-UNESCO Virtual AI  
Hackathon (13-14 March 2021)*





## Lessons from the GEC's first year of action



**The Global Education Coalition offers an innovative framework for intervention.** The GEC framework has demonstrated a way to leverage resources that are not normally available. The in-kind nature of contributions has allowed for arrangements and implementation that existing frameworks have traditionally not enabled.



**The Coalition is emerging as a key global platform.** Through the Coalition, partners are engaging in global initiatives such as the Global Skills Academy, building common narratives, such as the campaign on the return to school, and directing the course of action at regional and national levels such as the GPE-funded Consortium of UNESCO-World Bank-UNICEF. In particular, the GEC is considered a platform where private sector and civil society are playing important roles.

**Education technology's contribution to the GEC is paramount.**

While the action of the Global Education Coalition should be largely premised on free and open educational resources, there is also a need to engage with for-profit bodies operating in education. The regulation of for-profit organizations operating in education is strongly encouraged. However, despite the risks of "marketization," the education industry could be an essential partner in any innovation strategy at global scale. Efforts to expand education technology must also consider equity issues, and gender digital divides in terms of access and skills.

**GEC members' in-kind contributions are important but not sufficient to meet education costs.**

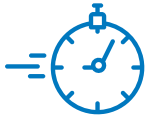
The economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic will constrain the resources available for education. In-kind contributions by GEC members will not be able to offset costs such as the large investments required in connectivity and other infrastructure.



**GEC partners' initiatives need to be made more visible.** The initiatives led by GEC partners should be receiving more attention and visibility, including through the new GEC newsletter and the website.

**The combination of knowledge development and dissemination, advocacy, national interventions, networking and cooperation allows GEC to benefit from data and research to build effective and large-scale interventions.**

The three flagships are concrete example of how knowledge can be translated into interventions targeting large numbers of beneficiaries. For instance, the Global Learning House builds on GEC members' analysis of learning losses and the availability of remedial learning programmes.



**Country interventions — such as providing policy support, mobilizing partners and supporting concrete interventions — are resource-intensive.** They require close coordination with national stakeholders and are sensitive to policy context and commitment. Crisis management teams or COVID-19 response teams are needed for successful interventions, as experiences in Senegal and Cameroon have shown. The capacity of GEC members to deploy teams rapidly on the ground is another key to success. For example, Microsoft and the Khan Academy have demonstrated how GEC members can mobilize global and local teams and partners. Furthermore, leveraging GEC resources and support requires time and — in some cases — formal agreements. Consequently, scaling up these interventions to respond to demands for support from member states necessitates stronger internal capacity in the GEC global team and better coordination with local education groups and GEC members.







# Strategic directions for the Global Education Coalition

As we mark the one-year anniversary of the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries are designing recovery plans for their education systems and making decisions about reopening schools, allocating resources for remediation and investing in resilience. It is vital that the GEC build on the experience of the past year as well as examine what learners and countries will need. The GEC's strategy allows for an agile, flexible and mission-oriented approach depending on the objectives, location and content of each initiative.

In the near term, the GEC will maintain the three-pronged approach towards its objective of ensuring continuity of learning for all with an emphasis on **recovery, resilience-building and reimagining** education. It is also important to ground GEC efforts in support of the UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief on Education and COVID-19, the #SaveOurFuture White Paper recommendations and the forthcoming Global Education Meeting recommendations and directions.

## 1. Country actions

GEC members are supporting 112 countries in all regions of the world. A review of the portfolio of initiatives in each country will be conducted, to reinforce the design of actions through multi-partner participation. Particular attention will be given to nurture local ecosystems and capabilities to produce contextualized education resources and offer global public goods (learning platforms, open education resources, open-source EMIS, credential engines, etc.) that can deliver at scale at different levels of education, accelerating the recovery process.

To enable monitoring and accountability, a set of indicators will be used and presented in a single integrated data snapshot, providing information about country initiatives. GEC members' involvement will be shared on the GEC website, including progress reports and via other external communications such as a monthly GEC member newsletter.

## 2. Global flagships

The three flagships (connectivity, teachers and gender) are priority areas identified on the basis of country demands and monitoring of the global landscape. The three flagships remain current and necessary, as illustrated by the Global Education Meeting outcome declaration. While maintaining the three flagships, GEC underpinned them with concrete missions presented in scalable initiatives that tackle challenges common to many regions. These missions aim to pool and synergize offers and contributions of several GEC partners.

The missions are expected to have an impact on many countries and target groups. This will allow GEC to launch worldwide actions, while providing individual countries with incentives to prioritize models that have a greater impact. Four particular missions were proposed and are in various stages of implementation, working towards time-bound targets: the Global Skills Academy, the Global Teacher Campus, the Global Learning House, and the Gender mission. These missions and updates on their progress have been discussed in various other parts of this report. Plans for the remainder of 2021 are discussed in the roadmap at the end of this report.

## 3. Data, research and advocacy

A series of enabling activities will be carried out, including investing in data collection, working with partners to maintain data trackers and supporting partners' advocacy efforts. The objective is to create common resources and evidence for galvanizing GEC members and attracting new partners.

## 4. GEC governance and operating model

The GEC is an agile platform. Since it aims to transform the landscape of collaboration in education, its operating model is also transformational, prioritizing multi-stakeholder engagement, a flexible and entrepreneurial operating mindset, and the meaningful engagement of its members based on their commitments and countries' needs. The present operating model focuses on the short term. GEC will evolve from its current structure to a new model following consultation with its members and key stakeholders. The governance model should ensure alignment with the priorities and architecture of the global education community under discussion. It should also ensure opportunities for GEC members to remain engaged.

### *Global level*

The GEC Global Team is hosted by UNESCO. It includes a coordinator and portfolio managers in charge of different categories of partners, including UN and international/regional organizations, the private sector, non-profit and civil society groups, academia and the news media. The GEC's distinctive model of multi-stakeholder partnerships deepens civil society and private sector engagement, supports scale, coordinates implementers, and helps countries to develop national education resources and home-grown responses. Several partners mobilized human resources to join the GEC Global Team including KPMG and Microsoft.

## *Country level*

At the country level, UNESCO offices and local education groups coordinate actions. GEC members sometimes conduct activities aligned with the GEC's mission under the GEC's banner without direct involvement of the global GEC team or local education groups. GEC members engaging in such initiatives receive access to GEC's communication and advocacy efforts and its network of partners.

## *Flagships and missions*

The GEC will support the advancement of the global flagships. To realize the aims of these flagships, the GEC Global Team is responsible for structuring opportunities for cross-partner initiatives, designing missions and creating shared value partnerships. GEC members and member states will be involved as co-creators, leaders and advisors.

## *Global Education Coalition transparency and accountability portal*

The GEC will use its website to develop a transparency and accountability portal using the Microsoft PowerBI tool. The transparency portal will provide real-time data and information regarding the Coalition actions, as well as progress in implementing the flagships and in conducting research and advocacy actions.

## *Global Education Coalition communication*

The GEC team is regularly updating the Coalition website. To better inform the Coalition members and the wider public, in addition to the #LearningNeverStops hashtag, the GEC team launched a monthly newsletter.







# Roadmap to December 2021: Key milestones for recovery

In 2020, we all worked to **Respond** to the crisis, forging new partnerships such as the Global Education Coalition and engaging in concrete initiatives such as the UNESCO-World Bank-UNICEF Consortium. Going forward, we suggest adopting a new narrative that encompasses Recovery, Resilience and Reimagining education (3Rs). In 2021, we propose a **specific focus on Recovery** to ensure safe, gender-responsive and child-friendly school reopenings that meet the needs of the most marginalized. Focusing on Recovery will also ensure that actions target teachers being supported as frontline workers; investment in skills; and narrowing the digital divide and ensuring the gender dimensions of school closures and addressed in recovery efforts. Recovery should also focus on addressing inequalities that were exposed during the pandemic, including through policies and programmes to prevent dropout and learning losses, and facilitate school to work transitions – particularly among the most vulnerable groups.

The action plan for the remainder of 2021 is based on the GEC's three pillars: **country interventions, flagships**, and **data, knowledge and advocacy**. Several activities are planned, including:

## Country interventions

- 1** Introduce new initiatives to support countries in recovery phase with particular focus on three areas: (i) Provide comprehensive support to children through the education system, with a focus on the most marginalized; (ii) Address learning losses; and (iii) accelerate digital learning and efforts to close the gender digital divide.
- 2** Continue to implement the GPE-funded Consortium activities in Western Africa, South-East Asia and the Pacific islands.
- 3** Continue implementation of activities planned in the 112 beneficiary countries and expand outreach based on countries' demands.
- 4** Support countries to enhance their local digital learning ecosystems and nurture sustainable and equitable national value chains.



# Global flagships

## 1. *Flagship on Connectivity*

- 1 Continue work to further the Global Education Connectivity Declaration Process with support from Dubai Cares, endorsing an International Declaration on Connectivity for Education by the end of 2021.
- 2 Continue to mobilize GEC members in the area of connectivity, ensuring teachers and learners are connected and equipped for digital learning.
- 3 Launch and further refine the Global Learning House (GLH), aided by a call for expression of interest to the Teach for All network and the inaugural meeting of GLH partners in April 2021.
- 4 Accelerate the implementation of the Global Skills Academy, a large-scale skills-for-work programme targeting youth and adults for upskilling and reskilling. UNESCO and partners will collaborate to shape a more sustainable version of the Global Skills Academy, building on lessons learned from the pilot phase and in line with the Agenda 2030.



## 2. *Flagship on Teachers*

1

Drawing on the work carried out by the GEC partners in 2020, and on the growth of the membership, the Global Teacher Campus will join forces with new partners and teacher training institutions to strengthen the capacities for digital and remote teaching of one million educators.

2

The Global Teacher Campus will engage with UNESCO Associated Schools and its Network of Teacher Training Institutions, and will leverage ongoing projects in the field, including GPE and GIZ supported projects on teacher development, and a ten-country project on “Harnessing Technology for Quality Teacher Training in Africa,” supported by the People’s Republic of China.



### 3. *Flagship on Gender*

Support the development and implementation of gender-responsive school reopening and contingency planning, drawing on the Back to school guide. With funds from Japan, UNESCO will cooperate with the UN Girls' Education Initiative, Plan International, Malala Fund and UNICEF to develop a national training package for education planners, teachers and school administrators drawing on the Building Back Equal: Girls Back to School Guide, and previous trainings on gender-responsive education sector planning.

1

Pilot trainings will be undertaken in Mali, Mauritania and Pakistan, with further efforts to integrate content into capacity development efforts planned for the Gender at the Centre initiative (reaching Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) and the Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA, reaching Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam), as well as upcoming IIEP trainings for Anglophone African countries.

2

Enhance access to distance learning approaches and contribute to narrowing the gender digital divide through online learning opportunities, digital mentorship and female role models. Partnerships with Technovation, Intel and Prada will advance this effort in over 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

## Data, knowledge and advocacy

The Partners will join forces to develop and leverage education response trackers, conduct surveys, collect data and knowledge that provide access to information on schools reopening, learning losses, drop-out and transition from school to work and make data available to support decision making and peer learning. The data collection will also expand diversify to other data sources. The Partners will also engage with policy-makers, mobilize international community, media and public to attract policy attention and financing to ensure policy and public support to education recovery plans at global and national levels. Specific planned actions include:

1

Further deployment and analysis of the REDS survey, with a target data analysis and international report release date of October 2021. For the first wave of countries, it is expected that data will be available by the beginning of April 2021, and for the second wave, at the beginning of June 2021.

2

With support from the Global Partnership for Education, the Gender Flagship will produce and disseminate results of the global study in September 2021 to understand the gendered impacts of COVID-related school closures, and document good practice to ensure continuity of learning and return to school. A systematic review is also planned on the gender dimensions of past extended school closures, to use as learning for the current context.

3

Further expand the multilingual #LearningNeverStops campaign focusing on “keeping girls in the picture” including the delivery of country-level advocacy through community radio, local press, engagement with key influencers, youth organizations and other means.

4

Launch of the initiative Frontier Technologies Solutions to respond to COVID-19 and recover back better in the context of the Coalition Forum. The event will bring together solutions and initiatives promoted by Global Education Coalition members that are offering continued learning for children, youth, and adults during the pandemic and within a lifelong learning perspective.

5

Finalization and dissemination of the third wave of the joint UNESCO-World Bank-UNICEF-OECD survey on education response.





United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Education  
Sector




# Supporting learning recovery one year into COVID-19

## The Global Education Coalition in action

The Global Education Coalition, launched by UNESCO, is a platform for collaboration and exchange to protect the right to education during this unprecedented disruption and beyond.

This is the annual report of the Coalition, which builds on the inaugural report published in September 2020, and covers the activity between March 2020 and March 2021.

### Stay in touch

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