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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Social development: literacy for life: shaping future agendas

Literacy for life: shaping future agendas, and education for democracy

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

  The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/155, entitled "Literacy for life: shaping future agendas". In the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session a report on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is also submitted in accordance with resolution 75/199, entitled "Education for democracy", in which the Assembly requested UNESCO, within existing reporting obligations, to report to the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution and invited the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, within her existing mandate, to contribute to the report of the Secretary-General.

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I. Introduction

1.   As mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 75/155, adopted at its seventy-fifth session, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been requested to prepare the present report to be presented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. The present report provides an overview of the global literacy landscape, including responses to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis, followed by highlights of the achievements obtained at the global, regional and country levels. It also offers recommendations for further advancing literacy as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A. The 2030 vision of literacy

2.   Literacy[1] is a vital component of the fundamental human right to education and a public good. It is at the core of basic education and an essential foundation of lifelong learning. Literacy has the ability to transform lives and is therefore critical for gaining access to other human rights and promoting sustainable development. The benefits of literacy for individuals, families, communities, societies, economies and the planet are well documented. Evidence confirms that literacy and numeracy are instrumental in achieving several of the Sustainable Developments Goals, including those related to poverty reduction, gender equality, health, and inclusive growth and decent work.

3.   The Education 2030 Agenda, which sets a new vision for education and lifelong learning, views literacy and numeracy as foundational skills of basic education, essential to lifelong learning and full participation in society and the economy. Literacy and numeracy play important roles across all age groups, from early childhood to adulthood, and in a range of different settings throughout life and work. Sustainable Development Goal 4 includes a specific target (4.6) concerning youth and adult literacy, which is to "ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy". Other targets are also linked to literacy, including target 4.3 concerning affordable and quality adult education.

4.   The full potential of literacy to "transform our world" – the overall aim of the Sustainable Development Goals – can be unleashed only if it is approached from a lifelong learning perspective. Such an expanded vision involves creating opportunities for individuals to develop literacy skills over their entire lifetime. It also entails putting learning and the learner at the centre of learning provision and developing integrated, holistic, sector-wide and multisectoral approaches to literacy. Thus, achieving the desired transformative effect of the Goals means working towards literate families, communities and societies that consist of independent and confident lifelong learners.

5.   Literacy teaching and learning occur in diverse linguistic, cultural and ethnic contexts. Particular attention should therefore be paid to the role of learners' first language in their achievement of literacy and in learning, in the spirit of the current

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[1] Literacy is a key component of adult learning and education. It involves a continuum of learning and proficiency levels which allows citizens to engage in lifelong learning and participate fully in community, workplace and wider society. It includes the ability to read and write, to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials, as well as the ability to solve problems in an increasingly technological and information-rich environment. Literacy is an essential means of building people's knowledge, skills and competencies to cope with the evolving challenges and complexities of life, culture, economy and society (UNESCO, Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015), para. 4).

International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032), proclaimed by the General Assembly to promote and protect linguistic rights as human rights.

6.   Literacy requires well-prepared educators who can adapt innovative pedagogies and leverage technology to meet the needs of diverse participants.

B.   Future-oriented initiatives strengthening the commitment to literacy

7.   In the 2021 report of the Futures of Education initiative entitled *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*, the lack of adequate literacy, numeracy and other basic skills is identified as a marker of social disadvantage. Literacy and numeracy are directly connected to possibilities for future learning and social participation. In the report, broadened and deepened approaches to literacy are advocated, which must become a society-wide commitment.

8.   In the context of the global discussion on the initiative, the International Council for Adult Education identified literacy as one of the biggest unsolved problems of the world in its own report, entitled "Adult learning and education: because the future cannot wait". Literacy, as a crucial foundation of adult learning and education, must be responsive to adult learners' needs, life roles and contexts, so as to empower and support the development of critical thinking.

9.   While the benefits of literacy are well known, adult literacy has not received sufficient policy attention or financial support. The Marrakech Framework for Action, adopted at the seventh International Conference on Adult Education, held from 15 to 17 June 2022, established a commitment to filling the funding gap and intensifying efforts to implement comprehensive and evidence-based, gender-transformative, cross-sectoral and inclusive literacy policies and implementation strategies to meet the adult literacy target set out under Sustainable Development Goal 4. To bridge the digital divide and address the related privacy and ethics concerns, States members of UNESCO also agreed under the Framework to promote open education resources for the common and public good. Lastly, in the Framework member States reiterated the importance of active and global citizenship. They advocated citizenship education for adults, with the aim of developing learners' critical thinking and promoting their active participation in their local communities and society.

10.   Initiated by the Secretary-General, the Transforming Education Summit to be held in September 2022 will spotlight the need to act fast to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 and transform education. It will highlight foundational learning, including literacy and numeracy, as being crucial to lifelong learning and to living a healthy and productive life in changing environments. Foundational learning has been identified as an area requiring greater attention and action because it can accelerate progress on Goal 4 and on the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

II.   Centrality of literacy in today's world

11.   Literacy and numeracy play a central role in building more peaceful, just, inclusive and sustainable societies, as well as addressing global challenges. These include global warming and climate change; crises brought about by pandemics, such as the COVID-19 pandemic; the changing nature of work owing to globalization, automation and new technologies; rapid demographic change; and conflict and war. The consequences of these challenges – growing levels of food insecurity; persisting or rising inequalities, vulnerabilities and impoverishment; heightened displacement and migration; and deepening digital and other divides – are preventing a growing number of people from fulfilling their fundamental rights.

12.   The accelerating pace of change has heightened the importance of literacy today for citizens of all ages compared with past decades. Young people and adults need to continuously improve their skills to adapt to rapidly transforming labour markets characterized by increasing digitization, greening economies, and persistent vulnerabilities in informal and rural economies. Access to text-based knowledge, information and communication, combined with the ability to critically process such material, is essential in order to handle the challenges in today's (and tomorrow's) world autonomously, productively and creatively. Numeracy is equally vital as people are increasingly required to apply their mathematical knowledge and competencies to a wide range of situations.

13.   In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing boost to the digitalization of learning environments, proficiency in literacy and information processing has become even more critical. A rapid recovery of education will not be possible without prioritizing foundational literacy, numeracy and digital skills.[2]

14.   There is ample evidence showing that literacy learning correlates with positive citizenship outcomes. Almost three quarters of the countries that responded to the *Fifth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education: Citizenship Education – Empowering Adults for Change* survey reported that literacy programmes contributed significantly to active citizenship.[3] One of the key messages of the *Global Report* is that adult learning and education has a strong and measurable impact on active citizenship, political participation, social cohesion, gender equality, and diversity and tolerance and that it therefore benefits social and community life.

III.   The global literacy landscape: progress and issues

15.   Progress made towards achieving youth and adult literacy targets has been slow and uneven. It has faced multiple difficulties in the past and continues to be challenged by major crises such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. While the global indicator for target 4.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals is a test-based level of proficiency in functional literacy and numeracy skills, the necessary measurement tools are not yet available outside of high-income countries. Reporting at the global level therefore continues to measure traditional literacy rates, which are estimates based on the conventional dichotomy of literacy/illiteracy.

16.   The most recent estimates, from 2020,[4] show a global adult (aged 15 years and over) literacy rate of 87 per cent, meaning that 770 million adults, including 482 million women (63 per cent), lack basic literacy skills. The global youth literacy rate (aged 15–24 years) is 92 per cent, meaning that 98 million youth lack basic literacy skills. With a literacy rate of 83 per cent for women and 90 per cent for men, the global literacy gender gap stands at 7 percentage points. This gap is smaller (2.1 points) among young people, and larger (11.5 points) among those aged 65 years and over.

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[2] Digital skills are defined as a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications and networks to access and manage information. They enable people to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfilment in life, learning, work and social activities at large (UNESCO, "Digital skills critical for jobs and social inclusion", 15 March 2018, available at https://en.unesco.org/news/digital-skills-critical-jobs-and-social-inclusion).

[3] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, *Fifth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education: Citizenship Education – Empowering Adults for Change* (Hamburg, 2022), available at https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/global-report/5th-global-report-adult-learning-and-education-citizenship-education.

[4] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, UIS.Stat database, available at http://data.uis.unesco.org/.

17. Considerable regional differences persist, with Central Asia reaching almost universal literacy (99.81 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa faring less well (66.13 per cent). In absolute terms, however, the number of young people and adults – especially women – with no or low literacy skills has hardly changed in 20 years, and the number of non-literate women has even increased in sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, most adults with literacy needs live in South and West Asia (362 million) and sub-Saharan Africa (213 million).

18. In the context of the 2021 annual global education data release, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics updated indicators and data sets on literacy. For the first time, data were published on literacy rates in urban and rural contexts, as well as on the elderly literate population aged 65 years and over. However, such data are only available for a few countries. For example, the adult literacy rate in Bangladesh is 82 per cent in urban contexts and 69 per cent in rural contexts, and in Mali it stands at 56 per cent in urban contexts and 22 per cent in rural contexts. However, literacy rates among elderly rural women are only 17 per cent in Bangladesh and 0.5 per cent in Mali. These examples illustrate that national average literacy rates can mask huge differences related to age groups, gender, geographical location and other factors of disadvantage.

19. Low-skilled adults make up a significant share of the population in the countries taking part in the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies survey.[5] On average, 20 per cent of adults perform at or below level 1 in literacy and numeracy. In Ecuador, Mexico and Peru, more than 50 per cent of adults scored at or below these levels. Around 25 per cent of adults in all participating countries have no or only limited experience with computers. Many adults also lack digital skills, with nearly one in two adults only proficient at or below level 1 in problem-solving in technology-rich environments.

20. The latest data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics show that an estimated 260 million children and adolescents of primary and secondary school age are out of school. In addition, increased measurement of learning outcomes at school has shown that many students in school do not acquire minimum proficiency in reading, even by the end of lower secondary school. Moreover, literacy is usually overestimated when it is not directly assessed. Almost half of all 20–24-year-olds who had completed lower secondary school in 18 low-income and lower-middle-income countries could not read a simple sentence.[6] In most countries, literacy is at best stagnating among those who have not completed at least lower secondary schooling. On the other hand, no schooling does not automatically equal "illiteracy", highlighting the importance of literacy acquisition outside of school. Decision makers should therefore pay attention to different learning spaces, including families and communities.

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[5] The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies is a programme of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that measures adults' proficiency in key information-processing skills – literacy, numeracy and problem-solving – and gathers information and data on how adults use their skills at home, at work and in the wider community. The survey is conducted in over 40 countries and economies.

[6] According to an analysis undertaken by the Global Education Monitoring Team of recent data from the Demographic and Health Survey project (*Global Education Monitoring Report* (Paris, UNESCO, 2021), p. 304).

Global education coordination and the Transforming Education Summit

1. Strengthening global cooperation on education

During the period 2020–2021, UNESCO galvanized multi-stakeholder cooperation to support countries in ensuring learning continuity, "building back better" and transforming education, as well as to strengthen the global education coordination on the Education 2030 Agenda. As a result, the renewed global education cooperation mechanism was adopted at the 2021 Global Education Meeting, held on 13 July 2021. Efforts culminated at the ministerial segment and the high-level segment of the Meeting, with the endorsement of the strengthened Sustainable Development Goal 4 Education 2030 High-level Steering Committee, mandated to serve as the global education coordination body in the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

The High-level Steering Committee is mandated to contribute to accelerated action for Goal 4 through its three functional areas: (a) promoting evidence-based policy formulation and implementation; (b) monitoring progress and improving the availability and use of data; and (c) driving financing mobilization and improved alignment.

The Steering Committee has identified four thematic focus areas for the period 2022–2023:

    (a)   Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools;

    (b)   Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development;

    (c)   Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession;

    (d)   Digital learning and transformation.

The Steering Committee is actively engaged in the preparations for the Transforming Education Summit preparatory process and follow-up.

2. The Transforming Education Summit

As announced in his report on Our Common Agenda, the Secretary-General is convening the Transforming Education Summit in September 2022. Recognizing that education is a foundation for peace, tolerance, human rights and sustainable development, the primary objective of the Summit is to mobilize greater political ambition, action, solidarity and solutions to reimagine education, recover pandemic-related learning losses and accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the overall 2030 Agenda for the remainder of the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals. The Summit and its preparatory process are fully integrated into the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism road map, with the High-level Steering Committee being mandated to ensure effective follow-up.

Preparations for the 2022 Transforming Education Summit have been guided by four overarching principles: (a) country leadership; (b) inclusiveness; (c) youth-inspired action; and (d) building on existing efforts.

The Summit preparatory process is advanced through three interlinked work streams centred on:

- National consultations to develop a shared vision, commitment and alignment of action across constituencies to transform education between now and 2030, under the leadership of Member States.

- Thematic action tracks to spotlight a small number of areas requiring greater attention and action that can accelerate progress on education and the 2030 Agenda and, in the process, transform education.

- Public engagement to democratize dialogue around education and to grow a global movement for education transformation.

A key milestone of the preparatory process, the Transforming Education Pre-Summit held from 28 to 30 June 2022 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris created momentum, harnessing the evolving discussions on transforming education. It was attended by over 150 ministers and was kicked off by a youth forum that brought together youth activists and representatives and served as a moment to launch a fresh push for public mobilization for education.

The High-level Steering Committee. will continue to monitor progress, promote and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and practice, engage young people, and champion cross-sector and multilateral cooperation.

Literacy in the context of the COVID-19 crisis

21. The COVID-19 crisis has had, and is still having, a significant negative impact on literacy. Even though literacy and numeracy skills have been crucial to developing health awareness and appropriate behaviours in the context of the pandemic, adult literacy programmes were hit hard by the crisis. A rapid assessment by UNESCO in mid-2020 suggested that 90 per cent of adult literacy programmes had been partially or fully suspended.[7] Only a few courses continued virtually (through television and radio) or in open-air settings, where possible. More rarely, providers, mostly in Europe and North America, were able to offer online learning programmes.

22. Furthermore, literacy programmes were mostly absent from countries' initial education response plans. Few countries included literacy in their pandemic response. Exceptions include Chad, which incorporated adult and non-formal education into its COVID-19 pandemic response plan, and Senegal, which established a working group on youth and adult basic education. While minority language speakers generally risk being excluded from learning, Algeria maintained its bilingual approach to literacy learning during the crisis.[8]

23. Those literacy programmes that managed to transition to online provision faced numerous challenges, notably a lack of funds; limited capacity to equip and support learners and teachers with the necessary devices, materials and skills; and poor or unavailable Internet connections and technological infrastructure. In many cases, literacy facilitators still managed to maintain direct contact with their learners (through social media, online applications, telephone conversations and home visits) to ensure continued learning.

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[7] UNESCO, "International Literacy Day: background paper on youth and adult literacy in the time of COVID-19: impacts and revelations", 8 September 2020, available at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374187.

[8] UNESCO, "Minority language speakers risk being left behind in COVID-19 education response", 17 February 2021, available at https://en.unesco.org/news/minority-language-speakers-risk-being-left-behind-covid-19-education-response.

24. In the *Fifth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* monitoring survey, UNESCO member States reported the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on adult learning and education. The most common were disruptions to in-person learning, closures of education providers, reduced participation and funding, and compromised quality. Conversely, some countries reported heightened participation in and demand for adult learning and education. Self-directed and intergenerational learning also became more important, along with community education. However, the *Global Report* provides only a snapshot of the pandemic's initial impact, which has likely been far stronger than anticipated at the time of the survey.

25. Evidence of the short-, medium- and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on literacy is still limited. The available research has confirmed that vulnerable schoolchildren were more likely to fall behind in their learning.[9] Young people and adults with literacy needs have been especially affected by the educational, social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and keeping them engaged in literacy learning amid competing priorities has been a major challenge. In April 2022, UNESCO addressed a survey to all 193 UNESCO member States to collect key findings on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth and adult literacy.[10] The results, which will be available in September 2022, may be a valuable resource for policymakers to rebuild and advance their literacy efforts.

IV. Progress at the country and regional levels

26. During the reporting period, UNESCO successfully supported national literacy policies and programmes, focusing in particular on non-literate youth and adults; out-of-school children and youth; the Organization's priorities in Africa; and gender equality. In total, 68 countries benefited from UNESCO support, including 15 countries that addressed the learning needs of out-of-school children and youth.

27. The literacy work of UNESCO is guided by the UNESCO Strategy for Youth and Adult Literacy (2020–2025) and its action plan. The Global Alliance for Literacy within the framework of lifelong learning [11] serves as its major implementation platform. This section of the present report illustrates progress made at the country and regional levels in the four strategic priority areas. [12] It also covers progress achieved in children's literacy.

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[9] Sabine Meinck, Julian Fraillon and Rolf Streitholt (eds.), *The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Education: International Evidence from the Responses to Educational Disruption Survey* (Paris, UNESCO, 2022).

[10] UNESCO, "UNESCO launches survey to collect key findings on COVID-19 impact on youth and adult literacy", 29 April 2022, available at www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-launches-survey-collect-key-findings-covid-19-impact-youth-and-adult-literacy.

[11] The Global Alliance for Literacy within the framework of lifelong learning comprises 29 countries that are strongly committed to improving youth and adult literacy: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, China, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, the Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone and South Sudan (see www.uil.unesco.org/en/literacy/global-alliance).

[12] The four strategic priority areas are: (a) supporting member States in developing national literacy policies and strategies; (b) addressing the learning needs of disadvantaged groups, particularly women and girls; (c) leveraging digital technologies to expand access and improve learning outcomes; and (d) monitoring progress and assessing literacy skills and programmes.

A. Supporting member States in developing national literacy policies and strategies

28. UNESCO supports its member States in ensuring that youth and adult literacy is well integrated into national policies, strategies and education sector plans. Overall, UNESCO has provided technical assistance to 40 countries. For example, its Capacity Development for Education Programme[13] supported the strengthening of institutional capacity in adult literacy and education in Nepal. This was achieved by developing guidelines for local governments to implement the non-formal education activities for which they were responsible in the context of decentralized governance. A total of 594 local and federal government representatives, as well as 705 managers and facilitators from 248 community learning centres, participated in training workshops to enhance their capacity to deliver related services. In Senegal, the Capacity Development for Education Programme supported the development of an initial teacher training framework integrating skills in youth and adult basic education.

29. Alternative learning opportunities for young people and adults are often absent from national education policies, strategies and plans. During the period 2020–2021, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, together with the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, responded to this challenge by developing an online course in English. Through the course, 40 participants from eight countries were trained in integrating alternative and non-formal education for youth and adults into sector-wide education plans from a lifelong learning perspective. An Arabic version of the course was then offered in 2021, with the participation of 51 government officials, researchers and representatives of civil society organizations from 11 Arab countries.[14]

30. A range of activities promoting policy dialogue and capacity development have taken place in each of the five UNESCO regions. In 2020, UNESCO organized the Arab Regional Conference on Literacy and Adult Education, as well as a regional policy forum on the recognition, validation and accreditation of learning outcomes and alternative learning programmes in the Arab States. In Africa, UNESCO increased its support for public literacy policies in 10 countries. In Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO organized two conferences on equitable education, with over 11,000 participants and 38,000 viewers.[15] In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNESCO supported Chile and Haiti as they integrated literacy and numeracy skills into their education policies, strategies and non-formal education plans.

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[13] The Capacity Development for Education Programme is a key delivery platform for the UNESCO education sector in the framework of the Education 2030 Agenda. With a capacity development approach that is focused on system strengthening, it supports the least developed and crisis-affected countries in designing and implementing education reforms that are essential to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4.

[14] Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. See UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "Over 50 participants from 11 Arab States complete capacity-building on alternative, non-formal education in Education Sector Plans", 21 December 2021, available at https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/over-50-participants-11-arab-states-complete-capacity-building-alternative-non.

[15] These conferences were organized within the framework of the Equitable Education Alliance with the goal of disseminating available information, knowledge and best practices to enhance equity in education, notably by targeting learners in non-formal education affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, the UNESCO office in Bangkok described the experience of training disadvantaged youth in using online learning resources in Thailand.

B. Addressing the learning needs of disadvantaged populations

31. The UNESCO literacy strategy emphasizes the learning needs of disadvantaged populations, in particular those of women and girls, and populations that are disproportionately affected by conflict, crises and natural disasters. UNESCO has provided 24 countries with technical support to develop the capacities required to manage more inclusive literacy programmes and has initiated a study on literacy strategies in 9 African countries with the same goal.

32. Teachers play a critical role in ensuring the equity, quality and relevance of literacy provision. UNESCO has therefore prioritized the professionalization of teaching personnel. At the global level, discussions around International Literacy Day and World Teachers' Day 2020, combined with requests from member States, led to the launch of the Global Education Coalition-Global Alliance for Literacy[16] initiative to develop digital skills among educators in Global Alliance for Literacy countries. Among its initial activities are the development of a digital competency framework for literacy educators, along with three training modules, and the design of an online course platform by Moodle, to be made available on the Learning Hub of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning,[17] which will make it possible to adapt and implement this training at the country level. Together with the International Council for Adult Education and the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning has developed Curriculum GlobALE,[18] a competency framework for adult educators.

33. At the regional level, UNESCO supported 10 African countries in developing a scheme, aligned with existing regional teacher certification frameworks, to integrate literacy and non-formal education into teacher training institutions. Together with the International Organization of la Francophonie, UNESCO organized a regional workshop to harmonize trainer reference frameworks for bilingual schools in Africa. In Chad, the Capacity Development for Education Programme provides technical support, funded by the Global Partnership for Education, to strengthen existing training programmes for literacy facilitators.

Girls and women

34. Several programmes supported by UNESCO have a strong gender focus. These include a women's empowerment programme in Côte d'Ivoire equipping 500 women with literacy skills; the School Meet the Learner Approach programme in Nigeria, which develops girls' and women's literacy and livelihood skills; and the Factory Literacy Programme in Cambodia, which was implemented through 25 partner garment factories across 12 provinces and benefited 1,786 workers (97 per cent of whom were women).

35. The Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (2014–2021)[19] was cooperatively implemented in seven countries by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the

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[16] The Global Education Coalition launched by UNESCO is a platform for collaboration and exchange, with the aim of protecting the right to education and ensuring the continuity of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[17] See UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "About the institute", available at https://uil.unesco.org/unesco-institute.

[18] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "Curriculum globALE: competency framework for adult educators", May 2021, available at https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/curriculum-globale-competency-framework-adult-educators.

[19] FAO, IFAD, UN-Women and WFP, "Global evaluation brief: joint programme on rural women's economic empowerment", available at www.fao.org/3/cb6058en/cb6058en.pdf.

Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to improve the status of rural women. Four of the participating countries – Ethiopia, Guatemala, Liberia and the Niger – provided literacy and numeracy training to equip 19,788 women with the basic skills necessary for entrepreneurship. As a result, participating women increased their agricultural production and improved their families' nutrition. They were also able to gain access to credit to start their own businesses, thereby increasing their incomes.

Indigenous peoples

36. UNESCO continues to promote mother tongue-based multilingual approaches to literacy. Family literacy and community learning programmes that draw on local and indigenous knowledges and prioritize intergenerational approaches to learning help to preserve linguistic and cultural identity.

37. In Chile, four studies were conducted on the use of eight indigenous languages in the context of a project[20] on linguistic and cultural revitalization among indigenous peoples, resulting in policy recommendations on literacy and education services in these languages. The main findings were disseminated in a webinar involving indigenous representatives and local authorities. In the framework of International Mother Language Day 2021, the UNESCO office in Santiago organized a series of policy dialogues through four webinars[21] on indigenous peoples, interculturality, linguistic rights and local languages in education, contributing to informed debate on the drafting of the new Constitution of Chile.

38. In 2021, UNESCO organized a global webinar on family literacy and indigenous and local learning through the UNESCO Chair in Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation. In May 2022, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning launched a self-paced online course on family learning and indigenous knowledges[22] in cooperation with the Commonwealth of Learning, with 282 users engaged as at 15 June 2022.

Refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants

39. Globally, the number of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants has increased significantly over the past decade. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning organized a webinar in December 2021 to better understand the multiple challenges they face in their pursuit of literacy, learning and work.[23] The Institute is also conducting a research project on the recognition, validation and accreditation of the learning outcomes of migrants and refugees, including an analysis of flexible learning pathways to facilitate their integration.

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[20] A project entitled "State of eight indigenous languages based on narratives, practices and experiences about language and culture in intercultural educational communities" ("Estado de ocho lenguas indígenas a partir de narrativas, prácticas y experiencias sobre lengua y cultura en comunidades educativas interculturales"). Further information in Spanish is available at https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/nota-conceptual-presentacion-estudio-lenguas.pdf and https://events.unesco.org/event?id=1265495251&lang=3082.

[21] The four webinars included 2,944 participants (scholars, members of indigenous organizations and elected indigenous representatives) in the drafting of the new Constitution of Chile. See UNESCO, "Ciclo de conversatorios 'Pueblos indígenas, interculturalidad y nueva Constitución en Chile'", available at https://es.unesco.org/Conversatorios-interculturalidad-nueva-constitucion.

[22] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "UIL launches a course on family learning and indigenous knowledges", 5 May 2022, available at https://uil.unesco.org/literacy/community-learning/uil-launches-course-family-learning-and-indigenous-knowledges.

[23] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "Webinar: understanding lifelong learning opportunities and policies for refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons", available at https://uil.unesco.org/event/webinar-understanding-lifelong-learning-opportunities-and-policies-refugees-migrants-and.

40.   Furthermore, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning is preparing a synthesis report[24] and compiling 25 technology-supported literacy programmes for migrants and refugees.[25] In May 2022, the Institute jointly organized a conference on informal language learning and media for migrants in the Nordic countries, [26] to identify promising research, policy and practice.

People in prison

41.   To identify current trends, progress made and challenges in prison education at a global level, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning has conducted research, published a literature review of education in prison in 2021 and advocated prison libraries. The Institute has also advanced prison education through a high-level colloquium in Canada with the UNESCO Chair in Applied Research for Education in Prison. The Institute will launch an analysis of country cases in late 2022, which will culminate in the production of guidelines for the design and management of prison education.

C.   Leveraging digital technologies to expand access and improve learning outcomes

42.   UNESCO promoted technology-enabled adult literacy and education programmes in 16 countries to ensure continuity of learning during the COVID-19 crisis. While celebrations of International Literacy Day, international literacy prizes, and a series of conferences and webinars on the digital transformation of education enabled the sharing of relevant policies and practices, UNESCO also implemented a range of activities, including diagnostic studies, on information and communications technology (ICT)-supported non-formal technical and vocational education and training in Benin, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo, and a pilot ICT-supported technical and vocational education and training model for low-skilled youth in the context of the Capacity Development for Education Programme.

43.   In Thailand, UNESCO helped to develop a lifelong learning online course to enhance the digital skills of over 280,000 disadvantaged young people. [27] In the Sudan, UNESCO piloted ICT-supported community learning centres that provided literacy courses for local women. UNESCO also helped to improve the non-formal education component of the e-learning system in Chad and promoted a project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency on ICT-enhanced literacy and lifelong learning solutions for refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons. In Thailand, the Learning Coin joint initiative by the Equitable Education Fund and UNESCO provided monthly scholarships to 454 out-of-school children, which allowed them to support their families financially by reading books from the LearnBig application.[28]

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[24] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "From radio to artificial intelligence: innovative literacy learning and education for refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons", available at https://uil.unesco.org/radio-artificial-intelligence-innovative-literacy-learning-and-education-refugees-migrants-and.

[25] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, LitBase database, available at https://uil.unesco.org/literacy/effective-practices-database-litbase.

[26] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "UIL co-organizes a conference on informal language learning and media for refugees and migrants in the nordics", available at https://uil.unesco.org/event/uil-co-organizes-conference-informal-language-learning-and-media-refugees-and-migrants-nordics.

[27] The online course is available at www.lll-olc.net.

[28] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "Learning Coin: open education opportunities for out-of-school migrants, Thailand", 12 January 2022, available at https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/learning-coin-open-education-opportunities-out.

44.   In 2020 and 2021, UNESCO organized two virtual policy forums on lifelong learning during the EdTech Korea Fair and contributed to the Central Asian Symposium on ICT in Education. The Organization also launched online lifelong learning modules in the Arab States,[29] which were used by over 5,500 educators and government officials. In Africa, it launched an open educational resources platform, BELUGA. In Nigeria, it provided 85 non-formal video lessons for television broadcasting in the Hausa language.

45.   In collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning organized an online course during the period 2020–2021 on planning family and intergenerational learning programmes, with more than 100 of the 300 participants from 60 countries receiving certificates. Also in partnership with the Commonwealth, the Institute published guidelines on open and distance learning for youth and adult literacy[30] in 2021 to help providers to design, implement and evaluate open and distance learning literacy programmes for youth and adults. The related online course released in 2022[31] reached 67 participants from 29 countries, 56 of whom received certificates.

D.   Monitoring progress and assessing literacy skills and programmes

46.   To monitor and evaluate the quality of youth and adult literacy programmes, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning continues to implement the action research project on measuring literacy programme participants' learning outcomes in 12 French-speaking African countries. The project resulted in the development in 2020 of test items to assess literacy, numeracy and life skills[32] for adaptation and translation into selected national languages, and the production of evaluation booklets, with subsequent field trials in 2022. An external evaluation of the project in 2021 highlighted the need for continued capacity-building on programme-based literacy assessment, as well as more regional and international cooperation.

47.   Other work carried out at the country level included the development of a national literacy survey in Afghanistan, an assessment of non-formal primary education for youth and adults in Mozambique in the framework of the Capacity Development for Education Programme, and an assessment of the literacy, numeracy and life skills of young refugees in Lebanon as part of a broader study.

E.   Children's literacy from a lifelong learning perspective

48.   Fulfilling the vision that all children, young people and adults should benefit from quality lifelong learning opportunities requires addressing existing literacy challenges through integrated, holistic and intergenerational approaches across all age groups. Within this mission, UNESCO pays special attention to the learning needs of out-of-school children and youth, in particular through its support for flexible learning and equivalency programmes in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic

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[29] The modules are available on the Kodrat e-learning platform.

[30] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, *Guidelines on Open and Distance Learning for Youth and Adult Literacy* (Hamburg, 2021), available at https://uil.unesco.org/literacy/guidelines-open-and-distance-learning-youth-and-adult-literacy.

[31] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "New UIL course: 'how open and distance learning can support literacy'", 15 February 2022, available at https://uil.unesco.org/literacy/new-uil-course-how-open-and-distance-learning-can-support-literacy.

[32] Life skills are seen as "cross-cutting applications of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which are important in the process of individual development and lifelong learning". See www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology/l/life-skills.

Republic, Nepal, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam;[33] the development of national policy frameworks on alternative education pathways in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen; the development of equivalency education and curriculum frameworks in Bangladesh and Haiti; and other operational activities in Chad, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria and the Syrian Arab Republic. As for the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, it has been conducting a series of studies and is currently revising the methodological framework for the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children run jointly by the Institute and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

49.   As part of the COVID-19 pandemic response of the Ministry of Education of Cambodia, the Capacity Development for Education Programme helped to strengthen ongoing initiatives targeting vulnerable learners through distance learning. One of these is the Basic Education Equivalency Programme platform, which serves as a supplementary learning resource for 610,000 lower secondary students unable to attend classes during school closures.

50.   The COVID-19 crisis has spotlighted the importance of family and intergenerational literacy and learning, an approach that seeks to strengthen connections between school, families and communities. In collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning developed and offered an online course in 2020 and 2021 for education providers on planning family and intergenerational literacy and learning programmes. In addition to the recently launched course on family learning and indigenous knowledges, two more courses will follow in 2022.

V.   Advancing the global literacy agenda

51.   The Transforming Education Summit seeks to mobilize political ambition, action, solutions and solidarity to transform education and to revitalize national and global efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4. Literacy as part of foundational learning has been directly addressed in action track 2 regarding learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development. At the same time, the other action tracks included discussions regarding literacy educators, the use of digital technology to advance literacy, and the financing of literacy programmes. The Transforming Education Knowledge Hub includes a range of promising practices shared by member States and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector.

52.   The Transforming Education Summit has created an important global, collaborative process through the international education community. This is a foundation on which the future can be built, and it shows that addressing literacy challenges is within our means.

53.   At the global level, UNESCO has continued to play its mandated coordination role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 through partnerships, advocacy, monitoring and policy guidance to secure adequate resources. Over the past year, two Global Education Meetings were organized, and a new global cooperation mechanism is now in place. The Global Education Coalition mobilizes more than 200 organizations to advance education.

54.   Literacy and numeracy, as they relate in particular to targets 4.1 and 4.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals, have been part of the coordination work of UNESCO in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 Education 2030 High-level Steering Committee and the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030.

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[33] ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund, "Increasing access to basic education for OOSC through flexible learning programmes in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam", available at www.aseanrokfund.com/lib/upload/files/resources/1__IAI-OOSC_Project_Introduction_GNI.pdf.

The following section presents the main outputs with regard to global coordination, advocacy, monitoring and financing.

A. Global coordination and partnerships

55. UNESCO has worked towards advancing the global literacy agenda through a range of platforms, networks and events, including the global coordination mechanism for Sustainable Development Goal 4, the Global Alliance for Literacy, International Literacy Day, the International Conference on Adult Education process, the Global Network of Learning Cities and the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning.

56. After extensive consultation, a Global Alliance for Literacy Strategy 2020–2025[34] was launched in April 2020, and 14 associate members joined the Alliance to support its implementation. The fifth and sixth annual general meetings, held online in 2020 and 2021, respectively, enabled the sharing of strategies, the strengthening of cooperation and the coordination of a relevant response to the challenges posed by the pandemic. The new Global Education Coalition-Global Alliance for Literacy initiative on digital competencies for literacy educators consolidates collaboration among Global Education Coalition and Global Alliance for Literacy partners by providing members of the Coalition and Global Alliance for Literacy countries with a platform for technical discussions on the digitalization of education.

57. International Literacy Day 2020 focused on literacy teaching and learning during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond, in particular the role of educators and changing pedagogies. The theme of International Literacy Day 2021 was "Literacy for a human-centred recovery: narrowing the digital divide", with a focus on sharing experiences in inclusive digital literacy programmes for non-literate youth and adults. International Literacy Day 2022 will focus on transforming literacy learning spaces, thereby exploring the changes required to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate the achievement of Goal 4.

58. The International Conference on Adult Education process has been another important platform for furthering the global literacy agenda. In preparation for the seventh International Conference on Adult Education, held in Morocco in June 2022, a series of regional conferences were held in 2021, preceded by subregional consultations. Five regional outcome documents and a synthesis report contributed to the formulation of the Marrakech Framework for Action. This main outcome document of the Conference will guide all relevant adult learning and education stakeholders and UNESCO member States in promoting adult learning and education and lifelong learning for all over the next 12 years.

59. UNESCO programmes related to literacy have benefited from sustained partnership with the Global Network of Learning Cities. One of the seven key issues addressed in the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities Strategy 2019–2020 is literacy. In addition, the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning brings together a broad range of stakeholders to support national strategies for learning assessments and to develop internationally comparable indicators and tools to measure progress made towards key Goal 4 targets. Taskforce 4.6, co-chaired by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and OECD, is responsible for providing advice on measures for monitoring indicator 4.6.1.

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[34] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, *Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning: Strategy 2020–2025* (Hamburg 2020), available at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373033.

B. Advocacy and communication

60. UNESCO has persisted in its efforts to raise the profile of youth and adult literacy, working against a general trend of low prioritization by Governments and partners. It works towards this goal by using existing platforms, global and regional forums and initiatives, and other openings for advocacy, such as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032). With the participation of over 1,000 stakeholders from around the world, the seventh International Conference on Adult Education provides an excellent opportunity to encourage member States to promote adult literacy and education.

61. The advocacy work of UNESCO is underpinned by enhanced data and knowledge bases (such as the UIS.Stat database and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning LitBase), research studies, technical papers, issue notes, fact sheets and other resources. In Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO raised awareness on the need to align lifelong learning with targets 4.3 and 4.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals in China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea. In the Arab region, the recently formed Arab Education Alliance has enhanced cooperation among key partners.

C. Monitoring

62. UNESCO has continued to play a key role in monitoring literacy progress and enhancing the measurement of literacy skills. The work of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (including the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning), the release of the Mini-Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme to measure youth and adult literacy skills, and the annual data refresh, combined with regular monitoring through the Global Education Monitoring Reports and the Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education, have promoted a better understanding of the state of literacy and adult learning and education.

63. Within the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning Taskforce 4.6, UNESCO has developed a measurement strategy for indicator 4.6.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to determine the percentage of the population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional literacy and numeracy skills. In 2021, nearly 100 policymakers and national experts benefited from a global webinar on youth and adult literacy data for evidence-based policies.[35] The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning developed two policy briefs on direct assessments of adult literacy[36] and numeracy skills,[37] as well as a flexible and multilingual tool (ePASS) to assess literacy and numeracy skills.

64. UNESCO also monitored the implementation of the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education and the Belém Framework for Action by collecting data from 159 member States for the *Fifth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education*, with a thematic focus on citizenship education. UNESCO also organized seven

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[35] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "Webinar: 'youth and adult literacy: better data for more efficient policies'", available at https://uil.unesco.org/event/webinar-youth-and-adult-literacy-better-data-more-efficient-policies.

[36] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "Policy brief published: direct assessments of adult skills and competencies", 22 December 2020, available at https://uil.unesco.org/literacy/policy-brief-published-direct-assessments-adult-skills-and-competencies.

[37] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "Policy brief 13: adult numeracy – assessment and development", December 2020, available at https://uil.unesco.org/literacy/policy-brief-13-adult-numeracy-assessment-and-development-0.

regional and subregional webinars to enhance the national monitoring capacities of over 500 stakeholders, as well as the data-collection process.

D. Financing

65.   The COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the long-standing issue of adequate financing for adult literacy and adult learning and education. According to the *Fifth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education*, nearly half of reporting countries plan to increase financing for adult learning and education (especially in Asia and the Pacific), 21 per cent do not know whether they will do so, and 8 per cent plan to decrease spending, owing partly to the disruption experienced by adult learners due to restrictions and a change of focus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

66.   Overall, it is concluded in the *Fifth Global Report* that adult learning and education remains underfunded. In the specific case of literacy, this was confirmed by a UNESCO technical study, which estimated that the 29 Global Alliance for Literacy countries faced a funding gap of $17 billion regarding the achievement of target 4.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals.[38] However, school closures, and the ensuing dropouts, may have increased demand for second chance and adult literacy programmes in the post-pandemic period. In Latin America, for example, up to 1 million students might abandon school, and demand for such programmes could consequently increase by an estimated 17 per cent.[39]

VI.   Education for democracy

67.   In this section of the present report, the implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/199 on education for democracy will be reviewed. While in the resolution the Assembly does not provide a definition of education for democracy, it reaffirms that democracy should be promoted as a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives. The notion of education for democracy has taken a new dimension in today's fast-paced and interconnected digital environment.

68.   While technologies have opened access to information and facilitated new modes of learning and participation in democratic institutions, the notion of full participation in the digital era has been undermined by unequal access to technologies, as well as by the rise of disinformation, violent ideologies and hate speech online. These new developments were highlighted in the recommendation in paragraph 66 (b) (ii) of the previous report (A/75/188).

69.   In reviewing the progress made since 2020, it is evident that agencies of the United Nations system have supported Member States in:

(a)   **Developing educational initiatives to address the rise of hate speech, which is an increasingly global concern**. Member States committed to addressing hate speech by developing educational initiatives embedded in the framework of global citizenship and human rights education during the 2021 Global Ministerial Conference on Addressing Hate Speech through Education, organized by UNESCO

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[38] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, "Counting the cost: achieving literacy in countries of the Global Alliance for Literacy", September 2021, available at https://uil.unesco.org/literacy/global-alliance/counting-cost-achieving-literacy-countries-global-alliance-literacy.

[39] Judith Kalman and Enna Carvajal, "Adult literacy programs in the context of COVID-19: a regional snapshot from Latin America and the Caribbean", paper prepared for the Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, 2020.

and the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Indonesia and Kenya, progress is being made with the support of UNESCO and the European Commission towards strengthening resilience in the face of potentially harmful content spread online;

(b) **Preparing school directors and teachers to act as facilitators of a democratic culture in schools and universities by promoting inclusive learning environments that consider different perspectives, cultures and educational needs**. In Viet Nam, UNICEF supported the revision of the national curriculum and teaching materials to eliminate gender bias and stereotyping, especially of ethnic minority girls, so as to promote progressive and equitable gender depictions. In Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, teacher guides were revised with the support of UNESCO to encourage participatory and collaborative learning in schools;

(c) **Investing in media and information literacy and digital citizenship to help individuals critically engage with information and act as ethical and responsible citizens**. UNESCO, in collaboration with Serbia and the European Commission, developed media and information literacy curricula development guidelines, as well as the second edition of the UNESCO model media and information literacy curriculum for educators and learners, to guide Member States in this critical area. Building on the recent recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence, UNESCO is working towards making individuals aware of the ethical challenges that the use of technologies such as artificial intelligence may entail. Recognizing the potential for tapping into new technologies to address societal issues, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, within its Global Resource for Anti-Corruption Education and Youth Empowerment initiative, held the African Youth Anti-Corruption Hackathon to engage young developers in inventing ways to counter corruption through technology;

(d) **Ensuring that young people are aware of their rights, given the profound and disproportionate negative impact of the pandemic on the rights of young people, including the rights to education, gender equality and freedom of expression**. As part of its efforts to ensure access to education for children in emergency situations, UNICEF promoted in Afghanistan a community-based education programme, which resulted in the establishment of 6,456 new centres in 2021. Another important area for action is scaling up sexuality education in out-of-school settings to facilitate girls' and women's full participation in the lives of their communities and societies. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund, a mobile app was developed to answer learners' questions about sexual and reproductive health. At the global level, the plan of action for the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, provides useful guidance for Member States on developing a comprehensive national human rights education strategy for young people, inclusive of all young people and with young people in leadership roles;

(e) **Providing young people, especially young women and marginalized groups, with opportunities to be an integral part of decision-making processes and participate in political and public life**. In Serbia, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) train and propose volunteer opportunities to young Roma, an initiative that resulted in the creation of an association of young Roma volunteers who contribute to improving their representation in different aspects of public life. In Nigeria, the United Nations Democracy Fund supports financial literacy education for women and youth on the fundamentals of public finance to enable them to engage in participatory budgeting processes with local officials and advocate the needs of their communities. In South Africa, UNDP and Front Row Studios developed

Democracy on Stage, a mobile industrial theatre production on democracy, created by young people for young people, to encourage youth participation in local government elections and emphasize the value of active citizenship;

(f) **Equipping teachers, educators, young people and the wider community with intercultural competencies to actively promote mutual understanding, pluralism of views and respect for diversity**. In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, guidance for integrating the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in schools was provided with the support of UNESCO, so as to raise children's awareness of living heritage and foster identity, pride and appreciation for cultural diversity.

70. Nevertheless, serious concerns about the backsliding in democratic governance and the rise in identity-driven populist sentiment were raised in the 2021 report from the International Commission on the Futures of Education. The Commission called for a new social contract of education grounded in global citizenship education principles, such as respect for diversity and solidarity, to build back better after the pandemic and shape just and inclusive shared futures.

VII. Recommendations

71. **On the basis of the present report, the General Assembly may wish to consider the following recommendations for Member States and their development partners:**

(a) **Policies, governance and financing**

- **Enhance political commitment and resourcing to fulfil everyone's right to literacy and basic education, thereby contributing to the creation of more just, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable societies**

- **Ensure that youth and adult literacy and basic education are integrated into national and international development, education and lifelong learning policies, strategies and plans, as well as COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery plans**

- **Strengthen legal frameworks, systems, participatory governance and sustainable financing schemes to promote literacy and numeracy for children, young people and adults as an integral part of lifelong learning, with a particular focus on disadvantaged populations and underserved areas so as to counter widening inequalities stemming from the COVID-19 crisis**

- **Increase investment in quality youth and adult literacy and basic education and step up coordinated, multi-stakeholder action for greater impact, in times of crisis and beyond, to make sustainable development a reality for millions of people who have missed out until now**

(b) **Equity and gender equality**

- **Pay close attention to gender, culture, language, socioeconomic activities and other essential elements of people's lives, ensuring that literacy and numeracy programmes are community led, of high quality and tailored to learners' previous knowledge and experience, and that they pave the way for further learning**

    (c)   **Innovation and technology**

- **Further harness the innovative and transformative potential of digital technology, as well as the intersectoral, integrated and intergenerational approaches to literacy and learning that have proved effective in addressing the COVID-19 crisis and empowering people to confront and resolve global challenges**

- **Support research and capacity development through partnerships and collaboration among universities and research institutes at the national and international levels, in particular by expanding the knowledge base on literacy in multilingual and digital environments**

    (d)   **Education for democracy**

- **Accelerate efforts to develop and strengthen educational policies and initiatives that combat disinformation, misinformation, stigmatization, racism, xenophobia, hate speech, discrimination, exclusion and violence**

    (e)   **Way forward**

- **Consider requesting UNESCO, in cooperation with relevant agencies of the United Nations system and other partners, to continue to play its mandated role as the lead coordinating agency for implementation of the Education 2030 Agenda and to catalyse collective efforts, notably towards achieving the literacy-related targets 4.1 and 4.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

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