



# LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

## Medium-Term Strategy 2022–2029

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

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UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

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The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) undertakes research, capacity-building, networking and publication on lifelong learning with a focus on adult and continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education.

Its publications are a valuable resource for education researchers, planners, policy-makers and practitioners. While the programmes of UIL are established along the lines laid down by the General Conference of UNESCO, the publications of the Institute are issued under its sole responsibility.

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# FOREWORD

**Daniel Baril**, Chair of the Governing Board  
of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong learning

**Sarah Anyang Agbor**, Vice Chair of the  
Governing Board of the UNESCO Institute  
for Lifelong learning

As we approach the culmination of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the global challenges facing humanity remain immense. The climate crisis is the primary imperative for sustained collective action but technological transformation, demographic change, health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the new and fast-evolving world of work are also pressing concerns in this third decade of the twenty-first century. Lifelong learning is key to overcoming these global challenges and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The 2021 Futures of Education report calls for a new social contract for education, with recognition of an extended right to education throughout life. It represents an important restatement of the principles of UNESCO, and particularly its historic focus on our shared humanity, the universal right to education and its rich potential in addressing social, economic and political challenges. The need for a formal recognition of a universal entitlement to lifelong learning was also highlighted in the United Nations Secretary General's Common Agenda report (also published in 2021) and is increasingly an avowed priority of the global development agenda for education, labour, human rights and sustainability.

It is in this context that the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) advances its strategy for the next eight years. With this new Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), UIL aims to strike a balance between priorities rooted in the challenges faced by the global community and this new and emerging thinking about – and interest in – lifelong learning. The world must embrace lifelong learning if we are to build fairer societies and a sustainable world.

# Our call to Member States, institutional partners, donors and other stakeholders is this: Work with us to deliver the promise of lifelong learning.

The strategy sets out how UIL will strengthen the capacities of Member States to build effective and inclusive lifelong learning policies and systems, explaining in detail the operational modalities through which it will deliver its work.

UIL's programmes will focus on three thematic priorities, carefully honed to reflect the challenges of our time: building quality learning ecosystems; fostering skills for life, work and learning; and ensuring that no-one is left behind. Through these priorities, the Institute aims to build learning ecosystems that work across life, in every setting and benefit everyone, including, crucially, women and girls.

We are in an era of challenge and transition. This document sets out an ambitious agenda for UIL and for lifelong learning, a roadmap through which we can play our part in delivering against the commitments of the UN's Common Agenda and the vision of the International Commission on the Futures of Education.

We are approaching the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda. This Medium-Term Strategy will finish as it nears its end point, at a moment when the extent of its success or failure will be clear. Until then, guided by its strategy, UIL will strive to keep lifelong learning high on the policy agenda and to support countries in achieving their educational aspirations and goals in the context of a new social contract for education. The Institute will do this by building capacities at local and national levels, strengthening partnerships, and offering data and knowledge. Our call to Member States, institutional partners, donors and other stakeholders is this: Work with us to deliver the promise of lifelong learning.

# A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

**David Atchoarena**, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

UIL's statutory objective is 'Within UNESCO's broad educational mandate ... to promote the recognition of and create the conditions for the exercise of the right to education and learning'. Since its foundation, the Institute has pursued and adapted its programme of work within the framework of its statutes to meet the evolving needs and developmental goals of UNESCO Member States. In the 70 years of its existence, UIL has firmly established itself as a unique entity in the United Nations system, specifically dedicated to lifelong learning. It simultaneously contributes to sustainable development and to building peace in the minds of men and women.

This Medium-Term Strategy will provide strategic direction and a roadmap for the Institute to prepare its programme and budget during the 2022–2029 period. In fulfilling the Institute's statutory responsibilities, the Medium-Term Strategy identifies three thematic priorities that will be attained through a combination of three cross-cutting operational modalities to ensure the achievement of the strategic objectives.

In developing this Medium-Term Strategy, structural changes affecting climate, demography, labour markets and technology have been considered. Besides these external factors, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will continue to frame the work of the Institute and its contribution to shaping the world we want by 2030. While SDG 4 positions lifelong learning as the benchmark for progress

in education, the growing recognition of its centrality for achieving many other SDGs is also expected to result in an increased demand from Member States for promoting lifelong learning in support of the sustainability agenda. Based on this strategy, UIL stands ready to provide policy advice, capacity-building and partnership platforms, as well as data and knowledge to Member States.

In pursuing a UNESCO Delivering as One approach, UIL will maximize synergies, with UNESCO Headquarters and other UNESCO Category I Institutes, and continually make efforts to better utilize internal resources and increase efficiencies and effectiveness in all UIL's programmes. To that effect, results-based management will continue to be key to improving management and enhancing performance, while increasing focus will be placed on systematic risk management to identify and mitigate potential events which might adversely affect UIL's performance.

The achievement of the strategic objectives will be measured by a results matrix and framework. These tools will contribute to enhanced accountability and transparency.

'Building learning ecosystems that work across life, in every setting, and include everyone' will drive our commitment to serve Member States in the eight years to come. More than ever, UIL will seek to be an organization that makes a real difference to the lives of people all over the world.

# UIL'S MTS AT A GLANCE



## VISION & MISSION:

- A world in which everyone can learn throughout their lives.
- To strengthen the capacity of UNESCO Member States to build effective and inclusive lifelong learning systems and policies

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- To guide and support the design, implementation and monitoring of lifelong learning policies at global, national and local levels
- To advance participation in learning opportunities throughout life and enhance quality of provision
- To contribute to greater equity and inclusion in learning

## OPERATIONAL MODALITIES:

- Building institutional capacities at national and local levels
- Offering more and better data and knowledge on lifelong learning
- Strengthening partnerships for advocacy, peer learning and innovation

## THEMATIC PRIORITIES:

- Building quality learning ecosystems: Content, technology and educators
- Learning, work and life: Skills throughout life
- No one left behind: Making lifelong learning inclusive

## OUTCOME:

- Build learning ecosystems that work across life, in every setting, and include everyone

# VISION

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) envisions **a world in which everyone can learn throughout their lives.**

In 2015, the countries of the world jointly undertook to '[e]nsure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' as part of their commitment to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As we reach its mid-way point, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and the 2030 Agenda continue to constitute the key framework for our work with Member States, and will do so for the duration of this strategy.

Much has changed since 2015. We now work in a context in which recognition of the right to education and lifelong learning is more important and urgent than ever. Factors such as the COVID-19 crisis, the climate emergency and the demographic challenges posed by mass movements of population and an ageing workforce show how critical it is to ensure access to quality education and learning opportunities throughout life.

Access to education and learning remains profoundly unequal, as the uneven impact of the pandemic has demonstrated. Around 773 million youth and adults worldwide do not have basic literacy skills and, while participation in adult learning and education is improving in some places, it is nowhere near the level required to satisfy SDG 4 or contribute fully to the other 16 SDGs. COVID-19 has exacerbated these challenges, but has also created an opportunity to do things differently, building back not only better, but fairer and more sustainably.

## **Understanding lifelong learning**

Lifelong learning refers to learning opportunities for people of **all ages and backgrounds**. It takes place in **diverse learning contexts**, including digital environments. It covers a **wide range of learning purposes** and contributes to **skills enhancement** for the **benefit of individuals, communities and the planet**. Lifelong learning denotes a **culture of engagement in learning throughout life** made possible by **flexible learning pathways**. It is fostered by individual curiosity and the pursuit of knowledge, community-based learning initiatives and multi-sectoral policy-making and programme implementation.

# MISSION

In this context, UIL seeks to strengthen the **capacity of UNESCO Member States to build effective and inclusive lifelong learning systems and policies**. UIL's **strategic objectives** are to:

- guide and support the **design, implementation and monitoring of lifelong learning policies** at global, national and local levels;
- **advance participation in learning opportunities** throughout life and **enhance quality** of provision;
- contribute to **greater equity and inclusion** in learning.

This strategy describes how, in the period from 2022 to 2029, UIL will pursue these objectives, working across three main operational modalities:

- Building **institutional capacities** at national and local levels;
- Offering **more and better data and knowledge** on lifelong learning;
- Strengthening **partnerships** for advocacy, peer learning and innovation.

Through these modalities we will pursue three thematic priorities:

- Building **quality learning ecosystems**: Content, technology and educators;
- **Learning, work and life**: Skills throughout life;
- **No one left behind**: Making lifelong learning inclusive.

Through our main thematic priorities, we aim to:

- Build **learning ecosystems ...**
- that work **across life, in every setting ...**
- and **include everyone.**

Through our main thematic priorities, we aim to build learning ecosystems that work across life, in every setting, and include everyone.

# THE LIFELONG LEARNING LANDSCAPE



# THE LIFELONG LEARNING LANDSCAPE

UIL is committed to a vision of lifelong learning as a precious public good that should be accessible to all and in all settings. In recent decades, lifelong learning has risen up the policy agenda, at global, national and local levels. It is a commitment of the international community under SDG 4, a policy goal of governments and an aspiration for learning cities. However, participation in quality lifelong learning remains uneven, with the least advantaged and most vulnerable – those who stand to benefit the most from education and learning – the least likely to access it. For most countries around the world the right to lifelong learning is still a distant prospect and resources are badly needed to promote it in order to fight inequality and injustice.

The context in which UIL works has changed dramatically since our last Medium-Term Strategy in 2014. New challenges have emerged while old ones have become more acute. These changes have not diminished the need for lifelong learning; just the opposite. We need to widen access to quality lifelong learning, ensuring people have access to it when and where they need it. Lifelong learning is key to reducing inequalities and responding adequately to the structural challenges posed by the climate emergency, a rapidly ageing population, and the technological revolution, which is transforming our work and social lives at a dizzying pace.

## The impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 has disrupted education globally, affecting more than 1.6 billion students and millions of young people and adults in both formal and

non-formal education, highlighting and exacerbating inequalities in access. It has exposed the limitations of current models of education and shown how many systems of education, particularly in poorer parts of the world where technological infrastructure is limited, were unprepared for the shift from face-to-face to distance learning. This learning disruption also amplified gender inequality and widened the gap between rich and poor, both within and between countries.

The crisis has highlighted the remarkable lack of priority given to non-formal adult education and learning, including adult literacy. Just as schools closed down, literacy programmes, which, by design, benefit the most disadvantaged youth and adults, also stopped. Millions lost their livelihoods due to lockdown and economic contraction, while opportunities for workers to reskill diminished. However, the pandemic has also provided an opportunity to rethink and reimagine education systems to make them more equitable, inclusive and sustainable. It gives much needed impetus to create a lifelong learning system that works for everyone, including the poorest, most marginalized communities, to ensure no one is left behind.

## Lifelong learning and the climate crisis

Lifelong learning has a critical role to play in supporting climate action and creating the conditions in which meaningful, positive change can occur. This role is multi-faceted. Lifelong learning is critical in providing everyone – regardless of gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, education

level or socioeconomic status – with factual knowledge of how the climate is changing and how individuals and communities can combat the causes, adapt and build local resilience. It can help foster the knowledge, skills and competencies to tackle crises when they occur, as well as improving preparedness for crises yet to come.

But lifelong learning is also about citizenship. It can help citizens identify and address local issues caused by climate change, while also giving them the resources and knowledge they need to become, through active citizenship, agents of climate action. Besides raising awareness of climate-related risks and changes in the local environment, and helping people use local resources sustainably, lifelong learning can empower them to press for change in their communities, their societies and globally. Beyond fostering skills and employability, lifelong learning has an equally critical role in giving people the understanding and agency they need to become empowered change agents in their communities and workplaces, as well as in civil society. Hence, collective mobilization through learning is critical to communities' responses to climate change.

### **The transformation of the labour market and skills development**

The world of work is rapidly changing in a multitude of ways. Change is driven both by developments in technology, led by artificial intelligence and automation, and by the adaptation of economies to the realities of the climate crisis. Work in recent decades has become less stable,

more subject to disruption and transition, including between the labour market and education, and more dependent on the capacity of workers to adapt and reskill. New jobs and new job roles will require frequent returns to education and the design of lifelong learning journeys for individuals. Learners also need pathways and recognition arrangements which enable them to navigate their learning itineraries, adapt to changing skills requirements and stay in the labour market longer. Even those who remain in the same job for a long period will need to retrain to keep up with the march of technology.

In addition to the changes driven by artificial intelligence and automation, which some call the 'fourth industrial revolution' (or Industry 4.0), climate change is creating new demands for skilling, reskilling and upskilling. Industries that have a detrimental impact on the environment are pushed towards obsolescence while new activities, driven by innovation, create green jobs and require green skills. Continuous skills development and reskilling are, therefore, central to building green economies.

### **Demographic change**

While societies are adapting to new conditions, their internal dynamics are deeply affected by changes to demography. Older people are the fastest growing age group globally: 2018 was the first year in history when people older than 65 outnumbered children under 5. By 2050, the number of adults aged 80 in the world will be three times higher than today. This means that adults can expect to stay in work longer, to change jobs more often, and to require reskilling and upskilling on an unprecedented scale. Lifelong learning

can enable older people to stay in the workforce and participate meaningfully in society. It can also support regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of Asia and the Pacific, where young people make up a considerable share of the population and need to access training and employment at scale.

International migration also requires deep adaptations in our societies, including in education. Migration has steadily increased in absolute numbers over the last five decades, creating a need for agile lifelong learning systems. In 2019, an estimated 272 million people – or 3.5 per cent of the global population – lived outside their country of origin. While most migrants move for work, family or education, the most vulnerable are those fleeing from violence, conflict, fear of persecution or deprivation. At the end of 2020, UNHCR reported 82.4 million forcibly displaced persons, of whom 26.4 million were refugees. Climate change and environmental degradation will further increase this number, especially in coastal areas. Migration increases the burden on education systems, but it is also an opportunity to revisit the link between recognition of learning and mobility and the potential for making education more inclusive. Reforming systems of recognition, validation and accreditation, and improving the articulation between different levels and types of education, formal and non-formal, benefit the entire population.

### **Technology and lifelong learning**

New technologies not only constitute sources of innovation for expanding access, improving quality and increasing

relevance, but also change the role of educators and the pedagogy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, delivery modes shifted entirely to distance education and online learning. This experiment, conducted at scale, provided important insights as to what the future of education could look like and on lifelong learning in digital times. Realizing the potential of online learning would first require that connectivity be accessible to all. Besides devices and internet connections, effective technology-enhanced learning also depends on learners having the digital literacy skills to benefit from digital resources and educational software. SDG 4 captures this dimension through Target 4.4 which highlights the proportion of youth and adults with the information and communications technology (ICT) skills needed for employment and entrepreneurship.

It is important too that people learn to use these technologies critically and understand their limitations. As evidenced during the pandemic, ‘fake news’ and the spread of disinformation can exacerbate social tensions and eventually constitute a threat to democracy and democratic values. Lifelong learning must, therefore, support media literacy, enable people to better recognize disinformation and help them understand the dangers of the digital platforms they use in their daily lives.

Technology has a huge potential for good, but it is not available to everyone. The digital divide tends to mirror existing social inequalities. Youth and adults from the most marginalized

# We must foster a culture in which the value of lifelong learning is recognized in, and adapted to, every context.

groups, such as refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, suffer from multiple disadvantages that limit their access to digital and online learning opportunities. All these groups need focused attention to ensure they can benefit from technology. Technology should not reproduce or accentuate patterns of inequality.

## A culture of lifelong learning

Realizing the potential benefit of lifelong learning partly depends on finding new ways to reach those who lack access or who cannot afford the devices, connectivity, digital innovations and educational software that increasingly drive learning. This might take the form of focused initiatives to engage vulnerable groups, ensuring information on learning opportunities reaches learners of all ages and backgrounds. But it also means making access to technology and digital resources genuinely open. A commons-based approach, providing open access to knowledge and learning resources, will be key to ensuring inclusion and equity in access and participation. Such efforts must be combined with the involvement of target groups in the co-production of curricula, as well as with the professional development of teachers.

But we need even more than this if we are to create lifelong learning systems equipped to meet the structural challenges described above. We must foster a culture of lifelong learning, one in which the value of lifelong learning is recognized in, and adapted to, every context, from formal education institutions to community

learning centres, workplaces, public spaces, cultural institutions, families and neighbourhoods. We need flexible learning pathways so people can move seamlessly between these contexts to meet their learning needs, which implies keeping design local, as it is in learning cities and learning territories. By promoting citizenship competences, lifelong learning can foster social cohesion, active citizenship and a culture of peace and tolerance. Embracing a culture of lifelong learning means helping everyone to develop a learning mindset. This starts with nurturing children's curiosity for learning in early childhood, schools and everyday life, and includes promoting the joy of learning in families, neighbourhoods and communities.

Making public spaces available for learning and engaging diverse institutions in lifelong learning creates entry points for people of all backgrounds. The collective dimension of learning should also be reflected in policies conducive to creating and promoting collective learning environments, including spaces for online learning. The social aspects of learning and celebrating learning together can inspire a stronger sense of community and empower learners to take care of themselves, others and the environment. In a world increasingly characterized by uncertainty, rapid unpredictable change and precarity, we need to foster a culture of lifelong learning, and recognize lifelong learning as a human right. We view this as an essential precondition of the renewal of our relationships with each other, with technology and with the planet.

# UNESCO'S STRATEGY AND PRIORITIES 2022–2029



# UNESCO'S STRATEGY AND PRIORITIES 2022-2029

UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 (41 C/4) identifies priority challenges – in education, the environment, social cohesion and technological transformation in the digital age – and provides concrete solutions for the accelerated implementation of the SDGs during this 'Decade of Action', thus laying the foundations for a shared ambition to meet the demands of the present and the future. Through the mobilization of international cooperation and support to Member States, the strategy also contributes to the realization of international frameworks for action such as the Paris

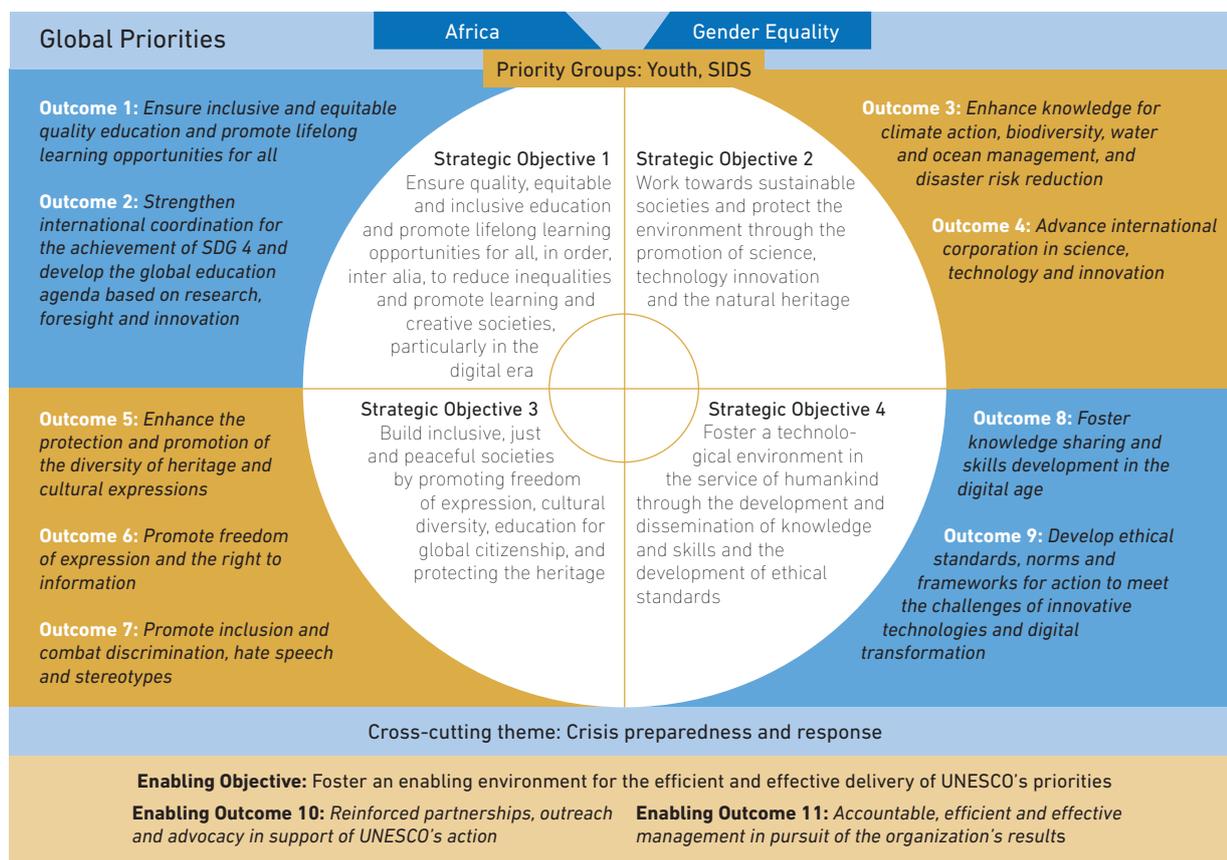
Agreement on Climate Change, Agenda 2063 of the African Union, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

All 17 SDGs are interconnected and complementary; however, UNESCO, as a specialized agency, focuses on those fields where its unique comparative advantages are recognized. It does this with a particular focus on its two key thematic priority areas: **Gender** and **Africa**.

## UNESCO's contribution to the SDGs



## UNESCO's strategic objectives, enabling objectives and their corresponding outcomes



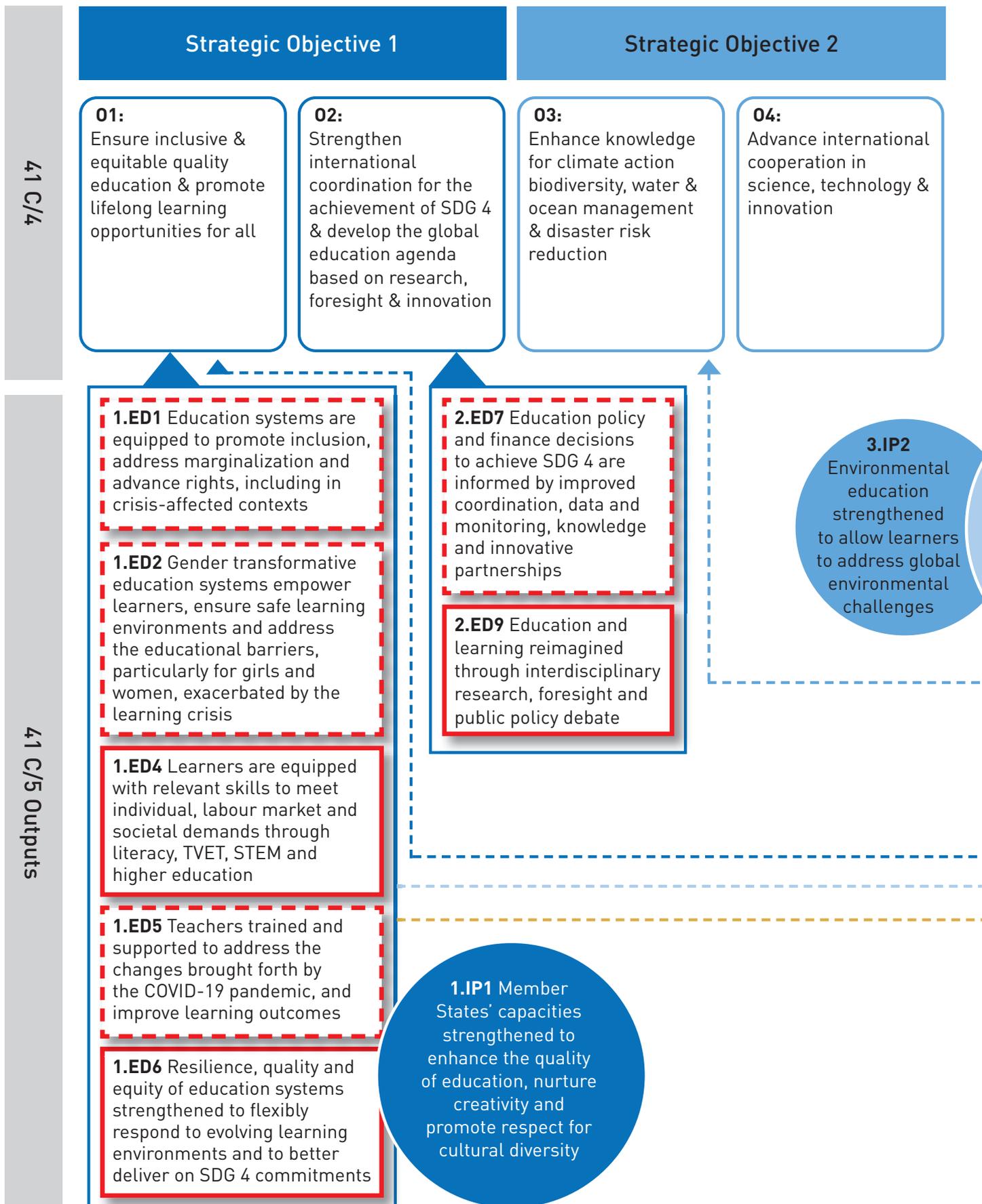
Within this context, UNESCO has developed a framework that captures key strategic objectives, enabling objectives and corresponding outcomes for each sector, as indicated above.

For the Education Sector of UNESCO, and UIL as an integral part of it, SDG 4 is the most significant and relevant. The world's already-fragile progress towards achieving this goal has been further jeopardized by the pandemic and the disruption it has caused to education.

Against this context, UNESCO's mandate to ensure universal access to inclusive

quality education at all levels and to lifelong learning opportunities for all becomes even more critical. Hard-won gains for equality and inclusion in education must not be reversed. UNESCO's strategy recognizes that, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, the limited resources available to finance competing development priorities will increase the need for innovation and coordination. The **diagram overleaf** shows how and in what areas UIL contributes to UNESCO's overall efforts to protect and promote education and accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 4. It explains how UIL contributes to the sector's strategic objectives, outcomes and corresponding results.

# UIL's contribution within UNESCO's Education Sector Results Framework



### Strategic Objective 3

### Strategic Objective 4

**05:**  
Enhance the protection & promotion of the diversity of heritage & cultural expressions

**06:**  
Promote freedom of expression & the right to information

**07:**  
Promote inclusion & combat discrimination, hate speech & stereotypes

**08:**  
Foster knowledge sharing & skills development in the digital age

**09:**  
Develop ethical standards, norms & frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies & digital transformation

**5.IP3** Member States' capacities and awareness are strengthened to protect, safeguard and promote Indigenous knowledge, cultures and languages through inclusive policies and targeted action

**7.ED3** Learners are empowered through transformative education to lead healthy lives, promote sustainable development and engage with the world as creative and responsible global citizens

**8.ED8** Technologies and digital innovations leveraged to ensure more inclusive, effective and relevant learning

**8.IP4** National capacities strengthened to empower learners of all ages, young women and men, with digital competencies and media and information literacy skills

**9.IP5** Institutional capacities strengthened for harnessing the benefits of artificial intelligence in all areas of UNESCO's competence, while addressing the ethical challenges and ensuring the use of digital technologies to promote, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms

Major contribution from UIL ——

Contribution from UIL - - -

# UIL'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



# UIL'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

UIL's work is shaped both by the context in which the Institute operates – the trends and challenges examined above, as they are experienced by Member States – and the strategic framework set by UNESCO. This includes its strategic objectives and outputs for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and SDG 4 in particular. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Framework for Action for SDG 4, provide a strong development framework for UIL's work, as well as clear programmatic legitimacy. However, it is important too that UIL is able to react to changing circumstances and the needs of Member States, as we have done, for example, in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In developing UIL's Medium-Term Strategy, we have maintained a line of sight between the two factors shaping our mandate. This means being aware of the impact of context on efforts to integrate the 2030 Agenda into policy and planning, and adjusting our focus accordingly. For example, we recognize that, in light of the economic hardship the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns imposed on women, families and communities, we need to focus renewed attention on work and skills. To address these challenges, UIL needs to mobilize its expertise in non-formal learning and learning transitions to ensure young people and adults (men and women) have access to the opportunities they need for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (SDG 4.4), and have their skills and competencies, however and wherever acquired, recognized and validated. This focus is reflected clearly in our thematic priorities.

It is evident too, however, that the overall goals of the 2030 Agenda, for example on climate action (SDG 13) and sustainable cities (SDG 11), and the specific aims to promote sustainable development through learning (SDG 4.7) and eliminate gender disparities in education (SDG 4.5), cannot be met through a focus on work and work skills alone. Interventions need to address those furthest from the labour market. This requires a focus on people, the majority of whom are women, whose struggles with poor basic skills – literacy, numeracy and digital skills – are compounded by multiple and complex disadvantages (SDG 4.6). We must also ensure that participation in adult learning and education is not limited to basic literacy or vocational skills and training, but also encompasses the third of the UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education's three fields of learning: education for active and global citizenship. We have to ensure lifelong learning is both multi-faceted and inclusive so our vision in the period of post-pandemic recovery is as wide and as flexible as it can be.

Realizing this complex array of benefits and ambitions demands an intersectoral approach, underpinned by the creation of quality learning ecosystems, using place-based partnerships to realize the contribution of lifelong learning to a range of different agendas, from social justice to health and wellbeing. Lifelong learning has well-evidenced wider benefits across different policy areas. But it also supports the intersection of these areas, bringing together different services and addressing different demands in a way that is sensitive to local circumstances. Working in this

cross-sectoral way is necessary to support vulnerable communities with complex, multi-dimensional needs.

It is important that this understanding of lifelong learning – as a comprehensive organizational principle for all kinds of learning, formal, informal and non-formal – is recognized and reflected in policies. To achieve this, Member States need support to implement lifelong learning policies and realize their full potential. UIL's aim is to support Member States in building gender-responsive learning ecosystems that work across life, in every setting, and include everyone, and to help them translate these principles into policies and plans, and to implement them.

But UIL's role is not simply to advise. The Institute also collects and analyses data, which we draw on in building institutional capacities at national and local levels and in our offer of policy support to Member States. We do this with a particular focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and through the twin lenses of UNESCO's core thematic priority areas: gender and Africa. Good data and targeted knowledge production and sharing, constitute important instruments themselves. They can promote and guide policies, evaluate their impacts and thereby raise the profile of lifelong learning at national and international levels.

UIL's vision – of a **world in which everyone can learn throughout their lives** – is ambitious, but our approach is pragmatic. We aim to achieve our mission – **to strengthen the capacity of UNESCO Member States to build**

**effective and inclusive lifelong learning systems and policies** – through clear and deeply practical thematic and operational priorities. These priorities are carefully calibrated to reflect both our expertise – where we can best add value – the needs of Member States and UNESCO's broader operational framework.

The following section sets out the three **thematic priorities** for our work in more detail. These are:

- 1) Building quality learning ecosystems: Content, technology and educators;
- 2) Learning, work and life: Skills throughout life; and
- 3) No one left behind: Making lifelong learning inclusive.

We explain the **operational dimensions** through which these thematic priorities will be addressed:

- 1) Building institutional capacities at national and local levels;
- 2) Offering more and better data; and
- 3) Strengthening partnerships.

Finally, we describe the **monitoring and evaluation** framework we will put in place to assess progress against key outputs and outcomes.

# UIL'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



# UIL'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

## Thematic priority 1. Building quality learning ecosystems: Content, technology and educators

### Learning in and for the future: A new model of learning, one that spans the life course

The vision of lifelong learning encompasses the full spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning, taking place in formal education and training institutions, at work and, increasingly, at home. Age no longer restricts access to learning. There is significant evidence that neuronal development continues throughout the lifespan; hence, learning can effectively occur throughout life. This new landscape is increasingly described as a 'learning ecosystem'. It reflects a shift from a time-focused, one-size-fits-all, mostly school-based model of learning towards a continuum of learning, delivered across diverse places, involving a wide diversity of actors and serving a wide range of purposes, including, but not limited to, employment. In the age of digital technology and AI, it is an interconnected system, often using online resources to allow ubiquitous access to learning, and offer individualized pathways.

Learning ecosystems constitute a holistic concept, recognizing lifelong learning as a continuum of connected experiences, which are personalized, driven by data and delivered across various locations, media, and periods of time, involving self-directed processes as well as collective activities. Using this paradigm, UIL will focus on three areas that constitute the pillars of emerging lifelong learning systems: content, technology and educators. Within

this framework, UIL will develop policy guidance instruments and knowledge resources aimed at responding to the increasing demands from Member States to enhance the quality of learning and cope with the rapid pace of global change. In response to this, UIL will build on advances in neuroscience and human cognition and seize the opportunities offered by the rapid development of digital technologies and AI.

### Redefining the content of learning: Competencies for the twenty-first century

In the twenty-first century, learners need to be able to develop in a rapidly changing environment, cope with uncertainty and respond to global challenges. Beyond adaptation, individuals need to learn transformative competencies for innovation, responsibility and awareness. Lifelong learning involves a new and broader set of knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes, through which the learner's agency is both recognized and fostered.

The notion of foundational skills is broadening fast to include a set of cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills that provide the flexibility, adaptivity and capability people need to understand the deep changes taking place in their environment, in particular the transformation of the labour market, climate change, migration and digitalization. The required competencies rely less on fact-based knowledge or procedural skills and tend to emphasize creativity, teamwork and the ability to

mobilize transversal skills in different contexts, at work and beyond.

Responding to such demands involves individuals' embrace of continuous learning and providers' development of interconnected pathways to foster and maintain knowledge and skills in an ever-changing environment. Lifelong learning systems must build an integrated continuum of formal, non-formal and informal education, including experiential learning. In so doing, they open a new era in which all experiences add to an interdependent set of holistic competencies.

UIL will continue its work in promoting functional literacy and numeracy skills in the Member States which encounter persistent challenges in youth and adult literacy. Along with this emphasis, there is a need to reflect and expand the notion of foundational competencies required for the twenty-first century.

UIL will support Member States to integrate digital competencies, media literacy and global citizenship as core elements of the new, emerging foundational skills. This covers frameworks for competency, curriculum and assessment. Reviewing and sharing country experiences, the Institute will provide evidence and tools to guide and support Member States eager to reform the content of their learning systems.

Learning in and for the twenty-first century requires a 'whole development' approach, including cognitive, social, emotional and physical capabilities. The Institute will review new models of learning that foster cognitive agility and consider the 'whole

person'. As countries gradually adopt a lifelong learning vision of education, they will need a learning paradigm, placing more emphasis on adult learning and aiming at developing capabilities across time and space. UIL will continue to undertake research in this area, in addition to following the development of this field of knowledge, and incorporate empirically tested findings in its capacity-development activities.

Besides the definition and design of content, UIL will also promote content-sharing. Thanks in part to UNESCO's support for the open educational resources (OER) movement, there has been considerable progress globally in the reuse of learning materials, but, so far, these have mostly benefited school education and higher education, with limited application in adult education. UIL will review initiatives conducted to facilitate learning content reuse and build repositories of reusable educational resources for lifelong learning, such as the Open Educational Resources Commons. Such initiatives, offering curated content with open licenses and encouraging co-creation and participation by users, are key to promoting a culture of lifelong learning. UIL will seek to build partnerships to gradually create such open, multicultural, multilingual and inclusive learning environments.

### **Technology-supported learning**

Learning ecosystems are grounded in a diversity of learning contents, places and sources, and rely on interconnectivity – across an entire lifetime. Interconnectivity allows us to consider learning experiences in a holistic manner rather than as isolated events. In the twenty-first century, technology has made this possible for

# Just like their students, educators must become lifelong learners.

some, and the promise of 'anytime, anywhere' learning, as well as learning personalized to individual needs, is becoming more achievable. Technology is changing the nature of human cognition. Digital technologies and AI are not only transforming formal and non-formal education, they are also changing social relations, collective learning, participatory research; they are transforming how people interact, develop and work. Hence, technology-supported learning is not only about scale and 'substitution'. It also affects the design, delivery, assessment and governance of learning processes with the emergence of new global actors and the rise of a market for learning. Emerging technologies are radically changing the ways in which we train, educate, learn and develop and they are similarly changing how learning professionals operate – building teams, seeking out shared materials and embracing a culture of reuse.

UIL will further investigate the emergence of technology-enabled lifelong learning systems and the potential of technology to enhance quality, increase participation, improve assessment models and facilitate portability and recognition of skills at national and global levels. The Institute will also consider how these trends modify governance and the role of the state. Furthermore, attention will be paid to the rise of inequalities due to the digital gap between and within countries. Besides collecting evidence about this trend, UIL will identify policy responses able to bridge this gap and facilitate knowledge sharing and policy learning between countries on this topic.

## Educators for lifelong learning

Future learning ecosystems are likely to rely increasingly on technology-facilitated collaborative environments, supporting educators in designing and adapting instructional strategies and in selecting relevant resources to adapt to learners' interests, needs, prior knowledge and abilities. Thus, the emergence of lifelong learning ecosystems requires a new type of educator, not only a trainer, but also a facilitator, mentor and coach, within a larger, connected network and technology-rich environment. Within a lifelong learning paradigm, teaching requires a genuine shift of mindset. Educators must give up conventional cognitive and teacher-centred approaches and adopt a holistic vision of learning and learner-centred practices. Their teaching models must abandon linear and time-based standards and apply personalized and nonlinear methods. Finally, educators, often trained to work as fully autonomous professionals operating in isolation, are now expected to navigate interconnected learning systems, use technology, and work in a team with other learning specialists.

Just like their students, educators must become lifelong learners. UIL will document new approaches to train, upskill and empower educators as learning professionals and help them develop the new capabilities they need. Particular emphasis will be placed on the emergence of new occupations (e.g. 'learning engineers'), as well as new team-based work organization models facilitated by the use of technology. Reviewing country experiences, UIL will contribute to the development of new instruments and standards to guide policies and the design of new systems for the development of learning professionals.

### **Thematic priority 1: Main interventions on UNESCO global priorities (gender, Africa) and priority groups (youth and SIDS)**

**Gender<sup>1</sup>:** As part of UIL's responsibility for SDG 4 and in line with the UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and through education 2019–2025, UIL will support and guide Member States in the development of learning content and lifelong learning systems that are gender responsive and free of gender bias.

Responding to persisting gender inequalities in education and in particular the digital gender divide, UIL will support and develop national and local capacities, including of non-formal educators, to develop and implement innovative and inclusive 'demand-driven' non-formal learning plans and programmes with specific gender outcomes that aim to enhance access and participation in adult learning and education activities and that ensure women and girls have equal access to the production and use of information, digital solutions and technology.

**Africa:** UIL will promote the development of learning in African countries with a view to building quality learning embedded in appropriate lifelong learning policies that include equitable access to ICTs and the professionalization of adult and lifelong learning educators, while prioritizing the most vulnerable populations. Specific capacity-development initiatives will be undertaken, focused on literacy, curriculum development (using Curriculum GlobALE) and an initiative on digital competencies of literacy educators (GEC/GAL initiative). Furthermore, the Institute will provide holistic policy support through capacity-building activities on 'Strengthening education systems from a lifelong learning perspective'.

**Youth:** In spite of the massive expansion of education systems, in many parts of the world young people continue to face significant obstacles to achieving their full potential. UIL will focus on the promotion of foundational skills, including digital skills, basic literacy and numeracy skills, especially in sub-Saharan African and South Asia, within the framework of Global Alliance for Literacy. Furthermore, UIL will also work to ensure that the many young people leaving the education system without the global citizenship and sustainable development skills that they need to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world are offered lifelong learning opportunities.

**SIDS:** UIL will explore partnerships with learning networks and institutions in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to build quality learning ecosystems. UIL will provide the eight SIDS categorized as least-developed countries with targeted support in the field of youth and adult literacy.

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<sup>1</sup> UIL will adopt a comprehensive concept of gender that refers to women, men and their specific needs, as well as gender identity and inter-generational relationships.

## Thematic priority 2. Learning, work and life: Skills throughout life

### Lifelong learning and work

Learning for and at work is an integral part of adult education and is increasingly recognized as a major component of lifelong learning. It is an important dimension of any quality learning ecosystem. UNESCO's Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education describes learning as a lifelong endeavour that can occur in formal, non-formal and informal settings with the ultimate goal of ensuring that adults can participate fully in societies and the world of work. Alongside basic skills and citizenship skills, vocational skills, together with other twenty-first century skills, are key.

The centrality of work for lifelong learning has been further magnified by the transformation of the labour market and the fast-changing world of work. New skills are constantly emerging and uncertainty is becoming the norm; a phenomenon reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Current workers can expect to retrain and upskill multiple times throughout their lives, making lifelong learning a priority for adults. Adaptability and the ability to acquire new skills and competencies are becoming more important, particularly in ageing societies. Adults must be ready and able to learn throughout their professional lives.

UIL will study emerging skilling models and document good practice showing how lifelong learning, and technical and vocational learning in particular, can shape those changes and contribute to quality jobs and, eventually, to high-skill,

high-wage economies. Particular attention will be given to online learning and other non-traditional forms of delivery, including peer-to-peer and intergenerational learning, and to the evolution and impact of micro- and digital credentials. UIL will research the extent to which experiential approaches overturn traditional didactic models and require new ways of validating and accrediting learning within the public as well as the private sector. This will build on UIL's work on the recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of learning and flexible learning pathways. The new body of research will provide the basis for sharing good practice, inspire policy-making and contribute to turning experiences at work into learning opportunities.

At the institutional level, UIL will provide evidence on the rise of responsible forms of corporate management resulting from a recognition of employers' social responsibility in fighting climate change and reducing social inequalities, among other issues. The impact of those main drivers on corporate learning strategies will be investigated, documenting how enterprises can move away from narrow types of workplace training to 'anywhere, anytime' skills delivery, expanding their focus from employees to clients and communities. The Institute will also review initiatives aimed at bringing together businesses, organizations and the education system to build, support and share collaborative spaces. This work will result in policy-guidance tools

# Preventing environmental collapse demands new models of adult education geared towards learning to care for ourselves, for others and for the planet.

aimed at equipping interested Member States with the information, frameworks and comparative experiences needed to design, implement and monitor strategies to build learning spaces that become ubiquitous.

## Climate transformation

Preventing environmental collapse and ensuring the survival of modern societies has become a top priority for humanity and demands new models of adult education geared towards learning to care for ourselves, for others and for the planet. The structural change resulting from the closure of certain industries, and the transformation of technology, jobs and required skills and competences in others, will require massive investment in upskilling and reskilling for adult workers.

Building on its prior work on green skills, UIL will document trends and policy responses, identifying good practices for reskilling and matching skills needs. To support countries engaged in the transition to low-carbon economies and societies, UIL will produce guidelines on climate action strategies for skilling, reskilling and upskilling through lifelong learning. Leveraging its experience in bringing stakeholders together, UIL will inform policy dialogue by offering a lifelong learning framework as a platform through which governments, businesses, trade unions, civil society organizations and learning providers can collectively address shared concerns and agree on the way forward.

UIL will contribute to building a body of knowledge on lifelong learning policies in support of techno-economic

decarbonization strategies to inform the design of effective policy packages and identify various modes of cooperation among actors: government, industry, labour, local governments and citizens. The approach will ensure that policy lessons and measures are contextualized to consider the diversity of country circumstances and economic sectors.

## Digital transition

Digitalization is not only transforming the labour market, but has also disrupted access to knowledge, innovation and lifelong learning. The impact of digital technologies on work and jobs necessitates integrating digital skills as a core component of all curricula, as foundational skills. UIL will further explore the concepts of digital literacy and digital competence, and their integration in adult education programmes. This scope will be extended beyond digital skills for use in a job, to include innovation and entrepreneurship skills to create new activities and generate employment.

## New forms of governance

According to the Futures of Education International Commission, a world 'where education is a common good is a place where bottom-up, local initiatives blossom and self-organised governance can succeed on a large scale'. UIL will continue to explore the spatial dimension of lifelong learning, through its development and implementation of the learning city model. We will further document how learning cities are able to build learning ecosystems where the community becomes a learning institution connecting a range of partners, such as 'libraries,

museums, community radio, public access television, spaces of the digital commons, not to mention institutions not even dreamed of yet', as well as formal education and training institutions. The development of learning cities as inclusive learning ecosystems provides a path towards a 'new humanism' reconciling employment, inclusion, health and well-being, and environmental protection.

In terms of policies and planning, UIL will produce instruments to help cities design lifelong learning strategies that are part of integrated territorial development plans. Learning cities' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic illustrated how such strategies, articulated with sectoral priorities in health, environment, food security, employment and social protection, can play a key role in crisis mitigation and in building resilience.

UIL will enlarge the scope of its learning cities agenda for research, advocacy, international exchanges, capacity development and technical advice to embrace the notion of learning territories. Such expansion will better address the needs of Member States in relation to rural areas, notably in Africa. UIL will identify the features and principles of learning cities that can be applied to rural settings and adapted to inspire rural learning initiatives. We will document and share good practice in co-creating platforms and mechanisms for mutual learning, and design multi-level governance and whole-government approaches addressing the challenges of urban-rural learning partnerships.

## From vision to action

Moving from vision to action remains the key challenge for lifelong learning. Providing accessible, affordable and relevant learning opportunities for people, enterprises and communities requires a better understanding of specific dimensions of learning ecosystems. UIL will unpack three key questions that remain unresolved:

- How to engage adults (especially vulnerable groups) in learning and how to encourage employers (including small and medium-sized enterprises) to provide or facilitate access to learning for their workers and, to an increasing extent, to the wider community? What incentives can be put in place? How can a culture of lifelong learning be created and recognition that adult learning works for all be fostered?
- How to finance adult learning? What are the lessons learned from the new generation of individual learning accounts? Besides individualized instruments and conventional government-funded delivery and employer-funded training, what innovative models can be identified, including at community level?
- How to scale up recognition and validation of prior experience and learning so that it can become accessible to all adults in the context of work and life in general?

Based on the findings of this work, UIL will identify and share good practice, organize policy learning events, produce new capacity development materials and initiatives, and provide targeted policy support to Member States on request.

## **Thematic priority 2: Main interventions on UNESCO global priorities (gender, Africa) and priority groups (youth and SIDS)**

**Gender:** UIL will continue to support Member States in applying inter-generational and family learning approaches that aim to engage men, boys and the local community in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and reducing stereotyping in education. UIL will support Member States by advancing gender-responsive training guidelines and a competencies framework for non-formal education policy-makers, stakeholders and facilitators. In addition, UIL will focus on enhancing women's digital skills through supporting national and local capacities to leverage the skills necessary for daily and professional life, particularly in countries where the women's literacy rate is low.

**Africa:** UIL will support Member States in Africa through promoting the implementation of the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE) and particularly in following up on the CONFINTEA VII Framework for Action, with a view to increasing equitable access to learning opportunities for youth and adults. The Institute will provide technical support and capacity development services to assist countries in setting up local learning infrastructures, such as community learning centres, and in developing learning cities' and learning territories' strategies.

**Youth:** UIL will develop case studies and promote effective practices around youth skills initiatives for sustainable development and climate action. UIL will also produce technical resources and offer capacity-building opportunities, with youth partners, for improving youth employability and livelihood, with a particular focus on young women and rural areas.

**SIDS:** Climate change poses an existential threat to SIDS. Their response includes ambitious mitigation targets and a strong commitment to transforming their economies into low-carbon economies. UIL will provide insights on the role of lifelong learning policy in supporting this transformation as well as in contributing to reducing, absorbing or preventing the adverse impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise.

## Thematic priority 3. No one left behind: Making lifelong learning inclusive

### Adult and lifelong learning in support of inclusion

Access to education tends still to favour those young people and adults who have already benefited from educational opportunity. Those with a deficit in knowledge, skills and competences, who are most in need of decent learning opportunities, are the most likely to find themselves excluded. In such circumstances, education can contribute to a further widening of the gap between the educational 'haves' and 'have nots'. At a time of rising economic inequality, education should form part of the political response to current and future challenges.

### Gender

Gender is an area where urgent action is required. In spite of significant progress in many parts of the world, gender inequality remains a serious concern for most countries, with gender differences persisting in a number of areas throughout the life course. The socioeconomic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected women and girls worldwide through an increasing burden of unpaid care and domestic work, job losses, rising poverty and increasing levels of violence against women and girls. These consequences are a stark reminder that protecting human rights and ensuring long-term development outcomes require support for women's socioeconomic wellbeing and empowerment through appropriate lifelong learning opportunities.

Education policies and practice should focus on disadvantaged and marginalized groups, starting with women and girls and targeting those least equipped to succeed in the labour market or participate fully in their societies. They should promote provision of learning opportunities to those most in need of learning and education, and provide them with adequate means to pursue their learning intentions. Lifelong learning opportunities then are to be designed and put into practice as effective instruments in support of human rights and social justice. Inclusive education systems should 'remove the barriers limiting the participation and achievement of all learners, respect diverse needs, abilities and characteristics and ... eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment'.<sup>2</sup>

UIL will focus on vulnerable target groups, considering the structural factors and challenges set out in the section on the lifelong learning landscape, including the need to adapt following the COVID-19 pandemic and to develop greener jobs and industries in response to the climate crisis. Programmes will target those groups whose needs will remain acute, or even grow, in the years to come. While delivering on gender equality and securing active and equal participation

<sup>2</sup> See <https://en.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-in-education>

# UIL will continue to support the efforts of Member States in developing lifelong learning systems, policies and practices that are gender responsive and inclusive.

of women and girls will form a core priority across all activities, the Institute will also consider other groups deserving specific policy attention, notably low-literate adults, older adults, migrants and refugees.

UIL will continue to support the efforts of Member States in developing lifelong learning systems, policies and practices that are gender responsive and inclusive. Leaving no one behind means no longer considering the gender gap only in a dichotomous way, but taking into account all discrimination based on gender identity/expression, gender characteristics and sexual orientation. Therefore, UIL will also identify effective approaches and measures that contribute to effectively tackling anti-LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer people) equality in and through lifelong learning and assist countries in implementing them.

## **Bridging the digital divide**

Recognizing the risks of social exclusion that digitalization creates for adults with low levels of literacy, while mindful of the potential of technology in meeting their learning needs, UIL will expand its work on digital literacy. Addressing the needs of low-literate adults and youth will remain an important dimension of our programme, through the Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning (GAL) and associated projects. We see this work as critical to making progress on a range of other fronts. Hence, UIL will further support Member States in designing policies and programmes to provide basic numeracy and literacy skills, together with other

transversal skills and competences, such as digital skills, media literacy skills and global citizenship skills. UIL's support aims to help Member States tackle social and gender inequities and enable low-literate youth and adults to gain access to decent jobs or to further learning opportunities.

## **Lifelong learning in response to demographic change**

In a rapidly ageing world, older adults will also be a priority area, as changes in demography, combined with the rapid development of technology, make the need to continue learning throughout life more acute than ever. Ageing societies must find ways of supporting adults to adapt continuously to new technologies which are changing the face of the workplace around the world. They also have to ensure that older people can remain active members of society and contribute to new forms of intergenerational solidarity and learning for as long as possible. UIL will develop its work on both these fronts.

Finally, and again related to changes in demography, refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons will continue to feature high on UIL's list of priorities. As the fourth *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 4)* showed, this group is not only among those least likely to participate in education and training, it is also one of the most neglected in policy terms. UIL will try to reverse this neglect, commissioning new research while developing existing work, for example on recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of learning outcomes and competencies. Through

developing knowledge resources, policy tools and support services, UIL will help host countries to include refugees and migrants in lifelong learning programmes, thus protecting and upholding the rights of people on the move, regardless of status.

## Strategic areas

In this inclusion and equity framework, UIL will strengthen and intensify its work around three strategic areas:

1. **Normative and legal frameworks:** contributing to UNESCO's broader monitoring work on the right to education, UIL will analyse trends in legal provisions designed to reduce inequalities in access, with a special focus on girls and women and on marginalized groups. Besides measures targeting individuals, attention will also be paid to legal incentives to increase and improve effective programme delivery for these groups. This work will contribute to preparing the ground for codifying a right to lifelong learning, mainstreaming gender and other equity issues.
2. **Policy:** UIL will provide technical knowledge and capacity-building support to Member States, on their request, to develop, adopt and implement inclusive and gender-responsive policies. Capacity-development activities will be designed, with policy-sharing and peer-learning events. Attention will be given to intersectoral policies that promote non-discrimination, and that integrate lifelong learning interventions into social

protection, employment, health and environmental policies.

3. **Knowledge production:** UIL will undertake practice-oriented research, at national and sub-national levels, to increase the availability of disaggregated statistics and analysis on intersecting inequalities in lifelong learning. We will produce cutting-edge research and evidence on policies and programmes that support inclusiveness, gender equality and women's empowerment. This will help fill critical knowledge gaps and deliver on the principle of 'leaving no one behind.'

UIL's work across all of these fronts will help to put innovative and effective policies and programmes into practice to support gender equality and the inclusion of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, thus contributing to reduced levels of inequality and inequity. Reducing these, especially inequalities of gender, is a prerequisite to guaranteeing the right to a quality education for all, as reflected in SDG 4. While advocating for recognizing the relevance of lifelong learning to these issues, and offering Member States appropriate support and capacity development to implement it, we will continue to strengthen partnerships with governments, civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders.

### **Thematic priority 3: Main interventions on UNESCO global priorities (gender, Africa) and priority groups (youth and SIDS)**

**Gender:** UIL will promote the design and implementation of gender-responsive national and local education plans and policies which advance rights and tackle key gender-related barriers preventing access to quality learning, and promote safe, inclusive and healthy learning environments, for both men and women. This will include better sex-disaggregated data, evidence-based research and knowledge sharing to inform the strategic action of Member States.

**Africa:** UIL will gather and produce data to promote adult learning and education in Africa and monitor progress in the region, including regarding good practices, following the priority areas agreed by Member States at CONFINTEA VII. Furthermore, outcomes of partnership initiatives within the frameworks of GAL, the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML) and the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) will be used to strengthen evidence-based lifelong learning policy-making in African countries.

**Youth:** UIL will guide Member States to include youth in lifelong learning policies, with a focus on young women, out-of-school and out-of-work youth, and young people on the move. UIL will also promote youth engagement and participation in policy development through policy dialogue at national and global levels, including networking events promoting youth voices on the future of lifelong learning, such as community forums in the GNLC, or hackathons for youth.

**SIDS:** UIL will work on improving the availability of data on lifelong learning in SIDS and will explore ways in which lifelong learning can reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience.

# OPERATIONAL MODALITIES



# OPERATIONAL MODALITIES

UIL will continue to prioritize capacity-development services to Member States. We will work to strengthen institutional capacities at national and local levels by offering training for policy-makers, providers and practitioners. We will organize global, regional and national forums to share good practice and tools for equitable, inclusive and flexible access to quality lifelong learning; and provide bespoke technical support.

## The UIL Learning Hub

To centralize UIL's resources and amplify their impact, UIL will launch a Learning Hub. The Hub will provide a one-stop online multimedia portal for policy advice, capacity development and knowledge sharing. It will give access to online training courses, workshops, webinars and e-conferences, and share tools and guidelines. It aims to help Member States build and sustain flexible and gender-responsive lifelong learning systems and will be developed in collaboration with UNESCO institutes and regional offices, other UN and development agencies, universities, and training institutions.

The Hub's training resources will cover the full range of issues UIL has expertise in, ranging from planning for lifelong learning and adult education, to the development of gender-responsive literacy strategies and policies, and improving monitoring and evaluation. It will feature resources on building learning cities, managing community learning centres and strengthening libraries for lifelong learning.

The Learning Hub will be an entry point for our future country-specific capacity

support to Member States. UIL will mobilize its internal and institutional expertise and capacity, and its external networks. We will feed back into the Learning Hub what we learn from providing this targeted support, thereby ensuring the Hub provides an up-to-date and comprehensive resource base.

## Offering more and better data

UIL aims to produce comparable data (sex-disaggregated data) and knowledge on participants, programmes, actors and policies in formal and non-formal education to help countries strengthen their education systems for sustainable and inclusive lifelong learning. The knowledge we produce can be grouped into five main areas:

- **Monitoring/evaluation** activities centre on the production of the GRALE report, but also include the monitoring of lifelong learning policies and UIL's Global Observatory on the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning. This work involves regular and/or standardized data collection.
- **Applied research** involves *ad hoc* data collection, developed in conjunction with a research project.
- **Methods, guides and tools** for data production. This refers to the production of any element that promotes or facilitates the production of quality data for countries and stakeholders.

- **Research and development activities** to, for example, promote foresight work to help countries anticipate changes in lifelong learning and support gender-specific needs of learners.
- **Synergies with external partners**, to validate the data produced; increase our data production capacity; and improve the reach of our data.

### Strengthening partnerships

Partnership is a critical part of UIL's vision for its work and how it will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. Partnership underpins planning and implementation of lifelong learning and is crucial to everything we seek to do. UIL will, therefore, continue to invest heavily in bringing stakeholders together in the effective networks we have facilitated. Our two flagship partnership networks concern cities and literacy, respectively.

### The UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities

UIL established the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) in 2012 in response to demand from UNESCO Member States. Against the backdrop of rapid urbanization and decentralization of education, it is vital that cities facilitate gender-responsive learning throughout life. In 2021, 229 members from 64 countries engaged in developing holistic and integrated approaches to lifelong learning. The network promotes policy dialogue and peer learning among its members, documents effective strategies and best practice, fosters partnership, provides capacity development, and develops instruments and resources to

encourage and recognize progress in building learning cities. In the coming years we intend to focus on helping the network make an even greater impact. We will:

1. **Enhance the knowledge and research base of the network**, establishing groups of experts to lead the production and dissemination of knowledge on key topics and facilitate capacity development for cities.
2. **Promote new partnerships between cities for interaction and exchange**, fostering increased cooperation between cities from the same region; and promoting inter-regional cooperation by twinning learning cities for mutual exchange and support.
3. **Expand the membership to underrepresented countries and regions**, increasing participation in the network of African cities and cities from under-represented Member States in other regions.
4. **Reach out to establish connections with other city networks**, going beyond the field of education to promote integrated approaches, and contributing to achieving goals in other sectors of sustainable development.
5. **Provide a digital space to facilitate peer learning and knowledge sharing for cities with the Learning Hub**. The Hub will be a resource for all member cities, and a repository of all the learning materials generated by the network.

## The Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning

Launched in 2016 by the Director-General of UNESCO, the Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning (GAL) is a platform to advance the global literacy agenda. It is aligned with the Education 2030 Framework for Action and UIL is its Secretariat. GAL fosters and coordinates a partnership of 29 Member States<sup>3</sup> committed to working together towards concerted action on youth and adult literacy.

SDG 4.6 encapsulates GAL's vision: 'By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy.' GAL's mission is to support member countries to drive improvements in national policies, strategies, resource mobilization, evidence and innovation. UIL will continue to support the implementation of the GAL Strategy adopted by GAL countries in 2020. GAL is also the main implementing body for the broader UNESCO Strategy for Youth and Adult Literacy (2020–2025). UIL will use digital tools hosted by the Learning Hub to facilitate access to evidence-based solutions, peer learning and networking to advance the effectiveness of literacy policies, for achieving national priorities and SDG target 4.6. UIL will also focus

on helping to build country ownership and inclusive partnerships.

UIL will continue to strengthen the operation of GAL and help shape its future, in collaboration with its co-chairs. We aim to enhance country ownership and support the development of national capacities to formulate gender-responsive policies, implement them effectively and establish robust monitoring evaluation mechanisms and tools. UIL will further align its capacity development and technical advice agenda for literacy with the GAL strategy. Recognizing the importance of effective, inclusive 'whole-society' partnerships for amplifying literacy efforts in GAL countries, UIL will also leverage the expertise and resources of GAL Associate Members and encourage new learning partnerships with other committed actors.

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<sup>3</sup> Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL) countries (as 2021): Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, People's Republic of China, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone and South Sudan.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION



# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This strategy is designed to support Member States in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to help realize the 2030 Agenda's vision of a world in which no one is left behind. To support the implementation of this overall objective and promote UIL's development, the strategy will be complemented by a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan that allows for M&E at different levels, throughout strategic themes and objectives.

The M&E plan will provide information and guidance on the evaluation and monitoring approaches used to trace development and report on results. A set of key performance indicators will be developed to monitor progress and allow for regular readjustment of the project portfolio according to a number of parameters, including geography, thematic area and budget. Some of the indicators will represent and reflect UNESCO-wide priorities on Africa and gender. In addition, UIL will conduct systematic external evaluations and undertake comprehensive reporting that will provide a results-oriented and transparent appraisal of UIL's strategy implementation.

## Monitoring and evaluation at different levels

### Overall evaluation

UIL will conduct a mid-term evaluation of the strategy<sup>4</sup> to assess progress made towards the achievement of the results outlined in the strategy. At the end of the strategy, a full, comprehensive external evaluation will be conducted.

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<sup>4</sup> Self-evaluation with an external validation.

### Evaluation of activities

UIL will conduct activity/project evaluations in line with UNESCO evaluation policy, with the aim of assessing an activity's performance and determining the outcomes and impacts stemming from it. They will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project design and implementation. Evaluation of expected accomplishments will be undertaken at the programme level to identify the achievement of results, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, budget and sustainability of the delivery of the programme against the strategic objectives.

UIL activities, indicators and outputs will be viewed through a gender lens and analysis, and will be supported by sex-disaggregated data (whenever possible).

### Reporting and transparency

As an institute of UNESCO, UIL is primarily accountable to UNESCO's Member States. The Institute contributes to Education Sector reports to UNESCO governing bodies. It also reports to its own Governing Board, core donors and partners through annual results reports, which are publicly available.

UIL commits to full traceability of its results in different ways. It does so, first, by ensuring that key performance evaluations/ audits are conducted externally and made available through its website; and, second, through its project portfolio management platform, allowing for verification. Finally, UIL structures all its data to be fully compatible with UNESCO's transparency tools, and engages with UN system-wide data harmonization initiatives. UIL will follow the UNESCO Education Sector reporting model in line with the C/5 results matrix (see Annex).

# ANNEX



# UIL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNESCO EDUCATION RESULTS MATRIX FOR THE FIRST BIENNIUM OF THE MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY, 2022–2023

<b>ED1: Education systems are equipped to promote inclusion, address marginalization and advance rights, including in crisis-affected contexts</b>		
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2020</b>	<b>Target 2023</b>
1. Number of countries supported in addressing the learning needs of marginalized groups through inclusive policies and practices*	2 (1 in Africa and 1 SIDS)	4 (2 in Africa and 1 SIDS)
2. Number of countries supported to enhance policies, data and mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning and qualifications of crisis affected people on the move, contributing to the Global Compact on Refugees	2 (1 in Africa)	3 (1 in Africa)
<b>ED2: Gender transformative education systems empower learners, ensure safe learning environments and address the educational barriers, particularly for girls and women, exacerbated by the learning crisis</b>		
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2020</b>	<b>Target 2023</b>
1. Number of countries supported in improving data, knowledge generation and policy dialogue to ensure gender equality in and through education	4 (1 in Africa)	6 (2 in Africa)
2. Number of countries with laws, policies, plans and strategies reviewed and resulting recommendations to implement and enforce gender equality in and through education	3 (1 in Africa)	6 (2 in Africa)
<b>ED4: Learners are equipped with relevant skills to meet individual, labour market and societal demands through literacy, TVET, STEM and higher education*</b>		
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2020</b>	<b>Target 2023</b>
1. Number of countries supported to develop or implement gender-responsive policies and strategies on skills development for work and life within lifelong learning policies, plans and pathways	4 (1 Africa)	5 (2 Africa)
2. Number of countries, especially those with adult literacy rates below 50% and the E9 countries, supported to improve youth and adult literacy (for men and women), including through the use of digital technologies	29 (17 Africa)	29 (17 Africa)
<b>ED5: Teachers trained and supported to address the changes brought forth by the COVID-19 crisis and improve of learning outcomes</b>		
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2020</b>	<b>Target 2023</b>
1. Number of teachers (male/female) trained on inclusive, gender sensitive and innovative pedagogies, including for digital technologies, remote and blended learning – of which % are ECCE, TVET, ALE and literacy teachers and educators	300 (100 Africa)	600 (200 Africa)

Performance indicator for priority Gender Equality:

100% of UIL projects are at least GEM 1 (partial gender mainstreaming), in terms of the UN Gender Equality Marker<sup>5</sup>

\*UIL area of focus

<sup>5</sup> The UN Gender Equality scale comprises four levels: GEM0: Gender blind; GEM1: Partial gender mainstreaming; GEM2: Solid gender mainstreaming; GEM3: Focuses on Gender equality / women's empowerment. UIL's strategy also aims to increase its share of projects at levels 2 and 3

<b>ED6: Resilience, quality and equity of education systems strengthened to flexibly respond to evolving learning environments and to better deliver on SDG 4 commitments*</b>		
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2020</b>	<b>Target 2023</b>
1. Number of countries supported to review and align sector policy, planning and financing frameworks with SDG 4	2	5
2. Number of countries supported to improve sector management, governance, management information, monitoring and evaluation systems	3	4
3. Number of countries supported to undertake gender-responsive curriculum development and reform that also integrate a gender perspective	5	5
4. Number of countries supported to improve learning outcomes, including early stimulation through better aligning policies, pedagogies, environments and assessments, and benefitting from the Global Learning House's mission	12 (RAMAA countries)	14 (including RAMAA countries)
5. Number of repositories, technical tools, guidelines and comparative analyses available to support education planning, sector management, curriculum, assessment, monitoring, evaluation and learning	10	15
<b>ED7 Education policy and finance decisions to achieve SDG 4 are informed by improved coordination, data and monitoring, knowledge and innovative partnerships</b>		
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2020</b>	<b>Target 2023</b>
1. Number of global, regional, country reports on SDG 4 monitoring, policy impact analysis, innovations and accelerators produced and disseminated (including GEM reports and GRALE)	1 GRALE report produced every three years	1 GRALE report produced every three years
<b>ED8 Technologies and digital innovations leveraged to ensure more inclusive, effective and relevant learning</b>		
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2020</b>	<b>Target 2023</b>
1. Repositories of open source e-learning platforms, digital tools and locally relevant open education resources strengthened and enlarged (2.1) and user-base expanded (2.2)	B 2.1: 1 (UIL Learning Hub) B 2.2: Unknown	T 2.1 T 2.2: 30% increase in the user base
2. Number of countries supported in developing technology-enabled inclusive and resilient learning systems (1.1) and/or in leveraging emerging technologies to enhance teaching/ learning processes and management of education	2 (1 Africa)	4 (2 Africa)
<b>ED9: Education and learning reimaged through interdisciplinary research, foresight and public policy debate*</b>		
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2020</b>	<b>Target 2023</b>
1. Number of research and knowledge products on key education issues made available (1.1) with evidence of impact/influence (1.2)	5	8
2. Number of global and regional research fora on the future of learning and education organized, including with UNESCO Chairs.	1	3



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