



## Webinar

# Youth and adult literacy: better data for more efficient policies

Monday 28 June 2021, from 10:00 to 12:00 (GMT+2)

**English and French interpretation available**

### **Context and rationale**

Youth and adult literacy and numeracy are vital for economic prosperity, social inclusion and sustainable development. For individuals, participation in the labour market and inclusion in the wider community are often contingent on knowing how to read, write and deal with numbers. Societies develop greater resilience to external shocks and more resources for sustainable development through higher levels of literacy and numeracy.

Yet, the number of non-literate youth and adults increased by 23 million from 750 million to 773 million between 2016 and 2018 (UNESCO, 2020). If we also consider the youth and adults who lack sufficient skills to achieve functional literacy and numeracy, the global figures may increase further. The large number of adults with fragile skills not only has implications for economic and social development of countries, but also affects how welfare gains are shared within societies. Without an accurate idea of the distribution of skills in the youth and adult population, it may prove difficult to introduce innovative technologies and new ways of working, which, in turn, slows down improvements in well-being and tends

to widen socio-economic inequalities. It can also be tough to identify the sub-populations most at risk of being left behind and to address their learning and skills needs through well-targeted programmes.

Understanding how to invest in and develop these skills requires comprehensive data about what people know, what they do with what they know, and the extent to which they are able to compete in the twenty-first century. High-quality data on adult skills and competencies enables evidence-based policy-making to improve skills governance and adult learning systems.

While collective efforts have led to gradual progress with respect to increasing literacy rates, global data on literacy remains insufficient to offer a comprehensive picture. Literacy estimates are mainly based on a self-reported measure of reading, which distinguishes between those who cannot read or write at all and those who have some very basic skills, and usually does not measure numeracy competencies. Currently, only 13 per cent of the world's countries have data on literacy and numeracy skills based on direct measurements (Subosa and West, 2018).

To highlight the importance of high-quality data, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is hosting a webinar on the role of literacy and numeracy skills data for evidence-based policies. The webinar will focus on how skill assessments not only draw attention to the issue of youth and adult literacy, but also, more concretely, contribute to the development of better informed and more effective policies. Over the course of two hours, participants will have the opportunity to discuss the extent to which youth and adults are able to employ literacy and numeracy skills in their home, at work, and in the wider community, as well as to answer questions about the skill distribution.

The event brings together experts, national representatives and policy-makers with varying levels of expertise in youth and adult skill assessment surveys in different contexts. The first half of the webinar focuses on the concepts and frameworks. A new UNESCO instrument, the Mini-LAMP survey, designed to be implemented through telephone- and tablet-based modalities, will be introduced. In the second half of the webinar, representatives of countries that have implemented direct assessments of adult skills will present how and in what ways the data from direct assessment surveys have benefitted their policy regimes, and to what extent these have introduced a new approach in national responses to youth and adult literacy challenges. The discussion that will follow is an opportunity for an exchange of ideas, in order to jointly reflect on future opportunities for youth and adult skills assessment in other national contexts.

## Registration

---

Please register via the link provided below:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_XUR3ssleQu2rkS-LGOnubg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XUR3ssleQu2rkS-LGOnubg)

## Draft Agenda

28 June 2021	
10:00 – 12:00 (GMT +2)	
<b>10:00 – 10:05</b>	<b>Opening remarks</b> Mr David Atchoarena, Director, UIL
<b>10:05 – 10:30</b>	<b><u>Session 1: Why and how to assess youth and adult literacy and numeracy?</u></b>  <b>Introduction to session 1</b> Ms Rakhat Zholdoshalieva, Team Leader, UIL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adult numeracy: A neglected field:</b> Mr Iddo Gal, Associate Professor, University of Haifa</li> <li>• <b>A UNESCO instrument: mini-LAMP</b> Mr Nicolas Jonas, Programme Specialist, UIL</li> </ul>
<b>10:30 – 11:20</b>	<b><u>Session 2: Country presentations</u></b>  <b>Introduction to session 2</b> Mr Nicolas Jonas, Programme Specialist, UIL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms Collen Dube</b>, NALA (Ireland), Chief Executive officer (15 mins)</li> <li>• <b>Ms Min-Seon Park</b>, NILE (Republic of Korea), Programme specialist (15 mins) (tbc)</li> <li>• <b>Mr Hervé Fernandez</b>, ANLCI (France), Director (15 mins) (tbc)</li> </ul>
<b>11:20 – 11:50</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>11:50 – 12:00</b>	<b>Closing remarks</b> Mr David Atchoarena, Director, UIL

## Background information

- [Policy brief on numeracy](#)
- [Policy brief on literacy](#)
- [UNESCO strategy for youth and adult literacy \(2020-2025\)](#)
- [Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning \(GAL\): strategy 2020–2025](#)
- [Global Alliance to Monitor Learning \(GAML\)](#)

### UNESCO – a global leader in education

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation for peace and sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education, providing global and regional leadership to drive progress, strengthening the resilience and capacity of national systems to serve all learners and responding to contemporary global challenges through transformative learning, with special focus on gender equality and Africa across all actions.



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific  
and Cultural Organization

### The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



## Stay in touch



**E-mail** [uil@unesco.org](mailto:uil@unesco.org)



**Webpage** [www.uil.unesco.org](http://www.uil.unesco.org)



**Twitter** @UIL



**Facebook** @uilunesco

### Address

UNESCO Institute for  
Lifelong Learning  
Feldbrunnenstraße 58  
20148 Hamburg, Germany



Sustainable  
Development  
Goals