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## International Literacy Day

Online International Conference on 'Literacy for a human-centred recovery: Narrowing the digital divide'

8-9 September 2021

Education  
2030 

# Concept note for International Literacy Day 2021

## Context

### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the worst disturbance to education and training systems in a century, with the longest school closures affecting more than 1.6 billion learners at its peak time. By November 2020, the average child had lost 54 percent of a year's contact time, which could be interpreted as the loss of over a year's learning if the time of forgetting what was previously acquired is counted<sup>1</sup>.

The pandemic and its repercussions have also magnified the pre-existing inequalities in access to meaningful literacy learning opportunities, disproportionately affecting 773 million non-literate young people and adults<sup>2</sup>. With low or no reading and writing skills, they tend to be more vulnerable in managing their health, work, and life<sup>3</sup>. In OECD countries, low-skilled adults are also less likely to recognize their learning needs (11 percent) than those with higher skills (35 percent), and are therefore less likely to look for learning opportunities<sup>4</sup>, a source of further widening inequalities. Despite this, initial global and national responses to COVID-19 concentrated on formal basic and higher education. The best efforts of governments and partners have been employed to ensure the continuity of literacy learning through distance and blended education. However, non-literate young people and adults who tend to face intersecting disadvantages, for instance, due to poverty, gender, social status, ethnicity, language, disabilities, and geographical location, have been at higher risk of being left behind. In the recovery phase, therefore, youth and adult literacy should be integrated into national strategies and plans from a lifelong learning perspective.

The rapid shift to distance learning also highlighted the persistent digital divide in terms of connectivity, infrastructure, and the ability to engage with technology. According to the International Telecommunications Union, nearly half of the world's people (3.7 billion) do not use the Internet, many of whom are in least developed countries, and urban-rural disparities and gender gaps continue to be present. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 7.7 percent were estimated to have a computer at home. Household internet access in the region is still limited with a rate of approximately 22 percent. Also made visible with the shift to distance learning was the insufficiency of other infrastructure and services that can facilitate learning. In Burkina Faso, Burundi and Chad, for instance, at least 85 percent of the population did not even have access to electricity in 2018<sup>5</sup>.

At the same time, the COVID-19 crisis amplified the centrality of literacy to people's life, work and lifelong learning. Reading and writing skills are essential, for instance, to access life-saving

<sup>1</sup> The UIS adopted 'forgetting ratio of 2.0' for its model in light of the loss of skills acquired by learners even before the interruption. In this model, for every month of contact time lost, two months of learning are assumed to have been lost.

<sup>2</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/literacy?page=1>

<sup>3</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374187>

<sup>4</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)

<sup>5</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/eg.elc.accs.zs>

information and sustain livelihoods. In addition, the need for digital skills, which are part of today's literacy skills, have been recognized for distance learning, a digitally transformed workplace, and participation in a digitalized society. While there is no single internationally agreed definition, digital skills are broadly understood as a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate and create information safely and appropriately in an increasingly technological and information-rich environment<sup>6</sup>. Various aspects of digital skills are increasingly becoming indispensable to be literate. However, many young people and adults are digitally non-literate, including those who lack basic reading and writing skills. In Europe, 43 percent of adults lack the basic digital skills required to participate in distance digital learning<sup>7</sup>. As acquisition of digital skills involves complex cognitive processes, these emerging skills demand calls for ensuring an adequate level of reading and writing skills<sup>8</sup>, the integration of digital skills into literacy programmes, if appropriate, and the consideration of the inter-relations between these skills, kinds of technology and teaching approaches to be adopted, as well as learners' motivation, life situations, contexts, and cultures.

### *Putting literacy and digital skills at the heart of a human-centered recovery*

The COVID-19 crisis contains the seeds of opportunity for a human-centered recovery. As the pandemic forced numerous literacy programmes to halt normal modes of operation, administrators, managers, educators, communities and learners themselves have struggled and found ways to ensure continuity of learning. Where face-to-face teaching and learning was restricted, distance learning supported by high-tech (e.g. computers, mobile phones, tablets), low-tech (e.g. TV, radio) and/or no-tech (e.g. print-based learning materials) solutions, and hybrid learning that combined face-to-face and distance learning, have been adopted. The specific situations of COVID-19 crisis have also fostered family-based learning and have enhanced the content of literacy programmes through intersectoral collaboration and new partnerships.

Many of these initiatives for sustaining literacy learning, generated, implemented and owned by individuals, communities, local authorities, and national institutions through their active participation, can contribute to building a solid foundation for a human-centred recovery. The pandemic has shown that the specific needs of heterogenous learners in challenging conditions can be better met by embracing diverse solutions of distance, face-to-face and hybrid learning. Also highlighted was the immediate need to equip those who are in digital environments with adequate literacy and digital skills, while stepping up efforts to narrow the digital divide. This calls for attention to several policy areas, including providing literacy programmes with no and low-tech solutions for those who do not have access to internet and/or electricity, exploring technology-enabled learning that facilitates acquisition of reading, writing and digital skills, and ensuring equitable access to inclusive and quality literacy learning<sup>9</sup>. More structurally, this will

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<sup>6</sup> The definitions of [the World Bank](#) and that of [the UNESCO Institute for Statistics \(UIS\)](#) are similar and have been adapted in this note. [UNICEF](#) defines digital literacy as 'the knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow children to flourish and thrive in an increasingly global digital world, being both safe and empowered, in ways that are appropriate to their age and local cultures and contexts'. [OECD's](#) framework of digital skills outlines a range of 'ICT generic skills' to use such technologies for task-orientated purposes, such as using software and accessing information. [The Broadband Commission for Sustainable development](#) also explains main components of digital skills.

<sup>7</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/digital-skills-all-europeans-brochure>

<sup>8</sup> The OECD's [2018 Programme for International Student Assessment \(PISA\) findings](#) show that 'youth with low basic skills found it difficult to process digital information in multiple presentation formats'.

<sup>9</sup> UN, 2020

require good governance and bold partnerships as well as further integration of youth and adult literacy into national lifelong learning policies and systems.

**Embracing diverse solutions for distance, face-to-face and hybrid learning for literacy:** During the pandemic, many countries adopted a mix of no-, low-, and high-tech solutions to ensure continuity of learning and to reach out to learners who otherwise had limited learning opportunities in their proximity. The pandemic illuminated the importance of adding a human factor through face-to-face interaction, creating physical or virtual communities for educator-learner interactions and peer support, and/or blended learning.

**Integration of learning of reading and writing skills and digital skills:** It is increasingly important to provide literacy programmes that prepare learners to thrive in a digital world through integrating digital skills into learning content. Founded on adequate reading and writing skills, digital skills enable learners to benefit from technology-enabled literacy programmes and further learning opportunities. As such, designing a literacy programme that integrates digital skills requires consideration of the inter-relations between these skills, together with kinds of technology and teaching approaches to be adopted.

**Quality of technology-enabled literacy learning:** Technology is not a panacea for malfunctioning learning. Central to quality technology-enabled literacy learning is the adoption of an appropriate type of technology to support the good teaching approach, learning content, assessment and certification. Literacy educators, together with relevant educational materials, also play a critical role, as well as learners' motivation, life situations, contexts, and cultures. A caution has been made for over-romanticizing technology-enabled personalized learning, as learning is situated and not an individual activity, and the increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) could intensify inequalities due to the likelihood of 'disadvantaged groups being misrepresented within AI-driven education'<sup>10</sup>.

**Equitable and inclusive access to technology-enabled literacy programmes:** Making inclusive technology-enabled literacy programmes accessible requires efforts within and outside the education sector given the cross-sectoral roots of disadvantages and educational marginalization faced by non-literate youth and adults. This includes online/offline technology-enabled learning, facilitating connectivity of learners, and the use of mixed distance learning strategies, such as television, radio and telephones, distribution of printed materials, and on-line learning.

**Good governance and partnerships for technology-enabled literacy learning:** Actors from different education constituencies and non-education sectors form local ecosystems and contribute to inclusive and meaningful literacy learning. Examples of multi-stakeholder partnerships include telecom companies ensuring the provision of zero-rating internet access and access to on-line resources and platforms, and partnerships, involving adult learning authorities and local universities sharing free online content. Governments have responsibilities, together with other stakeholders, to ensure that learners' privacy is protected,

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<sup>10</sup> [Digital technology and the futures of education – towards 'non-stupid' optimism - UNESCO Digital Library](#)

physical and mental well-being are preserved, and their safety is maintained. Also important is the fostering of digital citizenship and reaffirming education as a public good.

**Promoting youth and adult literacy as an integral part of national lifelong learning policies and systems:** By further integrating youth and adult literacy, national lifelong learning policies and systems can be enhanced to benefit from system-wide approaches and cross-sectoral collaboration, including that between the sub-sectors of ‘adult literacy, learning and education’ and basic education. Such collaboration could facilitate intergenerational learning and development of a sector-wide digital platform for technology-enhanced learning, recognition, validation, accreditation and certification of skills, monitoring and information management.

**Coordinated and sustained collective support, advocacy, and knowledge management:** Global and regional platforms and initiatives can continue to support national efforts to promote literacy, including SDG-Education 2030 coordination mechanisms, the Global Alliance for Literacy within the Lifelong Learning Framework (GAL), the Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC), the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML), the Global Education Coalition (GEC), UNESCO Chairs, the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait and the International Financing Facility for Education.

## Online International Conference on ‘Literacy for a human-centred recovery: Narrowing the digital divide’

### Agenda (8-9 September 2021)

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#### Main objectives:

- To share knowledge and experiences regarding inclusive and quality digital literacy programmes for youth and adults with no or low literacy skills.
- To explore the interplay between literacy and digital skills and the ways in which digital skills can be meaningfully integrated into literacy programmes.
- To identify the main issues to be addressed concerning the role of technology-enabled learning in reimagining literacy teaching and learning in times of COVID-19 and beyond.
- To present six outstanding literacy programmes which are awarded the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2021.

<b>13:30 – 13:31</b>	<b>Projection of a video of International Literacy Day 2021</b>
<b>13:31 – 13:55</b>	<b>Opening session</b> <b>Chairperson:</b> Mr Borhene Chakroun, Director, Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, Education Sector, UNESCO <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Opening remarks</b>, Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO</li><li>• <b>Remarks, Digital skills and literacy from the rights perspective</b>, Ms Koumbou Boly Barry, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education</li><li>• <b>Testimony of a learner:</b> Gogo, a 94 year-old woman from Kenya (video message)</li><li>• <b>Testimony</b>, Ms Hassina Sherjan, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Aid Afghanistan for Education, Afghanistan</li></ul>
<b>13:55 – 14:40</b>	<b>Ministerial Panel: Literacy at the heart of a human-centred recovery: Enhancing national policies and systems for narrowing the digital divide</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Mr David Atchoarena, Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning <b>Panelists</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• H.E. Ms Mariatou Kone, Minister of National Education and Literacy, Côte d'Ivoire</li><li>• H.E. Mr Tarek Shawki, Minister of Education, Egypt</li><li>• H.E. Mr Nadiem Makarim, Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, Indonesia</li><li>• H.E. Ms Maria Victoria Angulo, Minister of National Education of Colombia</li><li>• H.E. Mr Tiago Brandao Rodrigues, Minister of Education, Portugal</li></ul>
<b>14:40 – 15:20</b>	<b>Session 1: Inclusive and meaningful technology-enabled literacy programmes: creating synergies between literacy and digital skills</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Ms Katarina Popovic, Secretary General, International Council for Adult Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Harnessing the potential of digital technology for youth and adult literacy</b>, Mr Abdessamih Mahmoud, Director, National Agency for the Fight Against Illiteracy, Morocco</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Main trends in technology-enabled literacy learning programmes: UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2021</b>, Ms Mari Yasunaga, Programme Specialist, Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development, Education Sector, UNESCO</li> <li>• <b>Online second language courses for refugees and migrants in Germany</b>, Ms Inga Opitz, Deutsche Volkshochschul-Verband (DVV)</li> </ul>
<p><b>15:20 – 16:00</b></p>	<p><b>Session 2: Partnerships and financing for technology-enabled literacy programmes</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms Josje van der Linden, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences / Faculty of Arts, University of Groningen, The Netherlands (UNESCO Chair in Lifelong learning, youth, and work)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Multistakeholder partnership for supporting the marginalized and out-of-school children and young people</b>, Ms Thantida Wongprasong, Director, Office of Partnership, Innovation and Scholarships, Equitable Education Fund, Thailand</li> <li>• <b>Leveraging digital technologies for youth and adult literacy: Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning</b>, Ms Rakhat Zholdoshalieva, Team Leader, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning</li> <li>• <b>Partnerships to promote adult basic skills in times of COVID-19 and beyond</b>, Ms Graciela Sbertoli, Secretary General, European Basic Skills Network</li> </ul>

<p><b>Thursday, 9 September 2021</b></p>	
<p><b>13:30 - 14:45</b></p>	<p><b>Special Session on the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2021</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr Borhene Chakroun, Director, Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, Education Sector, UNESCO</p> <p><b>Video of the UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay</b></p> <p><b>Remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Opening remarks</b>, Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General, UNESCO</li> <li>• <b>Remarks</b>, Mr John Benseman, Chair of the International Jury</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Presentation of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H.E. Mr Kim Dong Gi, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Korea to UNESCO</li> <li>• Ms Filipa Lopes, Operations &amp; Project Development Specialist, Limitless Horizons Ixil, Guatemala</li> <li>• Ms Saroj Sharma, Chairperson, National Institute of Open Schooling, India</li> <li>• Ms Elinor Sisulu, Executive Director, Puku Children's Literature Foundation, South Africa</li> </ul> <p><b>Presentation of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H.E. Mr Yang Jin, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the People's Republic of China to UNESCO</li> <li>• Mr Emmanuel Krou, President, ONG GA-TIC Côte d'Ivoire</li> <li>• Mr Mahmoud El-Meteini, President, Ain Shams University, Egypt</li> <li>• Ms Roxana Fabris López Piña, Executive President, Construyendo y Creciendo, Mexico</li> </ul>
<p><b>14:45– 15:25</b></p>	<p><b>Session 3: Reimagining future literacy teaching and learning: how technology will impact literacy programmes</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr Peter Mayo, Dept. Arts, Open Communities, Adult Education, Faculty of Education, University of Malta</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How I see future literacy teaching and learning and the potential of technology</b>, Ms Amna Habiba, Representative of the UNESCO Youth Community, Pakistan</li> <li>• <b>Demystifying the digital reading brain for reimagining literacy and its teaching and learning</b>, Ms Maryanne Wolf, Director of the Center for Dyslexia, Diverse Learners, and Social Justice, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA, USA</li> <li>• <b>Rethinking teaching and learning for 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills</b>, Mr Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills, and Special Advisor on Education Policy to the Secretary-General, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</li> <li>• <b>Digital technology and futures of literacy teaching and learning</b>, Mr Sobhi Tawil, Director of UNESCO's Future of Learning and Innovation Team, UNESCO</li> </ul>
<p><b>15:25 – 15:30</b></p>	<p><b>Closing session</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr Hervé Huot-Marchand, Chief, Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development, Education Sector, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Closing remarks</b>, Mr Borhene Chakroun, Director, Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, Education Sector, UNESCO</li> </ul>



## Speakers' bio

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### Opening session

#### Mr Borhene Chakroun



Mr Borhene Chakroun is an engineer, with a PhD in Education Sciences from Bourgogne University in France. Borhene worked during the 1990s as a trainer, chief trainer, and project manager. He has also worked as a short-term consultant for the EU, World Bank and other international organisations before coming to the European Training Foundation (ETF) in 2001. At the ETF, Borhene worked as a Senior Human Capital Development specialist. He is now Director of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems Division at UNESCO-HQ. Borhene has conducted a range of policy reviews and skills systems diagnosis in different contexts. He has authored and co-authored various articles and books in the field of skills development and lifelong learning. Much of his most recent work focuses on global trends in reforming education and training systems and global agenda for skills development in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

#### Ms Stefania Giannini



Ms Stefania Giannini was appointed UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education in May 2018, becoming the top UN official in the field. In this position, she provides strategic vision and leadership in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Education 2030 Agenda, encompassed in Sustainable Development Goal 4. During her term, she has given fresh impetus to multilateral and bilateral partnerships, increased global focus on education's ethical role in providing learners with the skills to respond to 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges; heightened attention to the responsibility of universities in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and fostered closer relations between education, culture and the social and natural sciences. She affirmed

UNESCO's leadership in the context of the COVID-19 response, the most profound disruption to education in recent history, through global evidence, guidance, policy dialogue and collaborative work with UN partners to support countries and jointly advocate for prioritizing education in the recovery. She has encouraged mission-oriented approaches with public and private partners to build resilience and reimagine education, including through the Global Education Coalition. With an academic background in the Humanities, Ms Giannini has served as Rector of the University for Foreigners of Perugia (2004 – 2012), being one of the first and youngest women to hold this position in Italy. As Senator of the Republic of Italy (2013 – 2018) and Minister of Education, Universities and Research (2014 – 2016), she developed and implemented a structural reform of the Italian education system, centred on social inclusion and cultural awareness.

### **Dr Koumbou Boly Barry**



Dr Boly Barry holds a PhD in Economic History from Cheikh Anta Diop University in Senegal. She is the former Minister of Education and Literacy of Burkina Faso and has consulted widely for various governments and international institutions on the right to education. Dr Boly Barry has been an advocate on gender issues in education. She also has ample knowledge and experience in training and research, as a visiting professor at University of Nottingham, United Kingdom; University of Louvain La Neuve, Belgium; and as a lecturer at Ouagadougou University, Burkina Faso; Vitoria University, Brazil; and Fribourg University, Switzerland. She has been the Special Rapporteur on the right to education since the 1st August 2016 following her appointment at the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council.

### **Ms Hassina Sherjan**



Hassina Sherjan, a distinguished professional with over thirty years of thorough knowledge and experience in education, business, communication, and journalism, is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Aid Afghanistan for Education, and Owner and Chief Executive Officer of Boumi Company, an internationally recognized woman owned home accessory business and the only Afghan company with US and Europe Trademarks. She is the co-author of “Toughing It Out in Afghanistan”, published in February 2011, and has published various op-eds in NY Times, Washington Post, The Guardian, USA Today and more. She received The International Alliance for Women World of Difference Award 2012 and has been a Salzburg Global Fellow since 2019. She received a Master of Public Administration from Harvard Kennedy School and an Honorary Doctor of Law degree from Queen’s University, Canada.

## Ministerial Panel: Literacy at the heart of a human-centred recovery: Enhancing national policies and systems for narrowing the digital divide

### Mr David Atchoarena



Mr Atchoarena was previously the Director of the Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO, with oversight of education policies, higher education, adult and vocational education and training, and ICT in education. Prior to working at UNESCO Headquarters, Mr Atchoarena spent many years at the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) where he conducted research and technical cooperation programmes in the fields of educational planning, lifelong learning, technical and vocational education, and higher education. Before joining UNESCO, Mr Atchoarena served as Chargé de Mission at the National Agency for Lifelong Education of the French Ministry of Education and as a project coordinator in the Ministry of Finance and Planning in Saint Lucia. Mr Atchoarena holds a Doctorate in Economics from the University of Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne.

### H.E Ms Mariatou Kone



Ms Mariatou Kone is a sociologist and anthropologist and the first Ivorian woman to be appointed professor of Anthropology, after graduating from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in France. Since 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021, she has been the Minister of National Education and Literacy of the Ivory Coast. Before that, she has been successively the Minister of solidarity, social cohesion and fight against poverty, the Minister of women, child protection and solidarity and the minister of solidarity, social cohesion and compensation for victims. She has also

served as Director General of the National Programme for Social Cohesion (PNCS) and worked as a researcher and a lecturer. She was the first woman director of the ethno-sociology institute at the Felix Houphouet Boigny University in the Ivory Coast. She was peace mediator for the CEDEAO and the first woman to be elected mayor of the commune of Bondiali as well as the first woman deputy of the Bondiali-Ganaoni circumscription. She was Chair of the Regional Steering Committee of the SWEED project as well as the president of the Rotary club Abidjan Bietry. On 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018, she was awarded a distinction of the United Nations for her actions in peace and social cohesion. She is Commander in the Order of Solidarity and Officer of the National Order. She is a recognised expert and international consultant in various domains (rural land, family, gender, health, rural development, education, social cohesion), in several countries (Ivory Coast, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Burkina, Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad etc) and for many donors, agencies, organizations and consultancies (UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA, CEDEAO, UEMOA, FAO, FIDA, FEM, Union Africaine, NEPAD, BAD, EuroPact, SOFRECO, Experco International, Coyne et Bellier, BADEA, ROPPA etc). She has published several research works on questions of gender, health, family,

rural land, social cohesion, citizenship, and development in the Ivory Coast and in Africa. She is coordinator of the Environmental and Land Studies Laboratory for the Ivory Coast (LEEFCl) and the only representant of sub-Saharan Africa in the celebration of women graduates in the history of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS). She is also a member of several scientific networks.

### H.E Mr Tarek Galal Shawki



Born June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1957, in Cairo, Egypt, Mr Shawki is the Minister of Education & Technical Education in Egypt (since February 2017) and a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the American University in Cairo (AUC). Dr Shawki served as the Dean of the School of Sciences and Engineering at AUC (2012-2016) and as a senior strategic Advisor to AUC President (2016-2017). He was also named by the Egyptian President as the Secretary-General of the Presidential Advisory Councils (2014-17). Dr Shawki served as the Director of UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Science in Arab States (June 2008-2012) while he served as the Chief of the Section for "ICTs in Education, Science and Culture" within the "Information Society Division" at UNESCO (Paris, France - Nov 2005 - May 2008). Dr Shawki has served as the Regional Advisor for Communications and Information at the UNESCO Cairo Office (UCO) between January 1999 and November 2005. The UCO is a regional office for science, technology, and information for Arab States. Dr Shawki manages UNESCO's file on public-private

partnerships with the IT private sector and he was the key architect behind the signing of the UNESCO Microsoft Cooperation Agreement in November of 2004. In addition, Dr Shawki is the architect behind the emerging UNESCO framework for ICT Competencies of Teachers, as well as being directly responsible for a number of national, regional and global UNESCO projects in the fields of ICTs, Education, Science and Culture. Dr Shawki has been a Professor of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics for many years at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He also served as a panellist on the National Science Foundation and the National Research Council. His leadership is considered paramount to the Arab region in modernizing university education in basic and engineering sciences. Dr Shawki is currently leading the national education re-imagination plan in Egypt through the introduction of a new education system starting at early childhood (Edu 2.0) while reforming the current education system (Edu 1.0) by changing its underlying assessment model. Educational Background: Educated at Cairo University in Egypt and Brown University in Rhode Island, U.S., Dr Shawki spent 13 years as a researcher and professor of theoretical and applied mechanics at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, one of the top engineering schools in the world. Dr Shawki has a Ph. D. and an M. Sc. in engineering, an M. Sc. in applied mathematics (Brown University), and a B. Sc. in mechanical engineering (Cairo University).

### H.E. Mr Nadiem Makarim, Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, Indonesia

### H.E. Ms María Victoria Angulo



Ms María Victoria Angulo is a social economist with a Masters degree in Economic Development and Applied Economic Analysis and has over 20 years of experience in the field of social politics with an emphasis in education.

She has worked in the Colombian public sector as was an adviser to the Direction of Economic Studies at the National Planning Department; adviser and Deputy Director of Sector Development at Bogota's District Department of Finance; Deputy Director of Management Support for Higher Education Institutions, and Director of Promotion of Higher Education, both at the Ministry of Education. Between 2011 and 2015, she was Executive Director of Fundación Empresarios por la Educación, where she worked to improve the quality of public education. In 2016, the Mayor of Bogotá appointed her as the District Secretary of Education, a position from which she led the Ruta Integral de Atención a la Primera Infancia and other initiatives.

She has taught at Universidad Javeriana, Universidad del Rosario, Universidad de los Andes and Escuela Superior de Administración Pública. She was appointed Minister of Education in 2018. Due to her trajectory in the education sector, she was designated Vice President of UNESCO's SDG Education 2030 Committee, a component of the 2030 Education Agenda for the period 2018-2020.

### **H.E Mr Tiago Brandão Rodrigues**



Tiago Brandão Rodrigues was born in Braga, in 1977. He was Minister of Education of the XXI Government (2015-2019). He was elected to Parliament in 2015 for Viana do Castelo constituency. Rodrigues graduated in Biochemistry from Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia of Universidade de Coimbra in 2000, he was a researcher at Dallas University and at the Biomedics Investigation Institute in Madrid. He has a PhD in Biochemistry from Universidade de Coimbra, where his thesis won the António Xavier Prize in 2008. From 2010,

he was researcher in Cancer Research UK, at Cambridge University, being also associated to Corpus Christi College. His research was sponsored by the European Commission, through the Marie Curie Program and the European Molecular Biology Organization. He is a member of several international scientific societies and an author of many articles published in specialized magazines, such as Nature Medicine, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, and Cancer Research. With his article about one pioneer technique to evaluate the effectiveness of cancer treatments published in Nature Medicine magazine, he won the British Prize of International Society of Magnetic Resonance in Medicine, in 2013. He was guest speaker in many international conferences and lecturer in several pre- and post-graduation formations. He is member of the editorial board of scientific magazines and reviewer of articles, as well as evaluator of reputed international scientific funding agencies. He was a member of the direction of Portuguese Association of Researchers and Students in the UK, where he developed work in communication of science. He was Olympic attaché to the Portuguese delegation to the Olympic Games in London, in 2012.

## Session 1: Inclusive and meaningful technology-enabled literacy programmes: creating synergies between literacy and digital skills

**Dr Katarina Popović**



Katarina Popović is Secretary General of ICAE - International Council for Adult Education (global network of NGOs active in youth and adult education) and Professor for adult education and Chair of the Department for Andragogy, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia), and visiting professor at several universities. She is co-chair of the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group and a member of MGoS HLPF Coordination Mechanism related to the UN Agenda 2030. Ms Popović is president of the Serbian Adult Education Society, a certified trainer in adult education, a member of International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame, editor in chief of the journal “Andragogical studies” and author of numerous publications on adult education and adult literacy, and lifelong learning.

**Mr Abdessamih Mahmoud**



Abdessamih Mahmoud currently holds the position of Director of the National Agency for the Fight against Illiteracy. He holds a doctorate in Education Sciences - Management, Education and Societal Responsibility of Organizations, a diploma of higher cycle of management from the Higher Institute of Commerce and Business Administration and an engineering diploma issued by the National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics. Abdessamih Mahmoud has over twenty years of professional experience in the public sector. He spent seventeen years in the

Ministry of Economy and Finance, eleven of which were in senior positions. He was then in charge of mission for about three years at the level of the services of the Head of Government.

**Ms Mari Yasunaga**



Ms Mari Yasunaga is a Programme Specialist, currently working in the Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development in the Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems of the UNESCO Education Sector. Prior to joining the section in 2011, she worked for the Section for Basic Education, the Education for All Global Partnership Team, and the UNESCO Cairo Office. she has more than 20 years of experience in the field of education and international development, especially basic education, literacy and non-formal education. She holds a M. Phil. in Education from the University of Cambridge and a M.A. in Area Studies (New and Middle East) from the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London.

Ms Inga Opitz, Deutsche Volkshochschul-Verband (DVV)

## Session 2: Partnerships and financing for technology-enabled literacy programmes

Dr Josje van der Linden



Dr Josje van der Linden currently works as an assistant professor on Lifelong Learning at the department of Pedagogy and as a coordinator of external cooperation at the interfaculty institute Globalisation Studies Groningen of the University of Groningen. She has co-organised two summer schools on the theme of *Youth, education and work in (post-)conflict areas*, the first of which was held at the University of Groningen, and the second at Gulu University. The two summer schools together have resulted in a peer reviewed book on the theme of both summer schools with contributions from researchers and practitioners in (post-)conflict areas around the world. Josje has conducted research on lifelong learning for groups at risk in different, mainly developing, contexts.

This resulted in a PhD on *'Ensuring meaningful lifelong learning opportunities for groups at risk'*, a title that paraphrases SDG goal 4 on education and lifelong learning. Josje looks forward to organising and implementing activities to promote education and work opportunities for the youth in Uganda, accompanying them with research reflecting on the lessons learnt.

Ms Thantida Wongprasong



Ms Thantida Wongprasong is Director of Innovation and Scholarships at Equitable Education Fund, Thailand. She has experience as a project leader and facilitator in policies and practices in education training and skills development, innovation for marginalized children, youth and adults, and working in both public sector and non-governmental organizations. In Thailand, she is part of the Committee of National Curriculum Reform, Ministry of Education, Thailand and the Committee of Vocational Education and International Cooperation, The Office of Vocational Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Thailand. Thantida was educated at the Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg, Germany University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa and Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India (MA in Global Studies).

### Ms Rakhat Zholdoshalieva



Ms Rakhat Zholdoshalieva is a Team Leader of the Policy Support and Capacity Development Programme at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Hamburg, Germany. Before joining UIL, between 2015 and 2016, Ms. Zholdoshalieva worked with the Deputy Ministry for Literacy of the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan. She contributed to capacity development of curriculum designers and textbook writers and managed the development of new early literacy and numeracy textbooks for youth and adults. Between 2000 and 2008, she worked as a senior lecturer at private and public teacher education institutions in Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan. She holds a doctorate in education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of

Toronto, Canada, and a master's degree in education from the Institute for Educational Development at the Aga Khan University, Pakistan. She is a trained teacher of foreign languages from Osh State University in Kyrgyzstan.

### Ms Graciela Sbertoli



Ms Graciela Sbertoli is currently the General Secretary of the European Basic Skills Network, EBSN ([www.basicskills.eu](http://www.basicskills.eu)). She was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1952, grew up in Barcelona, Spain, and has lived in Norway since 1973. Graciela holds a degree in English Philology from the University of Barcelona, and a B.A. in Spanish from the University of Oslo. She has been involved in adult education since 1982. She was Director of Research and Development at the Norwegian State Center for Adult Education (1995-2001) and Assistant Director and Coordinator for International Affairs at Vox, the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning. In January 2015 Vox changed its name to Skills Norway. From April 2016 and until September 2017 she directed the Norwegian National Support Service for

Epale, the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe. In 2010, and from her position as Assistant Director at Vox, she launched the European Basic Skills Network, whose Executive Committee she chaired until she became the network's first General Secretary in June 2017. In her current position she is cooperating with the Commission and a variety of European stakeholders for the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways initiative. She has authored several language textbooks and has also worked in multimedia productions involving the use of radio and TV. She grew up as a bilingual speaker of Spanish and Catalan, is fluent in English, French and Norwegian, to a lesser extent also in Italian, she understands German and is currently learning Estonian and Hungarian.



## Special Session on the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2021

### Dr John Benseman



Dr John Benseman has worked in adult literacy and related fields for over 40 years, primarily as a researcher and evaluator in the sector, but also as a teacher and administrator. John has a PhD in the historical development of lifelong learning in New Zealand. While most of his career has been in formal tertiary institutions, he has also worked extensively in non-formal settings with NGOs, membership organisations and voluntary groups. John is widely published from his research and evaluation work, especially around his strong interest in research-informed teaching practice where research findings are used to improve everyday practice. His most recent work was as the lead researcher in a series of large-scale evaluation studies of workplace literacy programmes, evaluating family literacy programmes and identifying specific adult literacy and language programme and teaching strategies from research findings. In retirement John works as a research/evaluator for a local community development project and a volunteer adult literacy teacher.

### H.E. Mr Kim Dong-Gi



Mr Dong-Gi has considerable experience in diplomatic missions, having worked for the Korean Embassies in Canada, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, and the United States. With a background in English language and literature as well as international law, Mr Dong-gi was the Director-General for Cultural Affairs for the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs before being appointed Korea's Ambassador to UNESCO in July 2019.

### Ms Filipa Lopes



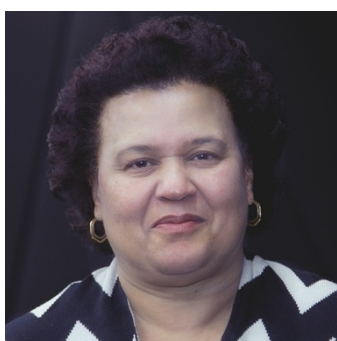
Ms Filipa Lopes grew up in Portugal and after completing her bachelor's degree in law she became involved in several volunteer projects related to education in Cambodia, humanitarian disaster relief in Nepal, and refugee protection in France. She pursued a master's degree in international law with a specialization in human rights at the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands. After graduating, she interned with the United Nations Population Fund, Defence for Children International, and the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao. Working for Limitless Horizons Ixil both on the ground in Chajul, Guatemala and remotely, she supports the local staff with monitoring and evaluation, reporting, and educational and literacy programming operations. She also leads strategic planning sessions, facilitating discussions, delivering research findings, and providing capacity building.

## Professor Saroj Sharma



Prof. Saroj Sharma, Professor of Education, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi took over as the Chairperson, National Institute of Open Schooling, an autonomous institution under Ministry of Education, Govt of India on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2020. A Doctorate in Education, and holds Master's Degree in four different disciplines – Science (Botany), Social Science (Sociology), Management and Education. She has rich academic as well as administrative experience of heading different Institutions of Education. She has been the first Dean of the University School of Education, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi. Presently she is member in the Governing Bodies, Board of Studies and Academic Councils of many Universities of India & also member of various Curriculum-Developments. She has been a member of the consultation committee constituted by National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) for the formulation of National Education Policy under Ministry of Education. She is in the Advisory and Editorial Boards of many Journals of Education and has to her credit a number of Books, Modules, Research Papers and articles. Prof. Sharma has taken many initiatives in the area of Adult Education, Special and Inclusive Education and striving hard to attain academic excellence.

## Ms Elinor Sisulu



Zimbabwean-born South Africa writer and human rights activist Elinor Sisulu combines training in history, English literature, development studies and feminist theory from institutions in Zimbabwe, Senegal and the Netherlands. She is the author of the award-winning children's book *The Day Gogo Went to Vote* (1997) and the biography *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In Our Lifetime* (2003) that won her the prestigious Noma Award for Publishing in Africa. Elinor is a founder member and current Executive Director of the Puku Children's Literature Foundation. In 2016 she was awarded an honorary PhD by the University of Pretoria for her work in human rights and reading promotion. In September 2020 she was appointed Chevalier de L'Ordre des Artes et des Lettres by the French government in recognition of her work with Puku.

## H.E. Mr Yang Jin



Ambassador Yang Jin's work experience covers a variety of posts at home and abroad in government offices, research institutes, education institutions, international organization and foreign services. He entered the Chinese State Education Commission (presently the Chinese Ministry of Education) in 1983 and had progressive experience in managing policy-making in technical and vocational education and in adult education. During this period, he also worked as vice principal of a technical and vocational school in Hebei Province of China for one year. He was Deputy Director-General of the Department of Basic Education in Chinese Ministry of Education until 2008, when he was appointed as Senior Programme Specialist (P-5) and Manager of the Programme on Lifelong Learning Policies and strategies in UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). In 2014, he was appointed as Director-General of the Central Institute for Vocational and Technical Education of China. Before taking office at the Permanent

Delegation of China to UNESCO, he served as Minister-Counsellor for Education in the Chinese Embassy in France for three years. Ambassador Yang Jin is a current member of the Governing Board of UNESCO UIL. From 2016-2019, he was a member of the National Education Inspectorate of China. He served as Vice-President of the Chinese Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Chinese Association of Adult Education. Ambassador Yang Jin holds professorship from the National Institute of Education Sciences of China and East China Normal University. He holds a Ph.D. in economics of education from the University of Manchester and Bolton Institute of Higher Education where he also studied for his M.Ed. in comparative education. His undergraduate studies were in mechanical engineering in Xi'an Jiaotong University of China.

### Mr Emmanuel N'guessan Krou



Mr Emmanuel N'guessan Krou was born on 30 September 1982 in Prikro, Ivory Coast. He is married and the father of three children. He is a salesman by training and a practising president of the NGO Ga-Tic that he founded in 2017 under the supervision and assistance of the UNESCO Abidjan Office. He was recruited as a trainer/supervisor for the pilot of the ICT literacy project for women traders. Voted best Shell station manager twice in 2013, and today laureate of the prestigious Confucius Literacy Prize 2021, he is passionate about challenges.

### Professor Mahmoud A.S. El- Meteini



Prof. El-Meteini graduated from Faculty of Medicine, ASU in 1985 and obtained his MSc in General Surgery in 1989. He received his liver transplant training in Paris (1990-1992) and obtained his MD degree in 1993. In 1996, he had advanced HPB and Liver transplant training in Japan. In 2001, he started LTX program in Egypt heading the first multidisciplinary team. In 2007, he founded Ain- Shams Center for Organ transplant followed by initiating liver transplant program in Assiut (2014) and Alexandria (2015) Universities. He chaired and presented in top national and international congresses and published in peer reviewed journals. His leadership and administrative philosophy nominated him as the dean of faculty of medicine from 2015 to 2019 where he adopted and realized an ambitious reform plan including educational, training and research arms. He started ASU medical research center and the first accredited virtual hospital that served more than 20 000 patients remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since his appointment as ASU President in August 2019, he planned for a total smart and green campus with huge investment in digital transformation, infrastructure, educational facilities, sports and recreational area renovation. He initiated ASU innovation hub and added three new faculties. He led ASU for internationalization by raising the first global alumni besides an active international relations and academic collaboration sector exploring joint research, student and faculty mobility across the globe. Eliminating illiteracy in Egypt was and still is a major concern for Prof. El-Meteini.

### Ms Roxana Fabris López Piña



Ms Roxana Fabris López Piña is an architect graduated from the Universidad Iberoamericana, with a Senior Management from the same Institution. Her professional experience has been developed in areas such as the housing industry, real estate development, infrastructure and construction, specializing in topics related to communication and the generation and administration of business plans. She has edited more than 30 books (including the Spanish edition of the World Cities Report 2016 and the New Illustrated Urban Agenda, published by UN Habitat). To Construyendo y Creciendo, she has managed to increase the number of students nationwide, establishing strategic alliances with government agencies, companies, Non-profit organizations and the general population. It has managed to open the largest number of educational classrooms in the history of Construyendo y Creciendo, it has expanded the educational model to more states of the Mexican Republic, benefiting construction workers, native communities such as Yaquis, Mayas, Tzotziles, among others.

### Session 3: Reimagining future literacy teaching and learning: how technology will impact literacy programmes

#### Professor Peter Mayo



Peter Mayo is Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta and UNESCO Chair in Global Adult Education at the same University. He is the author of numerous publications in sociology and education including his very latest Lifelong Learning, Global Social Justice and Sustainability (with L. English) and Critical Education in International Perspective (with P Vittoria) both published in 2021 with Palgrave-Macmillan and Bloomsbury Academic respectively. In 2019 he was inducted into the International Adult Continuing Education Hall of Fame.

#### Ms Amna Habiba



Amna Habiba is a 15-year-old Pakistani, founder of Global Creative Hub, international speaker, STEM researcher, and an advocate for girls' education and mental health. Recipient of the Young Achiever Award for digital activism in 2016, Amna has always been inspired to use the power of technology for the betterment of society. When COVID-19 struck, she explored e-learning and completed more than 80 courses in just 6 months in various fields. This led her to take part in multiple STEM programs, research on using AI for social good and more. To give back to her community, she launched a social development initiative that aims to make every Pakistani girl digitally literate, namely Global Creative Hub. As a girl education and digital literacy activist, Amna has spoken on various global platforms,

including World Bank, WomenTech Network, & IFC to advocate for her mission to support gender equality. In addition, she is also the youngest Pakistani to host two international AI hackathon in her country.

### Dr. Maryanne Wolf



Maryanne Wolf is a scholar, teacher, and advocate for children and literacy around the world. She is the Director of the Center for Dyslexia, Diverse Learners, and Social Justice at UCLA in the School of Education and Information Studies and the former John DiBiaggio Professor of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University. She is Chapman University's Presidential Fellow. She is a past Fellow (2014-2015), Research Affiliate (2016-2017), and present member of the Board at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. Her awards

include highest honours from International Dyslexia Association (Geschwind and Orton awards) and The Dyslexia Foundation (Einstein Prize); Distinguished Researcher of the Year for Learning Disabilities in Australia; Distinguished Teacher of the Year from the state and national American Psychological Association; Fulbright Fellowship (Germany); and the Christopher Columbus Award for Intellectual Innovation for co-founding Curious Learning: A Global Literacy Initiative, with deployments in Africa, India, Australia, and rural United States. She served as an external advisor to the International Monetary Fund and is a board member of Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation. She has several honorary doctorates, and has authored over 170 scientific publications; the RAVE-O reading curriculum for dyslexia; RAN/RAS tests of reading prediction with Martha Denckla; and *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* (15 translations; HarperCollins, 2007); *Tales of Literacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Oxford University Press, 2016); and *Reader, Come Home: The Reading Brain in a Digital Culture* (11 translations, HarperCollins, 2018). In the last year she received both the national award from the Reading League for her contributions on reading research and the Walter Ong Award for her work on the effects of different mediums on the intellectual development of the species. Most recently, she was elected a member of the Pontifical Academy of Science.

### Mr Andreas Schleicher



Mr Andreas Schleicher is Director for Education and Skills at the OECD. He initiated and oversaw the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and other international instruments that have created a global platform for policy-makers, researchers and educators across nations and cultures to innovate and transform educational policies and practices. He has worked for over 20 years with ministers and education leaders to improve education. Former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said that Schleicher "understands the global issues and challenges as well as or better than anyone I've met, and he tells me the truth". Former UK Secretary of State Michael Gove called Schleicher "the most important man in English education" – even though he is German and lives in France. He is the recipient of numerous honours and awards, including the "Theodor Heuss" prize, awarded in the name

of the first president of the Federal Republic of Germany for “exemplary democratic engagement”. He holds an honorary Professorship at the University of Heidelberg.

### **Mr Sobhi Tawil**



Sobhi Tawil (PhD) is currently Director of the Future of Learning and Innovation Team at UNESCO where he leads the Futures of Education initiative, as well as work in technology and innovation in education. He has some 30 years of experience in teaching, education policy analysis, research and program management with diverse institutions and organizations.

### 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. UNESCO also leads efforts to respond to contemporary global challenges through transformative learning, with special focus on gender equality and Africa across all actions.



### 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 contact

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