29 September 2020, 10 am to 11:30 am (New York time)

Education and Technological Transformations for Human-centered recovery

76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
Virtual Side Event

With less than 10 years to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, COVID 19 has tested the resilience of the education systems worldwide. Over a billion learners have been affected by school closures, creating a real risk of a ‘lost generation’, particularly among girls and young women. Yet, accelerated technological changes enabled the provision of digital learning opportunities for some, while the pandemic revealed and exacerbated existing inequalities across every aspect of our social, economic, and cultural lives.

More particularly, hastened technological adoption allowed teachers, learners, and education systems stay connected while delivering an unprecedented level of resources, services, and content to users. These products have also enabled education communities to remain connected during a period of pandemic isolation. However, the adoption of technologies also comes with challenges, including issues concerning access, scalability, training and ICT upskilling, and privacy and data concerns.

As the pandemic amplified inequalities in education, the need to leverage the transformational potential of rapid technological change and digital connectivity for the SDGs became evident. Technology can introduce agile ways of delivering education services, but to achieve scale and efficiently use resources, it is critical to engage partners as this can only be achieved when governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders work towards a common goal. The urgency for a ‘whole-of-society’ and ‘whole-of-government’ approach remains as the international community works towards identifying solutions.

During the pandemic, Member States made extraordinary efforts to mitigate school closures by introducing digital learning during the pandemic, heavily relying on technological advances. Despite their challenges, these technologies were important tools to sustain learning and engage communities at all education levels.

UNESCO mobilized support to ensure the continuity of learning around the world by establishing the Global Education Coalition in March 2020. This multi-sector Coalition brings together over 200 institutional partners from the UN family, civil society, academia, and the private sector working around three central flagships: Connectivity, Teachers and Gender Equality. The Coalition uses a mission approach to achieve large-scale targets and to operationalize actions. It’s successes during the Covid-19 pandemic have proven its innovative model on how the public sector can engage with external partners.

The event will bring about key partners to highlight the unprecedented technological changes in and through education both as means to mitigate the negative impact of COVID 19 and as a trend to reckoned with. It will amplify the messages that the use of new technologies and digital learning opportunities have become foundational in the advancement of the SDGs at all levels while creating
changes for inclusive and sustainable progress, promoting equal participation of women and girls to exercise all human rights.

Event Objectives

1. Identify and deepen the dialogue among partners on how technological change can impact the recovery and accelerate achievement of SDG 4, focusing on access, skills, and leadership.

2. Share lessons learned and commitments on the best use of accelerated technological changes to advance the achievement of SDG4, addressing the gender digital divide and inequalities, promoting equal and effective participation of people from all segments of society.

3. Explain the Global Education Coalition and its approach to partnerships, exploring how the Coalition support to leverage private sector’s investments and innovation and new technology for more effective delivery of education services.

4. Explore the opportunities that can unlock the potential of the Global Education Coalition to recover and advance SDG4?

Format

Participation: Ministers and Government; private sector CEOs, civil servants’ representatives.

Time and venue: 29th September, 10 am to 11:30 am (New York time), online

Link to register: https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ruS8XCT-QQ2ue_CZBqReOA

Duration: 90 minutes