

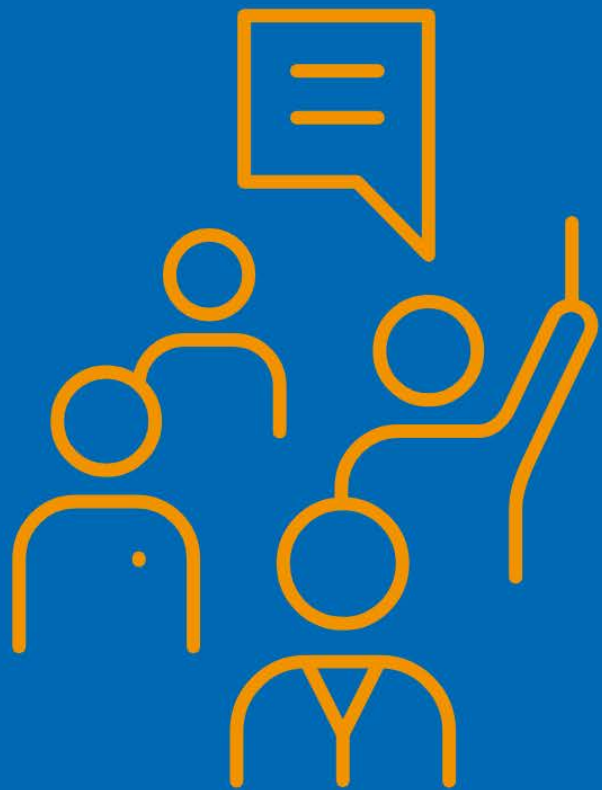


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Institute for
Lifelong Learning

Strengthening education systems from a lifelong learning perspective

7–25 November 2022



Concept note

An interactive online workshop for representatives of UNESCO Member States

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an action plan for ‘people, planet and prosperity’. Its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have reinvigorated the concept of lifelong learning – in particular with one stand-alone goal, SDG 4, which calls on countries to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’. A growing number of UNESCO Member States regard ‘lifelong learning for all’ as essential to their education goals and development frameworks.

However, for many countries, the concept of lifelong learning remains unclear, comprehensive policy frameworks for promoting lifelong learning are missing or underdeveloped, and implementation of lifelong learning programmes remains inconsistent. Consequently, there has been increasing demand from Member States for guidance on strengthening their capacities in making lifelong learning for all the conceptual framework and organizing principle of their education systems.

The COVID-19 pandemic, ageing populations, migration, globalization and the rapid pace of technological development have all created a strong impetus for lifelong learning. The benefits of lifelong learning are evident in its capacity to cut across sectors (e.g. health and education), create adaptable populations, embrace technology for learning, facilitate reskilling and upskilling in the world of work and, generally, foster a culture of learning in which opportunities to gain new knowledge, skills and understanding are tailored to the needs of individual learners.

As a result of the intensified global demand for lifelong learning, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) – in collaboration with Shanghai Open University (SOU) – is organizing the fourth in a series of workshops on strengthening education systems from a lifelong learning perspective. The first workshop took place in Shanghai, People’s Republic of China, in 2018, with participants from Indonesia, Kenya, Namibia and Viet Nam; a second workshop in Shanghai in 2019 welcomed participants from Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China, the Philippines and Rwanda; a third workshop, held online in 2021, involved participants from Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Kazakhstan, People’s Republic of China and Uganda. During each workshop, national teams worked collaboratively on the development of a draft proposal for a country-based policy or strategy to support the process of establishing lifelong learning-oriented education systems. The teams were aided in this process with input from key experts and UIL staff, who also guided them in the development of their draft policy or strategy. Like its predecessors, the upcoming workshop is intended for key stakeholders – including policy-makers and leading researchers – involved in lifelong learning and education. It will take place from 7 to 25 November 2022 with participants from five countries and is being co-organized by UIL in partnership with SOU.

The fourth workshop will be based on the contents of UIL’s recent flagship publication, *Making Lifelong Learning a Reality: A Handbook* (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381857>). Published in the first half of 2022, the handbook provides guidance on lifelong learning conceptualization, and policy development and implementation at both national and local levels.

Aim and objectives

The overall aim of the workshop is to work with representatives of UNESCO Member States to strengthen the design and implementation of lifelong learning policies. To achieve this aim, there are several specific objectives:

- Identify national priorities for lifelong learning by analysing development contexts and emerging issues in the participating countries, including institutional, legal, social, economic, demographic, technological, cultural and environmental factors;
- In alignment with national priorities and the SDGs, promote a contextualized understanding of lifelong learning;
- Review relevant sectoral policies in the participating countries from a lifelong learning perspective;
- Identify and evaluate approaches to the implementation of lifelong learning according to national contexts;
- Develop or strengthen lifelong learning implementation strategies;
- Foster an exchange of experiences and peer learning.

Workshop themes and topics

The core content of the upcoming workshop comprises a series of overarching themes and key topics. ‘Overarching themes’ refer to major trends that currently affect UNESCO Member States worldwide and therefore have an impact on education and lifelong learning; ‘key topics’ concerns processes relevant to the strengthening of education systems from a lifelong learning perspective.

Workshop themes and topics			
Overarching themes	Lifelong learning for health and resilience	Lifelong learning and the labour market	Digitalization and education
	Responding to demographic change	Environmental sustainability and climate action	Active and global citizenship
Key topics	The 2030 Agenda and Education for Sustainable Development	Features of effective lifelong learning policy	Lifelong learning through formal education
	Non-formal and informal learning	Flexible learning pathways	Local lifelong learning and learning cities

Participation, modality and activities

Participation

Each participating country is expected to form a national team comprising 8–10 members, including:

- experts from different sub-sectors of the ministry of education (primary and secondary education, higher education, adult and non-formal education, technical and vocational education and training), including possibly education planners at central and provincial levels;
- experts from other ministries involved in the provision of lifelong learning opportunities (such as health, labour, social affairs); and
- representatives of universities involved in the provision of lifelong learning.

In addition, each country team will be joined by a focal point actively working in the field of education and lifelong learning in that country, who will liaise with UIL and members of the country team before, during and after the workshop.

Modality and activities

The workshop will be conducted over three weeks through an **online learning platform**. It will be preceded by a preparatory phase (taking place from 31 October to 6 November), during which pre-recorded presentations and introductory readings will be made available. Participants will use this time to familiarize themselves with the platform and gain a sound understanding of the concept of lifelong learning through self-directed learning.

Weeks 1 and 2 (7–20 November) form the more interactive and intensive core of the workshop. Throughout these two weeks, participants will engage in a variety of activities, including pre-recorded lectures, online meetings and individual tasks. For around 1–2 hours every day, a series of activities will be made available for participants to undertake and will reflect the workshop themes and topics featured in this concept note. Participants will also have autonomy in the selection of some themes and topics and a collaborative learning approach will be emphasized throughout.

Additionally, at various points throughout Weeks 1 and 2, group discussions and group work will be conducted and submitted online with support from a professional facilitator and in coordination with UIL and country teams' focal points.

For the final week (Week 3; 21–25 November), the sessions will focus on finalizing the country team outputs, as well as follow-up actions to ensure expected outcomes are met after the workshop. These processes will culminate in a plenary session, with each country team giving a final presentation and leading a question-and-answer session.

Expected outputs and outcomes

The outputs of the workshop will vary according to national context and will be tailored to the unique opportunities and challenges for lifelong learning in each participating Member State. They will reflect the needs of the national education system and current state of lifelong learning development. For each country, one of the three following outputs is anticipated:

Lifelong learning policy. If a country is in the early stages of lifelong learning policy development and the main priority is to work towards the first national policy for lifelong learning, a concept note or draft for the policy may be produced.

Implementation strategy. In another national context, the priority may be to update or implement an existing policy, in which case a strategy for the implementation of lifelong learning may constitute the main output.

Targeted action plan. Alternatively, the country team may wish to prioritize one key area of lifelong learning (e.g. operationalizing a national qualifications framework or improving the quality of non-formal learning provision). In that case, the output may be a targeted action plan for improvements in that area.

All outputs should detail roles and responsibilities across all levels of government and for other stakeholders from the private sector and civil society, as well coordination mechanisms for collaboration, mobilization and allocation of financial resources, and innovative funding mechanisms. Additionally, outputs should feature monitoring and evaluation strategies for lifelong learning in the participating countries, focusing on how to monitor implementation of lifelong learning, assess outcomes and measure impact.

‘Expected outcomes’ refer to the actions taken to advance these outputs following the conclusion of the workshop. Though again context-specific, workshop outcomes generally refer to the finalization and enactment of the policy, implementation strategy or targeted action plan in the Member State within a reasonable period of time after the workshop. The fundamental expected outcome – across Member States – is that national education systems are strengthened from a lifelong learning perspective.

Organizers

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)

Shanghai Open University (SOU)

Working language

English

Dates and online platform

Dates: 7–25 November 2022

Online platform: learninghub.uil.unesco.org

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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.



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.

