

## UNESCO COVID-19 Education Strategy Regional Webinar-Arab States

*'Learning assessment during distance education in the Arab States'*  
**Thursday 28 January 2021, 10:30-12:45 (Beirut time) / 12:30-14:45 (Dubai time)**  
**Registration:** [https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_cbjoy003TL29J-ALHarFmw](https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_cbjoy003TL29J-ALHarFmw)  
**YouTube Live Streaming:** <https://www.youtube.com/unescoibeirutoffice>

### Agenda

Thursday 28 January 2021 10:30 – 12:45 Beirut time	
10:30-10:35 Opening	<p><b>Welcoming Remarks and introduction of the webinar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hegazi Idris, Ad Interim Director, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States (UNESCO Beirut)</li> <li>Mahra AlMutaiwei, Director, UNESCO Category II Centre-Regional Centre for Educational Planning</li> </ul>
10:35-10:45 General session	<p><b>Session 1: Global overview on learning assessment in the context of COVID-19 crisis</b></p> <p><b>Learning assessment in the COVID-19 era: what do we learn?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Huong Le Thu, Programme Specialist at the Section of Education Policy, Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO HQs</li> </ul>
10:45-11:30 International session	<p><b>Session 2: International experiences in learning assessment in the COVID-19 era</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Dakmara-Ana Georgescu, Programme Specialist on Curriculum, Teachers and Higher Education, UNESCO Beirut</p>

	<p><b>Mauritius - Online teaching and formative assessments during lockdown: a Mauritian perspective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ricaud Auckbur, Acting Chief Technical Officer at the Ministry of Education, Republic of Mauritius</li> </ul> <p><b>The United Kingdom - Cancelling examinations in the face of COVID-19: some lessons for teacher from the experience of UK nations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lena Gray, Director of Research and Analysis, AQA, the UK</li> </ul> <p><b>Hong Kong - People’s Republic of China – Making use of high-stakes examinations to provide diagnostic feedback to students and teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Xiao-ting Huang, Director, Examinations, Assessment and Research of Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority</li> </ul>
<p>11:30 -12:15 Regional session</p>	<p><b>Session 3: Regional experiences in learning assessment in the COVID-19 era</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Mahra AlMutaiwei, Director, UNESCO Category II Centre-Regional Centre for Educational Planning</p> <p><b>Jordan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Najwa Qbelat, Secretary General of Administrative and Financial Affairs, Ministry of Education, Jordan</li> </ul> <p><b>Bahrain</b></p> <p><b>The United Arab Emirates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H.E. Hamad Al Yahiai, Assistant Undersecretary for the Curriculum and Evaluation Sector, Ministry of Education</li> </ul>
<p>12:15-12:30 Interactive session</p>	<p><b>Session 4: Teachers experiences in learning assessment in the COVID-19 era</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Hegazi Idris, Ad Interim Director, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher representatives from the region:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Leen Hdeib, Lebanon</li> <li>○ Asmaa Abdelrahman, UAE</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
12:30-12:40	<p><b>Q&amp;A session</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Hegazi Idris, Ad Interim Director, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States</p>
12:40-12:45 Closing	<p><b>Conclusion and closing remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hegazi Idris, Ad Interim Director, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States</li> <li>• Mahra AlMutaiwei, Director, UNESCO Category II Centre-Regional Centre for Educational Planning</li> </ul>

## Speakers and moderators



**Hegazi Idris**

**Ad Interim Director, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States**  
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Dr. Hegazi holds a PhD degree in "Educational Planning and Policy Studies from Pittsburgh University, USA (1996) and a Master degree in "Educational Evaluation" from the same university (1993). He joined UNESCO in 1996 as Associate Expert at the organization's headquarters in Paris, and in 1999 he moved to UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut as Programme Specialist of Basic Education and Literacy. During his career at UNESCO Beirut office, he has led several initiatives and projects in Lebanon and in the Arab states, including: enhancing access and quality in early childhood education, promoting inclusive education, strengthening capacities in adult education; creating alternative pathways to education in countries in crisis and strengthening Global Citizenship in learning content and delivery. He has published several books and teacher guides in his area of expertise.



**Mahra Al Mutaiwei**

**Director of UNESCO Category II Center-Regional Center for Educational Planning, UAE**  
[mahra.hilal@rcep.unesco.ae](mailto:mahra.hilal@rcep.unesco.ae)

Ms. Mahra Al Mutaiwei is the Director of UNESCO Category II Center-Regional Center for Educational Planning (RCEP) in UAE. Ms. Al Mutaiwei has extensive expertise in the field of education planning, management, policies and indicators in the UAE, the Arab States, and the member states of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf thanks to RCEP's partnerships in the Gulf and the Arab region and around the world. She participated in a number of programmes and training sessions with the aim of enriching her technical expertise. She was a Programme Manager for developing and promoting education leadership in the UAE Ministry of Education. She also worked with a National Work Group to prepare the UAE report on UNESCO's 2015 Education for all initiative. In addition to her role as a quality assessor, she is the vice president of the National Team for achieving SDG 4 Education 2030 and an active member of several committees such as: the Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation Award for Distinguished Academic Performance and the Sharjah Award for Arab Creativity. Ms. Al Mutaiwei also represents the UAE in the International Steering Committee on UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), UNESCO's 2030 Education.



**Dakmara-Ana Georgescu**

**Programme Specialist on Curriculum, Teachers and Higher Education, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States**  
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Dakmara-Ana Georgescu in April 2012 joined the UNESCO Office in Beirut, Regional Bureau of Education for the Arab States, as Programme Specialist in charge with Curriculum, Teachers and Higher Education. She is currently coordinating the Office's Regional Programmes for Learning/Curriculum and Teachers, while contributing also to different Education in Crisis programmes and projects. Before she had coordinated the Technical Assistance for curriculum development of

UNESCO’s International Bureau of Education (UNESCO IBE, in Geneva, Switzerland, 2003-2012).

She graduated 1982 the History and Philosophy School of Bucharest University, majoring in Philosophy. In 2017 she received her Doctoral Degree in Philosophy (University BabesBolyai/Romania) with a Thesis on “Philosophical Paradigms of Education. Current Approaches to Learning”.

She had worked first as a secondary school teacher and since 1990 as a senior researcher in the Curriculum Department of the Romanian Institute for Educational Sciences. From December 1997 to December 2000 she served as the Advisor to the Minister (primary and secondary education reform) within the Romanian Ministry of National Education.



**Huong Le Thu**

**Programme Specialist at the Section of Education Policy, Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO HQs**

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Huong T. Le is a Programme Specialist at the Section of Education Policy, Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO. Prior to joining UNESCO, she worked in a broad range of donor funded development and education programme operation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the British Council and Action Aid International in Viet Nam. Since joining UNESCO in 2001, she has served in various professional positions at UNESCO, where she has played a critical role in building the technical capacity in education sector policy and planning for both the central and decentralized levels of education administration in Viet Nam (2001-2006); advised and supported countries in Asia-Pacific region in education policies and reforms, in particular in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Uzbekistan, Thailand (2006-2013); contributed to the strengthening and reform of multi-stakeholder partnerships constituting the key structure for coordinating global efforts for the implementation of SDG 4 – Education 2030 Framework for Action, in particular the SDG 4 – Education 2030 Steering Committee and the E-9 partnership (2014-2018); and repositioned the education research and foresight programme to strengthen UNESCO’s intellectual leadership in education (2017-2019). Huong is now coordinating the thematic programme on learning assessment for improved learning outcomes at UNESCO, including among others, the Responses to Educational Disruption Survey (REDS) in partnership with the IEA.



**Lena Gray**

**Director of Research and Analysis, AQA, the United Kingdom**

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Dr Gray is currently Director of Research and Analysis at AQA, England's largest GCSE and A-level exam board. She provides strategic direction to the Research and Development, Analytics and Data Science, Standards and Awarding, and Research Impact and Engagement Teams. She joined AQA in 2014 as Head of Research and since then has worked with the research, standards and analysis teams. Dr Gray is an Honorary Norham Fellow of the Department of Education at the University of Oxford. Her research interests include standard setting in national school-leaving examinations, and how exam board researchers can achieve policy influence.

Prior to joining AQA, Dr Gray worked at the Scottish Qualifications Authority, where she was responsible for the organisation's research, establishing policy, and introducing innovations to qualifications and assessment design. She also has experience as a secondary teacher and a university tutor and course leader.



**Ricaud Auckbur**

**Acting Chief Technical Officer at the Ministry of Education, Republic of Mauritius**

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Mr Ricaud Auckbur holds, under French Government Scholarship, academic degrees at Bachelor and Masters levels in Physics from University of Marseille, France. He also holds a number of professional degrees in Education, namely a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (from the MIE), a Diploma in Educational Planning and Administration- (New Delhi), a post Graduate Certificate in TVET (Melbourne) and a Graduate Diploma in Leadership in ICT and the Knowledge Society (Dublin).

He has started his professional career as Educator of Physics at secondary school level. He then progressed onwards into education administration and has been involved in educational planning and management at micro and macro level at mid and senior positions within the Ministries of Education and Tertiary Education in Mauritius.

He is presently the Acting Chief Technical Officer at the Ministry of Education. In this apex, polyvalent and multidisciplinary position, he is engaged in policy advising, steering and overall monitoring of all education initiatives in Mauritius.



**Xiao-ting Huang**

**Director, Examinations, Assessment and Research of Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, Hong Kong, People's Republic of China**

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Xiaoting has substantial experience in the development and implementation of education quality monitoring assessments. At HKEAA, she leads a team to carry out the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) project, which assesses primary 3, primary 6 and second 3 students in Hong Kong each year. Her research area spans a range of issues from test reliability and validity, item response modelling, to policy issues on the use of assessment data.

Before joining HKEAA, she worked as a faculty at Peking University (China). She received her Ph.D. degree in Quantitative Methods and Evaluation from University of California, Berkeley.



**Najwa Qbelat**

**Secretary General of Administrative and Financial Affairs, Ministry of Education, Jordan**

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Dr. Najwa Qbelat is an educational expert. She has participated in many conferences and published research papers in education. She is also a member in several committees working in various educational fields and activities. She is currently the secretary general of administrative and financial affairs in the Ministry of Education in Jordan.



**H.E. Hamad Al Yahyai**

**Assistant Undersecretary for the Curriculum and Evaluation Sector, Ministry of Education, UAE**

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Dr. Hamad Mohammed Al Yahyai is the Assistant Undersecretary for the Curriculum and Evaluation Sector in the UAE Ministry of Education. He has served as Director of the Curriculum Department of Grades 9-12 at the Ministry of Education in 2015-2016 and advised the Abu Dhabi Education Council in reviewing the curriculum in 2015. He also participated in the Khalifa Award for Education. Dr. Al Yahyai was a member of the Board of Directors of the National Rehabilitation Authority in 2017 and the UAE Fund's Review Board, as well as the Leadership Enhancement Program in 2015. In addition to his contributions to curriculum development, Dr. Al Yahyai has managed research funds to enhance the effectiveness of student learning in introductory physics courses.

Dr. Al Yahyai received his Ph.D. in Materials Science and Engineering from the University of California at Riverside. He earned a master's degree in physics from California State University, Los Angeles and a Bachelor of Science in General Physics from the UAE University.