

UNESCO COVID-19 Education Strategy Inter-Regional Webinar - Arab States and Asia-Pacific

Promote Lifelong Learning for all in a Learning Society: A Strategic Framework for advancing/upscaling Community Learning Centre in the Arab Region

23 February 2021 10:00am-12:30pm Beirut time / 3:00pm-5:30pm Bangkok Time

Registration: https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_pEQWb7I4Q5mxezcOFLud4w

YouTube Live Streaming: <https://www.youtube.com/unescoibeirutoffice>

Background

UNESCO defines that “a Community Learning Centre (CLC) is a local educational institution, usually set up and managed by local communities to provide various learning opportunities with the support of the local government, NGOs and the private sector.”¹ Mainly, its core functions are to provide i) education and training; ii) community information and resource services; iii) community development activities; and coordination and networking.² In order to meet multiple learning needs as per local contexts, it diversifies educational programmes ranging from basic education and literacy to life skills and income generation skills. It aims to promote development at individual and local levels by reaching all in the community irrespective of age, gender or education attainment. Particularly, its main beneficiaries are those who have few or no access to education such as pre-school children, out-of-school children, youth and marginalized groups including women and the elderly³. Ultimately, CLC contributes to establishing a virtuous circle, empowering the local people thereby improving quality of their lives and in turn promoting social transformation of the community.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is the education goal, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” Lifelong learning is highlighted in SDG 4 and CLC could be one of the best platforms to promote lifelong learning through community development, information and technologies in this century.

As Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) has grown and been more adapted for the last 10 years, a number of learning contents and materials has been largely digitalized and used for lifelong learning at CLC, home and wherever possible. While CLC is yet a physical platform to promote

¹ UNESCO CLCPEDIA. Retrieved from https://clcpedia.net/country_list.php on 2 January 2020.

² UNESCO (2008): Community Learning Centres: Country Reports from Asia. Available at:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000160492>

³ UNESCO (2017): Community Learning Centres - Introduction. Available at:

<https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/community-learning-centres>

lifelong learning and connect learners and facilitators, there are a number of virtual learning platforms and communities to promote lifelong learning. The pandemic of COVID-19 has accelerated and expanded available learning contents as well as virtual communities for lifelong learning according to the contents and needs of all individuals.

Context

In 1998, UNESCO initiated a community learning centre project aligned with the framework of the Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) to promote literacy and continuing education with special focus on the marginalized and underprivileged. Capitalizing its momentum, it was scaled up to reach the Arab region laying the foundation of CLC initially in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco⁴. Up to now, more than 40 countries worldwide have set up CLCs or equivalent non-formal education (NFE) Centres and the number of participant countries has been steadily growing⁵.

Despite growing efforts of Member States to promote lifelong learning at CLC, the COVID-19 which disrupted education systems at large scale — affecting almost 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents⁶ — disproportionately impacted on advancing CLC. On the other hand, the role and key functions of CLC in this time of crisis have been underscored as it plays a vital role particularly in providing community information and resource services that support local individuals with a range of programmes and activities encompassing education, psychosocial support, financial assistance, etc. via online or offline.

Noting its prominence, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States (Beirut Office) in collaboration with UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (Bangkok Office) is co-organizing a webinar that shed light on the opportunities and challenges in operating CLC at policy and practice level, focusing on pre-crisis, during crisis and post-crisis period. It will feature good practices spotlighting on outcomes and impacts of CLC, collected from/outside the Arab region and identify key issues and implication for the post-crisis. Therefore, it aims to set forth a strategic framework on unlocking and up-scaling potential of CLC in the Arab States by reaffirming SDG4 and empower individuals and communities to reach their full potential, and to promote the development and social transformation.

⁴ UNESCO (2008): Community Learning Centres: Country Reports from Asia. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000160492>

⁵ Data derived from country page of UNESCO.CLCPEDIA. Retrieved from https://clcpedia.net/country_list.php on 2 January 2020.

⁶ United Nations. (August 2020). Policy Brief: Education during COVID-19 and beyond. Retrieved from https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/sq_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf on 2 January 2021.

Objectives

The overarching goal of this webinar is to develop a strategic framework on advancing/up scaling CLC in the Arab region in line with SDG4 by addressing the needs and challenges of stakeholders and bridging the gap of policy guidance as well as practical recommendations on CLC organization and management within the context of COVID-19 and beyond. More specific objectives of the webinar are as follows:

- Assess current status of CLC operation at regional and national levels and identify the needs, common challenges and lessons learnt from education stakeholders during and after the COVID-19
- Present a strategic framework on advancing CLC organization and management in the region and highlight the importance of CLC with respect to its key functions
- Prioritize areas to effectively operate and manage CLC through decentralized mechanisms and partnerships and provide practical guidance at policy and practice levels.
- Share innovative and good practices and successful hands-on experience in operating CLC during the pandemic at national, regional and global levels
- Mobilize international, regional and national communities to foster and mainstream CLC for quality lifelong learning in the Arab region with joint-action plans

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced understanding of strategies and key elements necessary to lead successful CLC organization and management.
- Raised awareness of the importance and necessity of CLC for empowerment of individuals and communities, and social transformation.
- Catalysed multilateral commitment and cooperation in advancing CLC operation to safeguard the rights to education for all people in the region.
- Drew a set of recommendations on progressing CLC in the region at policy and programme levels based on derived joint-action plans from solidified partnerships.

Target Audience

The target audience will include relevant government educational officials and managers, CLC coordinators, programme managers and staff, teachers, educators and trainers at CLC, Academia, local community members, NGOs, CSOs, private sector partners working in the area of CLC, as well as any other relevant education practitioners working in this field.

Registration

- [Registration](#) is free and required in advance.
- Once you register, a unique join URL will be sent to your email.
- Certificates of participation will be awarded to attendees. Please make sure to put your full name in the correct manner when registering as it will show on the certificate.

Live transmission via YouTube

[Live streaming](#) will be provided for those who might not be able to register in advance or to join due to limited capacity of the platform.

Languages

The webinar will be conducted in Arabic and English. Simultaneous interpretation services (from Arabic to English and vice versa) will be provided.

Once participants enter the Zoom platform, they will be able to select language at the bottom of the platform. Those accessing via [YouTube live transmission](#) will have access to the webinar in the spoken language.