

# akzente

2/2021

The GIZ Magazine

## Green is the colour of hope

Exploring Costa Rica's  
untamed natural environment

## Digital chalk for all

Strengthening  
schools in Lebanon

## Custodians of natural treasures

The dedication of Algerian  
women in rural areas

# Education

Key to an inclusive society



‘Now

I have a job

I love.’

Ragaa,  
Syrian business owner in Istanbul

Get to know  
Ragaa and other  
businesspeople:



Turkey has taken in more Syrian refugees than any other country in the world – over 3.6 million in total. The Promotion of Economic Prospects for Refugees and the Host Community in Turkey (PEP) programme is striving to create better prospects and new opportunities for all.

# LEARNING BY DOING

Why the pandemic is a good opportunity to reform education systems.

**SCHOOL PUPIL** Lama Al Zein is 14 years old and comes from Lebanon. Like millions of other children and young people, she was unable to attend school for many months. In fact, so many people were affected that experts are already talking about the biggest educational crisis since the Second World War. The concern for Lama, children and their parents around the globe has been – and continues to be – the question of where they go from here, how to make up lost ground, and whether the gap in their schooling will have an impact on their future lives.

**THE SITUATION** for Lama and her friends in Lebanon had a positive outcome, as a report in this issue illustrates. They were supported by online teaching activities, giving them the knowledge they needed to carry on learning. Many countries switched to remote learning swiftly when the pandemic hit, but things did not always go as smoothly as they did for Lama. Sometimes the problem was a lack of internet connections – a good third of the world's population still lives offline. Sometimes no suitable learning content was available. And many children simply did not have time. The pandemic meant that they had to work to supplement the family budget.

**THE VERY LACK** of education has perhaps really underscored its value. School closures have once again made it all too clear that schooling offers so much more than just poring over textbooks and acquiring knowledge. The social benefits of education cannot be overstated. In the classroom and at break time, children learn to interact with one another. And for many children, school is a place where they can feel safe and get a

proper meal. Although none of this was really new, the pandemic has brought home to us what happens when schools close their gates, and everything moves online.

**THE CHILDREN HAVE ALSO FELT THIS** and cannot wait to get back to school – wherever they are in the world. They are desperate to return, reports Alice Albright, Chief Executive Officer of the Global Partnership for Education, in an interview. Children, she tells us, have learned how important education is for their future. It is 'the smartest investment in the world' adds Megan Lindow, a journalist living in South Africa, in an essay. Education helps people develop at an individual and a collective level. It drives progress and helps societies become inclusive. When people raise their level of education, they can be more independent in their decision-making, hone their ability to use their own judgement, participate more effectively in social processes, and shoulder social responsibility more readily. In the long term, this makes systems more democratic. And that is precisely why it is so important to invest in education, from schools through to technical and vocational education and university education.

**THE TURNING POINT** that the pandemic represents should be used for reforms that are long overdue. Many schools are no longer fit for purpose in today's world. They are trying to master 21st century technology with 19th century structures and 20th century teaching methods. That cannot work. And that is why politicians at an international level need to draw the right conclusions from the pandemic and make education a key element of building back better. You can



SABINE TONSCHEIDT,  
Director of Corporate Communications  
sabine.tonscheidt@giz.de

find out why this is important, what is needed to achieve this, and the contribution GIZ is making in the 'In focus: Education' section.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue and maybe also learning something new.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sabine Tonscheidt". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.



IN FOCUS: EDUCATION

# Showcased

Good education for all is the foundation for sustainable development and inclusive societies. It gives societies the opportunity of a more peaceful future.

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SUSTAINABILITY, AKZENTE

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INTRODUCING

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Janina Marie Laurent is advising the government on low-emission shipping. p.50



PORTRAIT

### From homemade yoghurt to dairy director

Giving up was never an option for Ymer Berisha. A portrait of the businessman. p.40



DIGITAL AKZENTE

Our magazine is also available online in an optimised form for mobile devices. [akzente.giz.de/en](http://akzente.giz.de/en)

PHOTOS: AXELLE DE RUSSÉ/LAIF (P. 5, TOP LEFT), ARBËRI KRASNDI (P. 5, BOTTOM LEFT)

IN FIGURES

# 89 million

This is the number of people able to use improved health services thanks to GIZ in 2020. The German Government's Emergency COVID-19 Support Programme played a major part in this. About 165 million people, for instance, obtained better health insurance.

# 12 million

In addition, 12 million people benefited from better schooling in 2020. 680,000 attended a professional upskilling course. Over the last year, GIZ has expanded online learning services, in particular.

# 3 million

Electricity savings of three million megawatt hours were also made. That is enough to power around one million German households.



Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, GIZ's services reached a lot of people, achieved results, and thus helped realise the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. GIZ regularly evaluates the results of its projects across the company, and across project and national boundaries. The above figures are taken from the 2020 survey.

Source: [www.giz.de/en/mediacenter/96851.html](http://www.giz.de/en/mediacenter/96851.html)

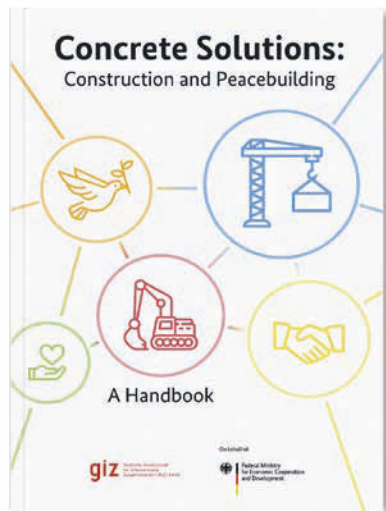


## Spices for gourmets

**CAMBODIA** Pepper from Kampot Province is highly sought after worldwide because of its characteristic aroma. Working on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Business Scouts for Development programme is helping producers of the gourmet spice gain better access to European markets in close cooperation with the Import Promotion Desk, a German import promotion scheme. Producers are becoming familiar with the requirements of the European market and are forging valuable contacts with importers.

# ‘One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world.’

MALALA YOUSAFZAI  
Pakistani children’s rights activist  
and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate



## Building for more peace

**RECONSTRUCTION** Can you write a whole book in only ten days? A group of more than 20 GIZ experts inside and outside Germany did just that. The book is entitled ‘Concrete Solutions: Construction and Peacebuilding’. It sets out ways of promoting peace by building infrastructures. It includes four case studies of construction projects in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Ukraine and describes how GIZ works effectively under extremely difficult conditions, as well as identifying the lessons learned from the examples given.

Roads, schools, libraries and refugee accommodation help foster peace. Another key element for success is the participation of local people. Increasingly fragile contexts and corruption are some of the challenges encountered. The team used the book sprint method, demonstrating how a digital product can be completed irrespective of the authors’ physical location within a very short space of time. You can find the book here:

<https://bit.ly/3wSudp1>

## THREE QUESTIONS FOR



ABRHAME ENDRIAS

The founder of the Lersha online platform aims to harness digitalisation to revolutionise agriculture in Ethiopia. He successfully launched the start-up in the middle of the pandemic. The Green Innovation Centre supported him all the way, from the initial idea to the launch. GIZ developed the Green Innovation Centre as part of the BMZ special initiative ONE WORLD – No Hunger.

### What gave you the initial idea for Lersha?

Even before the coronavirus hit, Ethiopian farmers had problems accessing inputs, tools and services from contractors to plough their fields by tractor. The pandemic, and the restrictions it has brought, has further aggravated the situation. That gave me the idea of developing an online one-stop market platform offering farmers agricultural inputs and services.

### How does the platform work?

Lersha combines a smartphone app, a call centre and Lersha agents. They act as a bridge between the platform and the farmers who are unfamiliar with digital technology. They record what the farmers need, deal with registration on the platform, and place orders with a farm service centre or service provider. We guarantee same-day delivery.

### What are the advantages of Lersha in the current situation?

Our service allows farmers to avoid unnecessary travel and contacts. And we can reach thousands of people in rural areas with just one click. In 2020, Lersha sent more than 27,100 text messages alerting farmers to important information about stem rust and migratory locusts.

# Thinking outside the box

**ECUADOR** Some people seek unusual solutions to problems, have new ideas, or just have a completely different perspective. Their creative approaches set them apart from the mainstream. But how can we find these problem-solvers and learn from them? Big data offers a way – by analysing huge volumes of data, we can save time and money in identifying people who achieve new milestones by taking a very different approach, also known as positive deviance. And they do so using the same resources that are available to everyone else. One example is deforestation, which is a massive problem in Ecuador. Every year, hundreds of hectares of rainforest are lost, almost always for grazing land. Everything that can be done to reduce this loss is a step in the right direction. Since 2020, GIZ has been working with the

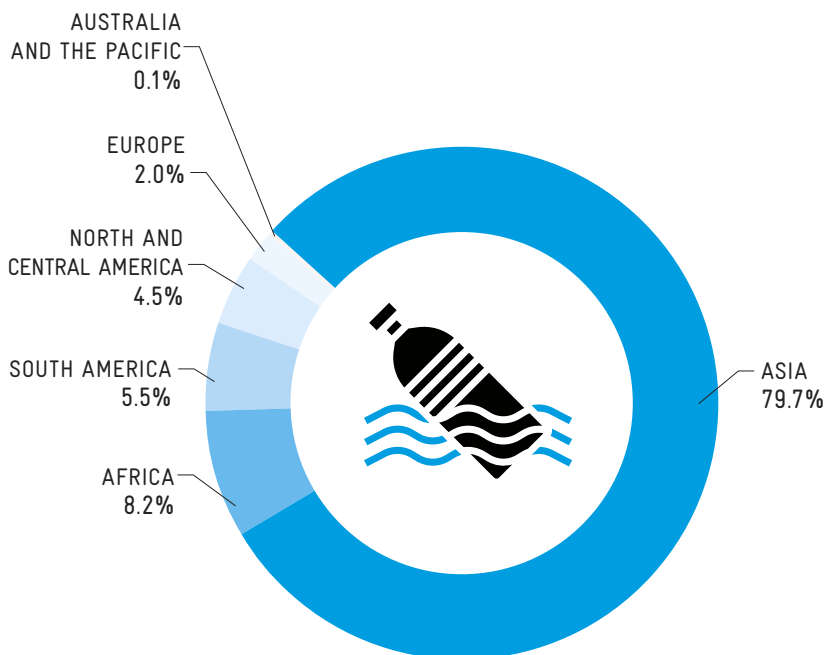
United Nations Development Programme, the University of Manchester, the UNDP Accelerator Labs and the GIZ Data Lab to prevent forest loss. They use big data to find cattle breeders who are farming successfully on the fringes of the rainforest, causing less deforestation than others in the process. Interviews on the ground supplement the analysis of digital data and satellite imagery. The data from Ecuador are currently being evaluated. The data-powered positive deviance approach is also being used in Mexico, Niger and Somalia to identify visionaries and pioneers and to learn from them. The method helps harness ideas that have emerged locally and been adapted, rather than importing solutions from elsewhere.

[www.blog-datalab.com](http://www.blog-datalab.com)



## Down the river

**IN COMPARISON** Rivers are one of the main sources of the plastic waste found in our oceans. By far the largest percentage of plastic waste carried by rivers to the world's oceans comes from Asian countries. The River Pasig in the Philippines is the top polluter.



Source: Statista/The Ocean Cleanup

## Valuable Water

**JORDAN** A growing population, immigration and rising temperatures caused by climate change are some of the reasons why Jordan's water needs are rising. Even now, the country is using ground water three times as quickly as it can be replenished. It is anticipated that by 2040, Jordan will only be able to meet one third of its drinking water requirements from conventional sources. One possible solution is the desalination of seawater and brackish water. There are already several small-scale desalination plants, and there are plans for further large-scale and medium-scale plants. On behalf of BMZ, GIZ is helping Jordan to use desalination schemes more effectively. Currently, two different authorities are responsible, and staffing levels and capacities are still inadequate. Now the roles of the two institutions need to be clarified, and they need support so they can perform the tasks entrusted to them in the future. GIZ is providing support for the planning of desalination plants and is advising operators on how to manage them. This is GIZ's first bilateral project in the field of desalination.



# Biosphere reserve in the making

**GEORGIA** Conserving the country's rich biodiversity – this is the objective of the Three Alazani Rivers Biosphere Reserve in Kakheti in eastern Georgia, which is currently in planning. The paperwork required for the designation of a biosphere reserve is expected to be submitted to the UNESCO Commission by autumn. GIZ is helping the Georgian Government with preparations on behalf of the German Environment Ministry. The non-profit Succow Foundation is an important local partner. It was founded by the internationally acclaimed East German ecologist and conservationist Michael Succow. Biodiversity in the Caucasus is under threat as a result of leached soils and advancing desertification. These processes will only be accelerated by climate change. Designation as a biosphere reserve will make it possible to protect natural resources and ensure sustainable and targeted management. Parallel to this, an EU-financed project is working on the designation of another biosphere reserve in Kakheti. For centuries the two regions have been used for transhumance, with shepherds moving their flocks from one grazing ground to another. The management bodies of the two planned reserves will work closely together to retain the historical cultural landscape and traditional forms of grazing.

## GEORGIA WIKI

**Official language:** Georgian / **Capital:** Tbilisi / **Form of government:** Parliamentary democracy / **Population:** 3.71 million / **Size:** 69,700 km<sup>2</sup> (including Abkhazia and South Ossetia) / **Human Development Index ranking:** 61 (out of 189)



Sources: UN, World Bank

## NEW PROJECTS



### Green business

**KAZAKHSTAN/UZBEKISTAN** The Aral Sea, once the fourth largest lake in the world, is today almost completely dried up, destroying the livelihoods of many people who fish the waters or farm the land around it. On behalf of BMZ, GIZ is advising micro, small and medium-sized enterprises on the Kazakh and Uzbek banks of the Aral Sea on sustainable economic development. Workshops, conferences, and planning based on geoinformation pinpoint ways of using resources more efficiently.



### Gap Fund

**GLOBAL** In future, 80 cities are to benefit from the City Climate Finance Gap Fund. They will receive technical advice free of charge to help prioritise and prepare urban investment in climate change mitigation. The first six projects in Montenegro, Ecuador, South Africa, Vanuatu, Mexico and Ukraine are tackling a range of issues, including the greening of urban areas, energy efficiency, sustainable mobility and solid waste and water management. GIZ is implementing the Gap Fund jointly with the World Bank and the European Investment Bank (EIB).



### Digital learning

**AFRICA** In Africa too, demand for remote learning is increasing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The BACKUP Initiative, financed by the European Union and BMZ, is supporting African countries in implementing digital solutions in the education sector. GIZ, in its capacity as one of the implementing organisations, is advising ministries and non-governmental organisations that apply for support. Botswana, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda and Zambia are eligible for assistance.

PHOTOS: 4MAKSYM/STOCKPHOTO (P. 8), ANDYPOIT/GETTY IMAGES (P. 9, LEFT), ANTHONY MCMULLEN/STOCK/ADBE.COM (P. 9, CENTRE), HELLO AFRICA/GETTY IMAGES (P. 9, RIGHT)



# GREEN IS THE COLOUR OF HOPE

An excursion to the area surrounding the La Tigra Rainforest Lodge in Costa Rica illustrates how many people are working together in the interests of nature conservation – the private sector is also doing its bit for the green recovery.

TEXT SANDRA WEISS PHOTOS SANDRA WEISS AND GIZ

*Green is the colour of hope*

## COSTA RICA

Capital: San José / Population: 5 million /  
Human Development Index ranking: 62 (out of 189)



Sources: World Bank, UN

Costa Rica is the first country in the world to receive a United Nations **award for its environmental policy**. The government is also deeply committed to fostering multilateralism and is heavily involved in vaccination equality initiatives. The emerging economy in Central America works closely with Germany on **climate projects**, and in the **fields of education and science**.



No fear of bees: At José Miguel Herrera's beehives, visitors get to taste the honey straight from the honeycomb. Most bee species in Costa Rica have no sting. The beekeeper has created a nature trail in the tropical rainforest where visitors can learn about these incredibly useful insects. Herrera and his small enterprise are helping preserve biodiversity in his home country.

The project contributes to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



# A

Although the nature trail behind José Miguel Herrera's house is less than 50 metres long, you can easily spend several hours here in the middle of Costa Rica's tropical rainforest. The flowers bloom in the most vivid hues and Herrera has fascinating stories to tell about the bees he keeps, while he goes from hive to hive and gives visitors a taste of his honey direct from the honeycomb. Costa Rica is home to more than 700 different bee species. Some of them are no bigger than a pinhead, while others are almost as large as one of the hummingbirds with which they share the flowers in Herrera's garden. 'Many of them are endangered,' explains the 31-year-old while the bees swarm in and out constantly. But you can barely hear them. Most bees in Costa Rica are quiet and placid – and have no sting. The honey that Herrera sells tastes fruity or slightly bitter, depending on the season.

For a long time his venture was overshadowed by imported honey, but now his honey is becoming more and more popular among tourists and locals, he tells us. 'I sold a lot of honey and natural remedies like pollen and propolis during the pandemic, both at the farm itself and online.'

Until a few years ago Herrera, from Valle Azul, still worked as a waiter. Now he has his own small business called Euglossin – named after a bee species – with his own logo, sales stand and Facebook page. He launched his company under a GIZ pilot project. Conservation and sustainable economic promotion go hand in hand.

Costa Rica is considered a shining light internationally when it comes to conservation and eco-tourism. So far, however, most ventures have come from state initiatives. The country aims to become carbon neutral this year. Conservation regions account for one quarter of its surface area. But this is also a financial burden for the state. And the COVID-19 pandemic was a harsh setback for the country since tourism is its main source of foreign exchange. The budget deficit is growing; Costa Rica's foreign debt now totals around USD 30 billion. That is one reason why the government wants to involve the private sector more in conservation.

## Green is the colour of hope

‘We need to rethink’ is the message from Deputy Environment Minister Franklin Paniagua, whose ministry is GIZ’s partner in the project. ‘The aim used to be to leave a natural reserve largely untouched.’ Conflicts soon arose between economic activities and conservation efforts. ‘Today we are seeking alliances with the private sector and trying to put the entire economy on a sustainable footing,’ says Paniagua. Green recovery is the government’s plan for the post-COVID era. But how can agriculture, tourism, transport, construction and forestry be reshaped to make them sustainable and climate neutral? ‘It’s only possible if the state, the people and the private sector pull together,’ says Paniagua. ‘And for that we need examples of where it has worked successfully.’

One of these examples is the development partnership ‘Reserva Bosque La Tigra: Biodiversity in Action’, which is receiving support from the German tour operator travel-to-nature and GIZ within the framework of BMZ’s develoPPP programme. The focal point is La Tigra, a former cattle farm two and a half hours’ drive north of the capital San José at an altitude of 1,300 metres. In 2003, Rainer Stoll, owner of travel-to-nature, purchased four hectares of land there together with a Costa Rican businessman. ‘It was grazing land, no forest, zero biodiversity, leached soils,’ Paul Valenciano, the Costa Rican partner, recalls. The big cats that once gave the farm its name had long since vanished. It was becoming increasingly lonely in the region as farmers sold their unproductive land to move to the capital city. The two dynamic businessmen broke this vicious circle. ‘With

reforestation and eco-tourism, we demonstrated that it is possible to live with and from the natural environment, without destroying it,’ explains Valenciano. The La Tigra Rainforest Lodge created 33 jobs.

### Research station to help spread knowledge

‘62 bird species, 17 amphibians and 18 reptiles live here,’ says Adolfo Quesada, Manager of the Lodge, during our evening frog tour. The undisputed stars of the tour are the red-eyed tree frog and the blue and strawberry poison dart frog. The concert they give at sunset is deafening and they can easily be found with the aid of a flashlight in the ponds and streams around the Lodge. Lodge residents and school field trips love the frog tour. Anyone who is interested can also buy a tree seedling for USD 30 and plant it themselves on the Lodge grounds – a certificate and GPS data are all part of the package. The profits from the Lodge are reinvested in the purchase of adjacent land which is then also reforested. The La Tigra reserve has now expanded to 46 hectares, roughly equivalent to 64 football fields.

At the start progress was slow, reflects Paul Valenciano. The ten rooms did not generate enough income. The quantum leap came in 2017, when GIZ came on board. The common goal is to significantly increase the forested area and create a development pool that revolves around eco-tourism in the region. And that is where our bee-keeper José Miguel Herrera comes in. He lives about 20 min-

**Bottom:** Lodge Manager Quesada also checks the insect hotels to make sure everything is in order. The nocturnal red-eyed tree frogs are the stars of the evening rainforest tour.





Every tree counts. Adolfo Quesada plants a tree with a tourist. Maricel Vargas is also there. She is replanting the rainforest around her small guest house, providing a habitat for birds like the collared aracari.



utes' drive away from the Lodge. A total of 15 budding small business owners with sustainable business concepts based in the area surrounding La Tigra have been trained so far at courses organised by GIZ. The modules covered marketing, cost accounting, corporate strategy and tax tips. 'Bees were my hobby,' says Herrera. 'The course gave me the push I needed to make bee-keeping my business.' He is saving his profits to buy adjacent land for his bees and plant indigenous flowers and shrubs.

A few hundred metres away from Herrera, Maricel Vargas has transformed her house into three holiday flats. 'I lost my job in 2017 and needed a new economic mainstay,' she explains. She soon hit on an idea. Her lovingly tended grounds have a spring – and therefore a great number of frogs. Her children had grown up and moved out. The house was virtually empty, and its location close to the main road made it ideally suited as tourist accommodation. Vargas is a welcoming host. 'I was only able to go to elementary school,' the 49-year-old tells us. 'Without the project I would never have had the

'Genuine progress benefits everyone, not just a few investors.'

ADOLFO QUESADA,  
Manager of the La Tigra Rainforest Lodge

confidence to start up a business.' What she liked best was the teamwork. 'Now we are all working together to protect the environment because our livelihoods depend on it.' She is now replanting the forest that her parents once felled to plant bananas and provide grazing land for their animals.

'Genuine progress benefits everyone, not just a few investors,' says Lodge Manager Quesada. A major concern for him and GIZ is to raise awareness among young people and to forge an alliance with the academic and scientific community. That is why a biological research station with an affiliated training centre is being built not far from the Rainforest Lodge. La Tigra, after all, is also a scientific experiment. To what extent will reforestation succeed in helping restore the original flora and fauna and thus reverse the destruction humans have caused? And is it possible to create a corridor linking the lowlands with the neighbouring Bosque Eterno de los Niños conservation area?

'Initial pictures taken by concealed cameras are very promising,' says Adolfo Quesada. 'Pumas, peccaries and ocelots have already been sighted again.' All the manager now needs to make him completely happy are the monkeys and sloths. But hopes are rising with every tree donated, like the one planted by a tourist from Bad Urach.

## BUSINESS AND BIODIVERSITY

Although the Central American land mass accounts for only one per cent of the Earth's surface, it is home to about **eight per cent of the world's biodiversity**. To protect these valuable assets, GIZ's Business & Biodiversity in Central America and the Dominican Republic programme is forging an alliance between government and the private sector. On behalf of BMZ, and with EU cofinancing, GIZ is working with the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) of the Central American Integration System (SICA).

**32 development partnerships** have already been established in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Private companies alone have invested some EUR 5 million in the sustainable management and protection of biodiversity. To this must be added the contributions of civil society, the scientific and academic community, and public sector donors.

The pilot project Reserva Bosque La Tigra: Biodiversity in Action in Costa Rica is one example of how public-private investment can **leverage environmental protection and sustainable eco-tourism**. The partnership between the German tour operator travel-to-nature and GIZ receives support under the BMZ's **develoPPP programme**. The costs totalled EUR 360,000, half of which was covered by the private sector financier. In this way environmental education can be promoted and tropical forests restored by an alliance for the environment, while the people in the region benefit from sustainable tourism.

Contact: Svenja Paulino, [svenja.paulino@giz.de](mailto:svenja.paulino@giz.de)

In fact, today three trees are being planted, including a *Lecythis ampla*, or monkey pot tree, which is an endangered species in Costa Rica. 'It produces large round pot-like fruit, which monkeys love,' explains Quesada. And the German visitor is delighted. 'I'm so happy that I can do something for conservation and for the holistic development of this region.' —

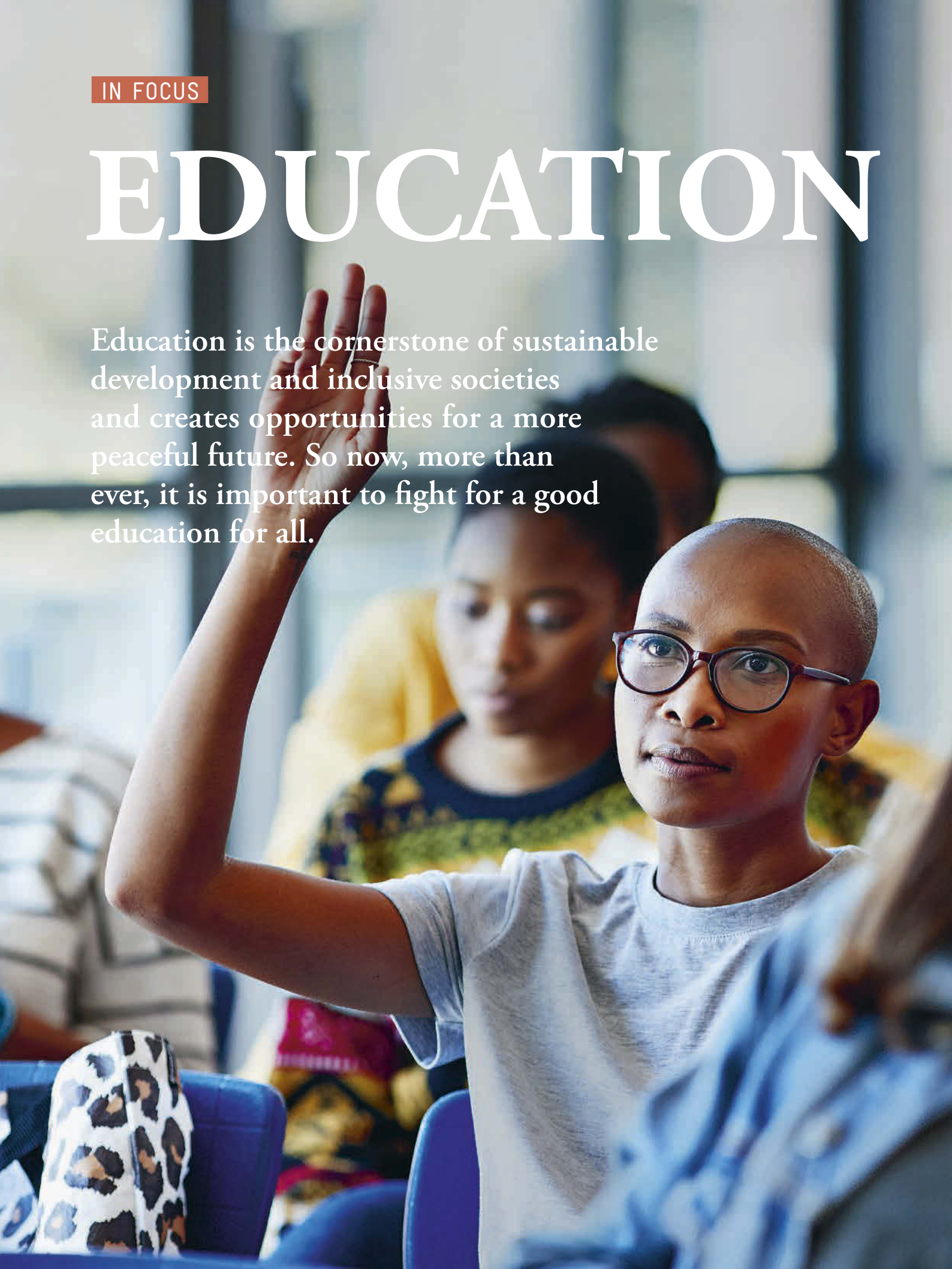


**SANDRA WEISS** lives in Mexico and has been reporting from Latin America since 1999 for many news outlets including Geo, Deutsche Welle, Die Zeit, Die Welt and Neue Zürcher Zeitung. She enjoys gardening herself and was happy to lend a hand with the tree planting at La Tigra Rainforest Lodge.

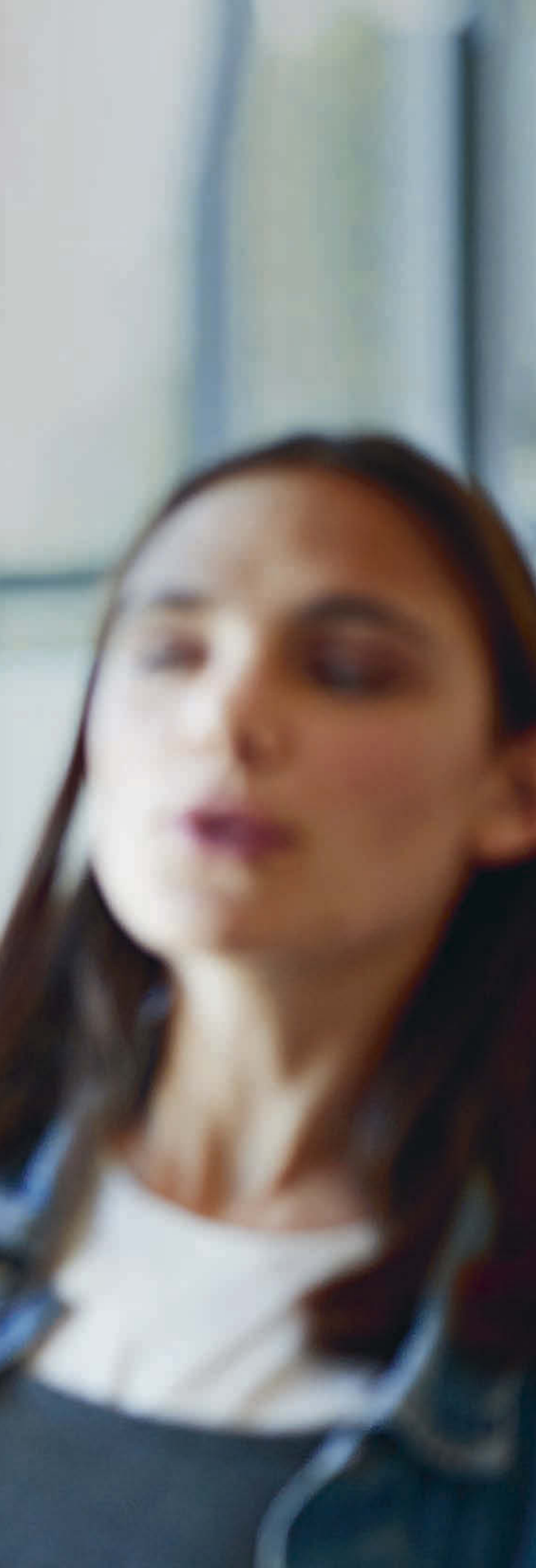
IN FOCUS

# EDUCATION

Education is the cornerstone of sustainable development and inclusive societies and creates opportunities for a more peaceful future. So now, more than ever, it is important to fight for a good education for all.







#### REPORT

## Digital chalk for all

What we need to do to ensure that children of all ages in Lebanon can continue learning even during times of crisis. **p.18**

#### OVERVIEW

## Spreading knowledge

Five educational initiatives using creative methods to provide help where it is most needed **p.22**

#### ESSAY

## Learning for the future

Science writer Megan Lindow explains why education is the smartest investment in the world. **p.24**

#### INFOGRAPHIC

## Light and shade

Facts and figures highlighting global progress on education and the risks that it faces **p.30**

#### INTERVIEW

## ‘Children are eager to return to school’

Alice Albright, Chief Executive Officer of the Global Partnership for Education, on the importance of learning **p.32**

#### BACKGROUND

## Learning from the pandemic

An analysis by Michael Holländer, Director of GIZ's Education Competence Centre **p.36**

#### EXAMPLES OF GIZ'S WORK

## A key element of recovery

One goal, many paths: GIZ activities focusing on education **p.37**

*In focus: Education*



Nawras Al Fayad (top) and his sister Masira (left, wearing a headscarf) enjoy learning with the digital platform Tabshoura. The development team was led by Nayla Zreik Fahed at the NGO Lebanese Alternative Learning.

# Digital chalk for all

Germany is helping to strengthen Lebanon's public education system so that children of all ages can continue learning even during times of crisis.

Text OLIVIA CUTHBERT Photos NATHEER HALAWANI

**F**ourteen-year old Lama Al Zein was really upset when her school had to close last year due to the coronavirus pandemic. 'I was afraid, most of all because I'm not very good at maths. I didn't know how I was going to learn,' she recalls. Those same concerns were felt by parents, young children, teenagers and teachers throughout Lebanon. Schools quickly put together plans to meet the sudden demand for online teaching. While many set up complete e-learning programmes, others could only provide sporadic online lessons. Some had no choice but to close altogether. In a country struggling to deal not only with a global pandemic but also a severe economic crisis, political instability, large numbers of Syrian refugees and the aftermath of a devastating explosion in Beirut, educational prospects for the younger generation are bleak.

Since 2019, on behalf of Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GIZ has been working to strengthen the public school system in Lebanon and therefore improve the educational opportunities avail-

able to everyone in the country. When COVID-19 struck, GIZ was able to respond quickly and with flexibility. Even before the pandemic, it had begun supporting the efforts of the non-governmental organisation Lebanese Alternative Learning (LAL) to update and digitise the country's 25-year-old curriculum. When schools had to close their doors during lockdown, LAL and GIZ accelerated and expanded their work in this area in order to make e-learning more widely available and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the country's million or so pupils.

## A shattered country

Urgent action was clearly needed. As early as 2019 and in 2020, many children were unable to attend school regularly or indeed at all due to continued civil unrest. Public schools came under further pressure as a result of the economic crisis as middle-class families slipped into poverty and had to take their children out of private education. Suddenly, the school fees were no longer affordable. Then, in August 2020, a huge ex-

## LEBANON

Capital: Beirut /  
Population: 6.9 million /  
Annual population growth:  
0.5 per cent / Human Development  
Index ranking: 92 out of 189



Source: World Bank

Per capita, Lebanon has accepted more **refugees** from neighbouring Syria than any other country in the world. It currently hosts around **1.5 million Syrians** who have fled the brutal conflict in their home country since 2011.

plosion tore through the port area of Beirut. The blast killed 200 people and injured thousands. Faced with charges of negligence, the Lebanese Government resigned, and a transitional government is now leading the country through the pandemic. 'The situation in 2020 was so desperate at so many levels that things just ground to a halt in the public sector, especially in state schools,' explains GIZ project manager Ismael Nouns.

### Learning platform more popular than ever

One solution that has emerged to help tackle this educational crisis is Tabshoura. Tabshoura is the Arabic word for chalk. This open-source digital platform was developed by a 60-plus-strong team from LAL and the illustrators' collective Waraq, which means paper in English. Demand for the platform rocketed. 'Before the coronavirus, the platform had around 8,000 users. That figure has now risen to 40,000. We've never had so many visits,' says Nayla

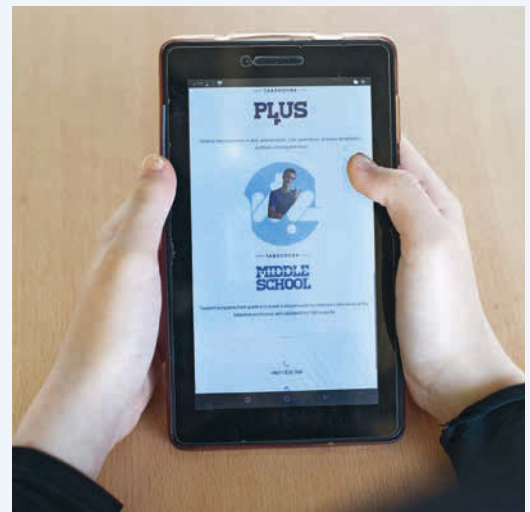
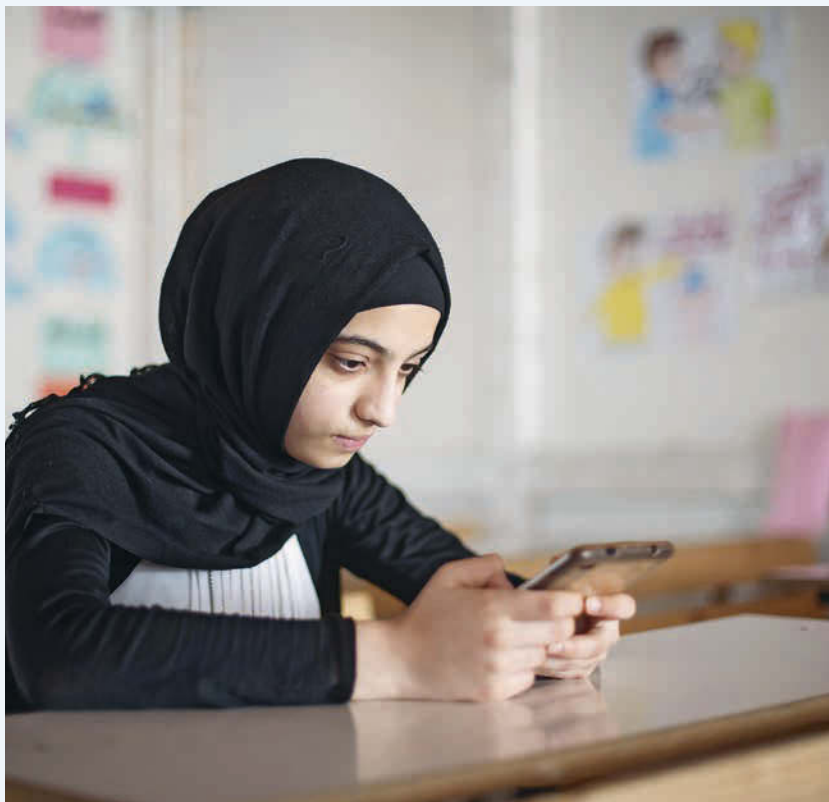
Zreik Fahed, LAL's Chief Executive Officer. Fourteen-year-old Lama is just one of these enthusiastic users. 'I'm not worried any more. If we stick to the online learning programme, we can find out everything we need to know,' she says. The platform is attractively designed and provides interactive tasks to make the learning process more exciting. It encourages younger children and teenagers to work independently. The programme, which is now officially recognised and recommended by the Lebanese Ministry of Education, promotes learning through play and fun, combining curricular and extracurricular content. This means that Tabshoura can be adapted to every child's own level, making it ideal for use alongside face-to-face teaching and other online courses.

### Ensuring that girls receive an education, too

For Loreen Obeid, that flexibility is particularly valuable. Loreen teaches technology at the Malaak Centre in the northern

Lebanese city of Akkar, which is close to the border with Syria and now hosts many of Syria's refugees. The Malaak Centre also provides lessons outside school for Syrian children between the ages of four and eighteen. Many of the children live in refugee camps where there may not be an internet connection. Here, in one of the poorest parts of the country, many families cannot afford a computer and often share a single device with others. The lack of computer equipment and unfamiliarity with the online world are not the only obstacles. 'The children want to learn, but their parents can't help them. This makes it particularly hard for the younger ones because they need support.'

There are also fears that the pandemic could make things worse for older pupils. 'Some parents don't encourage their children to learn or go to school, so the Centre has a lot of work to do in terms of persuading people,' says Loreen Obeid. 'That applies to girls above all. Often, they leave school at the age of fourteen, sometimes to get married.' The Centre has equipped all



With Tabshoura installed on her tablet, 14-year-old Lama Al Zein can work through all the course material she needs in preparation for her final exams. She has found it particularly helpful during lockdown, especially for maths.

300 of its pupils with a tablet so that they can learn online. To date, GIZ has provided 65,000 devices, including for children in all 9th and 12th grades nationwide. Training is also being provided for teaching staff.

### Supporting young refugees

Nawras Al Fayad (15) and his sister Masira (13), who fled the violence in Syria together with their family, were given a tablet by the Malaak Centre in Akkar, allowing them to attend online lessons in the morning. Both find Tabshoura more effective than the school's afternoon WhatsApp lessons. 'With WhatsApp you can leave the chat whenever you like, but with Tabshoura you have an online account, so the teachers can see what we are doing, and it's all much more structured,' says Nawras. Masira agrees: 'On Tabshoura we can check the answers. It's like having the teacher there, helping you and correcting you when you make a mistake. It's more fun to use, too.'

### App for sustainable e-learning

All the main course content for the final exams is already available on the platform, but there are plans to go even further. 'Digitising the curriculum was a massive project. But thanks to the outstanding support from GIZ, we hope to revise the entire curriculum and make it accessible to more disadvantaged groups and communities using an app,' says LAL's Nayla Zreik Fahed. With many of the country's poorer areas still affected by power cuts and poor internet connections, the children need to be able to download the material through the app so that they can use it offline. For now, LAL's offline solution is a small box server that creates a hotspot, allowing 30 devices to connect to the platform. That was useful as a start, but more comprehensive solutions are needed to make e-learning a sustainable option. Nayla Zreik Fahed's preferred approach would be a combination of online teaching and lessons at school: 'I think the best solution is a mixture of the two. Digital learning makes you more independent. It allows you to set your own goals, encourages you to think

Loreen Obeid teaches technology in the northern Lebanese city of Akkar. Part of her role is to support Syrian children.



critically and improves your ability to filter information online. Those are important skills. But I very much hope that children can also go back to school, meet other kids and enjoy the experience of learning together from a teacher, because that's really important.'

Fourteen-year-old Lama Al Zein would love that, too. Although she has found learning with Tabshoura helpful, especially in maths, her feared subject, she doesn't think digital lessons can replace learning in the classroom. That's a view no doubt shared by many others all over the world. —

The project contributes to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



For more information on how GIZ is supporting schools in Lebanon, see [akzente.giz.de/en](https://akzente.giz.de/en)

### LEARNING FOR LIFE

Measures to create a good learning environment and educational opportunities for all are investments in the future. This is where the Sustainable Facility Management in Public Schools in Lebanon (SUFA) project comes in. GIZ supports public schools in Lebanon as part of **BMZ's Special Initiative on Displacement**. With the country hosting around **1.5 million refugees** from Syria and struggling to deal with a severe economic crisis, political instability and now the coronavirus pandemic, the Mediterranean state's education system is under huge pressure. The project is helping to bring about lasting improvements in the **educational infrastructure** as a way of supporting Syrian refugee children and children in the host communities. As well as helping to develop digital learning platforms, which have proven invaluable during the pandemic in particular, the project is working to upgrade facilities at selected schools – outdoor classrooms, school gardens, resource-saving technology, barrier-free buildings and mobile learning systems – with a view to establishing them as **models of environmental good practice and integration**.

Contact: Ismael Nouns,  
[ismael.nouns@giz.de](mailto:ismael.nouns@giz.de)

# Spreading knowledge

Education is the key to a fulfilling life. A host of small and larger initiatives have been set up alongside the public education system to ensure that everyone benefits. Their mission is to provide help where it is most needed – often using very creative methods. We would like to present some of those initiatives here.



## Boosting prospects for women in rural areas

**BAREFOOT COLLEGE** What opportunities are available to women in rural areas? In many countries around the world, they are pretty much at the bottom of the ladder in terms of education. Yet it is vital they have access to further general and technical education so that their families, villages and societies can develop. The courses provided by Barefoot College are designed specifically for this target group. The College was originally set up in India but now works across the globe with the goal of enabling poor women to acquire the knowledge they need in order to improve their social position. Many have learned how to install basic solar panels, thus earning themselves the affectionate title of 'solar mamas'. Energy is still a scarce resource, particularly in some rural areas. They also learn about clean water and new business models. The College's motto is 'Learning by doing. Doing by learning'. Barefoot has now established further education programmes in 93 of the world's poorest countries and has already equipped two million girls and women in rural areas with the knowledge and skills they need to help drive change. –

## Supporting and integrating deaf children

**DEAF LINK** Deaf people in Uganda face widespread prejudice and are often socially marginalised. Most are unable to attend school and gain qualifications. As a result, they have little control over their future and cannot lead a productive adult life. The NGO Deaf Link Uganda (DLU) was set up in 2007 to try and improve their situation. Its aim is to ensure that deaf children of all ages have access to training programmes so that they have the same opportunities as others and can live a fulfilling life. The programme includes school materials developed specifically for deaf children, funding to help them attend school and regular advice and support. Support is also available to the children's families, for example to help them learn sign language. DLU is working to meet the needs of those who previously faced discrimination – and to give them hope of a better life. –



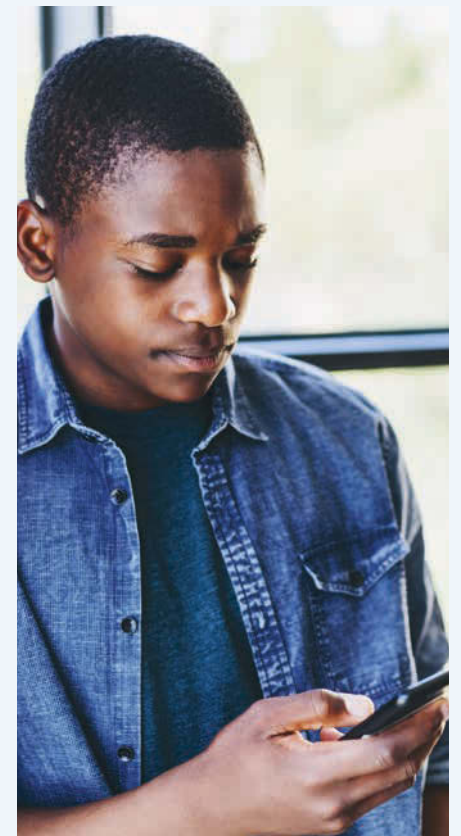
## Learning by phone

**ENEZA EDUCATION** The aim of the digital tool Eneza Education is to make learning enjoyable. In Kiswahili, the word 'eneza' means to reach or to spread. And that is precisely what the tool is designed to achieve. Thanks to inexpensive mobile technology, it enables users between the ages of 10 and 18 to access high-quality educational materials wherever they are – even in remote areas. All they need is a mobile phone. It is well known that mobile phone usage is very widespread in Africa, so this approach makes it possible to reach large numbers of young people, even those from poorer families. The company was set up by a Kenyan and an American in 2011. Today, Eneza is used by over ten million schoolchildren in Kenya, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. –

## Teaching digital skills

**DOUAR TECH** Douar Tech is a Moroccan organisation that focuses on older teenagers who have largely been excluded from the digital world up to now. The initiative was set up with the aim of narrowing the digital divide through a practical training programme for those with little money and therefore limited or no access to the inter-

net. The participants usually follow an intensive nine-month course that equips them with the digital skills they need for the labour market or to set up their own business. The programme combines on-site teaching and online courses in order to maximise learning. The network has now expanded beyond Africa as far as South-West Asia. –



## Reaching forgotten children

**AMAL ALLIANCE** Today, there are millions of displaced people and refugees all over the world – more than at any time since the Second World War. This includes huge numbers of children, whose rootless and emotionally challenging lives are made even more difficult if they miss out on valuable schooling. The Amal Alliance is an NGO that organises courses in refugee camps and transitional settlements to prevent the emergence of an entire lost generation. As well as building knowledge and skills, it works with children up to the age of 16 to help them deal with the emotional trauma that affects many refugee children. The Alliance was set up in the US but now works in numerous countries with large refugee populations such as Bangladesh, Lebanon and Turkey. 'Amal' is the Arabic word for hope – and that is exactly what the Alliance aims to provide: the prospect of a better future. –





# Learning for the future

The pandemic has made it increasingly clear that education is crucial and the smartest investment across the globe – particularly for girls. South Africa-based education and science writer **Megan Lindow** explains how education can make societies fit for the challenges ahead.

Illustrations FLORIAN BAYER

**W**hen the COVID-19 pandemic struck, schools around the globe closed their doors. By mid-April 2020, some 1.6 billion children – about 90 per cent of school pupils across the world – were no longer in the classroom. This unprecedented disruption to learning jolted the world into a new appreciation of how fundamental education is to almost every aspect of our lives. Suddenly, most of the world's children and young people – and their families – were deprived not only of classroom learning but also of the multitude of other opportunities and resources that schools provide to help them reach their potential: social interaction, mentoring, community, a sense of belonging, life skills, mental health support, physical safety and nutritious free meals, to name just a few.

Educators, NGOs and communities around the world mobilised all their re-

## IN THIS ARTICLE

### 1. INVALUABLE

Why a good education for all children is the smartest investment in the world.

### 2. INDIVISIBLE

Why, ultimately, everyone benefits and society as a whole wins when we support the weakest among us.

### 3. UNPREDICTABLE

How the global community can arm itself against future crises by forging strong education systems.

sources to fill the gaps left by school closures. It was a forced experiment in rapid innovation under intense pressure. Across Europe and North America, most schools switched to online learning. Pupils received learning materials on their mobile phones in Kenya, where classrooms remained empty for nine months during 2020. Children in Liberia and Burkina Faso accessed lessons through solar-powered radios. Teachers in Chile collaborated to design lessons delivered via radio. And in the mountainous province of Balochistan in Pakistan, children's books were carried from village to village by camel.

More than a year later, we can clearly see that the pandemic has highlighted and magnified the core challenge facing education systems across the globe: providing universal access and high-quality learning to all children (and often adults too) at an affordable cost. Despite being more constrained than ever, educators and communi-



ties are targeting the barriers that prevent the most vulnerable from accessing education while also weaving new thinking and innovations into curricula to make learning more attuned and responsive to 21st century challenges.

### The smartest investment in the world

The aim of UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 is to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.' For good reason, education is enshrined as a human right and a cornerstone of development, and underpins other SDGs including poverty, health, gender equality, decent work, innovation, inequality and peace. According to UNESCO, for every US dollar spent on education, between 10 and 15 USD are generated in economic growth.

In wealthy and poor families alike, education is seen as the gateway to a better future. Solid investment at the secondary and tertiary education levels, meanwhile, underpins economic success stories in countries like South Korea and Viet Nam. South Korea, for example, rapidly expanded its higher and vocational education systems in conjunction with policies to build a skilled workforce and create a sophisticated and

**'According to UNESCO, for every US dollar spent on education, between 10 and 15 USD are generated in economic growth.'**

high-tech economy. In the 1970s, just 10 per cent of South Korea's population entered higher education, compared to 87 per cent of young South Koreans today. Meanwhile, Viet Nam has a shorter track record but has followed a similar trajectory to achieve impressive growth in higher education in the past 20 years.

Even before COVID-19, however, global progress on education targets was stalling. For example, some 97 million children across sub-Saharan Africa were already out of school, their absence a symptom of wider pressures on families and communities resulting from climate change, conflict, natural disaster, illness, gender inequality and household poverty. One in four children lives in a region impacted by crisis. In the years up to 2019, more than 2,000 schools across west and central Africa were closed as a result of conflict and insecurity, affecting around two million children and 44,000 teachers. And many other young people around the world missed school as a result of disease and food insecurity caused by the effects of climate change.

The pandemic will have only heightened such vulnerabilities, undoing years of hard-won progress. Loss of livelihoods in poor families, for example, is expected to put pressure on millions of children to enter the workforce or, especially in the case of girls, get married instead of returning to the classroom. Studies of previous crises that disrupted schooling, such as Sierra Leone's Ebola outbreak in 2014, show that girls are more likely than boys to stay out of school permanently once their education has been interrupted. They also face higher risks of gender violence and early pregnancy.

In COVID-19 times, priority must be given to helping girls return to schools once they reopen. Girls' education has been called 'the smartest investment in the world'. Evidence shows it to be one of the single most powerful interventions to break cycles of poverty, improve health and development outcomes, foster female leadership, combat climate change and create positive ripple effects in society for generations to come. An educated woman is more than twice as likely to send her own children to school, and UNESCO has found that if all girls were to

complete their secondary education, the world's child mortality rate could be halved. 'Girls who have been to school grow up to be empowered women. They are not forced into early marriage and they tend to have healthier, smaller families, reducing emissions well into the future,' writes Ugandan climate activist Vanessa Nakate in a recent issue of *Time* magazine.

### Radical inclusion

Although many countries have made important strides toward free universal primary and secondary education, girls and other vulnerable students often still struggle with access unless they are proactively offered support. To this end, Sierra Leone recently unveiled a new policy of radical inclusion in schools – the first of its kind – putting disadvantaged girls, the disabled and the rural poor at the centre of efforts to make schools safe and inclusive for all. In Sierra Leone, 36 per cent of the poorest households have children out of school, as opposed to 6 per cent of affluent households.

'In practice, this means actively enabling those from marginalised and excluded groups to enter and remain in school until they graduate. It means adapting the education system to better meet their learning needs – ensuring school is a place of dignity, safety and respect for all – while systematically reducing cultural, policy and practical barriers to education,' writes David Moinina Sengh, the Minister for Basic and Senior Secondary Education.

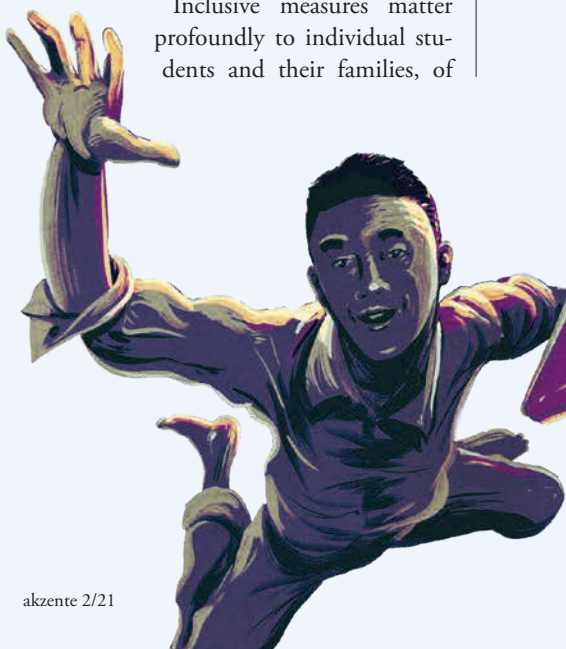
Inclusive measures matter profoundly to individual students and their families, of

## 'Inclusion makes education systems more flexible and supports lifelong learning.'

course, but they also benefit society as a whole. Research shows that diversity and inclusiveness in the learning environment not only foster better academic outcomes but also nurture creativity, collaboration, social skills, mental health and wellbeing. Focusing on inclusion also builds greater flexibility into systems and supports lifelong learning. Teenage mothers, refugees, migrants and other excluded groups need flexible opportunities and pathways for returning to school after their education has been interrupted. As disruptions resulting from climate change, conflict and natural disasters are likely to intensify, the resilience and flexibility of education systems will be increasingly important.

### Innovation for Africa's young people

For sub-Saharan Africa in particular, the urgency of investing in education at all levels could not be clearer. The region has the



world's youngest and fastest-growing population. And as the continent's population is set almost to double to two billion by 2050, sub-Saharan Africa will soon be home to the world's largest concentration of young people.

This will create unprecedented new demands on capacity in institutions that are already bursting at the seams. Enrolment in secondary schools, for example, is expected to double by 2030 – and already, there is space for only one third of those wishing to enrol. By one estimate, some 90 per cent of children in low-income countries lack basic secondary-level skills as opposed to 30 per cent of children in high-income countries. The scarcity of space in schools is one reason for such weak outcomes, but the figures also illustrate the need to improve the quality of curricula and teaching.

**‘Insights gained from the COVID-19 crisis could lead to improvements in education overall.’**

With some 75 per cent of the workforce currently considered to be in ‘vulnerable’ employment, Africa urgently needs to up-skill its young people to succeed in employment or entrepreneurship and to make the most of its demographic boom. It cannot do this simply by replicating existing learning methods. Rapid innovation is needed, as are fresh new ways to help young people develop the full depth and breadth of the technical, practical, critical thinking, creative, social and emotional skills demanded by the job market.

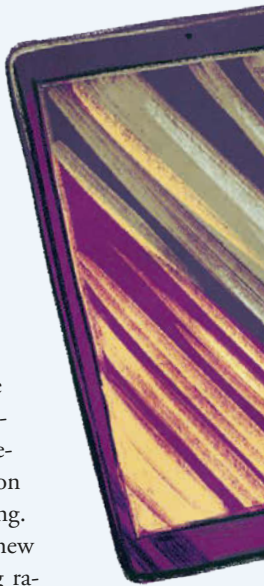
Educate! is a Ugandan NGO working directly in secondary schools helping 470,000 young people in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda to develop these skills and business acumen.

When COVID-19 struck, the organisation had to pivot rapidly from face-to-face interaction to distance learning.

As it introduced new teaching methods using radio broadcasts, conference calls and text messaging, the organisation also carefully gathered and analysed feedback from learners about the impact these measures were having, which helped it fine-tune its efforts as it went along.

According to Hawah Nabbuye and Sarah Kayondo, of the Educate! management committee, the process showed that, while such supplementary distance learning cannot replace face-to-face quality teaching, it can – if sensitively and appropriately designed – provide resilient and flexible ways of helping young people (especially those who are marginalised) to keep up their learning momentum under challenging circumstances.

Such new innovations and insights arising from responses to the COVID-19 crisis could be harnessed to provide lasting resources to help improve education as a whole. In general, better learning outcomes can be achieved by focusing on a few basics – the quality of teaching and an





approach to teaching children according to their skill level rather than their age group. Distance learning solutions cannot compensate for these basics, but they could be adapted to augment learning in overcrowded and under-resourced classrooms, for example. In Burkina Faso, where one person in 20 has been displaced as a result of conflict, the government has embraced distance learning and plans to continue using it to reach children who cannot access regular schools. 'For us, it's a path of no return,' as Education Minister Stanislas Ouaro told press agency Thomson Reuters.

### Developing skills for challenges

The pandemic has highlighted the depth and interconnectivity of the changes overtaking and remaking our world: climate change, global inequality, economic globalisation, a fourth industrial revolution, and artificial intelligence. It has revealed how

important education is for developing the resilience and knowledge to equip societies to respond to disasters and conflicts and to build peace.

Partly in response to the magnitude of these global challenges, educators are embracing teaching methods based on experiential learning that connect students to real-world issues and foster agile, collaborative, flexible, technologically adept, emotionally intelligent and self-motivated learning. One-size-fits-all models of education are steadily giving way to more diverse, complex and networked approaches, incorporating environmental intelligence, purpose, social justice and radical inclusion.

Schools are places where young people learn to be engaged citizens within a community, which also makes them critical spaces for social cohesion. They are places where young people from different cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities and nationalities have the opportunity to meet one another, work side by side and develop shared values of equality, human rights, respect, and free-

## 'In schools, young people can learn how to be citizens with a commitment to their communities.'

dom, collectively developing their long-term potential to create thriving, diverse and vibrant societies.

A recent article by the Brookings Institution highlighted climate change education as a powerful force both for learning and for galvanising climate action and climate justice. There is strong evidence that learning through experience – connecting conceptual learning to concrete, hands-on, real-world events – helps children to learn more deeply and enduringly. As the authors point out, the arena of climate change offers countless opportunities for experiential learning to children across the world, whether through implementing drought-sensitive agriculture in Zimbabwe or monitoring human impacts on marine protected areas in Mozambique.

'Harnessing the creativity of students and teachers to engage in climate action means every educator can become a climate champion, every school club leader an advocate, and every lesson can contribute to solving some dimension of climate change or its underlying drivers, and/or to adaptation to its impacts,' continue the authors.


By realising such possibilities in education, learners, teachers and their communities have the chance not only to develop the skills necessary to thrive in an uncertain future but also to play an active part in shaping that future. —



**MEGAN LINDOW**

is a researcher, writer and advisor on complexity, innovation and change processes in higher education, knowledge, technology,


the environment and social innovation in Africa.



*In focus: Education*


# Light and shade

In the years before COVID-19, the global community made great strides in education. Some of that progress is now at risk. We take a closer look.




## More and more young people are studying

Around the world, the proportion of young adults attending technical colleges, universities or vocational schools rose from 19 per cent in 2000 to 38 per cent in 2017. The share of young women in tertiary education exceeded that of young men by four percentage points. Source: UNESCO




## More children are going to school

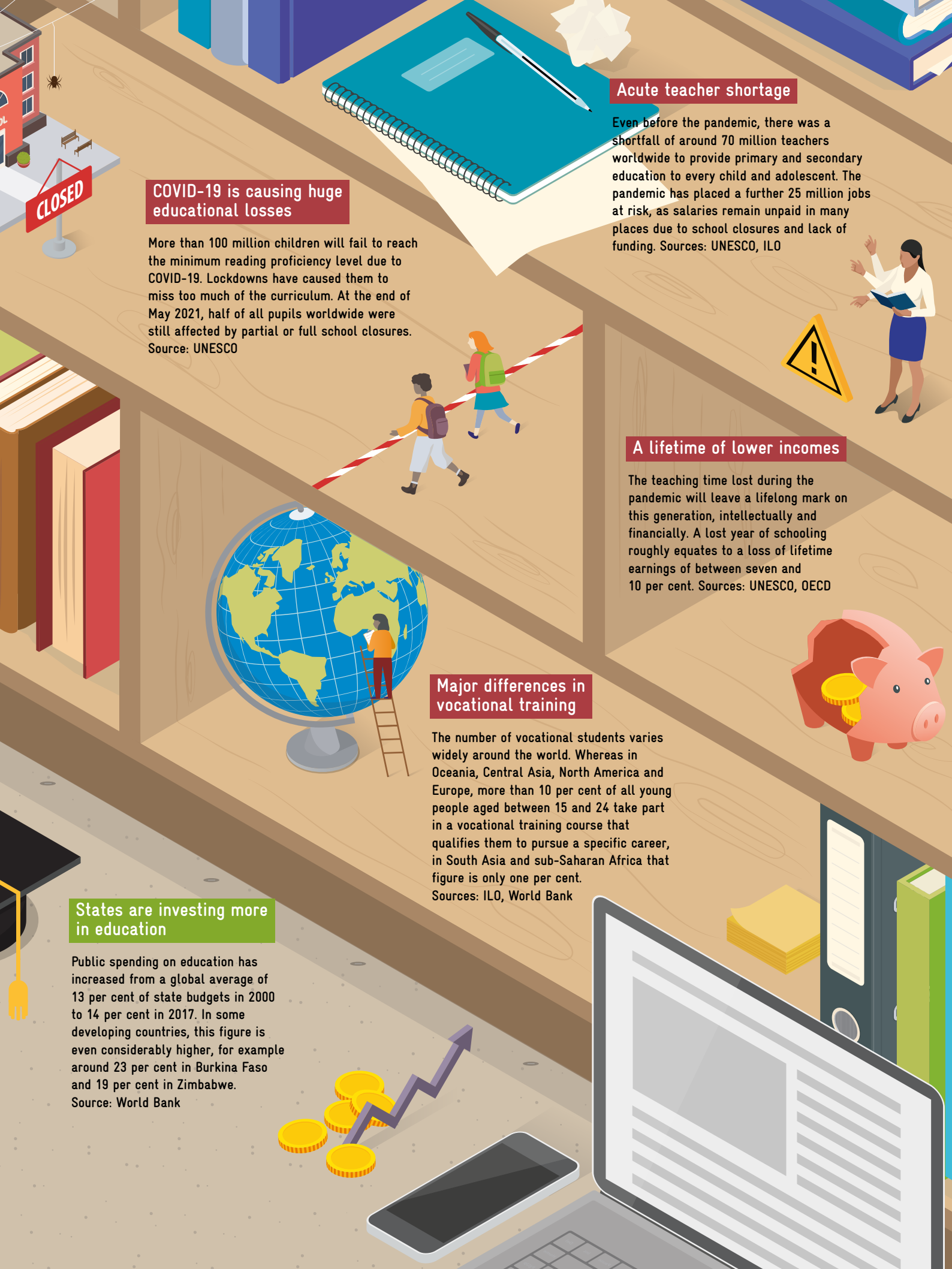
Worldwide, there is now a greater appreciation of the importance of education. In 1950, half of the global population had no formal education at all. In 1980, 30 per cent had still never been in a classroom. By 2017, it was just nine per cent of children of primary school age that had never attended school. Sources: OECD, UNESCO



## The number of school leavers is rising

In 2018, about 72 per cent of young people globally completed lower secondary education, while 48 per cent finished higher secondary schooling. Prior to COVID-19, it was expected that by 2030, an average of 81 per cent of the world's youth would complete middle school and 58 per cent would graduate from higher secondary school. Source: UNESCO





**CLOSED**

### COVID-19 is causing huge educational losses

More than 100 million children will fail to reach the minimum reading proficiency level due to COVID-19. Lockdowns have caused them to miss too much of the curriculum. At the end of May 2021, half of all pupils worldwide were still affected by partial or full school closures. Source: UNESCO

### Acute teacher shortage

Even before the pandemic, there was a shortfall of around 70 million teachers worldwide to provide primary and secondary education to every child and adolescent. The pandemic has placed a further 25 million jobs at risk, as salaries remain unpaid in many places due to school closures and lack of funding. Sources: UNESCO, ILO

### A lifetime of lower incomes

The teaching time lost during the pandemic will leave a lifelong mark on this generation, intellectually and financially. A lost year of schooling roughly equates to a loss of lifetime earnings of between seven and 10 per cent. Sources: UNESCO, OECD

### Major differences in vocational training

The number of vocational students varies widely around the world. Whereas in Oceania, Central Asia, North America and Europe, more than 10 per cent of all young people aged between 15 and 24 take part in a vocational training course that qualifies them to pursue a specific career, in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa that figure is only one per cent. Sources: ILO, World Bank

### States are investing more in education

Public spending on education has increased from a global average of 13 per cent of state budgets in 2000 to 14 per cent in 2017. In some developing countries, this figure is even considerably higher, for example around 23 per cent in Burkina Faso and 19 per cent in Zimbabwe. Source: World Bank





**ALICE ALBRIGHT**

The American has been Chief Executive Officer of the Global Partnership for Education since 2013. Previously, she served in the Obama Administration as Chief Operating Officer of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.



# ‘Children are eager to return to school’

**Alice Albright** leads the Global Partnership for Education, a fund that supports quality education in lower-income countries. She talks about the paramount significance of learning and why children everywhere cannot wait to get back to school.

Interview: Friederike Bauer

**The COVID-19 pandemic is a setback for education almost everywhere in the world. What are some of the most serious consequences resulting from it?**

The pandemic has created the biggest disruption to education that we have ever seen. At its peak, 1.6 billion children were out of school, nearly half of them in lower-income countries. The world’s most vulnerable children and youth have been the hardest hit by the pandemic, and we have seen how COVID-19 has already exacerbated existing inequalities. Hundreds of millions of children who rely on school meals have been left without a reliable source of daily nutrition and the pandemic may push more than 100 million people into extreme poverty. We also know that the longer children are out of school, the

more likely they are to never return. As many as 20 million girls are at risk of dropping out of school due to early marriage and teenage pregnancy, and millions more children may be forced into child labour to help support their families.

**What does that mean for the social cohesion of societies?**

Schools not only provide children with a safe, caring and conducive environment for learning. They can also provide them with critical thinking skills, the ability to work with others and solve problems – vital tools for success in an increasingly globalised world. In the long run, investing in education helps build peaceful and inclusive societies. The stronger and more equitable a country’s education system, the more its

children will learn now and earn in the future. For many children, school is far more than a place of learning. Beyond education, schools are lifelines that provide meals, health services, safety – and the hope of a brighter future.

**Are the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 still realistic?**

It is true that COVID-19 has had a major impact around the world, jeopardising all of the SDGs. That’s why we are working with partner countries to transform education systems and effect long-term change for children. If we want all children to complete free primary and secondary education, for example, the government needs a comprehensive and inclusive education sector plan that aligns the efforts of all education part-

**‘In the long run, investing in education supports the development of peaceful and inclusive societies.’**



ners. Only by working together can we achieve the objectives set out in SDG 4.

**What steps need to be taken as quickly as possible in order to get back on track?**

Governments need to ensure that the link to education and schooling remains intact. While schools are closed, children still need to be able to learn, and they should feel motivated to return to school once they reopen. To help countries respond to the education needs brought about by COVID-19, the Global Partnership for Education provided more than half a billion USD in grants to 66 partner countries. Funds have been used to provide children with remote alternatives such as radio, television and paper-based learning materials, and to train teachers on new learning methodologies and equip schools to reopen safely.

**Everybody is talking about building back better after the pandemic. What role should education play in this?**

As countries develop and implement their COVID-19 recovery and response plans, education must stay at the top of the list. By reopening schools, countries can get back on track and provide children with a much-needed sense of normality. Investing in education helps lift communities out of poverty and protects the most vulnerable children from being left behind. Every child should have the opportunity to learn, and education is the single best investment we can make for a more sustainable, peaceful and resilient future.

**What could be done in this context to make education systems more resilient, also regarding future shocks?**

To bounce back from COVID-19, governments must ensure education systems remain a political and financial priority. Domestic education budgets need to be protected as governments manage limited resources resulting from the economic consequences of the pandemic. It also involves ensuring schools integrate distance learning options



for the long-term, develop proper WASH facilities in schools and provide teachers with the skills to adapt to new learning methods. By strengthening education systems, governments can ensure they remain responsive to future crises.

**How important is development cooperation in strengthening education systems?**

Development cooperation is essential to ensuring that countries can build effective and efficient education systems. Through better coordinated efforts in the education sector, donors can help accelerate progress towards the provision of quality education for all children. At the same time, real change needs to be driven by national governments, and international aid should support and incentivise country-led reforms. In July, we

**‘Development cooperation is essential to ensuring that countries can build effective and efficient education systems.’**

hosted the Global Education Summit and asked world leaders to #RaiseYourHand and pledge at least five billion USD to help transform education systems in up to 90 countries and territories.

**Was there anything that impressed you personally in terms of education during the COVID-19 crisis?**

When I talk to students about how COVID-19 has impacted their education, the one thing I regularly hear is how eager they are to return to school. Children everywhere understand how important education is to their future. It can lift them out of poverty, help them find a job and allow them to become active and engaged members of society. Every child deserves the opportunity to learn and gain the skills to achieve their dreams. —

# Learning from the pandemic

Using the crisis in education as an opportunity to rethink and modernise – that is the order of the day, and GIZ's aim.

By MICHAEL HOLLÄNDER

The widespread school closures due to COVID-19 have clearly left their mark: lost learning, a lack of social contact and no school meals are just some of the consequences. The impacts will also be lasting, because many children, especially girls, will not return to school at all, even when they reopen fully one day. Young people are missing out on school-leaving qualifications and therefore opportunities for the future, missed lessons are causing psychological and physical stress; and children at home are not being adequately protected.

There are many factors that could result in a 'lost generation' unless action is taken and changes are made on a large scale. And yet many improvements in education had been made in recent years: school enrolment rates in developing countries rose from an average of 83 per cent in 2000 to 91 per cent in 2015, for instance. Thanks to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community then broadened expectations around education. Today, alongside access to education, the goal encompasses 'inclusive and equitable quality education' and 'lifelong learning opportunities for all'. Measures taken following the adoption of the SDGs had begun to have an impact, too, with further progress made along the entire education chain in many countries. However, for at least a year now, the world (of education) has been changing dramatically. Some teaching has moved online, but not all children and adolescents have benefited equally. According to figures released by the United Nations (UN), digital learning remained a pipe dream for at least 500 million children.

To ensure that the crisis does not develop in the way currently feared, education must become an integral component of sus-



**MICHAEL HOLLÄNDER**  
is the Director of GIZ's Education  
Competence Centre.  
[michael.hollaender@giz.de](mailto:michael.hollaender@giz.de)

tainable recovery. From GIZ's perspective, five things in particular are crucial. The focus should remain on state schools: making them resilient and crisis-proof is a major task for the post-COVID-19 era, because private schools, which promote themselves strongly in developing countries, often only reach the privileged. Education must be broad-based and it should accommodate children of all ages, as is called for in the Declaration of Human Rights. That is why GIZ is committed to strong public school systems, supporting them not only with advisory services and training, but also through targeted investment in school buildings and contemporary teaching and learning materials.

Hygiene measures in schools are another important factor, without which reopening schools will always be a risk – not only in a pandemic. Well-qualified teachers are also crucial and are at the heart of all educational efforts. Empowering them and equipping them with the necessary tools to provide high-quality, increasingly digital teaching is another goal of GIZ in its advisory work.

But the technology has to be right. Hand out tablets at all costs without first having assessed the situation makes little sense, for example because there might be a shortage of electricity or lack of digital skills. Finally, it is important to strengthen the relationship between the private sector and those responsible for education, and to lay the foundation for cooperation based on trust. During the pandemic, it has primarily been tech companies and textbook publishers that have taken up the cause of distance learning. These connections should be maintained and expanded.

GIZ will pursue its activities in this spirit and will continue working to tackle the education crisis. Even before the closure of schools due to COVID-19, we were involved mainly in strengthening education systems, in basic education and in vocational and higher education. For instance, in Tunisia, where we are promoting inter-company training activities with the private sector. Or in Malawi, where we are supporting the school system as a whole, for example through new curriculums, learning materials, teacher training and school meals. There is also the 'Fit for School' programme, which we are implementing in various Asian countries. This is about introducing hygiene standards in schools – standards that were already important before the pandemic, but which have gained new significance because of COVID-19.

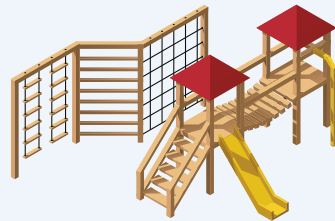
For us, there is no question that education should be an essential component of any recovery programme. If this is achieved in as many countries as possible, then the coronavirus crisis could provide the perfect opportunity to drive forward a long overdue modernisation of education systems and truly catapult them into the 21st century – and we must not miss this opportunity. —

# A key element of recovery

Education should play a central role in the period that follows the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Schools take priority

Almost everywhere in the world, COVID-19 has left its mark on the educational landscape, with schools closed and qualifications and opportunities missed. As a result, the crisis has increased inequality and cast a shadow over people's prospects for the future. GIZ wants to counteract this and to use the period after COVID-19 to strengthen education systems and make them equitable. —



**SUPPORT** Early childhood education provides important opportunities for levelling out social and socio-economic differences. The HEROES project supports the Jordanian Ministry of Education on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in increasing access to early childhood education. Among other measures, it is redesigning spaces and playgrounds for 3,000 children by the end of 2021. This will encourage more play and exercise after the lockdowns. The project has a special focus on refugees and children with disabilities. —

## Thinking ahead

**TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS** In Senegal there is great, yet barely tapped potential for renewable energy. To make better use of this, GIZ is supporting a master's degree course in renewable energy and energy efficiency at three of the country's universities, on behalf of BMZ. This includes providing advice on the course content, establishing contact with the private sector and training teaching staff. The motto is education for sustainability. —

## Defying the crisis



**SCHOOLING** Yemen has been in a state of civil war for many years, with the United Nations classifying the situation in the country as a humanitarian crisis. In order to allow children to still experience a degree of normality despite these terrible circumstances, GIZ is working on behalf of BMZ to keep classes going. This entails, among other things, training teachers and psychologists, and providing school materials such as books, writing desks and blackboards. —

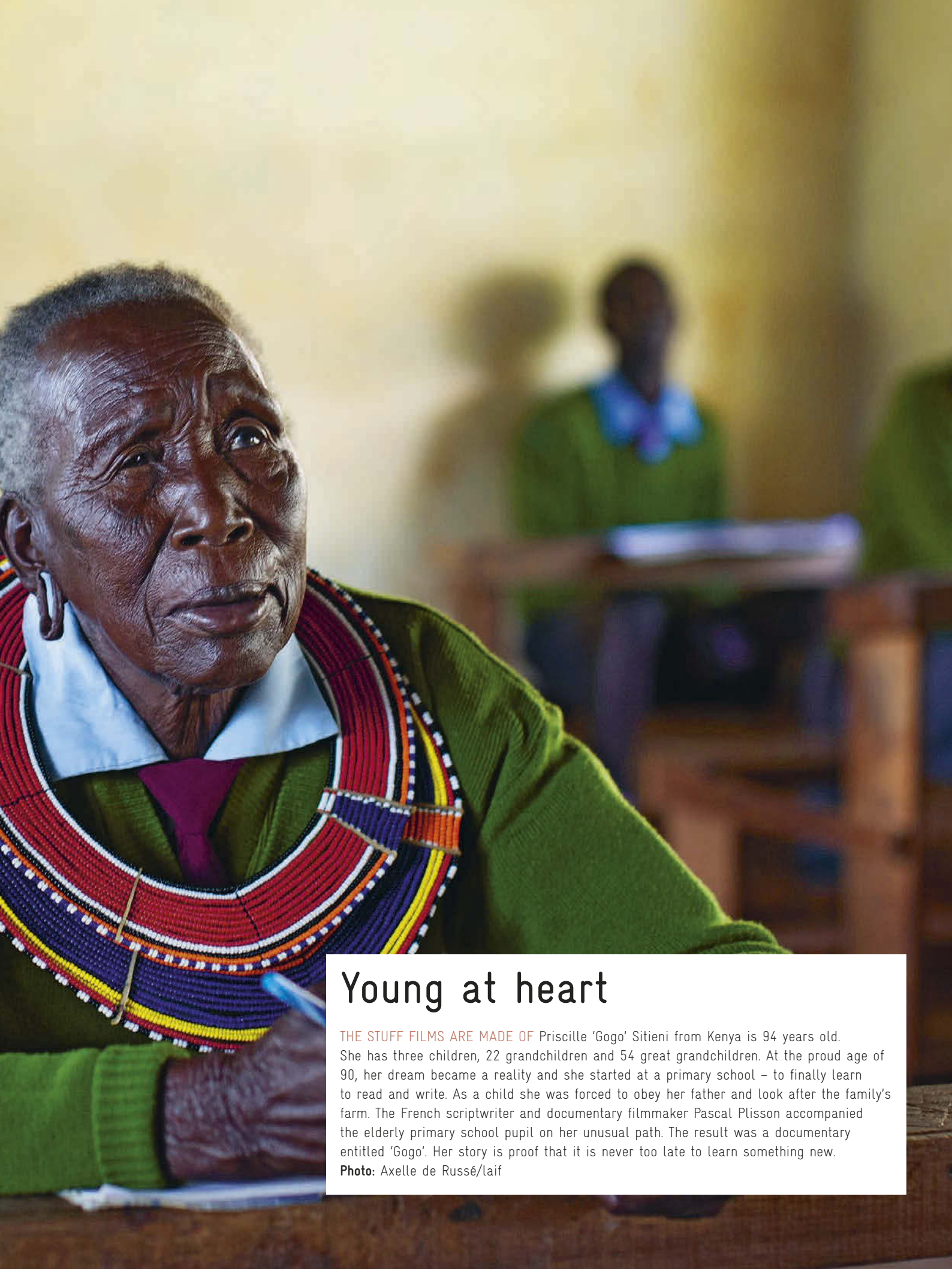
## 30,000 trainees

**PIONEERING** In Mexico's emerging economy, industry and services are growing at a rapid pace, thereby creating a demand for more and more well-trained professionals. However, the vocational education and training system is unable to meet this demand, either in terms of content or numbers. For this reason, GIZ is promoting the expansion of dual vocational education and training in Mexico, on behalf of BMZ. This emphasises the use of digital solutions, in particular, allowing the workforce of the future to deliver what the labour market needs most. —

## 1,400 teachers

**CLEVER** Teaching is something that has to be learned. In Mozambique, on behalf of BMZ and with cofinancing from Norway, GIZ is supporting teacher training to improve participants' digitalisation skills and introduce them to teaching methods that actively involve the pupils. This will make classes better, more modern and more exciting. Overall, the programme is reaching around 1,400 trainee teachers, who are becoming familiar with whiteboards, tablets and digital learning software. —





## Young at heart

**THE STUFF FILMS ARE MADE OF** Priscille 'Gogo' Sitieni from Kenya is 94 years old. She has three children, 22 grandchildren and 54 great grandchildren. At the proud age of 90, her dream became a reality and she started at a primary school – to finally learn to read and write. As a child she was forced to obey her father and look after the family's farm. The French scriptwriter and documentary filmmaker Pascal Plisson accompanied the elderly primary school pupil on her unusual path. The result was a documentary entitled 'Gogo'. Her story is proof that it is never too late to learn something new.

**Photo:** Axelle de Russé/laif

A man with a friendly expression, wearing a white lab coat over a dark blue shirt and a white hairnet, stands in a brightly lit industrial hallway. He is looking towards the camera. The background shows glass panels and a clean, modern environment.

## YMER BERISHA

The director of the Bylmeti dairy company in Kosovo can be proud of what he has achieved in life. Thanks to good training, plenty of energy and some helpful support when times were hard, he has built a prospering business.

# FROM HOMEMADE YOGHURT TO DAIRY DIRECTOR

Ymer Berisha does not believe in giving up. Over the past 20 years he has overcome many obstacles to build one of Kosovo's most successful milk-processing companies. He received support along the way, including from Germany.



**R**eally, it was pure chance that set Ymer Berisha on the path to business success. In the mid-1970s, his family lived in the picturesque village of Miradi e Epërme in central Kosovo, which was then part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. His father was a caretaker at the local dairy. One day he came home from work and asked his seven children, ‘Which of you has nearly finished school?’ It was 14-year-old Ymer who would be leaving school next.

Ymer’s father had learned that the dairy was offering a bursary to study at a vocational school in the Serbian town of Pirot, 300 kilometres away. After talking it over with his parents, Ymer decided to go to the school, specialising in dairy work, despite still being so young and the fact that it would mean being separated from his family. Even at such an early age, there were signs of determination and courage – traits which decades later would help him to become the head of one of Kosovo’s most successful milk-processing businesses. Despite many obstacles along the way.

## Yoghurt as a way to survive

Ymer Berisha completed his training in Serbia and returned home in 1980, working as a dairy technician. Then he lost his job. In 1989, shortly before the start of the bloodshed that was to lead to the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, the then Serbian President withdrew all of Kosovo’s autonomy rights. One result of this was that vast numbers of Albanians lost their jobs, and schools segregated children by ethnic background. These were very turbulent times, and thousands of Kosovo Albanians soon moved to other European countries seeking asylum, safety and a better life. The Kosovar diaspora provided support for many people in their old homeland.

Ymer Berisha, though, followed a different script. Just a week after losing his job at the dairy, he took a large cooking pot, filled it with milk from the family cows and began making yoghurt. ‘I started out with 30 litres of milk,’ he recalls. ‘I was unemployed, but I knew about dairy work – and what else could I have done?’ He still vividly remembers spending two sleepless nights trying to work out what to do next. Then it came to him. He potted up the yoghurt and drove to the capital of Kosovo, Pristina, where he offered his product to the owner of a well-known snack bar selling bureks (popular small baked flaky pastries often eaten with a yoghurt dip).

Ymer Berisha’s yoghurt was a hit from the start, and demand soon took off from other snack bars and local markets. As time went on, the young businessman began to employ other family members in production and bought extra milk from relatives and neighbours. To begin with, however, his business was not officially registered, and the Serbian police closed it down several times. In 1997, though, Ymer finally obtained a licence. Bylmeti – the name means ‘milk products’ – was officially established as a business, albeit run out of a room in his home. However, shortly afterwards, the war in Kosovo

forced the Berisha family to flee. Their house was burned down, and all the dairy equipment was stolen.

## Back to square one

When the war came to an end in June 1999, Ymer Berisha returned to his ruined village. ‘Starting again was worse than in 1990,’ he says: ‘This time, I didn’t just have very little money to start out with, I was actually in debt.’ Before the war his business had grown steadily, and by the time hostilities broke out it was processing up to 2,500 litres of milk a day. But now everything had gone.

That summer, British troops from the KFOR NATO mission came across Ymer Berisha and offered him a chance to start rebuilding his production facilities. His business reopened with capacity to process 200 litres of milk a day. On behalf of the German Government, GIZ’s predecessor organisation GTZ was also supporting small Kosovar businesses like Berisha’s. Within a short space of time, GTZ organised the milk churns that the small-scale milk producers in the villages urgently needed, along with small trucks and processing machinery to boost production. With this support, the family business gradually built up its capacity again. The plant now directly employs 72 people, and produces 30 different dairy products, some of them for export. And almost 400 farms currently supply Bylmeti. It’s a striking success story.

When 60-year-old Ymer Berisha stands outside his company in his home village and reflects on his life, he often looks back fondly on those early days. ‘People often ask how they can start a business without money. For me it was the other way around. Poverty forced me to think about what I could do, and to start the business you see today.’ —

Yoghurt dip with burek pastry snacks – a winning combination that helped Ymer Berisha on his way when he launched his business



# CUSTODIANS OF NATURAL TREASURES

Algeria is rich in biological diversity. The coastal regions in the north are home to many rare delights. Rural women there show how sustainable management in protected areas can work, while strengthening their role in society.

## ALGERIA

Capital: Algiers / Population: 43.05 million /  
Human Development Index ranking: 91 (out of 189)



Sources: World Bank, WorldAtlas

Covering an area of some 2.4 million square kilometres, this country of the Maghreb is the largest country in Africa. It is situated between Morocco and Tunisia along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

Algeria has set up more than ten national parks and conservation areas to protect its ecosystems and their biodiversity.

‘We learned how to protect nature, harvest crops sustainably and market the products.’



**AMEL BENDJMIL (47)**, *Chair of the Fleur de l'Edough (flower of the Edough Massif) cooperative in north-eastern Algeria*

‘I used to just stay at home all the time, taking care of my family and the household. Nobody was interested in us rural women. Life was very limited. When I saw women going to work, I started to ask myself why I couldn't do that as well. Eventually, the project presented me with a unique opportunity. The people from GIZ came to our community, explained what it was all about and asked whether I would like to join in. With their help we learned how to protect nature, grow and harvest crops sustainably, run a cooperative and market the products. We simply weren't aware of the fantastic resources out there in our forests. Now we make essential oils out of wild pistachios, rosemary, laurel and eucalyptus. We produce aromatic waters, soaps and skin creams. Our income makes us financially independent and we don't have to ask our husbands for money all the time. This gives us a completely different social status. In the early days people would talk, asking why my husband let me be out of the house all day and travel to other places. However, he and my family began to trust me more and more and actually encouraged me to do this work. In the end, we even had trips to trade fairs in Tunisia and Germany. Now I'm responsible for the house, my work and the women in the cooperative. I have to be there for them and motivate them, as well as dealing with marketing. We want our products to be the best, and sell them in this country and abroad. Yes, we do have dreams. If a woman has help and support, she can do good things for herself and others. If you see women that way, you feel that you have a goal in life.’ —

## INTERVIEW



Lydia Nait Kaci was responsible for the Environmental Governance and Biodiversity project (Gouvernance environnementale et biodiversité, GENBI) at Algeria's Ministry of the Environment, and is now involved in the follow-on project there, Protection of the Environment and Biodiversity in Algeria's Coastal Regions.

# 'Balance between income and protecting resources'

**Why did the Algerian Government choose to work with GIZ as its partner in the Environmental Governance and Biodiversity project?**

Algeria has a national biodiversity strategy, which focuses among other things on value chains and enhancing the value of resources. This has the effect of involving the local population and can help preserve biodiversity in the protected areas. If we raise people's awareness and make plain to them the benefits of protecting the environment and conserving nature, that contributes towards the achievement of our goals. We have carried out successful work on protected herbs in this project.

**How, exactly, are the women's activities incorporated into management of the national parks?**

The parks play a part in generating income for their residents. At the same time, we must protect the resources, and thanks to the project we have found a balance between the two. Training and awareness-raising measures have helped the women learn

how to take care of wild pistachio as a resource, for example, and manage it sustainably. At the Ministry, we drew up a usage plan to be used as a basis for allocating the women plots of land for harvesting the plants. The rural women are always involved in all the planning.

**Can this be used as a model for nature conservation and sustainable management?**

Definitely. We have already organised workshops in other districts to pass on the lessons that have been learned. However, studies of the resource situation like those we had in the north-eastern regions of El Kala and the Edough Massif have not been carried out everywhere. We are working on these now in the follow-on project, Protection of the Environment and Biodiversity in Algeria's Coastal Regions, or PECLA for short. It is very much based on experience gained in GENBI, in other words how to strike a balance between income and protecting resources – in this case fisheries. –

## WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES SHOW THE WAY

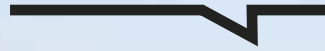
Indigenous plants and fruits have long been used in traditional medicine and cosmetics in Algeria. In the north-eastern coastal regions of El Kala and the Edough Massif, local women who are the custodians of this knowledge have used it to devise a **business model**. At the initiative of GIZ, they came together in 2018 to form the country's first women's private cooperatives. On behalf of BMZ, GIZ supported them with expertise and materials. There are now 95 women organised in five of these cooperatives. They used to work on their own, or not at all. Now they all work together, using the **operational and marketing structures** that they have created. They form **networks**, attend management courses and take part in national and international trade fairs. In this way, they learn to increase production efficiency and broaden their product range. The transformation **from housewife to entrepreneur** has fundamentally changed their position within society, which is rural and very conservative. The women are part of the local population of two **national parks**, one existing and one planned, and are involved in drawing up the usage plans for them. This is intended to guarantee the women a long-term source of income and prevent the overexploitation of resources. As a result, the state gains partners who strengthen rural economic structures and the **biodiversity conservation** projects at the same time.

Contact: Rolf Dietmar, [rolf.dietmar@giz.de](mailto:rolf.dietmar@giz.de)

The project contributes to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



## ‘Cooperatives are the driver of Algeria’s agriculture sector.’



**DJAMEL CHAÏB (40)**, owner of the Algerian company Biosource, which distributes plant-based oils, essential oils and hydrolates (aromatic waters) in Algeria and abroad

‘The zeal of the rural women inspired me – and the thought that I could do something for the development of these neglected, impoverished regions. That motivated me tremendously to be a link in this chain. I strongly believe that cooperatives are the driver of the agriculture sector. That’s why I supported the cooperatives with my expertise and technical equipment, for example a distiller. I also entered into a fair trade agreement with them, the very first of its kind in Algeria. Cooperating with them in this way is very advantageous for me economically. I’m well aware of the high value of their products and am willing to pay a suitably high price for that high quality. Another reason why I thought the project a good idea from the outset was that it has a certain underlying ethical spirit. That’s something that was always my aim: ethics at work. I feel very strongly about preserving anything that is rare and endemic, and giving it the value it deserves. The women harvest what they need with care and a lot of love. They know they are touching the soul of the plants. This is why I present their products for sale as the most exclusive in my entire range and enclose a brief outline of their story. This type of “storytelling” increases their worth even more, and above all speaks to those among my customers who value an ethically sound product. And, not to forget, I’m doing my bit to help improve living standards for these women.’ —

**‘I took part  
in all the courses.’**



**FATMA ZOHRA TABET (26), *member of the Fleur de l'Edough cooperative***

‘I actually trained as a construction engineer at a technical school, but I never earned any money in that profession because there aren't any jobs. So the cooperative gave me a good opportunity to start working. The GIZ team spoke to women directly in our region here. At first I thought, well, it's better than nothing. But I've been involved for two years now and I've grown to really like the work. I've taken part in all the courses on medicinal plants, sustainable development, marketing, finance and management. When GIZ provided us with a distiller to broaden our product range, I decided to specialise in distilling. The other women are a little older and were wary of touching the equipment. They were frightened that it might explode. To be honest, at first I was scared too that it would all blow up in my face, but now I really enjoy it. It isn't that complicated at all. We used to just dry plants. Now we produce essential oils and aromatic waters and have extended our range to include soaps and creams. It would be good if we could grow the plants ourselves in greenhouses, too. Then we wouldn't have to spend so much on transport. Up to now, we've had to hire a vehicle to drive into the mountains. If we grew our own, we could increase yields and reduce costs. Not only that – we want to get our products certified so that we can sell them to pharmacies as well. That will add to our profits, and we can invest more in materials such as hoses, pumps, packaging or labels. I think our cooperative really does have a future. We just need to keep working hard.’ —

# EDITOR'S

## *Digital Picks*

## Strong voices for education

**CAMPAIGN** The Global Campaign for Education promotes and defends education as a basic human right. It runs large-scale campaigns to address pressing inadequacies and presents profiles of individuals and their education story in its blog. Its goal is free, high-quality, public education for everyone around the world. –

[campaignforeducation.org](http://campaignforeducation.org)



## Global knowledge

**PODCAST** In TopClass, authors and researchers from the OECD deliver insights on education practices worldwide. Each episode focuses on a specific issue that is shaping the education landscape, such as mental health, artificial intelligence or consequences of the pandemic. –

[soundcloud.com/oecdtopclasspodcast](https://soundcloud.com/oecdtopclasspodcast)

## Female power

**DOSSIER** Girls' education is essential for sustainable development, including as a means of curbing child marriage. In 2017, more than 41,000 girls under the age of 18 got married every day. Girls with secondary schooling are up to six times less likely to marry so early as those children with little or no education. –

[www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation](http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation)

## Let's talk!

**FORUM** Education is a controversial matter. on\_education is an online journal that aims to stimulate public and academic debate on the theory and practice of education and to break up 'echo chambers'. Each issue addresses a topic of current interest and includes a minimum of five short essays or opinion pieces by guest contributors. –

[www.oneducation.net](http://www.oneducation.net)

## Looking to the future

**OUTLOOK** What will education look like in 20 years from now? Will we continue fine-tuning today's concepts or break away completely from the system of schooling as we know it? And what role will technology play? Four scenarios show possible alternatives and help to develop agile and responsive systems. –

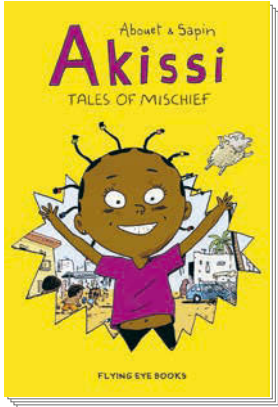
[weforum.org](http://weforum.org) (search for: future of education)





# CHILDREN'S BOOKS

*from around the world*



## AKISSI – TALES OF MISCHIEF

Akissi lives with her parents, her big brother Fofana and her big sister Victorine in the city of Abidjan, in Côte d'Ivoire. Tales of all the things she gets up to are told in 14 short comic-style stories. Akissi is creative and fearless in her day-to-day life and the stories offer an insight into the life of a middle-class Ivorian family. –

**Marguerite Abouet, Mathieu Sapin,**  
Flying Eye Books, 188 pages,  
6 years and above

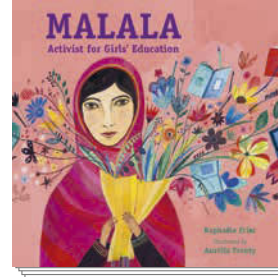
These books were selected from recommendations made by the Fachstelle Kinderwelten für Vorurteilsbewusste Bildung und Erziehung, an initiative promoting prejudice-conscious education. A full list, broken down by topic and age group, is available here (in German): [www.kinderwelten.net](http://www.kinderwelten.net)



## GOOD NIGHT STORIES FOR REBEL GIRLS

Special good night stories in the form of 100 tales of extraordinary women. The authors relate one hundred life stories of strong women who have made history or are still doing so. Forgotten women and pioneers are thrust back into the limelight. –

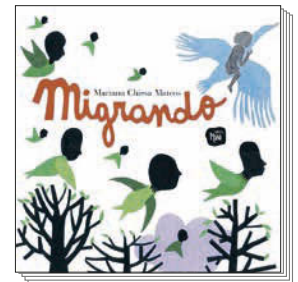
**Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo,**  
Particular Books,  
224 pages, 10 years and above



## MALALA: ACTIVIST FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION

This book tells the story of Malala, the girl who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2014 for her courageous commitment to education as a human right for all children. With full-page, mostly brightly coloured images, the book shows its readers that Malala had a beautiful childhood in Pakistan. Through her global campaigning, Malala makes it clear that children suffer most from war and violence. She gives children courage to stand up for greater justice. –

**Raphaële Frier,**  
Aurélia Fronty, Charlesbridge,  
48 pages, 6 – 9 years



## MIGRANDO

A book about migration with no words, and two title images on the front and back. The author tells two stories of migration from different eras: 1920 and today. The book succeeds in making migration an issue that all children can grasp – children who have had experience of migration themselves or in their families, and those who have not yet come across it in their world. –

**Mariana Chiesa Mateos,**  
Orecchio Acerbo, 64 pages,  
6 years and above

## Introducing

GIZ is always looking for experts for its projects. Why not visit our 'Jobs and careers' page: [www.giz.de/careers](http://www.giz.de/careers).

7:42 PM

From: **Janina Marie Laurent** >  
To: ★ **all akzente readers**

### An exceptional journey in exceptional times

Today, 4:53 pm

Iakwe from the Marshall Islands!

That's how you greet people here, 13,000 kilometres from Germany. Getting to my workplace was a real adventure. I travelled part of the way – from Hawaii to Majuro, the capital of the country – on a cargo sailing ship. During the pandemic, this was the only option; all flights to the island nation had been cancelled. The sailing ship was built in Bremen in 1952 and had been used as a ferry between Hawaii and Kiribati before now being deployed in the Marshall Islands. A proper two-master, like you see in the pirate films.

The advantage of this traditional means of transport is that its greenhouse gas emissions are minimal. For the Marshall Islands, a state spread across more than 1,000 islands, it is an ideal way of getting around – for goods and for people. My job is to support the government in developing solutions for low-emission shipping. This country has the third-largest shipping register in the world. As in other regions of the globe, a cargo sailing ship can be a useful alternative to ships powered by internal combustion engines.

The government is very interested in climate-friendly solutions because the land lies no more than two metres above sea level. Shoreline reinforcement has already had to be put in place to prevent damage from heavy rainfall, rising sea levels and ever more frequent flooding. GIZ is also supporting Marshall Islands' presence at the International Maritime Organization. The country already has a reputation there as being a strong advocate for climate action. In addition, we are training canoe builders so that they can pass on their knowledge as trainers. They are carrying on the age-old tradition of canoe building while at the same time offering an excellent alternative to motorised boats used for fishing and transportation between the islands.

The only drawback of this location that I can think of is the lack of fresh fruit. Fruit doesn't grow on the atoll – it has to be imported. The staple food is fish, which is cooked in very tasty ways. I'm really enjoying my work and living on the Marshall Islands.

Best regards,

Janina Marie Laurent

# SUSTAINABILITY

A look back at a project and its results



**Project:** Promotion of Rural Electrification through Renewable Energies

**Country:** Madagascar / **Commissioned by:** German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

**Term:** January 2015 to March 2022 / **Evaluation period:** January 2015 to March 2019

## THEN

Madagascar has great potential for various forms of **renewable energy** such as hydro-power and solar power. However, the majority of the country's energy continues to be generated from fossil sources, and only **15 per cent of the population** have access to electricity at all. In rural areas, the figure is actually below five per cent. All this has serious consequences for the country and its people. Forests are being cut down, for example, threatening the habitats of many of Madagascar's animal species. And without electricity, access to **education and health care** is more difficult, too. Moreover, economic development in the country as a whole is held back. Politicians and administrators in Madagascar recognised that it is very important to give more people **access to electricity** and to increase reliance on renewable energy sources. They would therefore like to reshape the country's energy policy. The project supports them in doing this, and is aimed at state and private sector actors.

## NOW

The project helped to make the investment climate for renewable energy more attractive, leading to **greater investment in the energy sector**. It achieved this first and foremost by advising state actors. One result was an improvement in the terms for public tenders. In 2018, a **new electricity act** was adopted that now provides legal certainty for private investors in the renewable energy field. Consequently, **EUR 1.4 billion** of private investment was raised for the two largest hydropower projects in the country's history. These schemes are set to increase Madagascar's electricity generating capacity by **more than 300 megawatts** by 2025. The project was also instrumental in connecting around **70,000 households** to an electricity supply from **renewable energy sources** during its term. Now, **eleven per cent** of people in rural areas have access to electricity.

<https://mia.giz.de/qlink/ID=246990000>

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Registered offices  
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Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 36, 53113 Bonn, Germany  
T +49 228 44 60-0, F +49 228 44 60-17 66

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5, 65760 Eschborn, Germany  
T +49 61 96 79-0, F +49 61 96 79-11 15

**E:** akzente@giz.de  
**I:** akzente.giz.de/en

Sabine Tonscheidt,  
Director of Corporate Communications (GIZ)

**Responsible:** Ute Schaeffer, Head of Media and Public Relations and Press Spokesperson (GIZ)

### Content concept and editing:

GIZ: Nicole Annette Mueller (editor)  
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**Education** [ ,edʒʊ 'keɪf(ə)n] is a human right and the key to individual and social development. It enables people to develop their personalities and lead a fulfilled life. Education strengthens democracy and promotes tolerance and a cosmopolitan outlook. It is also a condition for sustainability. To develop its full potential, education must be inclusive, equitable and high quality.

Source: UNESCO

As a service provider with worldwide operations in the fields of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education, GIZ works with its partners to develop effective solutions that offer people better prospects and sustainably improve their living conditions. GIZ is a public-benefit federal enterprise and supports the German Government and a host of public and private sector clients in a wide variety of areas, including economic development and employment promotion, energy and the environment, and peace and security.

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