UNICEF and Microsoft launch global learning platform to help address COVID-19 education crisis

NEW YORK, 20 April 2020 – UNICEF and Microsoft Corp. today announced the expansion of a global learning platform to help children and youth affected by COVID-19 continue their education at home.

The Learning Passport started off as a partnership between UNICEF, Microsoft and the University of Cambridge and its departments Cambridge University Press and Cambridge Assessment, designed to provide education for displaced and refugee children through a digital remote learning platform. It has now undergone rapid expansion to facilitate country-level curriculum for children and youth whose schools have been forced to close due to COVID-19. The platform will also provide key resources to teachers and educators.

“From school closures, to isolation, to a persistent sense of fear and anxiety, the effects of this pandemic are impacting childhoods worldwide,” said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director. “We need to come together and explore every avenue to keep children learning and help them through this difficult time. With long-term partners like Microsoft, we are able to swiftly deploy innovative, scalable solutions for children and youth. The adaptations made to the Learning Passport are a powerful reminder of what we can achieve together for children as the crisis deepens globally.”
According to the latest available data from UNESCO, 1.57 billion students have been affected by school closures in more than 190 countries worldwide.[1]

The Learning Passport, which has been in development for the past 18 months, was due to start as a pilot programme this year. When the global pandemic hit and schools were closed worldwide, the programme underwent rapid expansion of its reach. Now all countries with a curriculum capable of being taught online will be able to facilitate online learning for children and youth with devices at home.

Kosovo, Timor-Leste and Ukraine – which have closed their school gates in the past weeks to help halt transmission of the virus – are the first to roll out their online curriculum through the Learning Passport. The content available to schoolchildren includes online books, videos and additional support for parents of children with learning disabilities.

“Just as COVID-19’s impact has no borders, its solutions must not have borders, as it requires the collaboration across public and private sectors to ensure every student stays engaged and continues learning,” said Brad Smith, President of Microsoft. “UNICEF’s Learning Passport is uniquely positioned as a scalable learning solution to bridge the digital learning gap for millions of students to bring their classroom into their home during the pandemic.”

Children and young people continuing their education online can do so through a country-specific platform, accessed via their country’s learningpassport.unicef.org page. The platform for each country provides a digitized curriculum with textbooks and a selection of supplemental content, in national languages, that is jointly curated at country-level to best serve learners’ and educators’ specific needs. The Learning Passport captures a record of the curriculum subjects each student learns and guides learners with little additional support needed.

The Learning Passport is an example of how UNICEF partners with business – based on a shared-value approach, where producing social value and addressing its challenges also makes perfect business sense.

The Learning Passport is part of the Generation Unlimited Global Breakthrough on Remote Learning and Work that aims to use technology to address challenges faced by learners, facilitators and education providers, particularly

[1] https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse
in conflict-affected and humanitarian contexts. Generation Unlimited is a global multi-sector partnership to meet the urgent need for expanded education, training and employment opportunities for young people.

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**Notes to editors:**

Download multimedia content here: [https://weshare.unicef.org/Package/2AM408XP2EHX](https://weshare.unicef.org/Package/2AM408XP2EHX)

All references to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

**About Microsoft**

Microsoft (Nasdaq “MSFT” @microsoft) enables digital transformation for the era of an intelligent cloud and an intelligent edge. Its mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

**About Generation Unlimited**

Generation Unlimited is global partnership working to prepare young people to become productive and engaged citizens. It connects secondary-age education and training to employment and entrepreneurship, empowering every young person to thrive in the world of work.

**About UNICEF**

UNICEF works in some of the world’s toughest places, to reach the world’s most disadvantaged children. Across 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone. For more information about UNICEF and its work for children, visit [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org). Follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com).

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