

*The IBE vision:
A world where each and every
person is assured quality education
and relevant lifelong learning.*



2015

International Bureau of Education

IBE

INFOCUS

2015



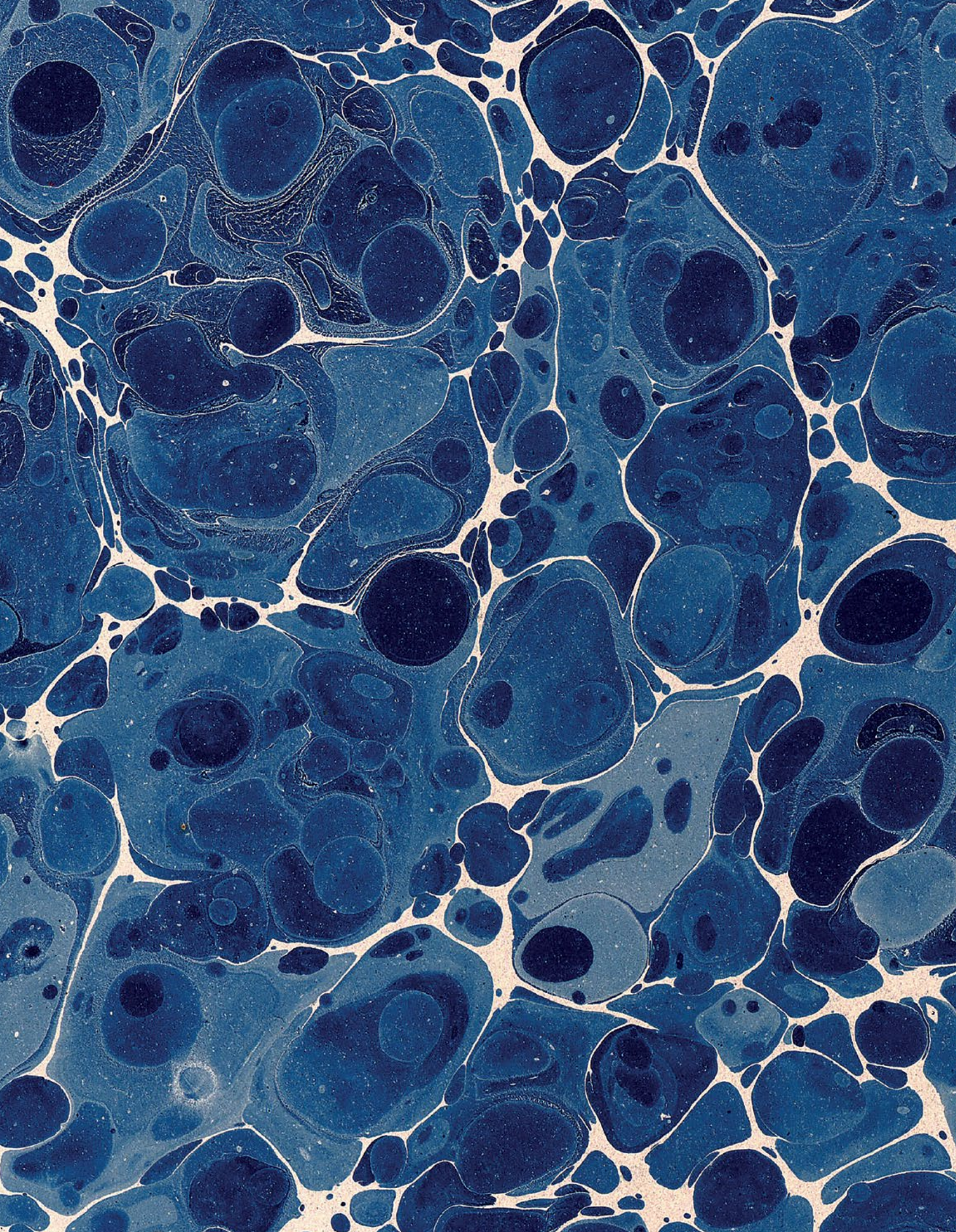
90 YEARS

OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

1925

2015

2015: WHAT *a YEAR it WAS!* | NINE DECADES *of* GLOBAL LEADERSHIP *in* EDUCATION | CONSERVING *and* RESTORING
an INTANGIBLE HERITAGE | CLOSING *the* KNOWLEDGE CREATION *and* APPLICATION GAP | Q&A *with* KEN BANKS
TRANSFORMING READING CURRICULA *in the* SAHEL | ADDRESSING GENDER INEQUALITY *in* STEM





Message from the Director



It is with great pleasure that I present this inaugural issue of *IBE In Focus*, the annual magazine of the International Bureau of Education (IBE). This magazine is meant to bring the IBE to the world, and to share with the public its key achievements and challenges for the year in focus. *IBE In Focus* captures critical moments of each year at the IBE, showcases the IBE’s flagship programs and gives the reader a textured feel for our work. The pages are of course too few to capture the breadth and depth of what the IBE is all about. But I trust that this magazine will serve as a virtual door through which you can come and experience the rich, intangible heritage that the IBE has accumulated over the nine decades of its existence.

IBE In Focus also prepares its readers for what’s to come by foreshadowing prospective efforts for the following year, ensuring that its keen readers and followers stay tuned!

This inaugural issue is special on several grounds. It is the very first publication of its kind, a medium through which the IBE reaches out to the public to inform them of its work. It coincides with the 90th anniversary of the IBE, which was established in 1925, a good two decades before the UN and UNESCO. It marks the 45th anniversary of the IBE’s *Prospects*, one of the oldest and most continuously published journals of international and comparative education. *IBE In Focus 2015* also coincides with exciting global landmarks: the 70th anniversary of IBE’s younger relatives, the UN and UNESCO; the end of two and half decades of the Education for All movement; and the turning of a new page from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals. On a lighter note, it captures my first full year as the director of the IBE.

As the first in the series, *IBE In Focus 2015* introduces the IBE’s rich history to the general public around the world. It demonstrates that unlike other premier institutions that lead the course of global education today, such as UNESCO and the World Bank, the IBE is not among the post-war institutions that were meant to promote peace, reconciliation and reconstruction. It was established to provide global intellectual leadership, to convene global dialogue on education and to set global education policies. The IBE has enjoyed its global convening power since 1929, when it became the very first intergovernmental institution on education. Since then, it has periodically convened intellectual, political and technical leaders, along with other stakeholders, to discuss and set global policies and programs in education.

With this magazine I invite the world to celebrate the IBE’s Ninety-Year Quest for Excellence in Education and to share the IBE’s commemorative logo: a collector’s item for supporters and followers of the IBE, a piece of history!

I am therefore very proud to launch *IBE In Focus* in such a momentous year.

Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope
Director, IBE-UNESCO



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Foreshadowing 2016

Statement from the President of the IBE Council



Dr. Godswill Obioma
*President, IBE Council
2014-2015*

It has been an unprecedented privilege to serve as Council President for the IBE-UNESCO from 2014 to 2015. This has been a period of intense institutional transformation, as the IBE, a UNESCO Category I Institute, takes firm ground as a global Centre of Excellence (CoE) in curriculum and related matters. Council members, the IBE director, and the entire IBE staff have worked relentlessly, not only reinforcing the foundation for this transformation and related work, but also vigorously pursuing this vision. The task has been hugely demanding and challenging—and tremendously rewarding. I also wish to recognize the many Member States and the IBE partners all over the world that have contributed immensely to the process of rethinking the IBE’s identity, mandates and functions in light of the emerging agenda on global education that focuses more closely on the role of curriculum in the quality, equity and relevance of education and lifelong learning.

The IBE is energetically promoting curriculum as crucial in today’s complex and fast-changing world. So I see how vital the IBE’s support is for countries that are putting their national aspirations and goals into practice by pursuing more appropriate processes of curriculum reform. What underpins the IBE’s work across regions and countries is its broad understanding of curriculum: reflecting the development and social objectives pursued by countries and encompassing the why, what, when and how of education and learning.

The IBE faced many challenges in reviewing its governance structure and programmatic work, so it can function more effectively within its mandate as a global CoE. The IBE Council was reduced from 28 to 12 members, to make governance more efficient and effective. The IBE statutes were also revised to reflect its new mandate as a global CoE. The Council’s working languages were reduced to English and French, to reduce operational costs. However, Arabic

and other languages may still be used during Council sessions, if funds are available.

Regarding strategic and programmatic work, the new IBE director, Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope, has capably and decisively led us in accelerating the implementation of the CoE strategy through six program areas endorsed by the IBE Council in 2015. These are: (1) Innovation and Leadership in Curriculum and Learning; (2) Critical and Current Issues in Curriculum, Learning and Assessment (CLA); (3) Systems Strengthening of the Quality and Development-Relevance of Education and Learning; (4) Knowledge Creation and Management in CLA; (5) Leadership for Global Dialogue on CLA; and (6) Institutional and Organizational Development of the IBE. The IBE’s organizational structure and institutional arrangements were realigned, allowing for more coherence and strategic integration.

I am deeply impressed by this comprehensive and ongoing reform process. I believe that the IBE is in a better position than ever before to play a key role in implementing the global Education 2030 Agenda. The IBE can now strategically reposition curriculum as a key driver of equitable quality education and learning and as an essential enabler of the attainment of SDG4. Countries are increasingly demanding the IBE’s support in light of this new agenda.

As this annual magazine shows, the IBE offers an impressive portfolio of programs, services, and products to UNESCO Member States. Given its expertise and its passionate and dedicated work, I have good reason to be optimistic about the IBE’s future.

Reflections from UNESCO’s Assistant Director-General for Education



Dr. Qian Tang
*UNESCO Assistant
Director-General for
Education*

I am really pleased to introduce this overview of the IBE’s work during 2015, a year that marks the 90th anniversary of the Bureau. Since its foundation in December 1925 and the adoption in 1929 of new statutes extending membership to governments, the IBE has played a prominent role in the field of education.

I would just like to recall that over many decades the International Conference on Education (ICE) organized by the IBE, since 1934, and later with UNESCO (since 1946), has served to discuss and set the international agenda for education. The ICE produced recommendations and informed global policy and practice on issues that are still relevant today: compulsory education, literacy and lifelong learning; education for international understanding; equality of education opportunities; access of women to education; and inclusive education, to mention a few. And after becoming an integral part of UNESCO in 1969, the IBE has contributed significantly to the objectives of the Education Sector, particularly in the areas of education content, educational information and documentation, comparative education and education research.

I take note, with satisfaction, of the IBE’s recent progress in revising its governance structure and programmatic work in order to strengthen its role as UNESCO’s global CoE in curriculum and related matters, a mandate which is unique within the UN family. The curriculum defines what learners are expected to know and be able to do, and what they are to become in an increasingly complex and fast-changing world. All countries face the challenge of ensuring that citizens of tomorrow are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values needed to live in their world and make it more just.

The Incheon Declaration calls for addressing disparities and inequalities in learning outcomes, mainstreaming gender issues, democratizing learning

opportunities and ensuring the acquisition of foundational skills as well as the competencies that enable citizens to live fulfilled lives and respond to local and global challenges. All of this requires a focus on curriculum as an effective tool for improving quality and ensuring that education contributes to holistic, inclusive and sustainable development.

I am therefore convinced that, given its accumulated experience, specialist knowledge and core programs in the field of CLA, the IBE has a key role to play in the implementation of the global Education 2030 Agenda and that it is uniquely positioned to support Member States in their efforts to introduce innovative approaches to the processes of curriculum design and reform that aim to ensure effective learning opportunities for all.

20

WHAT A YEAR IT WAS!



From any perspective, 2015 was a banner year for the IBE: an unparalleled pace of work, institutional transformation and unprecedented achievements. With a quiet smile, Director Marope notes the IBE's collective accomplishments, but only for a quick moment before she refocuses on the work ahead. As if waking from a sweet dream, she looks at her calendar longingly, showing absolutely no sign of slowing down. The senior management team is immediately called in for the 2016 work program planning meeting. "Oh dear! Here she goes again", team members murmur, with a mix of excitement and concern.

The IBE vision: A world where each and every person is assured quality education and relevant lifelong learning.

*
The 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report (Paris: UNESCO, p. 43), uses the term “qualified successes” to characterize the performance of the Education for All Agenda. The figures used in the next paragraph come from this report.

For education, 2015 was a year of remarkable landmarks, sobering lessons of experience, broken promises, “qualified successes”*, and challenging beginnings. It was the end of the term for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) agenda. No question: 2015 was a year of critical introspection on what went well and what went wrong with internationally agreed goals (IAGs) and targets. Many cities hosted consultations: Paris, Muscat, Incheon, New York, and more. The international community took note of the remarkable progress in opening access to education, particularly at the basic level, and in less-developed countries.

It also acknowledged its broken promises. Consider the 6.2 million under-fives who die each year of preventable causes, the 161 million children with moderate to severe stunting who thus have a dim chance at effective lifelong learning, the 58 million children without access to primary education, the 61 million adolescents without access to secondary education, who are most likely to become multiply disengaged and excluded youth, and the 781 million youth and adults without basic literacy skills. Add in the millions of girls who have less chance at schooling

than their brothers, the hundreds of millions of learners exposed to abysmally poor quality and ineffective education and learning experiences, and the many learners from disadvantaged backgrounds who are still excluded from quality education and the benefits it can offer for individual and collective development. It’s clear that, while the global community has a lot to be proud of regarding IAGs for education, a lot more remains to be done.

With perfect 20/20 hindsight, the wisdom gained from long journeys walked, and the unfailing hope on the future, we watched 2015 usher in the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and therein, the global Education 2030 Agenda. It also marked the 70th anniversary of the post-war United Nations and of UNESCO.

The Sustainable Development Goals

SDGs



Source: www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs

Persistent Challenges

Post ~2015



Source: Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2015

Above all, 2015 marked the 90th birthday of the International Bureau of Education: the cradle of global education as we know it today! It welcomed the new director of the IBE, Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope, and bestowed upon her both the great privilege of following in the footsteps of intellectual and education titans (Pierre Bovet, Adolphe Ferrière, Elisabeth Rotten, Pedro Rosselló, Jean Piaget) and the challenge of upholding a 90-year quest for excellence in education.

HEIGHTENING AND SUSTAINING EXCELLENCE IN CURRICULUM

With the introduction of the SDGs and of the global Education 2030 Agenda, the IBE had to define a better articulated and more strategic program over the medium to long term. After weeks of critical reflection, the IBE leadership and teams settled on six program focus areas, well aligned to the institution’s mandate and core functions. Effective implementation of these six programs will accelerate and reinforce the IBE’s CoE status, and will put into action its new vision, also articulated for the very first time in 2015.

Careful thought went into articulating and integrating the six program areas so they can better cohere, balance and mutually reinforce for better impact.

Innovation and Leadership in Curriculum, Learning and Assessment (Norms and standard-setting function)

➡ Re-conceptualizing and repositioning curriculum as central to national and global development dialogue and interventions. It is also aimed at repositioning curriculum as an indispensable tool for giving effect to policies on lifelong learning.

Current and Critical Issues in Curriculum, Learning and Assessment (Laboratory of ideas function)

➡ Developing curriculum frameworks, guidelines and prototypes for areas of high demand and where Member States (MSs) have limited experience and/or areas where MSs are not making desired progress.

Knowledge Creation and Management in Curriculum, Learning and Assessment (Clearinghouse function)

➡ Improving physical and substantive access to evidence-based knowledge required to guide curriculum design and development, as well as teaching, learning and assessment. This involves translating findings from cutting-edge research into easily accessible language with explicit implications for policy and practice. It also involves improving access to knowledge through printed and online documents on the IBE platform.

Systemic Strengthening of Quality and Development Relevance of Education and Learning (Capacity builder function)

➡ Strengthening the capacity of MSs to analyze and address critical impediments that prevent their equitable and resource-efficient provision of quality and development-relevant education and effective lifelong learning opportunities.

Leadership for Global Dialogue on Curriculum, Learning and Assessment (Intellectual leadership function)

➡ Regularizing and strengthening the International Conference on Education (ICE); to reinforce and reposition the IBE as an indispensable global actor and contributor in curriculum design and development; and to strengthen the IBE’s position as a global CoE in curriculum, learning and assessment.

Institutional and Organizational Development (Capacity builder function)

➡ Strengthening the IBE’s capacity to implement the CoE Strategy in preparation for an optimal contribution to SDG4 and the Education 2030 Agenda and to carry out its mandate effectively.

Broadening

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Many hands make light work! To effectively implement the six program areas, the IBE needs the reinforcement of strategic technical and financial partners. So, the IBE team rolled up its sleeves and reached out, starting within the “house”. After all, charity begins at home.

Beyond the “house” itself, the IBE team reached out to governments, foundations, the private sector and civil society groups. Thus, in 2015, the IBE witnessed signing ceremonies and launches of strategic technical and financial partnerships never seen before in its history. “The cradle of global education” recaptured headlines in cities around the world: Geneva, Lausanne, Paris, Macau, Buenos Aires, Palo Alto, Incheon and more!



A leading UNESCO Institute, the IBE is recognized and valued for the specialist knowledge and expertise that it brings to Member States, promoting new shared global understanding of curriculum and related matters.



HQ

curriculum; inclusive education; global citizenship education (GCED); youth education, learning and engagement; education for sustainable development



REGIONAL & FIELD OFFICES

Dar es Salaam:
curriculum review and reform

Kabul:
curriculum reform

Nairobi:
curriculum reform for competency-based curriculum



INSTITUTES (categories I & II)

UIS:
STEM; inclusive education; equity

IIEP:
youth culture and youth education

APCEIU:
GCED



Enhancing

GLOBAL VISIBILITY

Through their magazines, newspapers, websites, and social media, the new partners enhanced the global visibility of the IBE.

The IBE took to the stage to deliver keynote addresses across the world’s most prestigious conferences and events. It led and/or facilitated high-level dialogue in forums and platforms whose participants make life-changing decisions about education.

The IBE also spoke clearly and emphatically on the need for equity of education quality during the Incheon World Education Forum (WEF) and held the first consultations on its proposed global paradigm shift on curriculum. It also reached out to participants at many significant 2015 conferences:

IN the MEDIA

The IBE and Google partnering towards equity of education quality and learning, *United States.*

Interview with Dr. Marope on the importance of public contribution to education, *Lithuania.*

The IBE leads a side event at the World Education Forum, *Korea.*

The IBE launches its 10th diploma edition in curriculum design and development, *Uruguay.*

The IBE moderates presidential candidates’ debate on the country’s future education, *Uruguay.*

+
Read the full articles and much more at: www.ibe.unesco.org/en/news

ON the ROAD

The American Educational Research Association (AERA), *Chicago.*

The Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), *Washington DC.*

The International Symposium on Science for Education/International Brain Research Organization (IBRO), *Rio de Janeiro.*

The Education and Development Forum (UKFIET), *Oxford.*

The Third Google Global Symposium on Education, *Palo Alto.*

The World Education Forum, *Incheon.*

The Intercultural Diplomacy Conference, *Berlin.*

The Global Education Initiative, *Kaunas.*



Traveling **EXHIBITION**

On December 10, 2015, at the UNOG, the IBE launched a travelling exhibition on its 90-year history of intellectual leadership in education. From Geneva, the exhibition will run until the first quarter of 2016, and will reach other world cities: Dubai, Hong Kong and Durban.



On this page:
 The 90th anniversary traveling exhibition enhances the IBE's visibility across world cities Geneva, Dubai and Hong Kong.



IBE keynote speeches and special sessions at various events shone a bright light on its intellectual leadership. Even more, “the cradle of global education” launched the Global Education Initiative of the Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) in Lithuania.

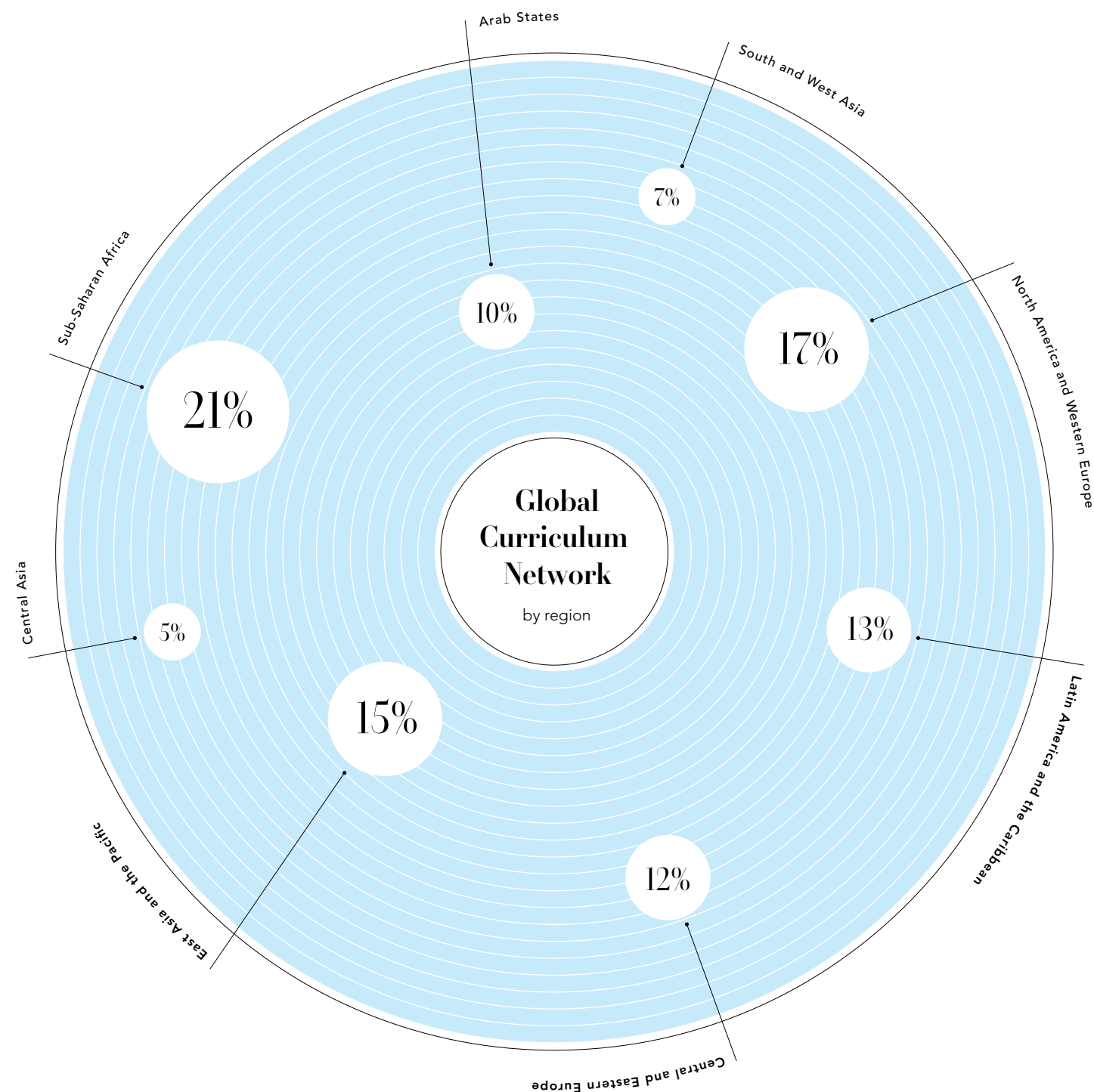
To top it off, the IBE launched its new, exciting and easy-to-navigate website to showcase the richness of its work. For the first time, the IBE occupied virtual spaces on Facebook and Twitter. It blogged about its fledgling initiative: In-Progress Reflections on Critical and Current Issues in Curriculum, Learning and Assessment. By the end of 2015, the IBE’s numbers of Facebook and Twitter followers had risen from 0 to 681, and from 0 to 537, respectively; and the IBE director’s followers rose from 0 to 477.

But using social media was hardly enough. The IBE put its show on the road. Under the chairmanship of Michael Møller, the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG), the IBE briefed international Geneva on what it stands for.

Furthermore, the IBE reached out to the heads of curriculum development centres (CDCs) across UNESCO Member States and established the Global Curriculum Network (GCN). During 2015 alone, 101 countries across all world regions registered for GCN (statistics on page 16).

Overall, 2015 saw the IBE establish a solid platform for better things to come, while also raising the bar for 2016. Read on! [o](#)

Above:
 The IBE briefed International Geneva at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), Palais des Nations, April 2015.



Regional distribution of Global Curriculum Network members

Meet the IBE Staff

The people behind
2015



Mmantsetsa Marope
IBE Director



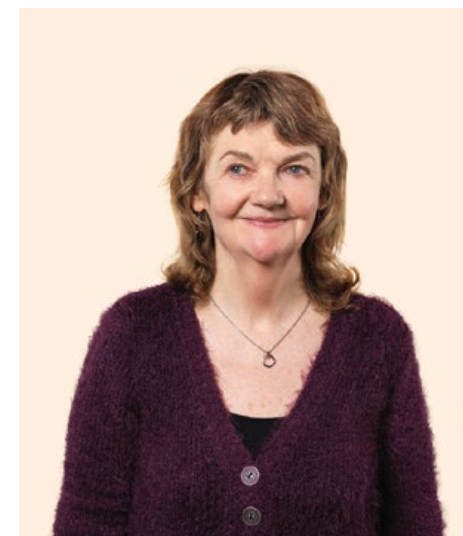
Elisabeth Glauser
Assistant to the Director



Khaled Abdalla
Junior Fellow



Hanspeter Geisseler
Associate Project Officer



Ruth Creamer
Documentalist



Cyrille Leroy
Administrative Assistant



Mohammed Bouassami
Administrative Officer



Natalie Browes
Junior Fellow



Renato Opertti
Senior Program Specialist



Juliette Torabian
Program Specialist



Massimo Amadio
Senior Program Specialist



Kseniia Fontaine
Junior Fellow



Amapola Alama
Program Specialist



Beatrice Addo
Junior Fellow



Simona Popa
Program Specialist



Valéry Kohemun
Administrative Assistant



Émeline Brylinski
Associate Project Officer



Hyekeyung Kang
Junior Fellow



Giorgia Magni
Junior Fellow



Roman Chestnov
Intern



Aurélie Boulos
Associate Project Officer



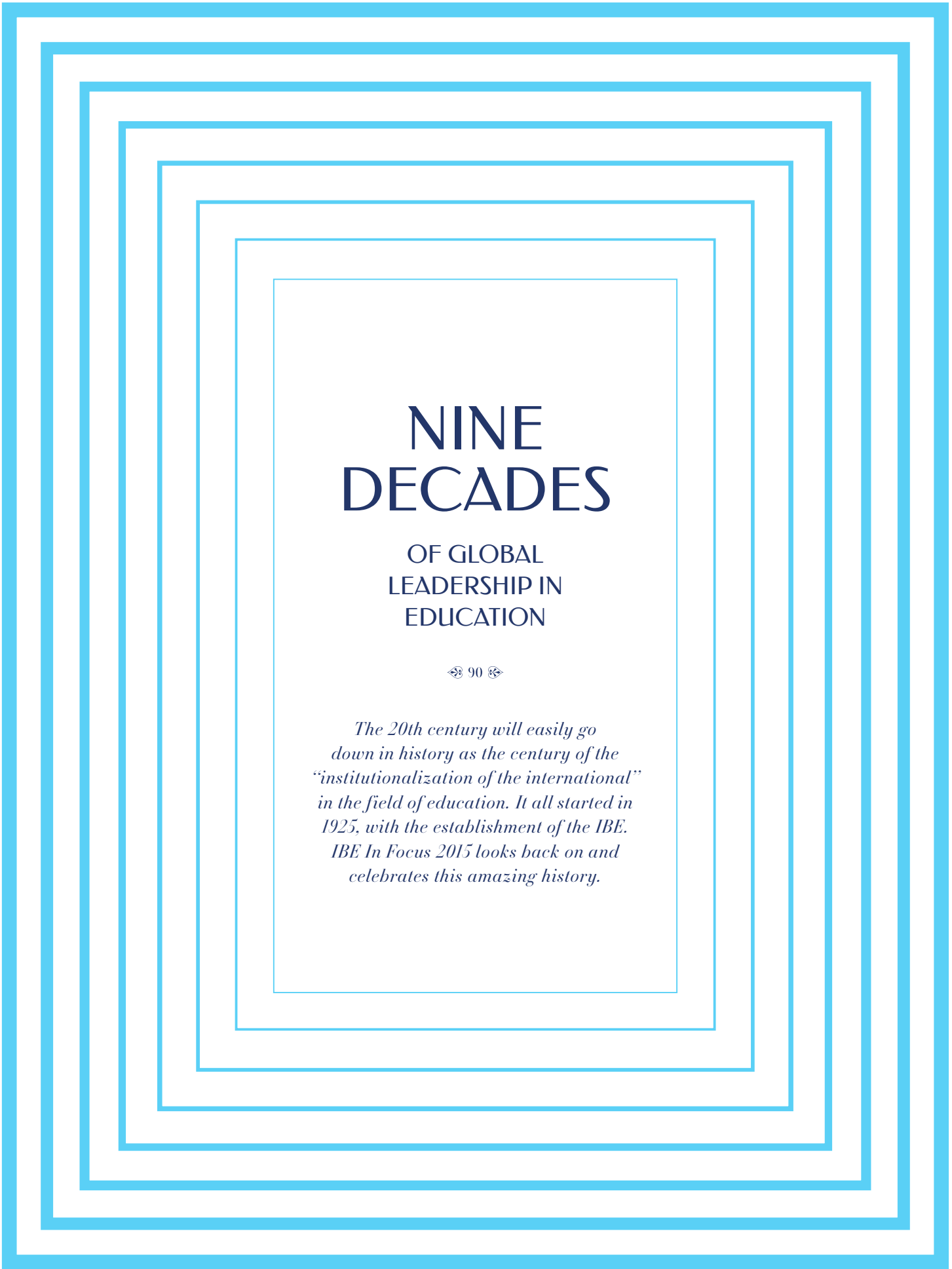
Eren Ozalay
Intern



Gerald Viollet-Bosson
Senior IT Technician



Lili Ji
Assistant Programme Specialist



NINE DECADES

OF GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP IN
EDUCATION

90

The 20th century will easily go down in history as the century of the “institutionalization of the international” in the field of education. It all started in 1925, with the establishment of the IBE. IBE In Focus 2015 looks back on and celebrates this amazing history.

IBE MILESTONES

1925

The IBE is created as a private Swiss association

During its first years, the IBE organized courses, study visits, exhibitions and conferences, and gathered and disseminated information on all matters related to education.

1929

The IBE becomes the first intergovernmental organization in the field of education

Jean Piaget, the eminent Swiss psychologist, is appointed director, with Pedro Rossello, a Spanish educationist, as his deputy. Together, they led the IBE for almost forty years.

1934

First session of the
International Conference
on Public Education

The IBE starts convening sessions of the International Conference on Public Education through the intermediary of the Swiss Federal Council (an arrangement that continued until 1946), inviting ministries of education to present reports on recent educational developments in their countries.

1939-1945

Service of Intellectual Assistance to Prisoners of War

During the World War II years, the IBE concentrates its efforts on the "Service of Intellectual Assistance to Prisoners of War", collecting and distributing books to study groups in the prison camps. By the end of the war the IBE has distributed almost 600,000 books.

1947

The newly established UNESCO and the IBE join forces

Between 1946-1968, the IBE and UNESCO establish closer links of cooperation with comparative education centres worldwide. They also play a catalytic role in the creation of regional societies and an international council of comparative education.

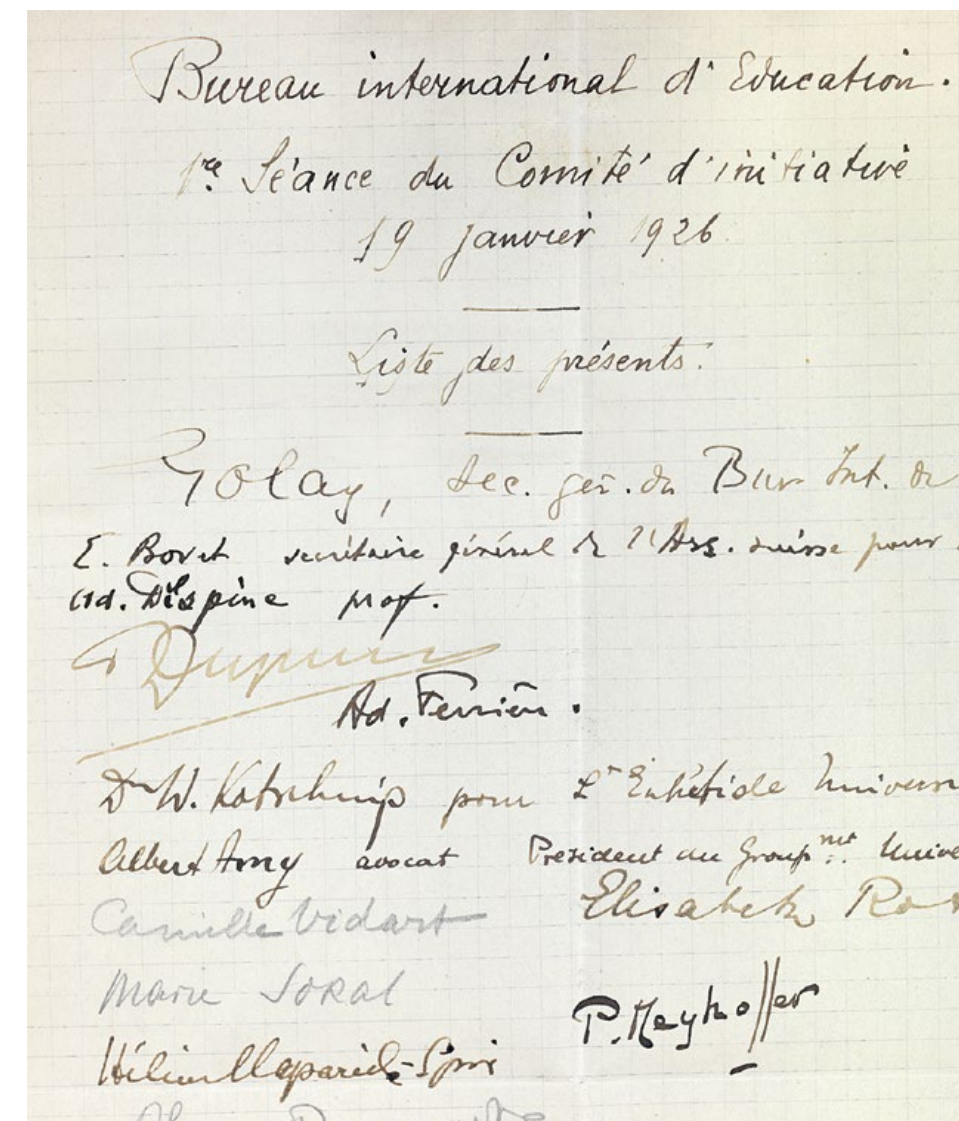
The IBE was born from the intellectual discourse of leading thinkers and architects of the progressive education movement known as the New Education, including Edouard Claparède and Adolphe Ferrière.

A Centre for Information
and Scientific Research

In 1923, lead thinkers and members of the International League for New Education, including Edouard Claparède and Adolphe Ferrière, requested that Henri Bergson, in his capacity as the President of the League of Nations Commission for Intellectual Co-operation, recommend the establishment, in Geneva, of an International Bureau of Education.

Thanks to a US \$5,000 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the governing board of the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute, founded in 1912, voted to establish the IBE to promote international cooperation in education. On December 18, 1925, the IBE was established as a centre for information and scientific research, with Pierre Bovet as its first director and Adolphe Ferrière and Elisabeth Rotten as his deputies. A committee including such influential figures as Albert Einstein, then a member of the League of Nations International Commission for Intellectual Cooperation, was set up to raise funds for the IBE.

The founding mothers and fathers of the IBE envisaged that, as part of its core mandate, it would collect and share information on education research and promote ways to apply it. This envisaged role of the IBE still resonates today. In the articulation of the IBE's medium-term programmatic focus (2015–2020), *(continued on page 26)* →



Partial list of participants
in the first IBE committee
meeting, 19 January
1926. [Left]

The historic pen used to sign the IBE accord in 1929, when it became an intergovernmental organization, and again in 1969, when it became a UNESCO Category I institute. [Above]



The first IBE Director, Pierre Bovet {left}, with his team, 1925

The aim of the International Bureau of Education is to serve as an information centre for everything that relates to education.

Art. 2 of the Statutes

*Ready for the signature of the governments
July 25, 1929*



1952

Women and education

The International Conference on Public Education addresses the issue of women’s access to education.

1956

Primary school curriculum

The International Conference on Public Education discusses issues related to the development of the primary school curriculum.

1969

Integration within UNESCO

The IBE becomes an integral part of UNESCO, as an international centre of comparative education, with a mandate of pursuing research particularly in the area of comparative education and maintaining educational documentation and information services.

1970

The International Conference on Education

The International Conference on Public Education becomes known as the International Conference on Education (ICE). For several decades, the Conference has been one of the principal mechanisms for setting the international agenda in the field of education.

1971

Studies and surveys in comparative education

The first volume is devoted to the issue of wastage in education. The last volume, published in 1987, focuses on science and technology in the primary school of tomorrow. The series then continues to be produced as Studies in Comparative Education.

1975

International Standard Classification of Education

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is approved by the International Conference on Education and subsequently endorsed by UNESCO General Conference.

Director Marope places a very strong emphasis on the IBE’s role as knowledge broker. She envisions that, from 2015 onwards, the IBE will not only continue to collect and share cutting-edge research findings, but will also rearticulate those findings ‘to make their implications for policy and practice more apparent’. Thus, it will continue to bridge the gap between knowledge creation and application. The IBE’s practice of disseminating knowledge to prospective users also dates back to its founding years. By 1929, with only three or four full-time employees working in a miniscule office, the IBE had organized ten international congresses, working with the League of Nations and several research and professional associations. Its “pedagogical tour of the world” had already reached 70 countries, across all continents. Equally ancient is the IBE’s role in capacity development, a part of which includes direct training. Driven by ideals of pacifism and universal fraternity, the IBE organized courses, study visits, exhibitions, and conferences featuring issues of current concern such as education for peace.

The first intergovernmental organization in education

Jean Piaget was clearly the longest serving director of the IBE (1929–1969). But, since its establishment in 1925, the IBE turned new pages under several directors, reinvented itself, and distinguished itself as a lifelong learning institution. In this regard, 1929 was a

landmark year. Four years after its establishment, the IBE extended membership to governments across the globe and became the first inter-government institution on education: the cradle of “global education”, as we know it today! For the first time in history, governments had a global platform through which they could commit to collaborating around commonly agreed challenges and priorities in education. From a humble start with only three founding members (Spain, Poland and the Republic and Canton of Geneva), a mechanism for global agenda setting in education was born. In 1934, the IBE formally convened a global governmental forum on education: the International Conference on Public Education (ICPE). The ICPE was held annually until 1946, except during the war years. With the Swiss Federal Council acting as intermediary, the ICPE was a forum where, by invitation, ministries of education reported and exchanged ideas on education developments in their respective countries.

A global convening agency was born – and with it, the convening power of the IBE, which is even stronger today. While it did offer country membership, the IBE opened its conferences and other activities to any government that chose to participate. The ICPE brought together more and more countries, facilitating a growth in country membership to three more by 1930 (Egypt, Ecuador, and Czechoslovakia), 20 by 1950 and 195 by 2015, the latter growth greatly enabled by being part of UNESCO.

THE IBE DIRECTORS

2014-
Mmantsetsa Marope
Botswana

2007-2014
Clementina Acedo
Venezuela

2005-2007 (Acting Director)
Pierre Luisoni
Switzerland

2000-2005
Cecilia Braslavsky
Argentina

1998-2000
Jacques Hallak
France

1992-1998
Juan Carlos Tedesco
Argentina

1988-1992
Georges Thomé
Lebanon

1987-1988
Gaston Mialaret
France

1986-1987
Chikh Bekri
Algeria

1983-1986
Seth J. Spaulding
United States

1977-1983
James B. Chandler
United States

1974-1975 (Acting Director)
André Lestage
France

1970-1974
Leo R. Fernig
United Kingdom

1969 (Acting Director)
René Ochs
France

1968 (Acting Director)
Laurent Pauli
Switzerland

1929-1967
Jean Piaget
Switzerland

1925-1929
Pierre Bovet
Switzerland

Over time, national reports from the IPCE provided crucial information on global trends in education, including policies across various countries and regions. For decades, researchers and scholars worldwide mined this unique collection and shared with the world a wide range of research findings, studies and trend analyses. Between 1933 and 1971, the IBE published summaries of these reports in the International Yearbook of Education, with UNESCO becoming the co-publisher after 1948. The IBE also released its own independent publications, starting in 1930, and continues to do so.

From a centre for research and information to a global comparative education centre

The illustrious history of the IBE owes as much to its broader membership as to its intellectual leadership. For forty years after the the IBE became an intergovernmental institution in 1929, served as its director; Pedro Rosselló, a Spanish educationist and a fervent advocate of comparative education, was his deputy. As a world renowned psychologist, theorist of the development of intelligence and one of the leading thinkers of the 20th century, Piaget had a reputation that carried the IBE around the world. In the last year of his directorship, along with his aides, he negotiated the integration of the IBE into UNESCO. After 1945, the IBE began collaborating with the newly established UNESCO

1984

Science and technology

The ICE adopts a recommendation on the universalization and renewal of primary education in the perspective of an appropriate introduction to science and technology.

1999

Focus on education contents, methods and teaching/learning strategies

The IBE becomes the UNESCO institute responsible for educational contents, methods and teaching/learning strategies through curriculum development.

2008

Inclusive education: the way of the future

The 48th session of the International Conference on Education is devoted to the theme “Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future”.

2010

Post-graduate diploma courses in curriculum design and development

The IBE starts organizing post-graduate diploma courses in curriculum design and development in collaboration with academic institutions. After the successful launching in Latin America and the Caribbean, the courses are expanded to sub-Saharan African countries.

2011

The IBE becomes a global centre of excellence in curriculum

The General Conference of UNESCO decides to adopt a strategy aimed at making the IBE a global Centre of Excellence in Curriculum.

2015

The IBE calls for a paradigm shift in curriculum

The IBE makes a strong call for re-positioning curriculum in the global dialogue on lifelong learning and sustainable development.

on education issues. It also established closer links with comparative education centres around the world. These partnerships catalyzed the creation of regional comparative education societies and an international council of comparative education. With its audience expanding since the 1930s, the IBE “asserted its independent and scientific character and publicly proclaimed its status as a global centre for comparative education” (Hofstetter, 2015, p. 39).

In 1946, the IBE started to convene the ICPE together with UNESCO; in 1970 the name was changed to the International Conference on Education (ICE), in recognition of other education providers beyond governments. The ICE has sustained its role in setting the global education agenda up to the present. Key global policies in education across the decades can be traced to the ICPE and the ICE: the duration of compulsory education (1934); education for international understanding (1948, 1968 and 1994); access of women to education (1952); literacy and adult education (1965); the role of teachers (1975 and 1996); the universalization and renewal of primary education (1984); improvement of secondary education (1986); and inclusive education (2008).

International centre for contents and methods in education

In the late 1990s, the mandate of the IBE changed yet again: It became an international centre for de-

veloping contents and methods of education. This change refocused the IBE on improving the quality of education through the instrument of the curriculum. Initially under the directorship of Cecilia Braslavsky (2000–2005), the IBE focused increasingly on curriculum, offering technical and policy advice to many countries and helping them strengthen their capacity in the field. The 2001, 2004 and 2008 ICE sessions tackled themes with much closer implications for the curriculum: education for learning to live together, education of young people and inclusive education.

A global centre of excellence in curriculum and related matters

The trend toward a stronger focus on curriculum was finally solidified in 2011, when the 36th session of the UNESCO General Conference decided to transform the IBE into a global Centre of Excellence in Curriculum (CoE) and related matters. Years earlier, with director Cecilia Braslavsky at the helm, the IBE had begun to work around three program areas: capacity building; policy dialogue; and resource bank and observatory of trends. The strategy for reaching its status as a global CoE was finally adopted in 2011, under the directorship of Clementina Acedo (2007–2014). As a way of realizing this strategy, the IBE articulated and began to implement three program areas: capacity development and technical assistance; knowledge

production and management; and policy dialogue on curriculum issues and trends.

Reaching for excellence in curriculum and related matters

Mid-2014 witnessed a dramatic transformative chapter of the IBE. Mmantsetsa Marope took the reins as the new director; she brought to the office her extensive and varied experience from schools, the civil service, academia and bilateral and multilateral agencies in education. Under her leadership, the IBE resolutely focused on its role as the global CoE in curriculum and related matters. Because the curriculum relates to practically all matters of education, She and her team decided to focus on three matters that most closely relate to the curriculum: learning, teaching and assessment.

Five medium-term program areas were articulated for accelerating progress towards excellence in the IBE’s areas of competence: curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment. From 2015, the IBE sought to optimize the contribution of the curriculum to enhance key elements of education: education quality, development relevance, resource efficiency, equity and effective learning. It is working painstakingly to improve the functioning of education systems as enabling environments for effective curriculum implementation. To this end, Director

Marope introduced into the IBE’s work program a systemic approach to improve these elements. The fourth program area of the IBE therefore speaks directly to the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4). She also called for a dramatic paradigm shift on the curriculum, repositioning it as an indispensable tool for putting into operation policies that make education more relevant to development. These include efforts to develop future competencies, to implement lifelong learning policies and to develop an integrative core to make education systems more coherent, along with a tool for infusing a futuristic technology perspective into education systems.

In Incheon, Korea, Director Marope pointed to two elements—the systemic approach to improving education and learning, and the global paradigm shift on curriculum—and placed them squarely on the agenda of high-level debates of the 2015 WEF. The IBE made a mark on the Incheon Declaration, which will guide the world in operationalizing SDG4 and the global Education Agenda until 2030.

Back at home in Geneva, 2015 was the year for the IBE to decisively turn a new page: rebranding the IBE flagship outputs and focusing them on the CoE mandate. With passion, unflinching resolve and tested experience, the IBE is ready for more to come in 2016. [○](#)

**From Three
Member States to a
Global Footprint**



Diploma in Curriculum Design and Development | Global Citizenship Education | Improving Learning Outcomes for Reading in the Early Grades

*Where and on what
is the IBE working
today?*



Education System Quality Analysis Framework | Strengthening STEM Curricula for Girls | Technical Support | Youth Education | Prospects



The IBE has had 90 years to collect what is now a hidden treasure trove of education materials from all over the world, spanning three centuries. Bequeathing this intangible heritage to future generations demands its careful conservation and sometimes even restoration. During 2015, the IBE began to digitize this treasure, not only to conserve it, but also to use the best technology to make it more globally accessible.



2015 marked the start of a campaign to restore and conserve the intangible heritage that the IBE has acquired over nine decades, so it can bequeath that heritage, responsibly and sustainably, to current and future generations.

Undoubtedly, the IBE library currently holds one of the most comprehensive textbook collections on earth. This Historical Textbook Collection comprises approximately 25,000 primary and secondary education textbooks and 300 atlases from the late 1700s to the 1980s, from over 140 countries, in over 100 languages. Together, they capture trends in the development of education over the better part of the 20th century.

The Historical Textbook Collection is not the only hidden treasure the IBE holds. It also boasts a unique archive of periodicals predating the 1900s, and 650 education journals from over 80 countries in a range of languages. The IBE’s Historical Archives represent another time capsule. They provide an insider’s view of the IBE, from 1925 to 1969, in the

form of personnel files, correspondence, administrative notes, etc. Equally impressive is the outsider’s view of the IBE, captured in its diverse publications and exhibitions. Take, for example a handwritten manuscript of Adophe Ferrière’s *L’école active* (1922), a key work from the progressive education movement.

Gearing up for the restoration and conservation process, the IBE’s documentalist, Ruth Creamer, rolls a cart of gray storage boxes through the doors and passageways of the documentation centre. She is eager to give the contents of these boxes a new lease of digital life. She carefully lays the boxes on a wooden table and opens one of them. And look at that: an Argentine atlas of Asia and Africa published in 1942. It certainly looks worn from the many fingers of the researchers who flipped through it over decades. But,

Opposite page:
Adophe Ferrière’s
L’école active (1922).





37 A NEPAL

37 E EUROPE

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371.8/0

6.7 /R

37 I /M

370.3 /F

370.9

37 N AFRIQUE

37 I /N

370.3 /G

371

371.17

137.7

37 N

371.02 /N

37 B BASUTOLAND

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371.02 /O

371.2

159

370.45

371.029

37 B TCHECOSLOVAQUIE

37 P

370.46

371.03

371.24

362.92

37 C /J

371.08

37 C /K

37 P ETATS-UNIS

370.46 AUSTRALIE

371.1

371.264



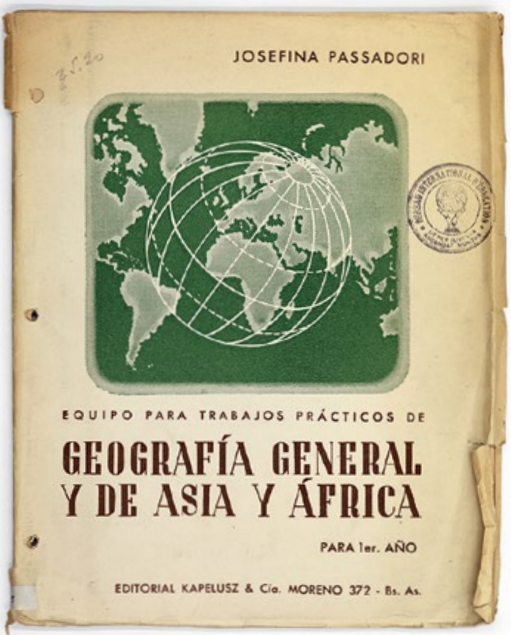
like the age-respecting societies it comes from, it wears its age proudly, and maybe even flaunts it. Cognizant of its delicate state, she holds it up carefully. The paper looks and feels brittle, ready to break into small pieces. “See, it means visitors will no longer be able to handle this book”, she notes with concern and the urgency to take this treasure into the digital age. Many others in the collections are equally or even more aged, thanks to the same chemical process that turns paper into dust. Her job is cut out for her, and she is clearly in a hurry to get down to the task at hand.

Her team accounts for each and every book in a massive spreadsheet that includes such details as the author, the printer and when and where each item was printed.

By December 2015, Ruth Creamer and her team had already finished cataloguing the first batch of 4,000 textbooks. Now they will scan and digitize them, to make them electronically searchable and—crucially—accessible. Imagine scholars being able to use a digital catalogue to find texts, or information on these texts, from almost anywhere on earth and at any time. This is the IBE’s dream. Thanks to a 1.2 million US\$ grant from His Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz Bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, 2015 saw the dream steadily become a reality. But fully realizing this dream will take a lot more than this grant has been able to initiate. Anyone out there willing to help?

Certainly 2015 was the year when the IBE straddled the old and the new. It was the year when the old laid a solid foundation for the new. It was the year when new 21st-century technologies gave a new lease of life to old and ancient texts dating back to the 1700s. Digital access to these old texts will continue to enable researchers to create new knowledge. But 2015 was not about “out with the old and in with the new”. It saw a strategic alliance, even a marriage, of the old and the new, one that will let the IBE enrich the intangible intellectual heritage it currently boasts of. It was about a relentless focus on a cherished tradition. ○

Opposite:
Ruth Creamer rolls
a cart of publications
through the doors and
passageways of the
documentation centre.



Argentine atlas of Asia
and Africa, published
in 1942

CLOSING
THE
KNOWLEDGE
CREATION
AND
APPLICATION
GAP

Since its establishment as a Centre for Information and Scientific Research, the IBE and its partner research institutions have continued to push the frontiers of knowledge. The IBE has equally been historically concerned with bringing cutting-edge knowledge to bear on policy and practice. Yet, a range of factors still keep cutting-edge research-based knowledge inaccessible, both literally and substantively, to a large base of policy makers and practitioners, especially in developing countries. Thus, in 2015, the IBE put a sharp focus on its knowledge brokerage role as a key mechanism for improving the substantive access that policy makers and diverse practitioners can have to cutting-edge knowledge.

THE ULTIMATE
VALUE OF
KNOWLEDGE LIES
IN THE WAY PEOPLE
CAN APPLY IT TO
ATTAIN DESIRED
RESULTS. FOR
THE MANDATE
OF THE IBE,
THESE DESIRED
RESULTS ARE
MAINLY LEARNING
OUTCOMES.

EXPANDING LITERAL AND SUBSTANTIVE
ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE



Quality curricula, animated by effective teaching and learning, are key instruments for bringing about desired learning outcomes, as verified by relevant assessments. Research-based knowledge on the IBE's areas of competence—curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment—continues to grow not only in volume but also in sophistication. However, a significant portion of policy makers and practitioners in IBE's areas of competence do not have access to this knowledge. Access is limited by a range of factors including cost, physical distance from libraries and/or total lack of libraries, lack of currency of materials in libraries and poor-to-nonexistent connectivity to virtual libraries. Sometimes even where potential users do have connectivity, they have limited capacity to sift through a corpus of research and select what matters.

Even where literal access may be adequate, researchers often present findings in a language and format that speaks to the community of knowledge creators but not necessarily to potential users. Thus, literal access does not always translate into substantive access, or to an understanding that lets people see clearly how those findings apply to policy and practice.

The IBE's 2015 work program placed a sharp focus on its role as a knowledge broker, to narrow the gap between knowledge creation and application. It articulated four concrete steps:

First, select. Sift through huge deposits of research-based knowledge to identify what is most relevant to policy makers and practitioners in the fields of curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment.

Second, simplify in order to expand substantive access. Review a library of knowledge and re-articulate it into easily accessible language that communicates key findings, making their implications for policy and practice very clear.

Third, disseminate to relevant policy makers and practitioners. Strengthen the IBE's IT platform, so it can serve as an optimal depository of knowledge, and share it with potential users. The IBE also revamped its website to more easily carry content to targeted users.

For those without easy connectivity, the IBE reached out to technologists to start developing solutions for disseminating knowledge to such areas; the



'launch of these efforts will begin in 2016. In the meantime, the IBE continued to produce and disseminate books, guidelines and briefs in both soft and hardcover formats.

Furthermore, the IBE strengthened its key networks—the community of practice and the alumni of the post-graduate diploma course—to widen the dissemination of knowledge to targeted users. And it established the Global Curriculum Network (GCN), connecting heads of curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment in member states, in order to further augment the knowledge dissemination to primary users and contributors.

Fourth, apply knowledge. Infuse this simplified knowledge base into diverse IBE services such as training courses, technical dialogue and technical assistance.

SO WHAT KNOWLEDGE DID THE IBE BROKER
DURING 2015?

Assessment as a tool for improving education quality. In May 2015, during the World Education Forum in Incheon, South Korea, Director Marope emphasized that diverse forms of assessments are indispensable to improve the quality of education and the effectiveness of learning. To this global audience, she

announced that the IBE would focus on assessment as a core element of a systemic approach to improving education quality, equity and learning.

In 2015, the IBE launched a new series of intellectual outputs and debates—*In-progress Reflections on Current and Critical Issues in Curriculum, Learning and Assessment*—to bring current thinking on these topics to potential users and to stimulate intellectual dialogue around them. The first issue of the series focused on assessment within policies and programs designed to raise the quality of education and to better facilitate learning. This output not only stimulated intellectual dialogue as intended, but also brokered new partnerships in the area of assessment.

Analytical knowledge base for supporting learning. In partnership with the UNICEF Regional Office and the OECD, the IBE produced the Latin American edition of *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*, which the OECD had originally published in 2010. This Spanish edition includes a new chapter that focusses on implications for related policies and practices in the region.

Designing curriculum for the fast-changing 21st century. The IBE sustained its efforts to broker knowledge through the IBE Working Papers on Curriculum Issues. First published in 2006, these papers share the interim results of ongoing research in cur-



Above:
Director Mmantsetsa
Marope speaking at the
Google 2015 Global
Education Symposium,
November 2015

riculum and provide readers with a preview of many exploratory studies. In 2015, they summarized research on the complexity of curriculum design within the 21st-century context of rapid social change and rapidly changing student needs. The IBE also reviewed research on how students acquire complex skills, with a focus on the “dark network” of implicit memory. The review concludes with a sharp focus on implications for education policy.

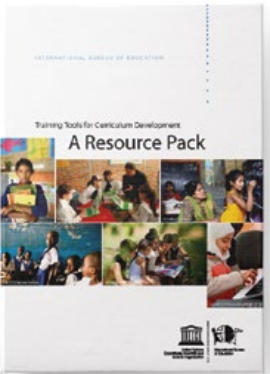
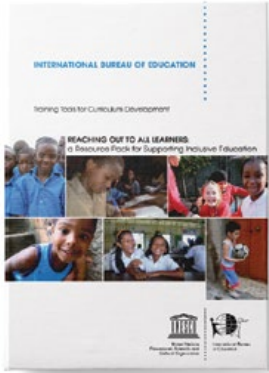
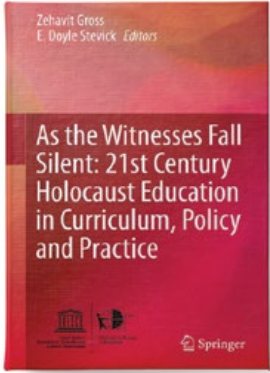
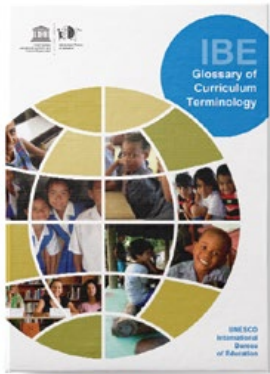
Current knowledge with relevance for key themes of the global Education 2030 Agenda. A key part of knowledge brokering is the capacity to discern what constitutes relevant knowledge and what knowledge is fit for what purpose. This is particularly important in the 21st century, where information overload is a daunting challenge for less discerning users. In its role as knowledge broker, the IBE continued its biweekly Alert Services, which carefully select and make available a range of online resources, including reports, publications, websites and news. Three thematic alerts were produced during 2015, focusing on the global Education 2030 Agenda: *inclusive education, global citizenship education, and conflict and education*.

IBE webpage. How could the IBE be a knowledge broker without a rich and user-friendly website to manage and communicate knowledge? 2015 saw the redesign and reshaping of the IBE website. The website now crisply reflects the IBE’s new strategic orientation; with its improved usability and navigation tools, users can better access the knowledge base in conjunction with IBE initiatives and activities. It also provides enhanced access to all IBE resources, which are now searchable by country, year, keywords and topics.

WHAT ABOUT THE IBE’S OWN KNOWLEDGE CREATION DURING 2015 ?

The IBE’s sharp focus on knowledge brokerage has not meant that it abandoned its creation of new knowledge. In 2015, it focused on creating new knowledge in its highest priority areas and within its function as a laboratory of ideas. It pushed the frontiers of knowledge in four priority areas, all focused on equity and inclusion.

Hot on the heels of the May 2015 World Education Forum, which acknowledged inclusion as an overall guiding principle of the global Education 2030 Agenda, the IBE produced a tool to support countries to put into effect their policies on inclusion in and through education. *Reaching Out to All Learners: A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Edu-*



Above:
IBE's contribution
to new knowledge,
2015

cation aims to support Member States in reviewing national policies and implementing inclusion at the school and classroom level. It provides comprehensive guidance for national policy makers, curriculum specialists and developers, teachers, teacher educators, school leaders and district-level administrators.

Also in 2015, the IBE published *As the Witnesses Fall Silent: 21st Century Holocaust Education in Curriculum, Policy and Practice*. The book stands out as a distinct example of the IBE’s commitment to excellence. Reviewers and critics promptly hailed it as the most comprehensive collection ever of empirical research on Holocaust education in the world. The timing was perfect: It was released just as the world marked the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. The book holds a key message: Given its complexity and deep connections with difficult histories, the Holocaust requires more than a simple new addition or insertion into curricula, or a few more hours squeezed into already packed study schedules.

The book makes a profound contribution to the work that lies ahead. Our shared global commitment to end genocide, mass atrocities and extremism requires a multifaceted effort, with education at its heart.

Triggered by debates during the launch of this book, in 2015 the IBE launched a new initiative: *Universal Values in the Curriculum*.

From 2016 onwards, the IBE will produce more publications on the critical issues of extremism, intolerance and exclusion, using approaches that are revealing and thought-provoking. The series of publications will further support the IBE’s work on universal values in education and the overall UNESCO work on the culture of peace, shaped by a respect for universal human rights.

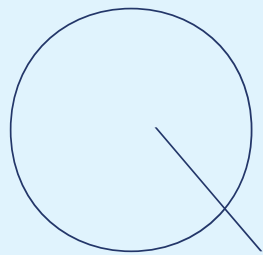
2015 also marked the 45th anniversary of *Prospects*, one of the oldest and most continuously published journals in international and comparative education. At 45, it looks more sprightly and vigorous than ever! In fact, 2015 saw the journal receive a facelift, as the IBE rebranded it in line with its current insignia, and as it entered a renaissance of its own. During 2015, *Prospects’* editor-in-chief, Director Marope, along with its managing editor, Dr. Simona Popa, aligned the journal’s substantive focus with the IBE’s current mandate to focus on curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment, as tools for equitable quality of education and lifelong learning. Quite an appropriate move, given the focus of the global Education 2030 Agenda. The articles published in 2015 exemplify the IBE’s unflagging efforts to produce and share up-to-

date evidence-based knowledge and analyses on curriculum, learning and assessment.

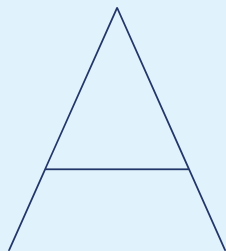
KEY TAKEAWAYS

Closing the gap between creating knowledge and applying it is rarely a straightforward task. Having now moved far from its original mandate as a single-function institution, the IBE has embarked on a transformative process. Far from thinking it a pipe dream, the IBE is determined to help those in research, policy and practice confront what is actually at stake and connect those points in a coherent and meaningful way. Its focus on both creating and applying knowledge is audacious but attainable. Like other fields, education is on the brink of fundamental change, and a key part of that change will be opening specialized knowledge to practitioners and even to the public. So, both literal and substantive access to knowledge matters—and even more crucial is applying that knowledge to create new and better realities for all. Technology is a key driver of this change, which comes with a new range of opportunities and challenges.

As a knowledge broker, the IBE is right out in front of these changes, and sees them as promising elements of a much-needed global dialogue about education, among researchers, policy makers, practitioners and the public. They are also elements of the even more crucial dialogue between education and other fields, even those not immediately linked to education. Learning from advances in other disciplines involves an enlightening and exciting process: translating their often introspective and highly specialized language into accessible wording and cross-fertilizing insights across disciplines. In 2015, the IBE initiated the first such project to connect more vigorously IBE’s contribution to new knowledge. [o](#)



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Creator of FrontlineSMS, an award-winning mobile messaging application aimed at the grassroots non-profit community, Ken Banks is one of the world's leading voices on mobile technology and development. He spent two decades working on projects in Africa to connect mobile technology to positive social and environmental change, and has looked specifically at how everyday technologies can be used to democratize opportunities for economic self-sufficiency, rebuild local community and promote a return to local resource use. His work and writing on Africa, technology and innovation won him many accolades, including Laureate of the Tech Awards, CARE International's first Entrepreneur in Residence, National Geographic Emerging Explorer, and Pop!Tech Social Innovation Fellow. Ken talks to us with passion about his extraordinary work, and the power and limitations that technology holds when it comes to learning.

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How did you come up with the FrontlineSMS idea? How has it evolved?

Making sure we make the most of the incredible opportunity mobile presents has taken up much of the last 15 years of my professional life. My experience of the African continent began ten years earlier in 1993 when I visited Zambia to help build a school. Since then I've returned to live and work on the continent on many occasions, always spending time with grassroots non-profit organizations, the majority of which were locally run. With a deep understanding of the problems and challenges they faced, it was no surprise that the initial focus of my work in mobile was to be there. As mobile phones began to show their development potential, they were the ones, I feared, who would be left behind. There were signs that, by focusing on the top tier of non-profits in the developing world—those with funding, access and resources—we were leaving those further down behind, and few people seemed to be paying any attention.

My response was to build a tool which would specifically meet the needs of that grassroots community. The idea for FrontlineSMS came to me one rainy Saturday evening in early 2005, in Cambridge, UK. Over the previous two years I had been working extensively in South Africa and Mozambique with a South African NGO on a contract with the oldest international conservation organization in the world: Fauna & Flora International. We were looking at ways national parks could use information and communications technologies to better communicate with local communities—something that has traditionally been problematic. Since SMS (text messaging) usage was just beginning its astronomical climb, it seemed like an obvious communications tool to consider.

While many solutions at the time were being developed around something many grassroots communities didn't have—the Internet—FrontlineSMS focused on leveraging what they did have. By connecting a mobile phone or a GSM dongle to a laptop computer, people could send and receive messages directly via the mobile network without the need for the Internet, without the need for expensive equipment and without the need for complex technical training. Early adoption was slow, but it gradually grew and, ten years on, FrontlineSMS is



being used in over 170 countries around the world for all manner of social change activities, from election monitoring, to conservation, agriculture, health, education and activism.

Can mobile technology help redefine learning? What are your thoughts about the links between innovation, entrepreneurship, social change, and education?

Perhaps I'm a little old school, but I don't think technology will ever replace teachers. Learning tools can supplement, enhance or extend the learning experience, but I still very much believe that it's not all about the technology. So when we talk about any kind of technology redefining anything, I'm immediately skeptical. The technology certainly can help, but first it has to be used in appropriate ways.

Clearly the Internet and mobile phones can provide access to a vast array of resources previously not available to students, and provide access to rich learning materials such as interactive websites, videos and games. While we've seen considerable focus and progress in these areas over the years, most of the entrepreneurship and social change initiatives I've come across don't focus specifically on education—although, of course, health messaging is, in effect, education, as is information about candidates in an election, all things delivered today through mobile phones in

various countries. With education per se, and how new technologies can enhance learning, most of what I come across are solutions developed by social businesses rather than lone innovators, so many people see e-learning solutions development as a business opportunity. They don't tend to think the same about health, which is interesting.

How do you imagine the school of the 21st century?

I think schools look different everywhere, so it's hard to picture what schools in general might be like. In the world of social innovation I live in, the world is the classroom, and when I think about some of the most valuable things I've learned over the years they've certainly come outside of any recognized learning infrastructure.

In terms of what the future of learning might be, I'm a big fan of Ashoka's 'Change-maker Schools' initiative, which seeks to arm students with the kinds of skills they're going to need in a rapidly changing world of work. Skills like empathy and problem solving, for example. I think the most successful students of the future will have more of their education rooted in the real world, rather than the one that existed in the 20th century.

We were honored to publish your article on mobile learning in Prospects. What are your thoughts about continuing to work with the IBE?

I am always excited to work with people and organizations open to change and disruption in their fields—but the kind of change and disruption rooted in the realities of what's needed rather than what people would simply 'like' to do. As the technology landscape leaps ahead in the developed world, we're presented with increasing numbers of tools which we can consider as learning tools for children in developing countries, but we shouldn't just see it as a case of 'technology transfer.' We need to consider which tools might be most relevant and appropriate, based on local needs, before rushing to show how innovative we are. These are all issues I'm passionate about, so I always welcome the opportunity to work with people keen to make the most of the opportunities available today. O



Transforming Reading Curricula in the Sahel



Reading is a fundamental skill, crucial to lifelong learning. Children who do not develop sustainable reading and writing skills in their early years are less likely to develop the other skills they need in school and throughout their education. This severely limits their economic, social and individual development opportunities later on. Yet, globally, about 250 million children of primary school age do not have basic literacy skills. About 130 million of these would have gone through lower primary education. The Sahel ranks among the lowest literacy rates, and the IBE answered the call.

Literacy Skills are Cornerstones of National Development

If you want to improve early reading skills, make sure that children are offered both high-quality reading curricula and high-quality teaching. This simple but transformative equation lies at the heart of the 2030 Vision of Literacy, promoted by UNESCO in 2015. Far too often, however, such vision statements remain only on paper, with little impact on policy and/or practice.

For instance, African governments acknowledge the importance of enabling children to acquire sustainable literacy in their early school grades. They recognize that literacy skills are cornerstones of national development. However, all too often they simply struggle to implement these ideas effectively through early reading and writing programs. Far too few teachers have the theoretical and practical knowledge to teach their students to read and write. Making the challenge even more complex is Africa’s vibrant multilingual reality and the shortage of opportunities for pre-primary education.

Many children miss out on opportunities to develop fundamental skills—and many have no chance to learn to read in their first language. The ripple effects of poor reading skills are dramatic: learners who make limited educational progress have limited opportunities for economic and social development throughout their lives. The bottom line? Social inequalities are established very early in life. The solution starts with the bare basics of education: reading and writing in the early grades, and strong early childhood care and education.

The IBE has the critical expertise to address this urgent need for quality early reading and writing education and is already supporting governments’ efforts in three countries in the Sahel: Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal. They are now IBE’s partners in an ambitious capacity-building project, sponsored by the Global Partnership for Education: *Improving Learning Outcomes in Early Grade Reading: Integration of Curriculum, Teaching, Learning Materials, and Assessment*. This multi-year initiative aims to develop early-grade reading competency.

During 2015, an IBE team, coordinated by Amapola Alama, produced curricula documents, tailored and targeted to each country’s needs and context. The team also developed materials to support teacher training and to ensure effective implementation of the student curricula across the three partner countries.

The IBE held nine capacity-building workshops, three in each country, with impressive and concrete results:

→ In Senegal, national orientations on teaching reading and writing in French as a second language, and a supporting document for instruction.

→ In Niger, two teacher-training modules, covering grades 1 to 2 and 3 to 4 of primary school, with a matching guide for practitioners.

→ In Burkina Faso, a guide and toolkit for teachers, and a revised training module.

Rather than asking stakeholders to grapple with somebody else’s idea of a problem that needs solving, this initiative challenges educators to investigate the conditions that pose challenges for early reading. More to the point, the teacher trainers and the teachers involved gain knowledge that they need to turn the teaching of early reading around, to significantly enhance curriculum alignment and to improve learning practices.

This achievement is unprecedented. Never before did teachers in these three countries have explicit training in reading instruction. It simply was not included in their teacher training curricula. Typically, teachers would enter the classroom with hardly any preparation to teach children how to read and write. Alama refers to the initiative as a “stimulant to mindset”. She has seen it generate remarkable change in teacher trainers and teachers, as well as in curriculum specialists. By producing the much-needed training materials and helping educators to integrate their knowledge, the initiative has empowered them to become primary agents of change.

More on the initiative in the future, as the IBE and its partners plan to take it to scale. ○



Students from
École de Saté,
Nagréongo, Burkina
Faso (fieldwork, Early
Reading Project).

SETTING

NORMS

AND STANDARDS

FOR QUALITY CURRICULA

A quality curriculum requires careful planning, attention to context, and clear guidance from norms and standards. But such norms and standards do not exist as yet! This leaves countries without a reference point, as they design and develop quality national curricula. In 2015, the IBE focused on its core function to set curriculum norms and standards.

For some years now, the IBE has maintained that “curriculum matters” more than education researchers, policy makers or practitioners realize. This message is increasingly pertinent, and it deserves repeating, given the demands that the global Education 2030 Agenda places on national curriculum frameworks to adapt to the many changes and challenges ahead. Indeed, concern for the quality and relevance of the curriculum permeates any discussion on education and development.

The curriculum is crucial for achieving Target 4.1 of SDG4: *By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.* It is also critical for learning and living in the complex, ever-changing world of the 21st century. To move beyond the rhetoric and implement a truly relevant 21st-century education will require far more than simply adding new content into current curricula and digital technology into schools. It will take a concerted focus on the design, development, delivery and assessment of national curricula.

This concerted effort requires clear guidance from clear norms and standards. During 2015, the IBE commenced work on creating this much-needed reference point, as a core part of its function as a norms-and standard-setting institution.

For a start, the IBE, in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair in Curriculum Development (CUDC) at the University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM), articulated sound criteria and a set of 25 indicators that can help assure that a curriculum is of high quality. For now, these indicators are structured around four main dimensions: education policies, curriculum orientations, curriculum profiles and curriculum experienced through learning.

Developing them required first of all the recognition of contextual specificities of national curricula and that no “one size fits all”. The indicators were therefore developed as generic pointers that countries can adapt to their respective contexts.

The work began in Cote d’Ivoire in 2015, where 40 Ministry of Education officials piloted the indicators, as they worked through their curriculum reform process. The pilot revealed the broader role those indicators could play. For instance, they could help create an enabling environment for reforming curricula, and even education systems more generally. The Ivorian pilot generated a set of short-, medium- and long-term objectives to be later translated into a three-year nationwide education action plan. The potentially transforma-



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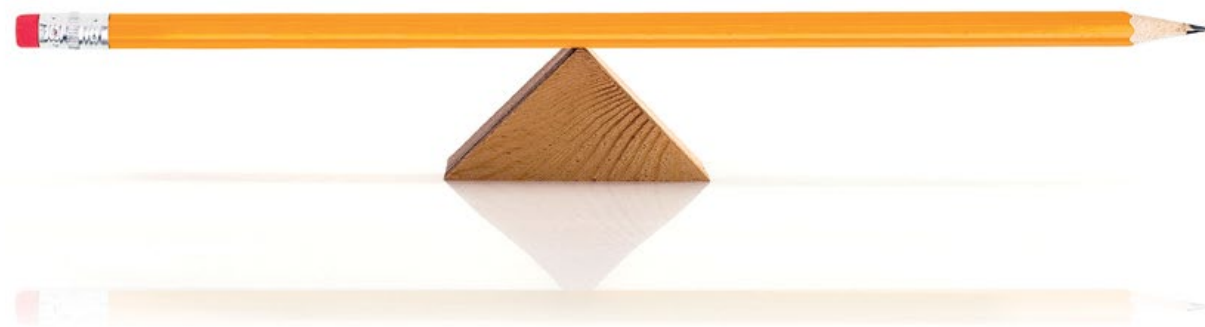
tive role of these indicators and strategies responded to the country’s demand for real-time, bespoke solutions, which are also innovative, transparent and easily understandable.

A mock application was also conducted by participants in the face-to-face session of the 2015 Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Diploma in Curriculum Design and Development. Participants recognized the long-standing “norms and standards vacuum” in the field, which leaves practitioners without the tools they need to assess and ensure the quality of their curricula. They saw that developing generic norms and standards was a key step toward understanding, reviewing and improving the ways that curriculum reforms are currently undertaken in the region.

In partnerships with curriculum agencies and institutes worldwide, the IBE will continue to develop, pilot and adapt the norms and standards in real contexts. At the end of the journey, the IBE will be able to offer Member States a valuable output: collectively validated tools that can guide high-quality curricula design and development. O

ADDRESSING GENDER INEQUALITY IN STEM

In 2015, the IBE launched a partnership with the Malaysian government to bring more girls into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) studies and to redress entrenched gender inequalities.





Women and STEM around the world

As part of the global equity and inclusion imperative, the Incheon Declaration adopted by the 2015 World Education Forum called for an *urgent elimination of gender disparities, by ensuring equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university (Target 4.5, SDG4)*. Many governments have been committed to promoting gender equality in education; at least in terms of access, many countries are moving toward gender parity in secondary education.

However, anyone who digs below the basic statistics on access will find that significant disparities remain in specific areas and at specific levels of education systems. To date, far fewer women than men are pursuing university degrees and careers in STEM fields. Why? Because many general education systems fail to enable girls to earn passes in learning areas that enable them to specialize in STEM at the tertiary level. Even as women have become a larger share of the college-educated workforce over the past decade, they remain underrepresented in STEM.

Likewise, despite the high proportion of women in higher education, gender parity remains elusive in research. Many factors explain this situation. In schools, girls encounter uninformed teaching practices, misrepresentations in textbooks and low societal expectations. They tend to have low self-confidence. In the STEM fields, women encounter gender stereotyping, lack of role models, isolation by their peers if they pursue scientific studies and less family-friendly flexibility. All these factors continue to discourage girls and women from pursuing STEM education and STEM jobs.

Inclusive curriculum: A catalyst for change

What should be done to increase women’s presence in STEM fields? One important strategy is developing inclusive STEM curricula, which can enrich the learning experiences of all learners and change mindsets and practices across societies. The IBE is deeply committed to supporting countries as they implement gender-responsive STEM policies through their curricula. But the IBE cannot do this alone. It is crucial to develop robust partnerships that can deliver on multiple imperatives and bring in valuable experience on ways to enhance girls’ participation and performance in STEM subjects.

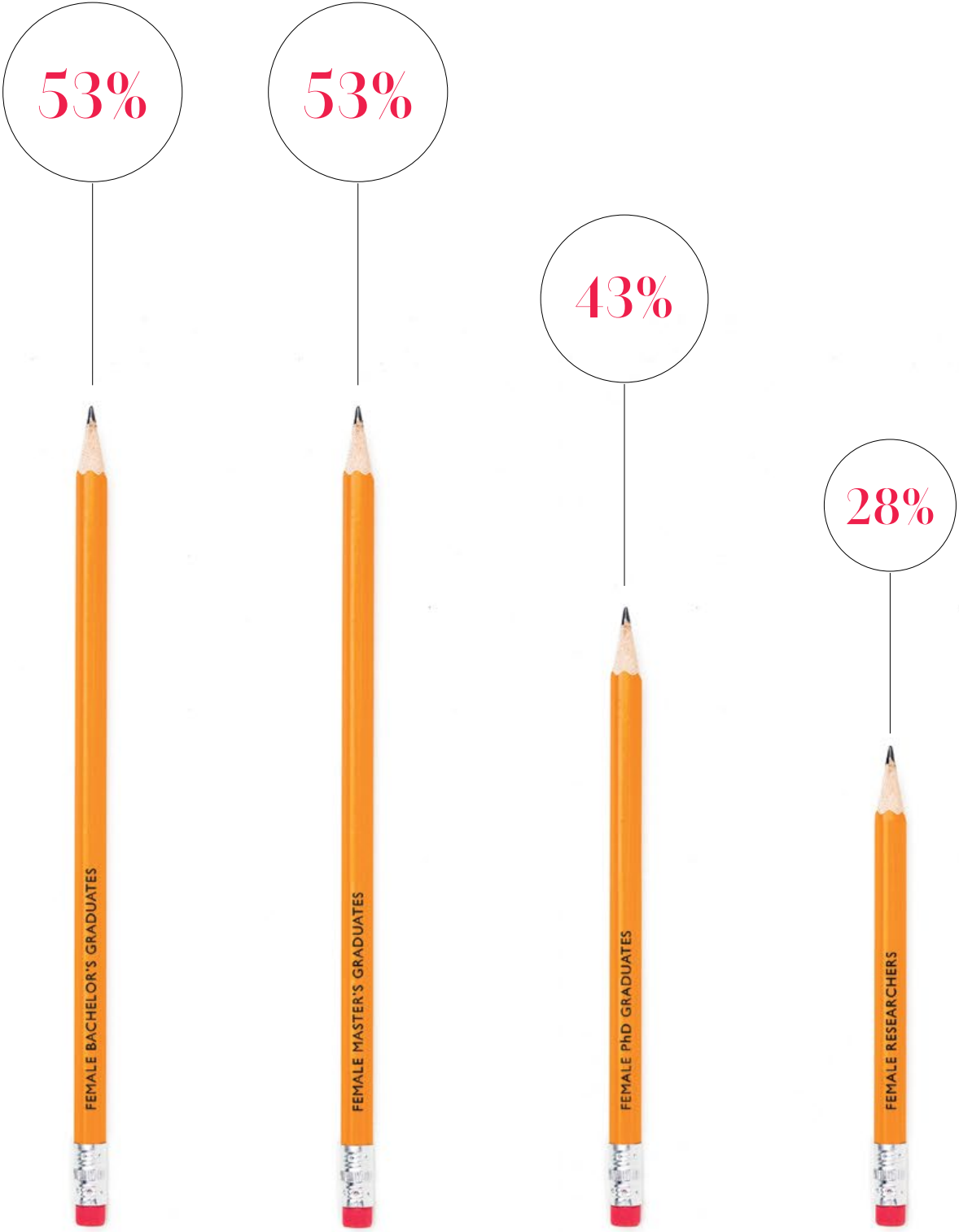
Malaysia and the IBE: A promising partnership

Malaysia brings considerable intellectual firepower and know-how to bear on the issue. To meet its goal of becoming a developed nation by 2015, the government sharpened its focus on STEM fields, especially in education. For instance, over the next five years, 60% of high school graduates will be concentrating in science, technology, engineering and math. The country already has a sufficient threshold of women in STEM. In fact, Malaysia’s science programs are the most gender-integrated in the world: Women earn 57% of science degrees and about half of computer science degrees.

This background provided the catalyst for the IBE and the Malaysia government to join efforts in supporting other countries, especially those in the geographic South, in bringing more girls into STEM education.

In April 2015, in Geneva, Malaysia’s deputy prime minister and minister of education, the Honourable Tan Sri Muhyidin Mohd Yasin, along with Director Mmantsetsa Marope, launched a joint initiative titled *Strengthening STEM Curricula for Girls in Africa, and Asia and the Pacific*. The initiative aims to strengthen STEM policies, curricula, pedagogy and teacher education and professional development in four countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Kenya and Nigeria. ○

Share of women in higher education and research, 2013



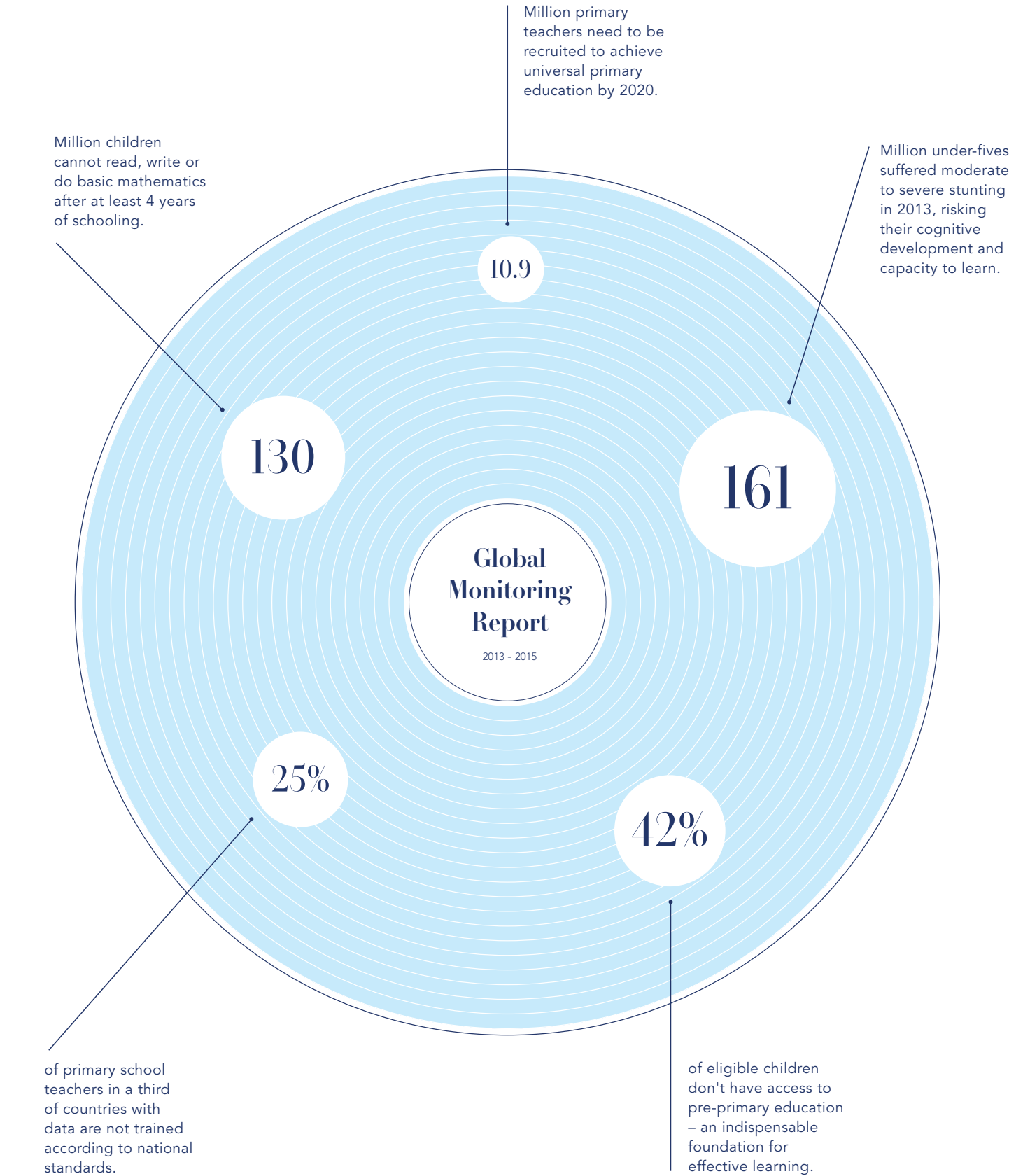
Source: UNESCO Science Report 2015, based on UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates.

Addressing the Global Education Quality and Learning Crisis

By the end of the EFA agenda, the global community broadly recognized that the challenge of poor education quality and ineffective learning opportunities had become a crisis. The average education system is unable to equip learners with the competencies required for effective functioning in the 21st century. To effectively address this global crisis, key impediments to effective and impactful education systems need to be analyzed and decisively addressed if SDG4 is not to suffer the fate of the EFA Goal 6.

In the 21st century, individual and collective development heavily depends on knowledge, skills, affects, technology savvy, and the application thereof to realize the desired impact (e.g., employability, productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, strategic collaborations, leadership, good governance). These attributes are collectively referred to as relevant competencies. Consequently, recent years have witnessed a proliferation of national and cross-border lists of comptencies for effective functioning in the 21st century. These lists are proferred for integration into curricula. As such, there has been a pervasive trend to reorient education systems and their curricula towards competency-based approaches. However, diverse assessments show that due to the poor quality of education and ineffective learning opportunities, the average education system fails to enable learners to acquire required comptencies. Other than curtailing individual development, poor acquisition of competencies denies countries the human resources and the human capital accumulation required to support holistic, inclusive and sustainable development.

The challenge of poor education quality and learning is more severe in, but not restricted to, developing countries. It is equally more intense for learners with disadvantages such as: coming from a low socio-economic background, being female, having disabilities, dwelling in rural/remote or urban informal settlements, speaking minority languages, being displaced, and living in conflict affected areas. Thus, what intensifies the challenge is the inequity of education quality and learning across situations.



Source: Global Monitoring Report 2013-14, 2015

During 2015, the IBE intensified its contribution to the redress of the global education quality and learning crisis by adding a program area seeking to:

Strengthen the capacity of member states to analyze critical impediments that hinder their equitable provision of quality, development-relevant, resource-efficient education and lifelong learning opportunities, and to develop and implement responsive interventions.

This support was structured in three phases. The first phase was a comprehensive analysis of the functioning of the education systems with a view to identify binding constraints. This analysis was led and undertaken by technical experts from Ministries of Education, with support from the IBE. Based on findings from the analysis, binding constraints were prioritized through a consultative process. The second phase was the development of interventions to redress and even eradicate identified constraints. The third phase will be the actual implementation of the interventions, supported by close monitoring of their impact.

In previous years, the IBE had already supported ten countries as they undertook the first, analytical, phase. In 2015, an eleventh country, Swaziland, joined the list of countries that had completed the first phase. Can you identify the eleven countries?



Reports from the eleven countries identified the list in the column to the far right as the most binding constraints to equitable provision of quality, development-relevant, resource-efficient education and learning opportunities.

Also in 2015, the IBE provided the first three countries—Seychelles, Swaziland and Egypt—with technical support towards the design of interventions for addressing priority constraints.

In the coming years, the IBE will sustain technical support to these countries’ education systems in transitioning to best practice, characterized by:

Four
SYSTEM
CHARACTERISTICS
In best-practice education systems

1

They are equitable and responsive to the learning needs of all citizens and inhabitants.

2

They offer a high quality of education and effective learning opportunities that lead to high levels of learning outcomes for all.

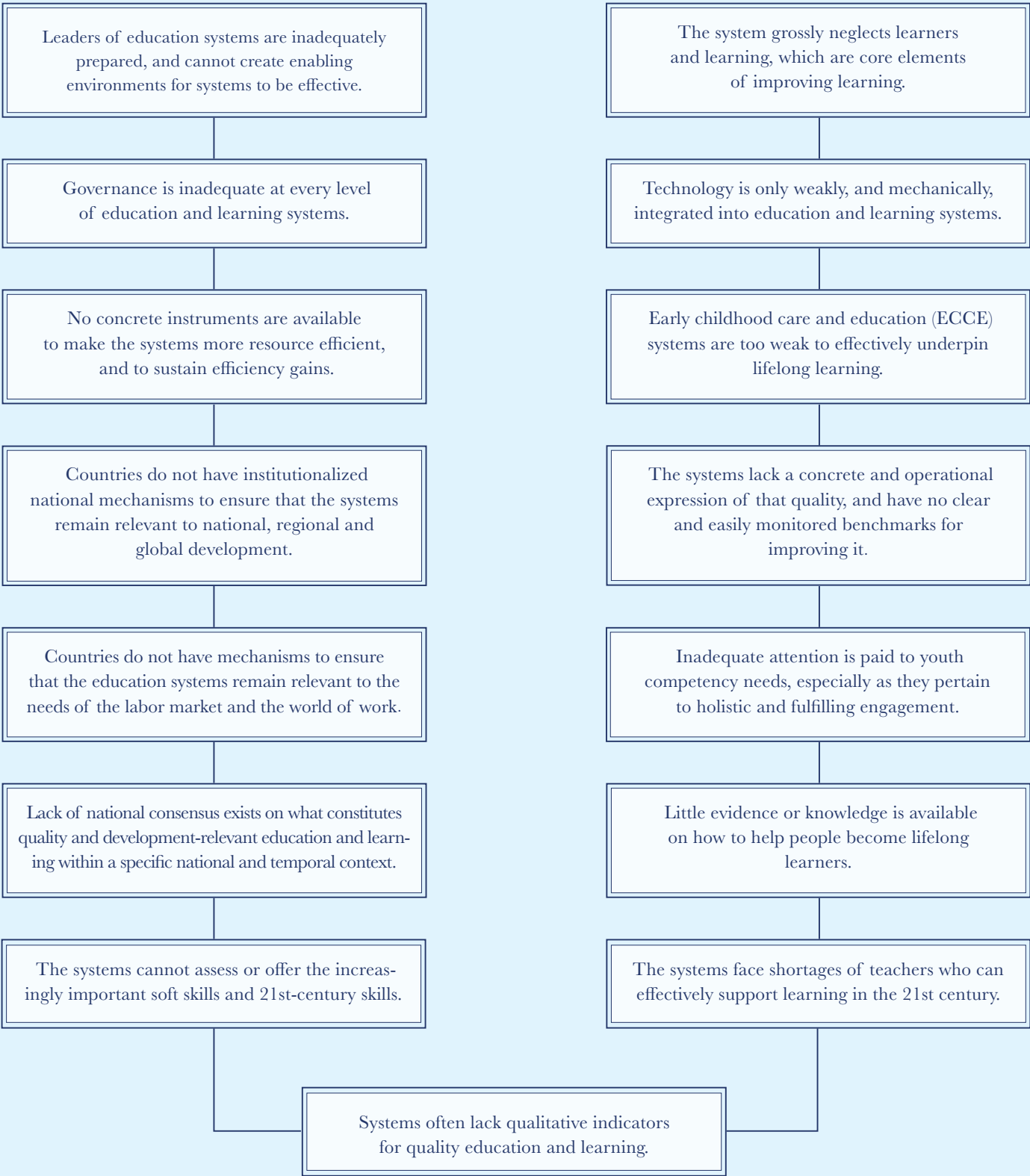
3

They are responsive to their country’s development challenges and opportunities.

4

They use resources efficiently, and are resilient and sustainable.

Binding Constraints
to **EQUITABLE, HIGH-QUALITY,
DEVELOPMENT-RELEVANT,
and RESOURCE-EFFICIENT
EDUCATION and LEARNING**



STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP FOR CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

It is the end of August 2015, at the Catholic University of Uruguay. Students lob questions, huddle together in project teams, identify what in their national curricula requires attention, exchange answers, debate multiple potential solutions, and then develop concrete plans of action.

This blend of thought-provoking discussions, personalized learning and engaging group activities is the essence of the post-graduate diploma course

in curriculum design and development. Among the students are policy makers, curriculum specialists, teacher supervisors, school principals, teacher trainers and quality assurance officers.

This is the Latin America and the Caribbean branch of the program, hosted by the Catholic University of Uruguay (UCU) for its sixth consecutive year. The program has also been offered four times in Africa, hosted by the Open University of Tanzania (OUT), thanks to support from the Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award for Distinguished Academic Performance.

The training combines two weeks of face-to-face sessions, led by international and national experts, and nine months of distance learning, supported by a multidisciplinary pool of tutors. Among other resources, it uses the IBE-produced Resource Pack, which covers a vast array of training activities and case studies from all UNESCO regions, along with cutting-edge knowledge on curriculum trends, issues and practices from an international and comparative perspective. The Resource Pack, whose new edition was just published, is designed to serve as an “education GPS” that can help participants move confidently and successfully through curriculum renewal and development.

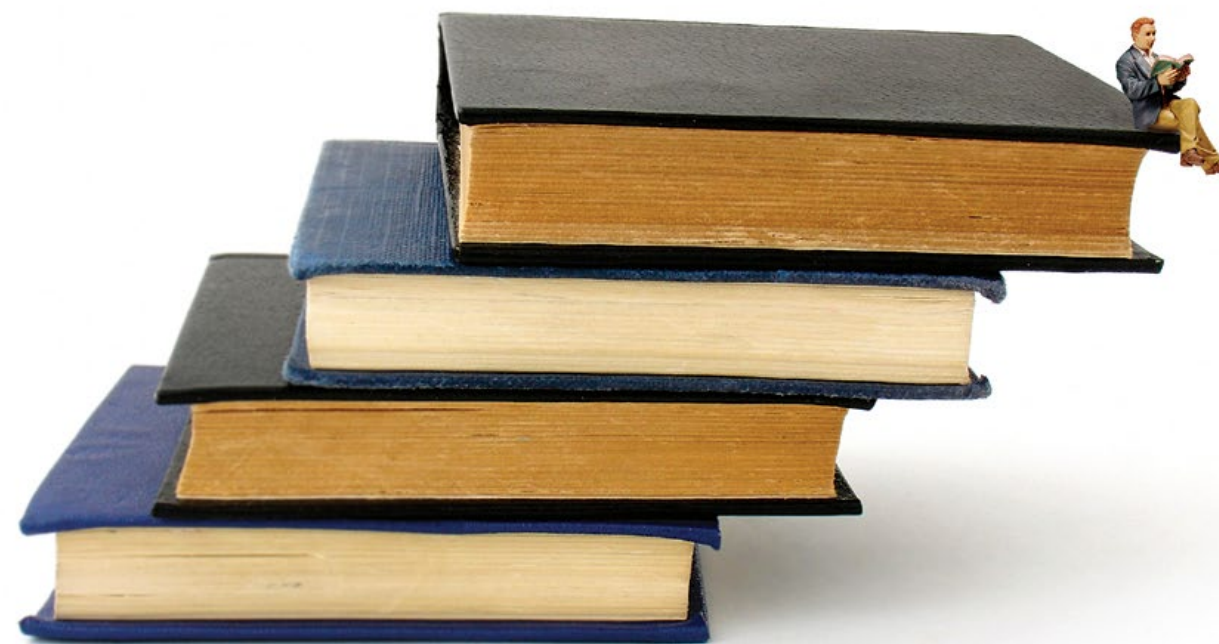
The students who converge here engage in innova-

tive thinking, with specific goals of solving practical problems. At the end of the course, they hone an array of techniques they can use to spur innovation in their national curriculum development processes. Graduates often become major players in their countries, leading innovative curricula reforms. The program is certainly meeting its goal: to build technical leaders for curriculum design and development at national and regional levels and to spur professionalism and innovation in the field. And in 2016, the program’s remarkable development and success soon expand to the Arab region.

On its 10th anniversary in 2015, the program had reached 450 participants from 60 countries. As it grows, it also keeps reflecting on itself. In addition to its tangible achievements, what really matters is its innovative process, which drives positive transformation in curriculum design and development. The IBE remains resolute in maintaining its creative culture. ○



2015 marked a decade of the IBE post-graduate diploma program which grooms future technical leaders for curriculum development at the national and regional level. The program already covers Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean; 2015 saw the IBE prepare to expand it into the Arab states.





worlddidac ASSOCIATION

The IBE and the Worlddidac Association signed a Memorandum of Understanding in December 2015. The agreement expands the IBE's technical services to more Member States and partners—and meanwhile lets Worlddidac members participate in the IBE's projects and initiatives.

This partnership extends the IBE's geographical outreach to the Worlddidac network: 140 member companies and organizations in 38 countries on 4 continents. It connects the IBE's global networks of policy makers and practitioners with excellent and well-known international educational service providers, bringing them updated knowledge and better access to the latest educational technologies and services.

As part of this agreement, IBE staff will attend two Worlddidac exhibitions in 2016: GESS Dubai 2016 and Worlddidac Asia in Hong Kong, allowing them to connect with high-ranked officials, practitioners, and CEOs of education service groups.

Notes from the Managing Editor



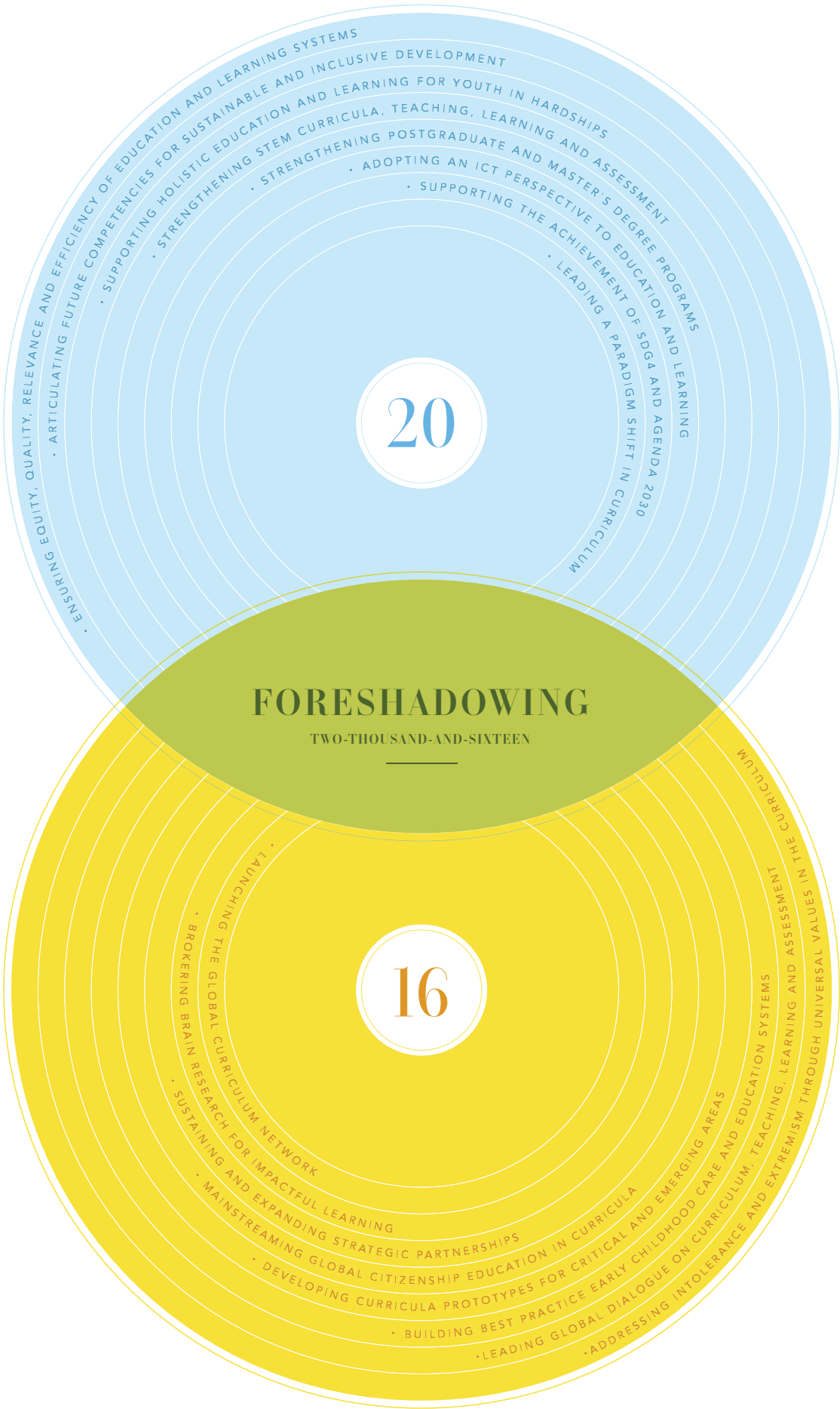
When our director, Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope, challenged us to create an annual magazine, no one, including myself, could have anticipated what was in store. We devoted a fair bit of time and effort to finding the best model for a magazine, one that would match our dream. In the hectic whirl of building it from scratch, we held on to the hope that we could create a new kind of space where we would share the IBE’s exciting work with the world; a space that would bring intellectual pleasure to both authors and readers, in accessible style and language. In this compressed space—which we’ve named *IBE In Focus*—we sought to see ideas, reflections, and information jostle together into the simply elegant style of a reporter who connects with her readers, especially those who are not education specialists.

Still, we hope you’ll find more here: a lifelong learning IBE that constantly builds on a solid foundation of enduring and cogent ideas; but also vibrant projects, throwing out obsolete ideas and practices and bringing in new ones. In short, the rich history and the constant self-renewal of the IBE. This has been our work in 2015: ardent, innovative and exemplary, guided by our confidence that we can bring transformative and positive change to the world.

Join us in wishing the *IBE In Focus* a long and cherished life!



Simona Popa
Managing Editor, IBE In Focus



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