UNESCO International Community of Practice:
Global Alliance on the Science of Learning for Education
Inaugural Statement

1. PREAMBLE

We, the participants at the first expert meeting on the Learning Sciences, meeting in person at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 25 to 26 October 2023,

Observing that the world has made progress on getting more children into school, however, the issues of quality, equity and relevance, together with the subsequent questions of whether and how effectively students are learning are becoming an increasing concern,

Conscious of the urgency to take action towards safeguarding the rights to education and addressing the persistent global learning crisis,

Responding to the work of the SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC)'s Functional Area 1 on evidence-based policy formulation and implementation, the Call to Action of the 2022 United Nations Transforming Education Summit, and the recommendations in the report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education, which are also reflected in the United Nations Secretary General's Vision Statement on Transforming Education,

Reconfirming the potential of scientific knowledge about how humans learn to drive innovations and transform teaching and learning practices, in particular those related to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, as well as the pertinent knowledge and evidence they produce to inform policymaking, teaching and learning processes, teacher education, and education management,

Acknowledging the challenges involved in integrating the insights and evidence that are fragmented across different disciplinary lines of research on learning and teaching, and the critical need to overcome these challenges in order to provide useable information in ways that can be taken up by practitioners to improve teaching and learning,

Acknowledging the neglected and unfulfilled potential of using the pedagogical knowledge and classroom experience of teachers and other education practitioners to test and refine theories and to inform future research agendas,

Recognizing the importance of two-way dialogue among policymakers, educational practitioners, and scientists in bringing education policy, practices and the scientific knowledge about how people learn into alignment and mutually beneficial reinforcement, the sharing of knowledge, networking and strengthening capacity to improve production and uptake of scientific knowledge for education policies and practices,

Recognizing that a Global Alliance on the Science of Learning for Education includes in its ethos an explicit and intentional call for action towards convergence of knowledge across different academic disciplines and a consilience towards a common groundwork of explanation or understanding, therefore creating a Science, instead of many sciences,

Having discussed about the latest insights and developments in the different scientific fields of study of how people learn and the possible modality of working,

1. Recommend that a Global Alliance on the Science of Learning for Education (henceforth, the Alliance or Global Alliance) is hereby established, on 26 October 2023 in Paris, France.
2. Suggest that UNESCO, with its mandated intellectual and technical role in education and science, and the power to convene, serving as a laboratory of ideas, facilitates the work of this Alliance by acting as a knowledge broker among policymakers, educational practitioners, and scientists.
3. Further recommend that UNESCO represent the Alliance as the principal 'Scientific Council' to advocate for and inform the deliberations of global multi-stakeholder consultation and coordination mechanisms in the areas of its expertise, which may include the Global Education Meeting, the High-Level Steering Committee for SDG 4, G20 meetings, the SDG 4 Technical Coordination Mechanism, UN General Assembly, and other important high-level global political decision-making processes and mechanisms.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE ON THE SCIENCE OF LEARNING FOR EDUCATION

The overarching aim of the Global Alliance on the Science of Learning for Education (henceforth, the Alliance or Global Alliance) is to serve as an international community of practice and 'network of networks' to influence and inform global and national policy discourses on transforming education and learning which are currently taking place in both political and education development fora. To this end, the Alliance will work closely with the HLSC's Functional Area 1 on evidence-based policy formulation, planning and implementation to inform these debates. The Alliance will be represented by UNESCO as its Scientific Council at global multi-stakeholder consultation and coordination mechanisms (e.g., Global Education Meeting, the High-Level Steering Committee for SDG 4, G20 meetings, the SDG 4 Technical Coordination Mechanism, UN General Assembly) and other important high-level global political decision-making events.

This objective will be achieved by improving the feedback loop from research production to policymaking (i.e., scientific knowledge to inform policymaking) and implementation (i.e., the uptake and application of scientific knowledge to improve pedagogy and teaching-learning processes), and vice versa, and to enhance communication and improve resources and tools to support the SDG 4 mission of achieving a high-quality education in formal and informal learning environments, inclusive of digital and remote learning, with respect to education policies, pedagogical practices, and teacher education and professional development. It is understood that the scientific knowledge about how people learn and about teaching-learning processes embeds scientific inquiry from all academic disciplines that study learning and pedagogy, as well as those which, working on the frontiers of knowledge, have a potential to impact education. Another aspect of this effort is to identify the frontier areas of research, which are apparently far from education issues, but have a potential to impact them strongly in the future.

In particular, the objectives of the Global Alliance on the Science of Learning for Education as an international community of practice are as follows:

1. Foster a community of practice for brokering between scientists, policymakers and practitioners in education, and provide a platform for international cooperation, knowledge exchange, consensus, and networking, seeking synergies among the multiple existing networks working independently.

2. Broaden the understanding of what it takes to truly transform teaching and learning in scientific ways through scientist-policymaker-practitioner-community collaborative enquiries, investigations, and experimenting on the application of findings from scientific studies.
3. Develop a consensus and peer-reviewed harmonization and synthesis of scientific knowledge about how people learn and teaching-learning processes for the implementation and uptake by education policymakers and practitioners.
4. Support wide-scale implementation by promoting systems thinking, interdisciplinary approaches, and innovation in education policies and practice.
5. Provide evidence-based tools and strategies to promote improvements in teaching and learning.
6. Strengthen capacity, especially in the global south for research and action to address the multiple crises and challenges in education and learning that transcend borders and require not only local but global solutions.
7. Leverage UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks, who act as producers of 'local' knowledge, for strengthening cooperation on global activities related to SDG 4.

Annex: Founding Members

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