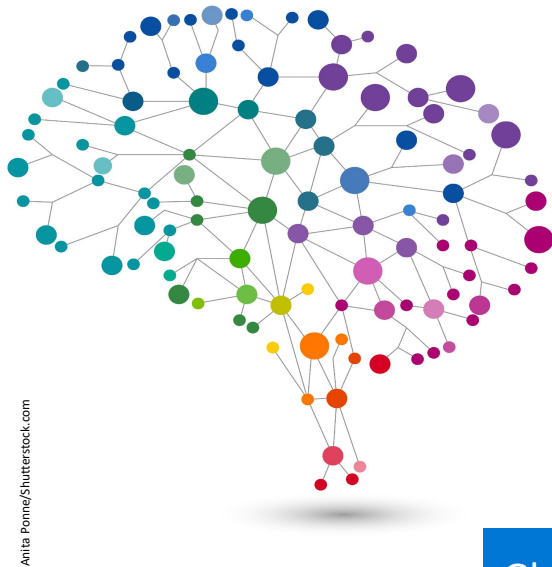




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3-4 December 2026

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

Concept note

2nd Joint Annual Meeting of the

Global Alliance on the Science of Learning for Education

and the Global Science of Learning Education Network

From education systems to learning ecosystems

Background

The [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#) is the United Nations agency responsible for coordinating and monitoring global progress on education, and the custodian agency for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 - Quality Education for All.

As a standard-setter, clearinghouse, laboratory of ideas and catalyst for international cooperation, UNESCO works to ensure that education policy is grounded in the best available evidence. To strengthen the scientific basis of that work, UNESCO established the [Global Alliance on the Science of Learning for Education \(UNGASOL\)](#) as the scientific arm of its global education effort, dedicated to translating the science of learning into policy and practice, and has since partnered with the [Global Science of Learning Education Network \(GSoLEN\)](#), a worldwide community of scientists, researchers, policymakers, funders, science communicators and practitioners. The 2nd Joint Annual Meeting of UNGASOL and GSoLEN will be hosted by UNESCO at its Headquarters in Paris.

Since UNGASOL was established in 2024, its convenings have moved the international community from the case for the science of learning in education (2023), to knowledge brokering as the binding constraint on uptake (2024), to embedded practice under the theme “From Research to Results” in a first joint meeting with GSoLEN (2025). The 2026 meeting takes the next step. As our understanding of learning is itself evolving and the [post-2030 agenda](#) is taking shape, the question is what follows for policy when education is understood not as a set of discrete systems but as an inter-connected learning ecosystem spanning digital and community spaces, school, home, and work.

The timing is also political: in March 2026 the [SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee \(HLSC\)](#), the apex global body that coordinates and monitors progress on SDG 4 and provides strategic and political guidance to the international education community, placed the resilience of education systems at the centre of its 2026-2027 priorities, with the teaching profession, foundational and lifelong learning, and inclusive digital transformation among its reinforcing pillars. The meeting is positioned to feed directly into the 2027 [Global Education Meeting](#), the ministerial gathering that will review the progress towards SDG 4 on education and open the next phase of consultations on the post-2030 education agenda, allowing UNGASOL and GSoLEN to bring the science of learning into that agenda at a formative moment.

Purpose and approach

This 2-day event brings together the UNGASOL and GSoLEN communities, comprised of a growing number of policymakers, scientists, educators, EdTech developers, philanthropists and media, to deepen the relationships and shared understanding of how to mobilize the science of learning to advance flourishing for individuals in support of each country's educational goals, social-economic development, as well as local and global problem-solving.

This meeting is built around two commitments:

1. Share and celebrate advances in exploring and implementing the science of learning across settings.
2. Foster genuine, ongoing dialogue between the communities that produce knowledge and those who turn it into policies, both locally and across regions, in order to deepen and expand the science of learning's impact.

Participants

All members of UNGASOL and GSoLEN are invited to attend, as well as teachers, school leaders, teacher educators, curriculum developers, learning assessment experts, and digital technology developers.

The meeting is open to non-members. Education technical experts and decision-makers of UNESCO's Member States, UN agencies, development partners and civil society organization are also invited to participate.

Meeting themes

The meeting is organized around two scientific themes while integrating a structured policy exploration. The themes are overlapping rather than sequential: most learners move among many learning spaces, in person and virtual, within any given week and across any given decade of life.

Thematic track 1. In an era of digital learning and AI, what does the science of learning tell us?

Digital tools and AI are rapidly changing how, where, and when we learn. Almost 86% of students now use AI tools in their studies (Digital Education Council, 2024), yet science-of-learning principles remain unevenly embedded in the design of digital products, even as those products reach learners at scale (Global Education Coalition, 2026).

A central concern is the gap between engagement and learning: digital environments are often optimized to capture attention rather than to support understanding. The same tools that widen access can deepen divides where connectivity, devices, and support are unevenly distributed. What is the impact of the hybridization of learning – the blending of in-person and virtual learning, of school and

workplace learning, of human and AI-mediated instruction, on developing brains, and what can the science of learning inform what learning methods work best within and across various developmental stages of a life.

This theme builds on the discussion that began at the joint 2025 annual meeting to further explore AI and hybrid learning within a science of learning framework. It looks to the science of learning community from regions and communities around the world to better understand: What is the current state of digital learning, how are digital tools and AI changing how people learn, and what matters most for healthy brain development going forward?

Thematic track 2. Strengthening the science-policy-practice nexus: Building learning ecosystems through implementation

The second theme takes up one of the outcomes from the joint 2025 annual meeting: How can we support education sector actors to strengthen the science-policy-practice nexus and more effectively integrate the science of learning into learning ecosystems.

The theme explores and spotlights science-of-learning-grounded implementation models of innovative learning ecosystems that are moving scientific evidence into everyday educational decisions.

A critical principle runs through all of these implementation models: findings from one setting do not transfer unchanged to new contexts. While the research developed in one context cannot simply be assumed to apply in another, our community spotlights impactful examples that contribute to our collective knowledge and cross-fertilization, inspire local thinking and action, and spark the dialogues and partnerships to build learning ecosystems grounded in the science of learning.

As UNGASOL continued to expand, newly established Regional Hubs are well positioned to embrace and test innovative learning ecosystems, across very different infrastructure, cultural, and climate contexts. Regional Hubs can operationalize knowledge brokering and translation through bi-directional connections to national Local Hubs, thus creating a new learning ecosystem connecting scientists, practitioners, EdTech developers and policymakers founded on the science of learning.

Policy discussion. Turning the science of learning into messages for the post-2030 agenda

The event will convene policymakers, ministry representatives, and multilateral partners alongside the scientific community. Throughout the event, attendees will provide their perspectives, observations, and expertise towards a set of priority questions. These policy questions ask how such instruments can be built into coherent structures rather than added piecemeal, and how the transition can be supported for the institutions and professions, whose role the science of learning helps redefine.

The event will culminate in a guided, structured policy discussion with a concrete purpose: to distil what the science of learning means for policy into a clear set of key messages for the post-2030 education agenda-setting process, to be carried to the Global Education Meeting in April 2027.

Draft programme outline

The 2nd Joint Annual Meeting will take place in person over two days at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 3 to 4, December 2026. The programme moves from framing to the two scientific themes, to a closing policy dialogue.

Day 1. Thursday 3 December

Welcome and opening. Setting the stage: the post-2030 agenda, the shift from education systems to learning ecosystems, and the science of learning, followed by a keynote. The first theme, *“In an era of digital learning and AI, what does the science of learning tell us?”* opens in the afternoon.

Day 2. Friday 4 December

The day will open with the second theme, *“Strengthening the science-policy-practice nexus: Building learning ecosystems through implementation,”* with a sharing of innovative science-of-learning-grounded implementation models of learning ecosystem. The policy discussion will begin after lunch.

Expected outputs

1. A concrete science-of-learning contribution to the post-2030 education agenda, in the form of a set of key messages and priority policy directions emerging from the closing policy discussion, to be tabled at the 2027 Global Education Meeting alongside the foresight and youth inputs already feeding that process, and shared with the HLSC 2026–2027 workplan.
2. A compendium, in non-technical language, of leading insights, research findings, and exemplary models of science-of-learning-grounded ecosystems, as part of the meeting proceedings.

Call for proposals and pre-registration

Pre-registration opens on 1 July 2026. To facilitate organization, interested participants are invited to pre-register for the meeting. As spaces are limited, invitations will be issued on a first-come-first-served basis until all spaces are filled. There is no participation fee to attend the meeting, but participants are expected to cover their own travel, accommodation and visa costs. Lunch will be provided for the two days of the meeting. Participants from low- and low-middle-income countries may be eligible for financing. **The pre-registration deadline is 31 July 2026.** Participants who have secured a place at the meeting will be contacted with more information after the pre-registration deadline.

Proposal submissions can be made via the pre-registration form. Proposals should be aligned with one of the two themes and support the overall purpose and goals of the meeting by contributing to the growing body of scientific and research insights into learning and/or the activation of scientific insights to improve learning experiences and outcomes. Proposals should contribute original insights and findings from research; tools, frameworks, and/or other resources designed to support the integration of the science of learning into education; educational innovations that leverage the science of learning; and/or programmes and projects focused on knowledge-brokering for the science of learning in education. **Deadline for proposal submissions is 31 July 2026. Selected proposals will be notified in early September.**

To submit a proposal and/or pre-register, interested individuals may complete [this form](#).

For more information

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Joining our networks!

Membership to the [UNESCO Global Alliance on the Science of Learning for Education](#) (UNGASOL) is open to universities, research institutions, networks, think tanks, civil society organizations, non-

governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, foundations, funders, associations, academic societies and publishers (Institutional Membership), as well as individual researchers, academics, teacher educators, teachers, curriculum developers, assessment experts and policymakers, who may be representatives of national governments (Individual Membership). Membership is at no-cost and criteria is further described in the [Terms of Reference](#). Members are automatically subscribed to the Newsletter. To apply for membership, applicants may complete the [application form](#).

The [Global Science of Learning Education Network \(GSoLEN\)](#) is an international network of scientists, educators and others invested in using the science of learning to make a positive difference to learning experiences and outcomes for all. All who share this mission are welcome to the no-fee network. To join, fill out the [membership form](#).