



EDITORIAL



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05 / Editorial / Cliente: IBE-UNESCO (Oficina Internacional de Educación)

Desarrollo de línea gráfica editorial, para publicaciones con temática educativa (IBE) / Comportamiento visual general.





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#### 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 uniformed 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 Honorable Tan Sri Muhyiddin Mohd. Yasin, along with Director Mnantsetsta 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. 





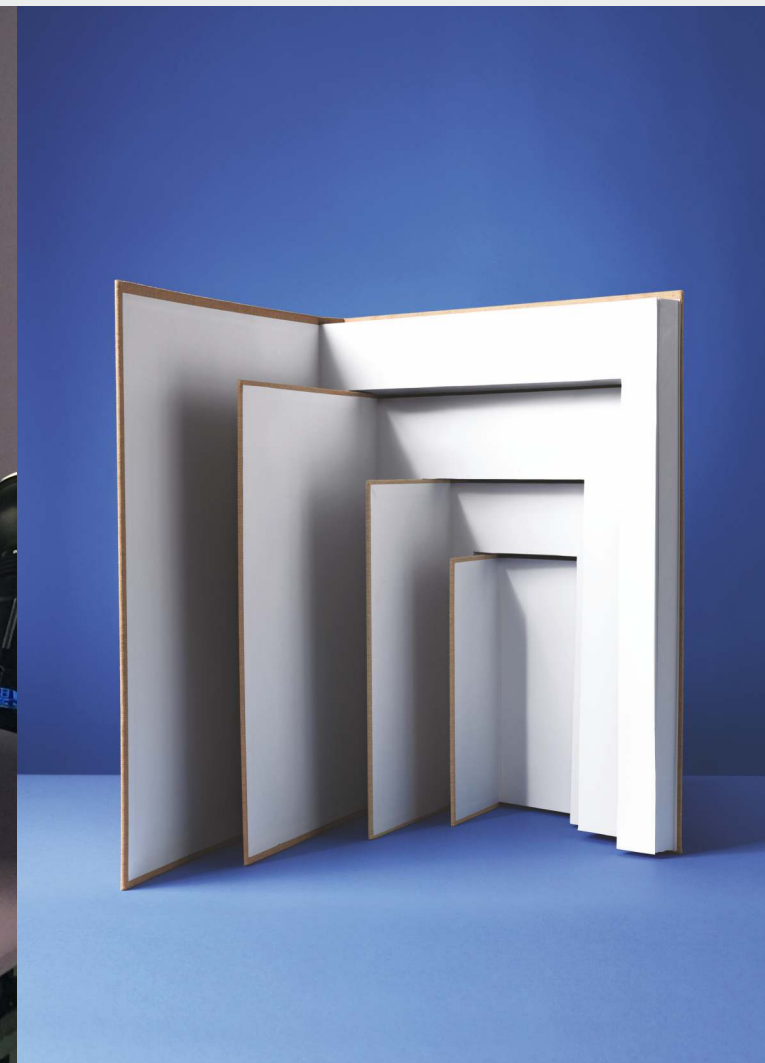
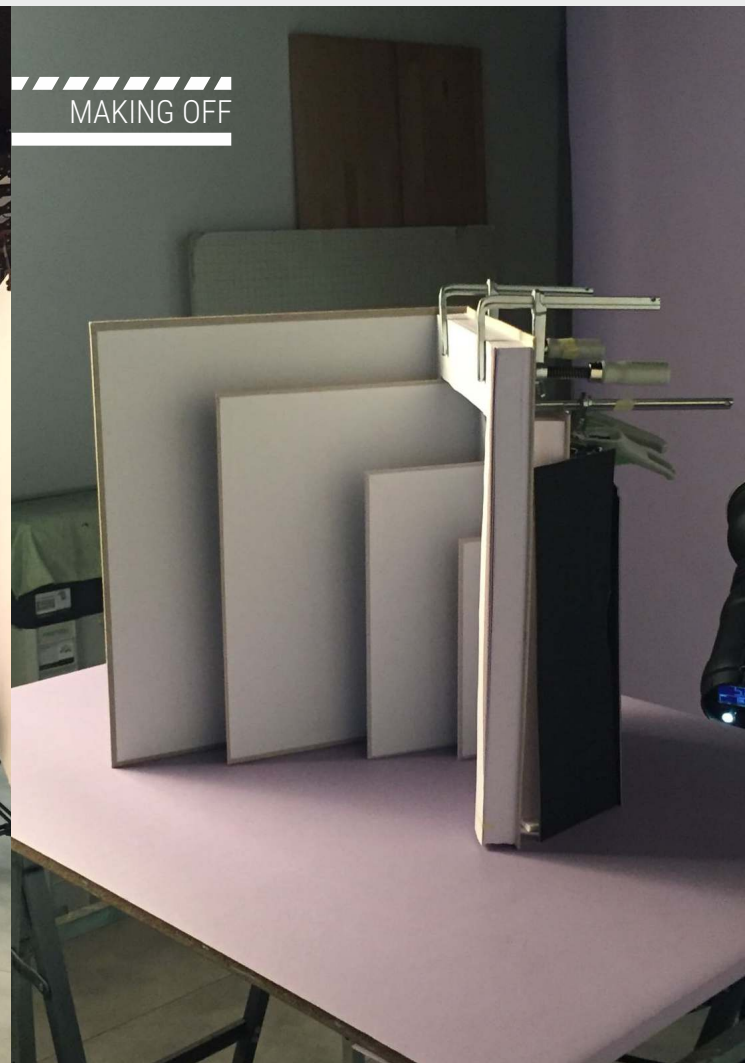












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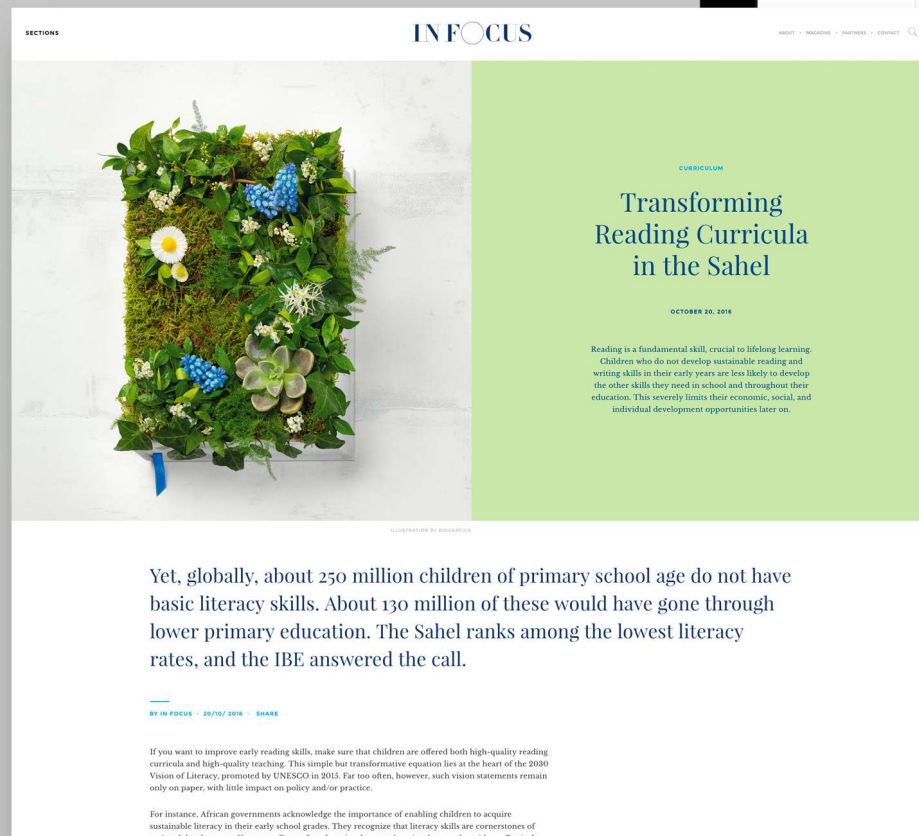












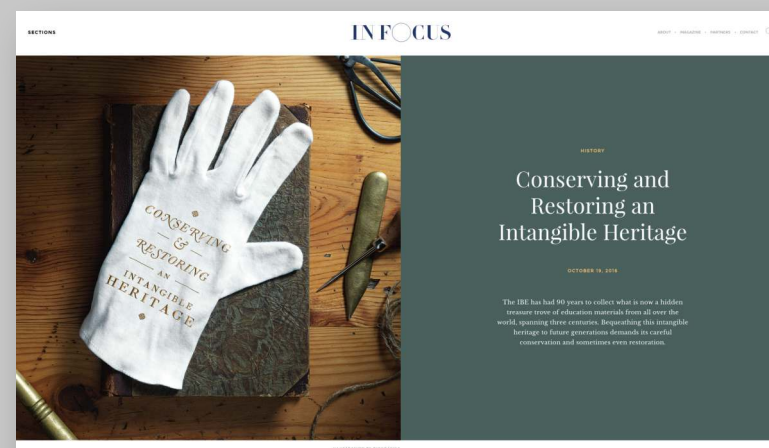


Yet, a range of factors still keep cutting-edge research-based knowledge inaccessible, both literally and substantively, to a large base of policy makers and practitioners, especially in developing countries. Thus, in 2015, the IBE put a sharp focus on its knowledge brokerage role as a key mechanism for improving the substantive access that policy makers and diverse practitioners can have to cutting-edge knowledge.

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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 cracks to the community of knowledge creators but not necessarily to potential users.



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.

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2013 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 23,000 primary and secondary education textbooks and 100 atlases from the late 19th to the 1980s, from over 140 countries, in over 100 languages. Together, they capture trends in the development of education over the latter 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 1923 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 Adolphe Ferrière's *L'École active* (1922), a key work from the progressive education movement.



Adolphe Ferrière's *L'École active* (1922).



Adolphe Ferrière's *L'École active* (1922).

Getting up for the restoration and conservation process, the IBE's documentalist, Ruth Cramer, rolls a cart of gray storage boxes through the doors and passageway 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.

