



Summary Report

2025 BRIDGE Workshop

**Strengthening Inclusive Education Systems
through Non-Formal Education**

23–26 September 2025
Seoul & Busan, Republic of Korea



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2025 BRIDGE Workshop

*Capacity Building Workshop
for Bridge Programme Partners*

BRIDGE Programme

*Partnership Programmme
for Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)*

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Overview and Schedule

2025 BRIDGE Workshop

Dates and Venue	23 -26 September 2025 UNESCO HOUSE, Seoul, Republic of Korea
Organized by	Korean National Commission for UNESCO
Supported by	Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea

Theme

A Systematic Approach to Enhancing the Effectiveness of 'Non-Formal Education' – Building Inclusive Education Systems

Participants

13 representatives responsible for the Bridge Programme—from the current 8 participating countries and 5 candidate countries

* Bridge Programme works together with National Commissions for UNESCO and Laureates of UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize

Background

Non-formal education, which embraces the contexts and needs of diverse learners outside the formal schooling system, has played a critical role—particularly in low and middle-income countries and among socially vulnerable groups—in expanding access to education and ensuring lifelong learning. Building on this potential, the Bridge Programme of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) has supported field practices in Africa and Asia, aiming to strengthen inclusive education systems. These efforts are part of the global endeavor to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all).

This workshop aims to highlight the role of non-formal education as a key strategy which UNESCO leverages in building inclusive education systems. In particular, it will focus on three priority areas: (1) recognition of learning, (2) use of digital technologies, and (3) promotion of cooperation and solidarity, with the overall objective of fostering peer learning and strengthening the BRIDGE Programme's implementation capacity through collective engagement with participating countries.

Schedule

Day 1. Tuesday, September 23, 2025 (UNESCO House, Seoul)

09:40–10:00	Registration		
Opening Session			
10:00–10:30	Opening Remarks	Byung Soon Yun	Acting Secretary General, Korean National Commission for UNESCO
	Welcome Remarks	Eunjong Ra	Director, Global Education Policy Division, Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea
	Congratulatory Remarks (video)	Jeong Bog Moon	Member of the National Assembly, Republic of Korea
		Silinthone Sacklokham	Secretary General, Lao National Commission for UNESCO
		David Mulera	Acting Deputy Secretary, Malawi National Commission for UNESCO
Luis Nivio de Fatima Soares		Secretary General, Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO	
Thematic Workshop PDM for the Effective Management of the Bridge Programme			
10:40–12:30	Lecturer	Ji-Hyang Lee	Adjunct Professor, Kyunghee University
12:30–13:30	Welcome Lunch		
Setting the Scene			
13:30–14:20	Presenter	Sun Kyung Lee	Director, Division of Intl. Cooperation Programme Korean National Commission for UNESCO
		Khalil Bahloul	Expert in charge of TVET Training, IIEP-UNESCO Afrique
Roundtable 1 Connecting Learning: Recognition, Validation and Accreditation in Non-Formal Education			
14:20–16:10	Moderator	Khalil Bahloul	Expert in charge of TVET Training, IIEP-UNESCO Afrique
	Introductory Remarks	Boyoung Kim	Senior Programme Specialist, Korean National Commission for UNESCO
	Panelists	Alexandrinha dos Santos Passos	Programme Officer, Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO
		Dunaisingh Sarawanamuthu	Senior Lecturer, National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka
		Samson Kantini	Senior Programme Officer, Zambia National Commission for UNESCO
		Ugyen Tshomo	Chief Programme Officer, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Bhutan
		Min-seon Park	Programme Specialist, National Institute for Lifelong Education
16:10–16:30	Break		

Roundtable 2 Digital Inclusion: Digital Technologies for Non-Formal Education			
16:30–18:00	Moderator	Subin Sarah Yeo	Assistant Professor, Hannam University
	Introductory Remarks	InHye Lee	Programme Specialist, Korean National Commission for UNESCO
	Panelists	Hyunju Kim	Head of Impact Business, ENUMA Korea
		Saima Fayaaz	Coordinator, Bunyad Literacy and Community Council, Pakistan
		Sooji Kim	Head of Education and Health Team, Good Neighbors Korea
		Kiwoong Park	Senior Researcher, Korea Education and Research Information Service

Day 2. Wednesday, September 24, 2025 (UNESCO House, Seoul)

Roundtable 3Solidarity and Cooperation: Partnerships and Collaborative Governance			
10:00–11:30	Moderator	Sangkyoo Kang	Director, Division of Planning and Coordination, Korean National Commission for UNESCO
	Introductory Remarks	Yeongeun Sim	Programme Specialist, Korean National Commission for UNESCO
	Panelists	Phaly Phanlouvong	Technical Official, Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR
		Chifuniro Clement Chikoti	Programme Officer, Malawi National Commission for UNESCO
		Abdullah Mohammad Mahmoud Awad	Director of Research, Taghyeer, Jordan
Sujeong Kim		Programme Officer, Gwangmyeong City	
11:30–13:00	Luncheon		
Group WorkshopProject-Based Peer Learning and Collaborative Approaches			
13:00-15:30	· Breakout into smaller groups for project-based peer learning - Group A: Bhutan, Jordan, Tanzania, Zambia - Group B: Cote D’Ivoire, Laos, Pakistan, Uganda - Group C: Burundi, Ghana, Malawi, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste		
15:30-16:00	Break		
Consultation SessionCountry Project Review			
16:00-18:00	· Bilateral meetings to review progress and discuss on 2026 plans		

Day 3. Thursday, September 25, 2025 (Busan)

08:00-11:00	Travel from Seoul to Busan
Site Visit 1	BRIDGE X Youth @ Busan University of Foreign Studies
12:00-15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Campus Tour · Lunch @ School Cafeteria · [BRIDGE X Youth] Dialogue with Young Members of the Busan Development Cooperation Student Alliance
Site Visit 2	BRIDGE Meets Creativity @ Busan Cultural Foundation
16:00-17:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Field Visit and Briefing: Ongu Arts and Culture Education Programme for Citizens

Day 4. Friday, September 26, 2025 (Busan Excursion)

Session Highlights

1. Opening

The 2025 Bridge Workshop commenced with an opening address by Mr. Byung Soon Yun, Acting Secretary-General of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, followed by a warm welcoming remark from the Director of the Global Education Policy Division, Ministry of Education, Ms. Eunjong Ra. Congratulatory remarks were delivered by Hon. Jeong-bok Moon (Member of the National Assembly), Mr. Sayamoungkhoun Souliyamath (Secretary-General of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO), Mr. David Mulera (Acting Deputy Secretary of the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO), and Mr. Luis Nivio de Fatima Soares (Secretary-General of the Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO).

To commemorate the meaningful exchange, the opening ceremony concluded with Secretary-General Byung Soon Yun presenting a traditional Korean gift to Professor Clement Bigirimana (Burundi National Commission for UNESCO), who accepted it as the representative of all international participants.



2. Thematic Workshop

Project Design Management (PDM) for the Effective Management of the BRIDGE Programme

by Prof. Ji-Hyang Lee (Adjunct Professor, Kyung Hee University)



Professor Ji-Hyang Lee (Adjunct Professor, Kyung Hee University) delivered an interactive lecture on Project Cycle Management (PCM), providing participants with a robust framework for designing and managing education-focused development projects. The session was structured around three core components (1) the unique characteristics of education projects, (2) the formulation of the Project Design Matrix (PDM), and (3) the application of these tools to strengthen monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

- In explaining the distinctive nature of education projects, Professor Lee emphasized education as a fundamental and enabling right, a core driver of human capability development, and a central pillar of sustainable development. She underscored the importance of learner-centered and context-sensitive approaches, noting that quality education requires careful consideration of both equality and equity, supported by evidence-based planning and a strict “do no harm” principle.
- Turning to project design, she defined a project as a time-bound and budg-

eted set of activities aimed at achieving a specific objective, and highlighted the importance of structured decision-making across the five stages of the project cycle. She introduced Results-Based Management (RBM) as a foundational logic underpinning effective project design, explaining how it can be articulated through a Theory of Change or a Logical Framework. Using a simplified flowchart, Professor Lee demonstrated how inputs and activities—such as teacher training—lead to outputs and outcomes that collectively contribute to higher-level goals. She stressed that a well-constructed PDM depends on clear and coherent logic linking inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and goals, supported by measurable indicators.



3. Setting the Scene

BRIDGE Programme and Its Strategic Directions

by Ms. Sun Kyung Lee (Director of Division of International Cooperation Programmes, KNCU)



Ms. Sun Kyung Lee (Director of Division of International Cooperation Programmes, KNCU) presented a comprehensive overview of the BRIDGE Programme's strategic evolution. Her presentation was centered on three overarching strategic goals designed to enhance the programme's impact and sustainability.

Under the goal of addressing education needs, she emphasized the Programme's contribution to achieving SDG targets 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 through non-formal education (NFE), aligned with UNESCO's Strategy for Youth and Adult Literacy (2020–2025). She highlighted the continued relevance of BRIDGE in responding to the global learning crisis, noting that out-of-school children and youth reached an estimated 272 million in 2023. Drawing on BRIDGE's 15 years of implementation and evidence from country reports, she underscored both the scale and quality of impact achieved in expanding access to inclusive learning opportunities.

In relation to broadening outreach in diverse ways, Ms. Lee highlighted the strategic use of the BRIDGE brand, consistent annual reporting, and sustained advocacy through UNESCO General Conference sessions and engagement

with Member States. These efforts have strengthened partnerships, enhanced public recognition, and expanded participatory engagement through open events, youth involvement, and the use of both traditional and social media in Korea and partner countries.

Concluding with catalyzing quality-assured scale-up, she outlined KNCU's support for partner institutions through annual PDM manuals, interactive BRIDGE workshops, and recent initiatives introducing digital learning via mobile educational applications. She emphasized that BRIDGE's future direction lies in continued innovation, strengthened advocacy, and active partner engagement to scale effective practices in a quality-assured and sustainable manner.

Planning Education, Building the Future

by Mr. Khalil Bahloul (Expert in TVET Training, IIEP-UNESCO Afrique)



Mr. Khalil Bahloul (Expert in TVET Training, IIEP-UNESCO Afrique) introduced the mission of IIEP highlighting ongoing efforts to reflect Non-Formal Education (NFE) in national educational planning. For over 60 years, IIEP has strengthened the capacity of Member States to plan and manage their education systems through three primary approaches: training, technical cooperation, and knowledge mobilization.

To set a solid foundation for educational development, IIEP focuses on six key pillars: Learning, Equity, Transparency, Technology, Resilience, and Skills. Mr. Bahloul highlighted that NFE is now treated as a cross-cutting sub-sector of both equity and inclusion within the Education Sector Analysis (ESA). IIEP has developed analytical indicators for NFE to provide policymakers with a comprehensive layout of the educational landscape. Within the Education Sector Plan (ESP) preparation stage, NFE is integrated through specialized cost calculation models, allowing for its inclusion in tangible financial and budgetary data.

The presentation detailed IIEP's extensive support over the past 18 months to strengthening skills development (TVET) in Africa, which includes the development of 46 planning documents across 42 countries. A system-wide approach is being utilized to close the gap between skill demand and supply, ranging from continental initiatives to national projects. The "New Global Campus" project was showcased as a prime example of leveraging technology to provide diverse training catalogues, specifically aimed at achieving gender equality and social inclusion. Mr. Bahloul concluded by reaffirming IIEP's commitment to reducing the marginalization of learners and invited participants to explore various forms of collaboration to build more resilient and inclusive education systems.

4. Roundtable 1

Connecting Learning: Recognition, Validation and Accreditation in Non-Formal Education

Moderated by Mr. Khalil Bahloul (Expert in TVET Training, IIEP-UNESCO Afrique)

Panelists consisting of representatives from Timor-Leste, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Zambia, and the Republic of Korea.



Overview

The session examined how non-formal education (NFE) can move from flexible but peripheral provision to a system-recognized pathway that connects learners to further education and labor-market opportunities. Following an introductory presentation by Ms. Boyoung Kim (KNCU) setting the objectives and UNESCO-based framework, the session, moderated by Mr. Khalil Bahloul, featured four Bridge Project cases and the National Institute of Lifelong Education, highlighting context-based approaches to connecting learning pathways. Country cases and tools, including national qualification frameworks, management information systems (MIS), and relevant programmes, were presented as practical solutions to make NFE learning visible, credit-bearing, and transferable across education systems and into employment.

- From flexibility to recognition addressing disconnection: Presenters emphasized that flexibility alone does not ensure equity at scale unless NFE outcomes are formally recognized. National qualification frameworks, assessment cross-walks, and exam-aligned pathways were highlighted as key mechanisms to validate learning, reduce dead ends, and connect community-based education to formal progression routes.
- Making field practice legible to policy: Speakers stressed that documenting local practices—such as Open Schools, community learning centres, and ICT literacy initiatives—and translating them into standardized data and competencies is essential for policy uptake. MIS platforms and shared indicators were presented as tools to generate credible evidence for ministries, align NFE provision with formal standards, and link learning outcomes to education sector plans and labour-market needs.
- National mechanisms enabling learner's transitions: Country examples illustrated how transition mechanisms—such as level descriptors aligned with formal curricula, equivalency assessment routes, and recognized credentials—enable learners to move from NFE into secondary education, tertiary pathways, or employment. Where such mechanisms function effectively, NFE outcomes become portable and stackable within national systems.
- Pathways to labor market and further study: A recurring focus was ensuring that NFE leads to tangible opportunities through examination preparation, orientation support, ICT literacy for employability, and recognition frameworks that translate community-acquired skills into qualifications accepted by employers and higher education institutions. These approaches position NFE as a cost-effective, rights-based strategy for advancing SDG 4's equity agenda.

The session underscored system integration as the central requirement for impact: formal recognition and validation of NFE outcomes, systematic documentation of field practices through shared data systems, and governance through multi-stakeholder platforms. Together, these pillars enable NFE to function as a flexible, cost-effective, and rights-based pathway that reduces learning inequalities and ensures community-based learning leads to nationally recognized progression and employment opportunities by 2030.

Timor-Leste Case

by Ms. Alexandrinha dos Santos (Programme Officer, Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO)



Ms. Alexandrinha dos Santos outlined the institutional context of the BRIDGE Project, explaining its implementation through the National Commission for UNESCO and monitoring by the Ministry of Education of Timor-Leste. The programme supports three Non-Formal Education Programmes (NEP)—Equivalency, Literacy, and Life Skills—designed with flexible curricula and delivery modalities, including face-to-face, blended, and distance learning across diverse learning spaces. Learner progression and completion are as-

essed through diagnostic, formative, and final national examinations leading to certification. Ms. dos Santos reported that the equivalency programme has been implemented in nine municipalities, with four additional municipalities currently in progress toward nationwide rollout by 2026, and noted that graduation levels have generally been sustained despite periodic declines as some learners prioritize employment over continued study. The presentation and Q&A highlighted persistent challenges related to learner dropout and financial constraints, particularly limited national funding due to competing policy priorities, underscoring the importance of evaluation-informed adjustments and forward-looking strategies to strengthen retention, sustainability, and policy alignment of the NEP within Timor-Leste's education system.

Sri Lanka Case

by Mr. Dunaisingh Sarawanmuthu (Senior Lecturer, National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka)



“Open School offers flexible, no-age-limit access; equivalency and continuous assessment bridge into national exams and TVET.”

Mr. Dunaisingh Sarawanmuthu introduced the government-led Open School Programme, a flexible second-chance education pathway designed to re-engage school dropouts and other marginalized learners, including adults and persons with disabilities. The programme seeks to identify the causes of dropout and support learners’ reintegration into further education and the labour market through tailored non-formal education (NFE), with a strong emphasis on access to recognized credentials via examinations aligned with national General Certificate (O- and A-Level) routes. Delivered through regional study centres and modular levels roughly corresponding to Grades 6–10/11, the programme currently reaches over 6,150 learners annually and complements academic pathways with bridging modules focused on employability, entrepreneurship, life skills, and linkages to technical colleges and vocational routes. Mr. Sarawanmuthu highlighted the Practice and Innovation component as a key mechanism for certifying learning progress against national and international standards, thereby facilitating workplace integration, while noting

recent advancements such as expanded access, ICT literacy initiatives launched in 2024, updated curricula, and strengthened regional delivery. At the same time, he underscored persistent challenges related to tutor professional development, uneven implementation across provinces, and the need for more efficient data compilation and MIS integration, emphasizing that strengthening institutional capacity and data systems is essential for scaling recognition and learner progression within Sri Lanka's evolving NFE framework.

Bhutan Case

by Ms. Ugyen Tshomo (Chief Programme Officer, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Bhutan)



"The MIS enforces timelines and provides evidence for policy and budgeting—critical in a resource-constrained setting."

Ms. Ugyen Tshomo presented Bhutan's approach to strengthening non-formal education (NFE) through a coordinated institutional framework, noting that while multiple stakeholders are involved, all budgeting is channelled through the Ministry of Finance. She outlined the NFE Equivalency Framework and Pathways, which link early learning, literacy, and skills training in close coordination with the Ministry of Education, and highlighted how support from the BRIDGE Bhutan Project has enabled the development of a national

NFE Management Information System (NFE MIS) to address long standing challenges in data collection, monitoring, and accountability.

Adapted from UNESCO's administrative model to Bhutan's context, the NFE MIS—designed and rolled out with BRIDGE backing—introduces digitized, role based modules for centre management, instructors, learners, monitoring and evaluation, repositories, and reporting, thereby replacing fragmented paper systems with transparent, near real time linkage between community level implementation and central administration. Ms. Tshomo emphasized that this digitization, together with BRIDGE supported revision and digitization of instructors' guides and operational guidelines and provision of laptops to NFE instructors, is strengthening evidence based policy planning and resource allocation in a resource constrained environment, while improving course oversight, role clarity, and accountability across stakeholders. She also presented practical applications of technology within NFE delivery and highlighted Community Learning Centre (CLC) outcomes that have empowered women to establish independent livelihood businesses. The discussion underscored that effective collection and use of NFE MIS data is now critical to prioritizing investments, sustaining coordination, and consolidating NFE reforms in Bhutan.

Zambia Case

by Mr. Samson Kantini (Senior Programme Officer, Zambia National Commission for UNESCO)



"Construction itself was part of the learning process... trade testing certified community builders who then found jobs or formed cooperatives."

Mr. Samson Kantini reflected on the 2016 BRIDGE project and its implications for the implementation of the BRIDGE Zambia Project from 2026 onward. Drawing on earlier experiences, he explained that Zambia's BRIDGE model has established

a scalable pathway from non-formal education to employment by recognizing prior and community-based learning through Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (RVA) integrated with TVET. He noted that pilot Community Learning Centres (CLCs) applied “learning-by-doing” trade tests to assess and certify local artisans’ skills, which facilitated early employment outcomes. Sustainability was further supported through the engagement of alumni tutors and spillover effects linked to women-led enterprise development. Mr. Kantini emphasized that a three-level framework enables learners to progress from demonstrable skills certification to secondary and vocational education pathways, leveraging existing school infrastructure adapted for adult learners through andragogical approaches and targeted teacher incentives.

Looking ahead to the 2026–2030 period, he outlined plans to scale up implementation across diverse communities through ICT-enabled delivery, curriculum updates, strengthened quality assurance and coordination mechanisms, and the development of an integrated NFE database linked to national systems to support targeting and accountability. He also identified key constraints, including limited adult-appropriate facilities, ICT and infrastructure costs, facilitator retention, and persistent data gaps. In response, he called for partnerships to support co-investment in facilities, digital learning networks—including cross-border exchanges—and national NFE data integration, with a view to strengthening RVA–TVET mechanisms that support the transition from skills to credentials and from credentials to employment at scale.

Korea Case

by Ms. Min-seon Park (Programme Specialist, National Institute for Lifelong Education, Republic of Korea)



“Non-traditional degrees carry legal parity with traditional ones; over 1.4 million degrees awarded through ACBS/BDES.”

Ms. Min-seon Park expanded on the Republic of Korea’s approach to lifelong education by introducing three ongoing initiatives. The Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS), established in 1998, is an initiative that has enabled learners to accumulate required credits toward a nationally recognized bachelor’s degree. The Bachelor’s Degree Examination for Self-Education Scheme (BDES), a fully self-directed and examination-based scheme, has opened a pathway in which learners enter and obtain a bachelor’s degree. As a pathway aiming to support adult learners, Ms. Park presented the Academic Career Acknowledgment System for Adult Learners, which targets adults who have not completed primary or lower secondary education. The system aims to support these learners in attaining basic education completion, thereby opening pathways to further education or employment. Ms Park briefly outlined the policy and institutional framework under which lifelong education is governed in the Republic of Korea and shared that, to date, more than two million learners have progressed to higher education through ACBS and BDES, with approximately 1.4 million successfully earning a degree. She emphasized that a key strength of these systems lies in the formal recognition of certificates by national or local government authorities. Nevertheless, she also pointed to ongoing challenges, particularly the limited recognition of non-academic learning experiences or alternative forms of academic credit within other formal education sectors. To address these challenges, Ms. Park concluded by highlighting the potential of integrating digital and AI-driven tools, alongside strengthening cross-border cooperation, to better respond to evolving international learning needs.

5. Roundtable 2

Digital Inclusion: Digital Technologies for Non-Formal Education



Moderated by Ms. Subin Sarah Yeo
(Assistant Professor, Hannam University)

Panelists consisting of representatives from ENUMA Korea, Pakistan, Good Neighbors Korea, and Korea Education and Research Information Service.



Overview

The session explored how digital technologies can support non-formal education (NFE) when they are applied in ways that are context-responsive, teacher-mediated, and institutionally grounded. Following a brief introductory presentation by Ms. Inhye Lee (KNCU), which set the objectives and discussion framework based on relevant UNESCO normative references, the session was moderated by Ms. Subin Sarah Yeo and brought together practitioners and policy-linked institutions from ENUMA, Pakistan (Bunyard), KERIS, and Good Neighbors Korea.

- The ENUMA Korea case showed that adaptive digital learning can strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy when backed by clear government commitment, financing, and institutional coordination. Large-scale experiences in Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia underscored the importance of policy prioritization and partnerships, while BRIDGE-supported initiatives in Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste demonstrated effective CLC-based integration for out-of-school learners. A less successful refugee case in Bangladesh highlighted the limits of technology without local acceptance and community ownership.
- The Pakistan (Bunyard) case highlighted how low-tech and no-internet solutions, such as Tele-School and Radio School, can sustain learning for rural women and marginalized communities during crises. Bunyard's long-term, phased approach expanded access through mobile and multimedia learning, while persistent barriers—affordability and the digital gender gap—remained. BRIDGE support, particularly in strategic guidance and teacher capacity development, enabled more context-sensitive use of digital tools.
- KERIS presented the Solar School Project as a model of responsible digital innovation, using solar-powered ICT to support learning in resource-constrained settings. Its impact relied on a phased, evidence-based approach and continuous feedback from teachers and learners, with a clear message that teacher empowerment, contextual adaptation, and pedagogy must guide digital scale-up.
- Good Neighbors Korea's Tanzania case demonstrated that teacher-mediated, community-driven radio-based learning can improve outcomes in non-formal and crisis-affected contexts. Teachers' involvement in content development and complementary materials strengthened local ownership, while evaluation results confirmed that teacher intervention—rather than technol-

ogy alone—was the decisive factor in improving learner engagement and performance.

Overall, the roundtable reaffirmed that digital inclusion in non-formal education depends less on the sophistication of technology and more on how it is embedded within local institutions, teaching practices, and partnerships. Teacher mediation, demand-driven design, and alignment with existing non-formal education structures emerged as shared conditions for effectiveness and sustainability.

ENUMA Korea Case

by Ms. Hyunju Kim (Head of Impact Business, ENUMA Korea)



Ms. Hyunju Kim presented ENUMA's approach to strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy through adaptive digital learning solutions, highlighting that effective technology must be accompanied by strong partnerships, public ownership, and sustainable financing. She introduced a key success case in Pakistan, where adaptive English and mathematics applications were implemented with cost efficiency and supported by clear government commitment, including a willingness to invest approximately USD 100 per child. Additional cases from Indonesia and Malaysia demonstrated how policy prioritization, well-defined institutional roles, and collaboration among ministries, donors, and local partners enabled large-scale adoption, including over 500,000 downloads in Indonesia. Ms. Kim further highlighted recent BRIDGE-supported initiatives in Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, where collaboration between

ENUMA, Community Learning Centres (CLCs), and national partners—facilitated through the BRIDGE Projects—enabled context-appropriate literacy support for out-of-school learners and embedded digital tools within non-formal education systems. Reflecting on challenges, she cited a Bangladesh refugee context as a less successful case, noting that despite promising educational outcomes and international support, resistance from host communities revealed the limits of technology-driven solutions in the absence of local acceptance and system-wide alignment. The discussion underscored a shared lesson from its experience noting that while digital tools are powerful enablers, their effectiveness and sustainability depend on demand-driven design, strong government and community ownership, coordinated partnerships, and a system-wide approach that prioritizes learners’ needs and teacher mediation beyond project-level interventions.

Pakistan Case

by Ms. Saima Fayaaz (Coordinator, Bunyad Literacy and Community Council)

Ms. Saima Fayaaz presented the BRIDGE-supported digital non-formal education initiatives targeting rural women and other marginalized communities across four Union Councils, situating the work within Pakistan’s broader policy and institutional shift toward ICT-enabled education. She highlighted how low-tech and no-internet solutions—such as Tele-School and Radio School—have played a critical role in ensuring learning continuity for millions during crises, while Bunyad’s long-term, phased approach



since 2009 has progressively expanded access through mobile-phone-based learning, multimedia content, broader ICT access, community internet facilities, and online capacity building. Despite these advances, Ms. Fayaaz underscored persistent demand-side barriers, particularly affordability constraints and a pronounced digital gender gap that continues to limit rural women’s participation in digital learning. In the discussion and Q&A, she emphasized that support

from the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) under the BRIDGE framework has been distinctive in going beyond financial assistance to include strategic guidance and teacher capacity development, enabling more effective and context-sensitive use of digital tools in non-formal education. She concluded that sustained capacity building, inclusive partnerships, and policies explicitly addressing access and gender-based digital divides are essential to ensuring that digitalization strengthens—rather than deepens—educational equity for marginalized communities in Pakistan.

Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS) Case

by Mr. Kiwoong Park (Senior Researcher, Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS))



Mr. Kiwoong reflected on the Solar School Project as a case of responsible digital innovation relevant to the BRIDGE Programme’s emphasis on equitable, context-responsive digitalization in non-formal education. He explained how the project, implemented through public–private collaboration and supported by Korea’s digital education agenda, equipped schools with solar-powered ICT infrastructure, enabling them to function as community learning hubs in resource-constrained settings. Mr. Park emphasized that the project’s effectiveness stemmed not from technological novelty, but from a phased, evidence-based approach incorporating environmental and data analysis, contextual verification, and continuous feedback from teachers and learners—

an approach aligned with UNESCO's guidance on demand-driven and rights-based digital education. While noting the strengths of public-private cooperation, he cautioned that as initiatives scale, diverging stakeholder interests can undermine coherence if governance structures and implementation stages are rushed or bypassed. He underscored that, in line with lessons from BRIDGE partner countries, the success of digital innovation ultimately depends on empowered local teachers, contextual adaptation, and policies that prioritize pedagogy and human capacity over technology. The discussion and Q&A, including remarks from IIEP-UNESCO, further highlighted the scalability of such models when embedded within broader system frameworks, including opportunities to link digital education with renewable energy and community development—reinforcing BRIDGE's role as a platform for translating innovative pilots into sustainable, system-level impact.

Good Neighbors Korea Case

by Ms. Sooji Kim (Head, Education and Health Team, Good Neighbors Korea)



Ms. Sooji Kim presented lessons from the Radio Educational Broadcasting initiative of Good Neighbors Korea in Tanzania, illustrating how demand-driven, teacher-mediated digital solutions can improve learning outcomes in non-formal and crisis-affected contexts in line with the BRIDGE Programme's focus on inclusive and context-appropriate digitalization. Reaching approxi-

mately 129,000 secondary learners, the initiative adopted a community-driven approach in which radio-based lessons were produced using local voices, with teachers actively involved in content editing and the development of complementary workbooks for students and educators, thereby strengthening local ownership and relevance. Drawing parallels between Radio Libraries and Community Learning Centres (CLCs), Ms. Kim highlighted how teachers mobilized locally available educational resources to support structured learning. While the project initially aimed to expand participation, evaluation results demonstrated broader impacts, including improved learner motivation, increased engagement and radio listenership, and measurable gains in academic performance. The presentation emphasized that teacher intervention—rather than automated or self-directed radio use alone—was the decisive factor behind these outcomes, as confirmed through regional comparisons. In the discussion and Q&A, Ms. Kim underscored the importance of redefining teacher roles and competencies in ICT-supported non-formal education, highlighting teacher motivation, confidence, and digital literacy, as well as the value of short, step-by-step programme designs to facilitate effective technology integration. She concluded by noting plans for follow-up phases and potential national-scale expansion, reinforcing the BRIDGE lesson that digital tools are most effective when embedded in pedagogically sound, teacher-centered, and system-aligned approaches to inclusive education.

6. Roundtable 3

Solidarity & Cooperation: Partnerships and Collaborative Governance



Moderated by Mr. Sangkyoo Kang
(Director of Division of Planning and
Coordination, KNCU)

Panelists consisting of representa-
tives from Malawi, Laos, Jordan and
Republic of Korea



Overview

The session showcased how inclusive education systems are built through solidarity-driven partnerships that connect government leadership, National Commissions for UNESCO (Natcoms), civil society, and communities. Following an introductory presentation by Ms. Yeongeun Sim (KNCU) on objectives and UNESCO frameworks, the session, moderated by Mr. Sangkyoo Kang, featured three Bridge-supported cases and initiatives from Korea's first Lifelong Learning City Gwangmyeong City. Throughout the discussion, panelists illustrated how coordinated governance, shared platforms, and mutual accountability are vital to planning, resourcing, and integrating NFE into national and municipal strategies.

- **Community-rooted leadership and ownership:** Country examples showed village chiefs and community committees mobilizing participation, mediating disputes, aligning CLC activities to local development priorities, and even contributing land or common spaces. This local stewardship underpins relevance, participation, and sustainability—demonstrating how solidarity is practiced daily through shared roles, resources, and problem solving.
- **Natcoms as conveners and bridge-builders:** Speakers highlighted Natcoms' unique position to seed pilots (e.g., BRIDGE-supported initiatives), convene cross-ministerial coordination, and surface evidence from community practice that informs policy and program design. By channeling attention and resources to credible local actors, Natcoms can help elevate NFE within national plans and stimulate wider adoption by other stakeholders.
- **Civil society as proximate innovators:** CSO-led literacy and community programs illustrated how grassroots models reach marginalized groups (including refugees), generate measurable outcomes, and adapt quickly across contexts. The session underscored the need for funding pathways that empower proven local organizations, reduce dependence on short, shifting project cycles, and formalize recognition of non-formal learning so impact translates into progression and opportunity.
- **Collaborative governance that links institutions, field practice, and technology:** Municipal and country cases showed structured councils and working committees aligning priorities across departments, connecting citizen-led programs to city strategies, and building ecosystems where learning feeds livelihoods, social economy, and inclusion efforts. Strong leadership legitimizes citizen voice, helps break silos, and makes collaborative governance “stick” beyond electoral and budget cycles.

The session affirmed that achieving SDG 4 requires not just more resources but stronger solidarity—as where Natcoms convene, governments enable, CSOs innovate, and communities lead. BRIDGE-funded pilots provide concrete entry points to test and refine approaches; multi-stakeholder platforms translate those lessons into policy and scale; and collaborative governance ensures NFE is systematically planned, adequately resourced, and meaningfully integrated into broader education and agendas.

Lao PDR Case

by Ms. Phaly Phanlouvang (Technical Officer, Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR)



“A sustainable system that continues to improve over time requires a stakeholder platform and inclusive decision making—training and spending included.”

Ms. Phaly Phanlouvang presented the institutional framework of the BRIDGE Laos Project, outlining the roles of the Lao National Commission for UNESCO (LNCU), the Department of Non-Formal Education, and local governments in implementing key components such as primary-level equivalency programmes, NFE teacher training, basic vocational training,

and capacity-building for local committees. She highlighted the integration of NFE within local governance structures, with village chiefs, Community Learning Centre (CLC) committees, and youth mobilizing participation, providing learning spaces, and coordinating with formal schools. While progress has been made, challenges remain in sustaining volunteer engagement amid economic constraints and limited honoraria, underscoring the need to strengthen partnerships for financing, establish a formal multi-stakeholder platform, and promote inclusive decision-making on training and resource allocation. The discussion concluded that sustained participatory governance and joint monitoring mechanisms are essential for the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of NFE systems.

Malawi Case

by Mr. Chifuniro Clement Chikoti (Programme Officer, Malawi National Commission for UNESCO)

“CLC pilots informed the Malawi 2063 mid-term plan; policy now enables wider CLC establishment. Inter-ministerial collaboration is key to scale.”

Mr. Chifuniro Clement Chikoti presented the ongoing BRIDGE Malawi Project, which improves access to and quality of non-formal education by using existing and newly established Community Learning Centres (CLCs) as pilot sites for innovation in curriculum, service delivery, and governance. He showed geographic distribution to identify coverage and gaps and emphasized the central role of traditional chiefs in supervising CLC operations, resolving disputes, and mobilizing participation, with community committees handling day-to-day administration and youth serving as volunteers/facilitators, strengthening ownership, accountability, and skills development. Building on demonstrated successes, he stated how BRIDGE programme has advocated and contributed in securing the inclusion of the CLC concept in the Malawi 2063 first 10-year implementation plan, and other organizations have since adopted CLC approaches in additional districts—evidence of system uptake. The Q&A highlighted practical challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteers under economic constraints and policy-capped honoraria (mitigated through community-led selection criteria and ongoing training) and underscored that BRIDGE projects are effective testbeds whose scale-up hinges on inter-ministerial collaboration (Education, Gender/Social Affairs, Youth and Sports, Health) and embedding successful pilots into national policy, planning, resourcing, and monitoring frameworks to close systemic NFE gaps.



Jordan Case

by Mr. Abdullah Mohammad Mahmoud Awad (Director of Research, Taghyeer)



“By investing in smaller-scale projects like We Love Reading, KNCU has various opportunities to take further risks and cooperate with smaller innovative strategies with these local organizations to cultivate these potentials.”

Mr. Abdullah Mohammad Mahmoud Awad highlighted the urgent challenges faced by disenfranchised children and women across Jordanian, Syrian, and Palestinian communities. He introduced the ongoing efforts supported by BRIDGE programme

explaining that, in collaboration with local organizations, the We Love Reading programme prioritizes the development of female community ambassadors who foster reading opportunities for children and women. These ambassadors are supported to strengthen their sense of agency and recognition within their communities and through partnerships with seven local organizations, the programme implemented a total of 516 community read-aloud sessions.

Mr. Awad distinguished the 2025 BRIDGE Jordan Programme from conventional international aid approaches by underscoring its emphasis on local ownership through direct engagement with grassroots actors, while also noting the vulnerability of international aid schemes to sudden funding cuts driven by shifting political agendas. He advanced in pointing to the absence of sustained national legislation supporting non-profit organizations, which contributes to an unstable operating environment. Reflecting on the programme’s progress to date, Mr. Awad advocated for a “locally led development” approach, calling for a national framework that formally recognizes non-formal learning and establishes effective multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms.

In closing, he introduced the recent development of Istijarah, an initiative that seeks to embed shared values through literacy. The subsequent Q&A session crystallized several system-level priorities, including the formalization of non-formal education within national frameworks, the establishment of mul-

ti-stakeholder coordination mechanisms with clear authority, and the provision of longer-term direct funding to proven grassroots civil society organizations (CSOs), enabling innovative, locally led models to be tested, de-risked, and scaled.

Korea Case

by Ms. Sujeong Kim (Programme Officer, Gwangmyeong City)



“Great cities are built by great citizens; great citizens are shaped through lifelong learning.”

Ms. Sujeong Kim introduced how Gwangmyeong became Korea’s first Lifelong Learning City, stressing the relevance of non-formal education in response to demographic changes—particularly population ageing—and climate-related challenges. She explained the city’s Three-tier Network Council, which enables citizen-led initiatives through an institutionalized governance structure linking policy direction, cross-institutional coordination, and district-level resident participation. Although many learning centers do not receive continuous funding, strong civic engagement has sustained diverse learning spaces, including Regional Village Learning Centers and the citizen-run “Loose School.” Ms. Kim noted that the city’s transition from a fragmented education approach to a

full-cycle lifelong learning system was driven by institutionalization and close collaboration with local governments, supported by national and provincial resources amid tightening municipal budgets. She further highlighted inclusive and issue-linked initiatives—such as career transition programmes for mid-life citizens, sign-language interpreter training, extended-access learning through the Gwangmyeong Knowledge Store, and learning aligned with city agendas like carbon neutrality and the Garden City strategy. The Gwangmyeong Citizen Gardener Cooperative was spotlighted as a representative full-cycle model, where former participants return as instructors and community actors. The discussion and Q&A underscored that committed leadership—from mayors to community leaders—is the decisive factor in embedding citizen voices into policy, enabling cross-departmental collaboration, ensuring resource continuity, and building resilient, inclusive lifelong learning systems aligned with SDG 4.

7. Group Workshop – Project-Based Peer Learning

Breakout into smaller groups for project-based peer learning

- Group A: Bhutan, Jordan, Tanzania, Zambia
- Group B: Cote D’Ivoire, Laos, Pakistan, Uganda
- Group C: Burundi, Ghana, Malawi, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste



8. Consultation Session: Country Project Review

Bilateral meetings to review progress and discuss on 2026 plans



9. Site Visit 1. Busan City

BRIDGE X Youth @ Busan University of Foreign Studies

Dialogue with Young Members of the Busan Development Cooperation Student Alliance



10. Site Visit 2. Busan City

BRIDGE Meets Creativity @ Busan Cultural Foundation

Ongru Arts and Culture Education Programme for Citizens



Others



Overall Assessment and Participants' Reflections

2025 BRIDGE Workshop Feedback

- **Survey period:** 1–13 October 2025
- **Respondents:** 13 workshop participants
- **Results Summary**

Category	Item	Result	Other Comments
Overall Satisfaction	Overall workshop (Day 1–4)	5.00	-
	Contribution to achieving event objectives	4.92	
	Event management	4.92	
	Promotion of practical cooperation and exchange	4.92	
	Capacity-building and insight gained	4.85	
	Average: 4.92		
Session-wide Satisfaction	Thematic Workshop	4.87	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many respondents positively noted that the overall structure and presentations were clear and informative.• Some participants felt that limited time constrained deeper discussions and cross-country case sharing.• Suggestions included expanding hands-on, experience-based learning and providing online follow-up discussion opportunities.
	Setting the Scene	4.77	
	Roundtable 1 - RVA	4.77	
	Roundtable 2 – Digital Inclusion	4.69	
	Roundtable 3 – Cooperation and Solidarity	4.83	
	Group Workshop	4.88	
	Consultation Session	4.89	
	Average: 4.81		

Busan Programme Satisfaction	BRIDGE X Youth	5.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many participants highlighted the exchange with youth and the local community as particularly impressive.
	BRIDGE Meets Creativity	4.92	
	Busan City Excursion	4.97	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes emphasizing arts, inclusion, and intergenerational dialogue were positively received. Participants appreciated opportunities to experience Korean culture and history firsthand. Some suggested allowing more time for interaction with youth.
	Average: 4.96		
Other Aspects	Hotel	4.92	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many participants expressed high satisfaction with accommodation, meals, and overall support, noting the thoughtful hospitality.
	Meals	4.69	
	Logistical and administrative support:	4.92	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive feedback was given on experiencing Korean cuisine and traditional food culture. A few participants mentioned that the checkout time was early and suggested considering late checkout options in the future.
	Average: 4.69		

Appendix

Participants List

	Country	Name	Title	Affiliation
1	Bhutan	Ms. Ugyen Tshomo	Chief Programme Officer	Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Adult and Higher Education Division, Bhutan
2	Burundi	Mr. Clement Bigirimana	Secretary General	Burundi National Commission for UNESCO
3	Côte d'Ivoire	Ms. Eline Yeo	Chef de Projects	Côte d'Ivoire National Commission for UNESCO
4	Ghana	Mr. Apollonius Osei-Akoto Asare	Chief Programme Officer	Ghana Commission for UNESCO
5	Jordan	Mr. Abdullah Mohammad Mahmoud Awad	Director of Research	Taghyeer
6	Lao PDR	Ms. Phaly Phanlouvong	Technical Official	Non-Formal Education Department, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR
7	Malawi	Mr. Chifuniro Clement Chikoti	Programme Officer for Education	Malawi National Commission for UNESCO
8	Pakistan	Ms. Saima Fayyaz	Coordinator Education/Literacy & Trainings	Bunyad Literacy and Community Council
9	Sri Lanka	Mr. Dunaisingh Sarawanamuthu	Senior Lecturer	National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka
10	Tanzania	Ms. Fatma Shaaban Mrope	Project Manager	UNESCO National Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania
11	Timor-Leste	Mr. Alexandrinha Dos Santos Passos	Education Coordination and Bridge Project Coordinator	Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO

12	Uganda	Ms. Imelda Engabi Kyaringabira	Principal Literacy Officer / National Coordinator, Adult Learning and Community Education	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda
13	Zambia	Mr. Samson Kantini	Senior Programme Officer	Zambia National Commission for UNESCO
14	IIEP	Mr. Khalil Bahloul	Expert in charge of TVET Training	IIEP-UNESCO Afrique
Observers				
15	China	Mr. Shimin Wang	Programme Officer	National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO
16	Japan	Ms. Suzuka Miyazaki	Programme Officer	Japanese National Commission for UNESCO
17	Thailand	Ms. Ajjima Kaveeyarn	Programme Officer	Thai National Commission for UNESCO

Key Remarks (Opening)

by Byung-Soon Yoon, Acting Secretary-General, KNCU

Good morning. 안녕하세요.

My name is YUN Byung Soon, Acting Secretary-General of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO.

Distinguished guests, esteemed representatives, and respected experts,

On behalf of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, it is my great honor to welcome each and every one of you to Seoul for the 2025 Bridge Workshop. I would like to extend a special welcome to our partners from Bhutan, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Timor-Leste, Ghana, Jordan, Laos, Malawi, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Uganda, and Zambia. I know that many of you have traveled great distances, and I want to express my deepest gratitude for your commitment.

In particular, I extend my sincere appreciation to Ms. Ra Eunjong, Director of the Global Education Policy Division at the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea, and Mr. Khalil Bahloul, Expert for TVET Training at the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. I would also like to express my gratitude to our colleagues from the National Commissions for UNESCO of China, Japan, and Thailand, who are joining us for the staff exchange programme. Your presence here enriches our discussions and strengthens our network.

Looking around, I see not just a group of participants, but a true "Community of Practice." We are honored to host our dedicated partners managing current projects, privileged to welcome colleagues from former partner nations, and excited to greet the prospective members. This diversity is our greatest strength.

Today, the international community faces growing concerns over the weakening foundations of educational cooperation, due to the reduction of ODA contributions by donor countries. While the Republic of Korea has also experienced a reduction in its overall ODA volume, our government has consistently recognized that safeguarding education finance is central to global recovery. Above all, the Bridge Programme has continued to receive unwavering support, as its necessity and effectiveness have been clearly demonstrated through past achievements.

Since 2010, with the support of the Ministry of Education and the dedicated commitment of our partners, the programme has reached approximately 1770,000 learners across 24 countries. It has been a unique model of collaboration, jointly led by National Commissions for UNESCO and the laureates of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize, to advance SDG 4.

For too long, non-formal education has been viewed as a supplement. But we are here today to champion a new paradigm. We believe that non-formal education is not merely a supplement, but a core implementation strategy for building the truly inclusive and flexible education systems envisioned by Sustainable Development Goal 4. This approach is also closely aligned with the UNESCO Strategy for Youth and Adult Literacy (2025-2029).

With only five years remaining until the SDG deadline, our work here is more critical than ever. Our theme, "A Systematic Approach to Enhancing the Effectiveness of Non-Formal Education," is a call to action. Over the next four days, we will explore pathways for action, focusing on three thematic pillars: Policy Strengthening and System Linkages, Digital Inclusion, and Solidarity and Cooperation.

Our journey this week will mirror the geography of our host country. Here in Seoul, we will engage in strategic dialogue. Then, we will journey together to the dynamic port city of Busan to witness practice in action. This is a journey from theory to practice, from strategy to impact.

Let us embark on this journey with open minds and a collaborative spirit. With great optimism for the progress we will make together, it is my distinct honor to officially declare the 2025 Bridge Workshop open.

Thank you.

Summary Report

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through Non-Formal Education**