



## MEASURING SDG4: HOW PIRLS CAN HELP

### The international release of PIRLS and ePIRLS 2016

**PIRLS**  
**2016**

## UNESCO-IEA press conference and roundtable on the release of the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room IV,  
Fontenoy Building, Paris, France  
5 December 2017  
Live webcast available**

### Background

In 2015, UN Member States adopted a new set of ambitious goals to address poverty, hunger, disease and other development challenges by 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG4 aiming to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,” build on the Millennium Development Goals and aim to go further to ensure no one is left behind. SDG4, including its corresponding targets, promote a renewed and broader focus on inclusion, equity and gender equality, and effective and relevant learning.

The Education 2030 agenda requires efficient and accurate systems to measure progress towards SDG4 commitments. UNESCO Institute for Statistics is working with partners to develop the indicators, standards, and methodological tools needed to track progress. International learning assessments are important contributions to this process, enabling the collection of cross-national and longitudinal data that can assess progress towards goals, track equity, and create a common language for defining and discussing competency levels in learning.

The IEA’s PIRLS (Progress in Reading Literacy Study) is an international assessment of reading comprehension that has reported trends in student achievement every five years since 2001. Conducted by the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College, PIRLS represents the worldwide standard for reading comprehension at the fourth grade. PIRLS also provides extensive information about home supports for literacy and school environments for teaching and learning. PIRLS 2016 is the fourth assessment since 2001, providing trends in reading achievement over a fifteen-year period. Fifty countries and 11 benchmarking regions participated in PIRLS 2016. Inaugurated in 2016, ePIRLS is a computer-based assessment of how well students read, interpret, and critique online information in an environment that looks and feels like the internet.

UNESCO is co-hosting with IEA the release of the PIRLS and ePIRLS 2016 international report during a press conference followed by a roundtable, which will explore the application of international assessments in measuring SDG4, and key findings from PIRLS 2016 related to the school environment, gender disadvantage, and early childhood education as a foundation for learning.

### Purpose

The event aims to increase participants’ understanding of PIRLS and ePIRLS findings and their relevance for policy-making, the application of learning assessments to measure SDG4, and actions needed to translate 2030 commitments into national education development efforts to ensure no one is left behind.

## Duration and format

The event will launch PIRLS 2016 and a joint UNESCO-IEA special booklet, and include:

- A one hour press conference presenting the findings of 2016 PIRLS and ePIRLS
- A 90-minute roundtable exploring the application of learning assessments to measure SDG 4, and thematic areas of interest to advance Education 2030 including the school environment, gender disadvantage, and early childhood education as a foundation for learning.

Light refreshments will be served.

## Participants and registration

The event welcomes members of the media; UNESCO Permanent Delegations; education practitioners and educators; researchers and experts; bilateral, multilateral and other development partners; representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; and private sector representatives.

For planning purpose, we invite participants to [register in advance online here](#) before 27 November 2017. Registration will also be possible on-site for this free event.

Online participation is also possible through a live webcast (link to be provided closer to the event).

## Working languages

The event will be held in English and French; supporting documents and interpretation will be provided in both languages.

## Note on photography

Please note that the event will be covered by a professional photographer and a videographer, and will be streamed online. The picture, video and audio may be used by UNESCO and IEA for publications, both offline and online.

## Contact

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For questions and queries on the launch event:  
PIRLS 2016 Launch team [pirls2016\\_launch@iea.nl](mailto:pirls2016_launch@iea.nl)

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Ms Anna Kaehne, IEA Public Outreach Officer  
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## Programme

Tuesday 5 December 2017: Morning	
09:30 – 10:00	<b>Registration/Coffee</b>
10:00 – 10:15	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> Dr Anne-Berit Kavli, Chair, IEA Mr Qian Tang, Assistant-Director General, Education, UNESCO
10:15 – 10:30	<b>Introduction to PIRLS</b> Dr Dirk Hastedt, Executive Director, IEA
10:30 – 11:00	<b>Presentation of the PIRLS and ePIRLS 2016 results</b> Dr Ina V. S. Mullis and Dr Michael O. Martin, TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Department of Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation, Boston College
11:00 – 11:15	<b>Q &amp; A session for the press</b>
11:15 – 11:30	<b>Coffee break</b>
11:30 – 12:40	<b>Roundtable exploring three thematic areas</b> <i>The roundtable will launch an UNESCO-IEA special booklet, and consider the application of international assessments in measuring SDG4, and key findings from PIRLS 2016 related to the school environment, gender disadvantage, and early childhood education as a foundation for learning.</i> <b>Moderator:</b> Ms Soo-Hyang Choi, Director, Division of Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development, UNESCO <b>Panel discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Silvia Montoya, Director, UNESCO Institute for Statistics</li> <li>• Dr Catherine Jere, Lecturer, University of East Anglia</li> <li>• Dr Paulína Koršňáková, Senior Research and Liaison Adviser, IEA</li> <li>• Dr Jyotsna Jha, Director, Center for Budget and Policy Studies, India</li> </ul> <b>Questions and answers</b>
13:00	<b>Closing</b>

## Biographies



### **Dr Anne-Berit Kavli, Chair IEA**

Anne-Berit Kavli is Head of Department at the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. At the Directorate she coordinates international activities, including Norway's participation in large-scale international studies on learning outcomes. She is the elected Chair of IEA, and also worked closely with OECD as a Chair of TALIS Board of Participating Countries and a member of PISA Governing Board. Currently she is also involved in the Global Alliance for Monitor Learning (GAML).



### **Dr Dirk Hastedt, Executive Director, IEA**

Dr Hastedt has been with IEA since 1989 and has over 30 years' experience in large-scale assessment. He oversees the IEA's operations, studies, services, and drives the IEA's overall strategic vision. Dr. Hastedt is also a co-editor-in-chief of the IEA-ETS-Research Institute's journal "Large-Scale Assessments in Education"



### **Dr Ina V.S. Mullis, Executive Director, IEA's TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College**

The contributing author of more than 70 reports of assessment results, Dr Mullis has extensive management and technical experience in conducting large-scale international and national assessments. For four consecutive study cycles since 2001, she has been directing the IEA's PIRLS assessment of reading. She is a Professor at Boston College in the Lynch School of Education's Department of Measurement, Evaluation, Statistics, and Assessment.



### **Dr Michael O. Martin, Executive Director, IEA's TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College**

Dr Martin is a long serving member of IEA's technical advisory group and an internationally recognized expert in large scale assessment methods, specializing in assessment design and implementation, including data collection, scaling, and analysis. Together with Dr. Ina V.S. Mullis, Dr. Martin has been directing PIRLS literacy assessment since 2001. He has been a Research Professor at Boston College since 1994.



### **Dr Paulína Koršňáková, Senior Research and Liaison Adviser to IEA**

Prior to her involvement with the IEA studies on an international level, Dr Koršňáková worked as a teacher, senior lecturer and researcher implementing comparative research projects and international large-scale assessments in education in Slovakia. Dr Koršňáková is committed to facilitating capacity-building, knowledge exchange, and innovation and quality in education worldwide, particularly in relation to compulsory education and key competences, such as reading.



### **Dr Qian Tang, Assistant-Director General for Education, UNESCO**

Dr Tang heads UNESCO's Education Sector, which includes staff at Headquarters, field offices and the seven education Institutes. He is leading the Sector to carry out the task of global/regional coordination and monitoring of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education. Before joining UNESCO, Dr Tang spent eight years working in a number of posts at the national and provincial level in China.



### **Ms Soo-Hyang Choi, Director of the Division for Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development, UNESCO**

Since 2012, Ms Choi is the Director for the Division for Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development in the Education Sector of UNESCO Headquarters. She is also UNESCO Focal Point responsible for the prevention of violent extremism through education. Ms Choi began her career at UNESCO in 1997, as Chief of the Early Childhood and Family Education Section and other chief positions dealing with inclusive education, field support and coordination, technical, vocational and secondary education. She has worked in Pakistan and Zimbabwe, where she was the UNESCO representative to Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe as well as to the Southern African Development Community.



**Dr Silvia Montoya, Director, UNESCO Institute for Statistics**

Dr Montoya became the UIS Director in 2015, with a longstanding experience in a wide range of national and international initiatives to improve the quality, management and use of education statistics, with a specific focus on learning assessments. Prior to joining the UIS, Dr Montoya was the Director-General of Assessment and Evaluation of Education Quality at the Ministry of Education in Argentina, and has held other positions in academia.



**Dr Jyotsna Jha, Director, Center for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS), India**

Dr Jha heads the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, an independent non-profit, non-governmental organization located in Bangalore, India that focuses on research in gender, education, social and economic policies, budgeting, decentralization and governance issues. Dr Jha has written extensively on boys' underachievement in education, including a 2006 publication with the [World Bank](#), and a 2012 paper on this topic for the UNESCO [Global Education Monitoring Report](#). Recently she has revisited this issue, leading to two publications by a) RTI International and b) the Commonwealth of Learning (forthcoming).



**Dr Catherine Jere, Lecturer, University of East Anglia, School of International Development**

Dr Jere has extensive experience in policy-related research and analysis in formal/non-formal education, gender, marginalization and school violence. Current a Lecturer at the University of East Anglia, she has worked with the UNESCO Education For All Global Monitoring Report, the Centre of Educational Research and Training at the University of Malawi, and is currently a member of the Global Partners Working Group to End School-Related Gender-based Violence.