

1 January 2025

GLC Update

This semi-annual report provides a detailed summary of the accomplishments and global activities of GLC for the period 1 July 2024 through 31 December 2024. The programs and milestones discussed in this report serve to provide extraordinary momentum, not only for the remainder of the year, but also for our five-year plan and beyond.

Global Learning Council in partnership with the Villars Institute

The Global Learning Council (GLC), along with the Villars Institute Foundation (VIF), Switzerland, envision a future where education is democratized globally. In addition to its work at its Switzerland headquarters in Villars, GLC has initiated activities in India and Rwanda, with a particular emphasis on emerging economies, with further plans to expand in two other developing countries, one in Africa and one in South America in coming years. These global initiatives are rooted in promoting learning practices on the ground and at a sufficiently appropriate scale to catalyze systemic change. The goal is to leverage innovation in science and technology to create sustainable, scalable and impactful educational solutions, by seamlessly integrating GLC's activities with the vision and mission of VIF. The GLC initiatives also significantly amplify the reach, scale and scope of our efforts launched in Switzerland, and create a multiplier effect in philanthropic support, programs, and human resources for substantial impact.

1. Appointment of new GLC Senior Advisors to drive initiatives

During the summer of 2024, GLC was very fortunate to appoint five colleagues as Senior Advisors. Their active engagement with GLC, along with their volunteer efforts, expertise and passion, contributed significantly to the rapid progress achieved on many initiatives. The [GLC Senior Advisors](#) are:

Anna Celner, Villars, Switzerland, formerly Senior Executive in various roles at Deloitte.

Ming Dao, Senior Principal Research Scientist, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA

Vanessa Evers, Professor, University of Twente, The Netherlands

Christian Kobsda, Head of Berlin Office, Max Planck Society, Germany

Krishnan Narayanan, Co-founder and President, Iitihaasa Research and Digital, Bengaluru, India

2. New GLC Office in India

A new GLC India Office has been established in New Delhi in September 2024 at the headquarters of [Schoolnet India Ltd](#), India's leading, largest, and oldest EdTech service provider, helping over 100,000 schools improve their learning outcomes and teaching efficiency using technology. The goal here is to create a regional hub for GLC activities which will be seamlessly integrated seamlessly with those of the Villars Institute in India. Schoolnet is providing space, staffing support, and logistical assistance for a variety of events held in India and for outreach with schools, industry, startups, NGOs, government agencies, and philanthropic organizations.

This Office also interfaces with programs, events and activities across India, such as the newly established collaboration with the International Baccalaureate (IB) Schools and Affordable Private Schools (APSs) in India, master classes for a spectrum of learners, and Ideathons held in Bengaluru each year, as well as the student/researcher engagements with various collaborative efforts at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, and elsewhere in India.

3. New GLC Office in Rwanda

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed in November 2024 with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Rwanda to establish a new GLC Rwanda Office/Secretariat in Kigali. This Secretariat, supported by Rwanda's Ministry of Education, shall be responsible for facilitating major activities initiated by GLC through VIF.

Following the very successful organization of a GLC Hackathon in Kigali in April 2024 on the use of artificial intelligence in education for school students, plans are being formulated for specific new activities and meetings in Rwanda.

4. New Partnership with International Baccalaureate

By working closely with IB, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, GLC has facilitated new collaborations between IB and Schools in Rwanda and between IB and Schoolnet in India.

In both countries, IB partnerships have led to collaborations in GLC-sponsored hackathons and ideathons that focus on the themes of GLC and VIF, including use of AI and technology in the context of learning, environmental sustainability and planetary health, and intergenerational collaboration in learning. See Sections 6C and 6D below for a more complete listing of activities.

5. GLC Summer University Student Internships at CERN

During the Summer of 2024, GLC sponsored a unique opportunity for a two-month internship to a cohort of STEM-inspired young global citizens at CERN, the European Council for Nuclear Research (in French: *Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire*).

The work of the students on team projects, coordinated jointly by GLC and CERN following the internship, will be presented at the Global Learning Conference in June 2025.

6. Key Activities of GLC in India

India accounts for nearly 18% of the world population, with the median age of Indian population of 1.4 billion people being 28.2 years in 2023. GLC and VIF have partnered with [Schoolnet India Ltd](#), an organization based in India committed to inclusive growth in education. This partnership aligns with GLC's and VIF's missions by adapting and integrating technology to improve educational access and quality for impact at scale while, at the same time, managing local challenges and reality.

GLC hosted its inaugural hackathon for college students across India in February 2024. The overwhelming success of this event, generously sponsored by GLC Advisory Board Member, Kris Gopalakrishnan, and organized by GLC Senior Advisor, Krishnan Narayanan, has led to substantial interest in enhancing the scale and scope of the GLC-initiated Hackathons in India.

A Two Ecolnnovators Ideathons in India in January 2025

Two GLC-facilitated Ideathons, both focusing on Ecolnnovation, will be held in India in January 2025: the first on 24 January in New Delhi, organized by Schoolnet, for school students from across India; and the second, on 28 January in Bengaluru for university students from across India, with generous support from GLC Advisory Board member, Kris Gopalakrishnan, and leadership from GLC Senior Advisor. Krishnan Narayanan.

The Ecolnnovators Ideathon is a competition targeted to students with the aim of fostering tech-driven problem-solving skills in such areas as biodiversity, water and air pollution, circular economy, energy management, and environmental sustainability. The two Ideathons are being closely coordinated with input and support from GLC/VIF, as well as public, private, governmental and non-profit organizations and startups in India and the United States.

Both events have attracted enormous interest from participants from across India. Here are the latest statistics on outreach and participation:

Ecolnnovators Ideathon for **school students**, New Delhi:
1,515 registrants, 560 Idea submissions

Ecolnnovators Ideathon for **university students**, Bengaluru:
2,678 registrants, 250 Idea submissions

Winners of the hackathons in India will be invited to present their work at the Global Learning Conference in Villars in June 2025.

Partnerships include some of India's well-known institutions such as TERI School of Advanced Studies, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, Grok Learning, MuGamma, Axilor, Infosys Science Foundation, Pratithi Investments, as well as global entities focusing on AI, such as SureStart, among others, to provide mentorship and masterclasses.

The final event of the New Delhi Ideathon will feature speeches by Dr Tariq Al Gurg (CEO of Dubai Cares, a global philanthropic organization) and Mr Sanjay Kumar, Secretary of the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India.

The Bengaluru Ideathon will feature a Demo Day which includes a masterclass by Dr. Arun Venkatramani, who helps to coordinate the AI research activities for GLC, on Sustainability and AI, and a keynote by Professor Indumathi Nambi of IIT Madras.

In a partnership with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, school participants in the GLC Ideathon who submit entries related to water will be eligible to participate in Sweden's **Stockholm Junior Water Prize**, for which the India selection process is coordinated by IIT Madras.

B Improving learning opportunities at scale

[Affordable private schools](#) (APSS) are those privately owned schools that charge a fee of

approximately US\$50 per month. They cater to nearly half of Indian school students, bridging the gap between low-income families' aspirations and the quality deficiencies in government schools. Estimates suggest that there are between **200,000 to 400,000 APSs** in India, serving approximately **60-90 million school children**.

By focusing on APSs, the GLC-Schoolnet partnership seeks to create large-scale, tangible impact by equipping the schools with modern teaching methods, technology, and teacher capacity-building programs. This effort addresses the urgent need for high-quality resources and skilled educators to bridge the digital and pedagogical divide.

With Schoolnet's expertise in education and capability for implementation at scale, GLC aims to impact **50,000 students and teachers** in Indian APS within its first year of this partnership (July 2024 through June 2025). Our plan is to grow this number significantly over the next five years, not only in India, but also in select countries in Africa and South America.

C Teachers' Professional Development Program (PDP)

GLC-facilitated **PDP** is creating a new collaboration between IB and Schoolnet in India that maps the IB framework to the Indian context, aiming to train over **1,000 teachers across 100 APSs** on IB's inquiry-based learning during its first year.

D APS Accelerator Program

The **APS Accelerator Program** will aim to augment select APSs into a school with learning outcomes similar to those facilitated by IB schools, through Schoolnet's activities in India, thereby fostering global-level education.

7. VIF-Inspired and GLC-sponsored Climate Leadership Courses

Designed for students in Grades 6–8, Climate Leadership Courses will be launched first in India in March 2025 through Schoolnet India Ltd, emphasizing environmental stewardship and sustainability through hands-on learning and technological insights. Developed in alignment with India's National Education Policy & National Curriculum Framework and inspired by the Villars Institute Framework, the courses will foster proactive leadership in climate action and systems thinking.

The learning outcomes from these courses will be assessed rigorously so that they can be suitably adapted for delivery in other countries in Africa or South America.

8. GLC Research Fellows Network

GLC is coordinating and sponsoring group projects aligned with the themes of its activities and those of the VIF through the Research Fellows Network (RFN). A key research theme for the RFN in 2025 is the **application of machine learning (ML) in environmental science and sustainable energy education**.

New projects have been initiated to develop approaches that help learners of all ages in using AI and deep learning to probe into such topics as planetary boundaries and biodiversity, in a collaboration with researchers at MIT, Sweden and elsewhere. The outcome of these new activities will be presented at the Global Learning Conference on 16 June 2025 in Villars.