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全球智慧教育大会
Global Smart Education Conference

Synthesis Report

2026 GLOBAL SMART EDUCATION CONFERENCE

—— The Annual Conference of GSENet

Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability

18-20 August 2026



Beijing Normal University

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Be in awe of education, for it shapes the soul of human,

Be cautious to technologies, for its adoption has to be effective,

Be entangled with Smart, for the uncertainty tends to be increasing,

Be serious to academies, for the true research needs evidence.

Foreword

At a critical juncture in the transition to the intelligent era, education is undergoing a profound transformation driven by digital technologies and artificial intelligence. While the integration of AI holds significant potential to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, it also raises fundamental questions of educational purpose, ethics, and equity. How can we uphold the human-centred essence of education and ensure that AI serves educational purposes? How can innovation in AI be aligned with educational principles so as to support the holistic development of learners? And how can the international community foster consensus and strengthen collaboration to promote mutual learning and shared progress in harnessing AI for the sustainable development of education? These questions have become central to the global education agenda. As a new educational paradigm in the intelligent era, smart education has emerged as both a critical pathway for addressing these challenges and a shared strategic vision for countries seeking to advance progress towards SDG 4.

As the annual conference of the Global Smart Education Network (GSENet), the Global Smart Education Conference 2026 (GSE2026), co-hosted by Beijing Normal University and the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE), was convened in Beijing from 18 to 20 August 2026 under the theme “Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability.” The conference brought together representatives from government agencies, international organizations, universities, research institutions, and technology enterprises, alongside frontline educators from more than 60 countries. Through plenary sessions, high-level dialogues, roundtables, workshops, seminars, and design competitions, it examined emerging developments in smart education policy, technology, theory, and practice.

GSE2026 placed the sustainable development of education at the centre of discussions on AI and educational transformation. The conference explored two closely interconnected dimensions: education for sustainable development, through which education cultivates the knowledge, capabilities, values, and sense of responsibility needed to shape a sustainable future; and the sustainable development of education itself, which calls for education systems to continuously adapt, renew, and transform in response to technological, social, and environmental change. From this perspective, the sustainable development of education cannot be achieved through technological innovation alone. It requires systemic transformation across teaching and learning, school development, regional education ecosystems, governance, teacher development, and international cooperation, while embedding equity, inclusion, safety, and responsibility throughout the process.

GSE2026 also launched and released more than 20 initiatives and outcomes, including the Global Smart School Initiative, Smart Education Around the World: Partners’ Perspectives from Seven Regional Reports, and Pacesetting Global Educational Transformation Report: AI-Driven Innovations from 100 Selected Top Universities. The conference also featured a Smart Education Exhibition showcasing emerging theories, technologies, and practices. Together, these outcomes and activities helped articulate a shared vision and practical pathways towards more equitable, high-quality, inclusive, and sustainable education in the age of AI, while contributing to progress towards SDG 4 and the broader goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

GSE2026 reaffirmed the importance of international dialogue and collective action in shaping the future of education in the age of AI. As education systems continue to evolve, sustained cooperation, responsible innovation, and a shared commitment to equity, quality, and sustainability will be essential to ensure that technological progress remains firmly aligned with the purposes of education and the holistic development of every learner.

Organizations

Global Smart Education Network (GSENet)



Network with the Best for Promoting Smart Education for ALL

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- **Prof. Shafika Isaacs,** Chief, Section for Technology and AI in Education, UNESCO; Director a.i, UNESCO IITE
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First and foremost, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. CHENG Jianping, Chairman of the University Council of Beijing Normal University, and Dr. TANG Qian, former Assistant Director-General for Education at UNESCO, who served as Co-Chairs of GSE2026. Their strategic leadership, foresight, and sustained commitment provided invaluable guidance for the successful convening of the Conference.

We also extend our deep appreciation to the Co-Chairs of the GSE2026 Program Committee—Prof. CHEN Xing, Vice President of Beijing Normal University; Prof. Shafika Isaacs, Chief of Section for Technology and AI in Education, UNESCO, and Director a.i. of UNESCO IITE; and Prof. HUANG Ronghuai, Co-Dean of the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University and UNESCO Chair on AI in Education. Their academic vision, intellectual leadership, and thoughtful direction ensured the quality, coherence, and scholarly depth of the Conference programme.

Our special thanks also go to Prof. Asha S. Kanwar, Chair of the Advisory Committee of the Global Smart Education Network and Chair Professor at Beijing Normal University; Prof. ZHAN Tao, former Director of UNESCO IITE; Prof. CHEN Guangju, former Vice President of Beijing Normal University; and Mr. LIU Dejian, Co-Dean of the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, for their valuable guidance, continued encouragement, and steadfast support.

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We would also like to express our special appreciation to Prof. KANG Zhen, Vice President of Beijing Normal University, for presiding over the Opening Ceremony and for his distinguished leadership and thoughtful guidance on this important occasion.

We are equally grateful to the distinguished government leaders and senior officials from around the world who contributed to GSE2026, including Hon. Dr. Kaviraj Sukon, Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research of Mauritius; Hon. Mr. Noureddine Nouri, Minister of Education of Tunisia; Hon. Mr. Bright Msaka, Minister of Education, Science and Technology of Malawi; Hon. Mr. Idrissa Samb, Minister of Employment, Vocational and Technical Training of Senegal; Hon. Dr. Mo'ale 'Otunuku, Minister for Education and Training of Tonga; Hon. Prof. Stella Christie, Vice Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Technology of Indonesia;

and Hon. Ms. Faatamaalii Jenny Lauano, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Samoa. Their participation broadened the global and cross-regional perspectives represented at the Conference and contributed to meaningful dialogue on the future of education in the age of AI.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all speakers, moderators, and participants from around the world—including representatives of governments and international organizations, scholars and researchers, education practitioners, technology experts, and industry leaders in smart education. We are equally grateful to all attendees and student participants for their active engagement and meaningful contributions. Their ideas, dialogue, and enthusiasm made GSE2026 a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange, interdisciplinary dialogue, and collective learning.

We are particularly grateful to the 28 member institutions of the Global Smart Education Network (GSENet). Their continued engagement, collaboration, and shared commitment have provided a strong foundation for advancing international dialogue, knowledge exchange, and cooperation in smart education.

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We would also like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Co-Chairs of the GSE2026 Organizing Committee, whose strategic oversight, effective coordination, and dedicated leadership were instrumental in ensuring the smooth and high-quality organization of the Conference.

Our sincere thanks also go to the Secretariat and to the international affairs, programme coordination, publicity and communications, technical support, finance, venue services, and other operational teams of the GSE2026 Organizing Committee, as well as to every colleague and volunteer who contributed to the Conference. Their professionalism, meticulous preparation, close collaboration, and unwavering dedication ensured the effective delivery of every aspect of GSE2026. Behind every session, dialogue, exchange, and moment of connection was the collective effort of many individuals working with care and commitment to bring the vision of the Conference to life.

To everyone who contributed to GSE2026—through leadership, scholarship, partnership, service, or participation—we extend our sincere gratitude. It is through this shared commitment to dialogue, collaboration, and innovation that the global smart education community can continue to advance towards a more equitable, inclusive, high-quality, and sustainable future for education.

The Organizing Committee

Global Smart Education Conference 2026

Introduction



Since its inception in 2020, the Global Smart Education Conference has served as a crucial platform for international collaboration and exchange in smart education. The 2020 edition, held on August 20th-22nd, explored the theme *AI and Futures of Education*. It aimed to further understand the latest achievements and development trends in smart education, fully grasp the influences of AI on the futures of education, and discuss the factors, features, plans, and potential problems in IT-driven educational development.



With a focus on identifying the promise of futures of education, the Global Smart Education Conference 2021 was held on August 18th-20th, 2021, with the theme of *Smart Learning and Futures of Education*. The plural form of “Futures” emphasized multiple dimensions of the future and appealed to reimagine how education and knowledge shall shape the future of humanity in a context of complexity, uncertainty, and precarity.



The Global Smart Education Conference 2022 was held on August 18th-20th, exploring the theme *Intelligent Technology and Digital Transformation in Education*. It put emphasis on how intelligent technologies empower smart education, digital transformation in regional and rural education, the futures of education in the eyes of teachers and students, how digital governance of education can be enhanced to direct intelligent technologies to the common good for education and humanity.



The Global Smart Education Conference 2023, convened from August 18th-20th, delved into the theme of *Education Transformation and Data Governance*. It underscored the relentless global march towards digital transformation in education, emphasizing the ever-growing prowess of technology in empowering educational advancements. It highlighted the mounting urgency for effective data governance, fueled by the rising need for accountability and efficiency.



The Global Smart Education Conference 2024, convened from August 18th-20th, centered on the theme of *Educational Transformation & International Understanding*. The conference highlighted the accelerating trajectory of digitalisation and transformation within the global education landscape, drawing attention to the digital strategies and long-term planning emerging across the international community. It explored practical pathways for advancing the digital transformation of education, reflected on pressing issues and challenges facing education systems worldwide, and facilitated the exchange of new theories, technologies, perspectives, and achievements in the field of smart education.



The Global Smart Education Conference 2025, convened from August 18th-20th, centered on the theme of *Human-AI Collaboration: Reshaping the Educational Ecosystem for the Future.* The conference explored innovative pathways for the deep integration of emerging technologies and education, shared new practices in human–AI co-education, co-teaching, and co-learning, and examined how to build a safe, efficient, and sustainable new ecosystem for smart education.

The Global Smart Education Conference 2026 (GSE2026) was held from 18 to 20 August 2026 under the theme “Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability.” The Conference brought together speakers from more than 60 countries and regions, including representatives of international organizations, leading academic institutions, governments, and the private sector. Its programme featured 5 plenary sessions, 21 parallel sessions, 4 closed-door meetings, student-centred activities, a teacher competition, a smart education exhibition, and the release of more than 20 major outcomes. Together, these activities provided a global platform for dialogue across policy, research, technology, and educational practice.

At the heart of the Conference was a shared exploration of how artificial intelligence can contribute to the sustainable development of education while keeping people and educational values at the centre of technological transformation. Discussions examined the opportunities and challenges brought by AI across different levels and dimensions of education, including educational equity and inclusion, quality and personalised learning, teacher development, innovation in teaching and assessment, and the responsible and human-centred use of emerging technologies. By connecting global perspectives, innovative practices, research evidence, and policy dialogue, GSE2026 sought to advance new pathways towards more equitable, inclusive, high-quality, human-centred, and sustainable education in the age of AI, while strengthening international collaboration around these shared goals.





Group Photo of Guests at Opening Ceremony

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Executive Summary

“Education determines the present and future of humanity.” From 18 to 20 August 2026, the Global Smart Education Conference 2026 (GSE2026), co-hosted by Beijing Normal University and the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE), was convened in Beijing under the theme “*Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability*.” The conference brought together representatives from government agencies, international organizations, higher education institutions, research bodies, and technology enterprises, as well as frontline educators, from more than 60 countries to jointly explore sustainable development pathways for the deep integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and education. The conference released a number of outcomes, including the Global Smart School Initiative and the Pacesetting Global Educational Transformation Report: AI-Driven Innovations from 100 Selected Top Universities, and held a Smart Education Exhibition that showcased new theories, technologies, and practices in smart education. Together, these efforts seek to explore new, equitable, inclusive, high-quality, and universally beneficial models for global education development in the intelligent era, and to support the implementation of the education goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

How Education Responds to Sustainable Development

As the core goal of the digital transformation of education, smart education not only highlights the future development direction of reshaping the educational ecosystem with new technologies but is also becoming a common strategic vision for countries around the world to address the major challenges of the digital age and achieve the sustainable development goals in education. In terms of deep-seated changes in educational forms, the "wisdom" in smart education stems from the professional leadership of teachers, while the "capability" of Smart Education relies on the technological support of the environment. The "innovation" in future education focuses on the iterative upgrading of forms. The "Global Digital Compact" adopted at the United Nations Summit of the Future, embodies the collective will of the international community to unite in seizing digital opportunities and addressing digital challenges, collectively building an inclusive, open, fair, and secure digital future. China regards advancing the digitalisation of education as an important strategy for educational modernization, progressing from the "3C" concept of connection first, content-centered, and cooperation essential, to the "3I" actions of integration, intelligence, and internationalization, continuously advancing the national strategy for the digital transformation of education. By creating a national smart education platform and launching an international version, China continually updates educational concepts, reforms educational models, and innovates digital teaching methods, promoting a transformation in learning approaches towards "on-demand provision." This successfully constructs a new form of smart education that balances technological empowerment, green development, and open cooperation, providing a practical model for the global digital transformation of education.

Education for Sustainable Development: Shaping a Sustainable Future through Human Development

The contribution of education to sustainable development lies in advancing society toward a just, peaceful, inclusive, and green sustainable future by promoting human development. From the perspective of the global common good, **Dr. TANG Qian,** Former Assistant Director-General

for Education of UNESCO and Co-Chair of the conference, observed that education and knowledge hold significant public value, and that the potential of the digital revolution should be fully unlocked to transform smart education into shareable, sustainable global action and practice, so that education better serves the common interests of humanity and a sustainable future. As a transformative educational philosophy, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) aims to enable learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed to advance sustainable development, and to develop the capacity to respond to complex sustainability issues and take responsible action, thereby fostering the social, economic, environmental, and cultural dimensions of sustainable development. Viewed in this light, ESD places human development at the center; its educational aim extends beyond the transmission of sustainability knowledge to emphasize the holistic transformation of learners' cognition, values, and actions, equipping them with the capacity to understand a complex world, participate in social change, and create a sustainable future.

Confronted with multiple global transformations—ecological transition, digitalisation, and demographic change—**Prof. Didier Jourdan**, Co-Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair on Global Health and Education, Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in Education and Health, and Professor at Université Clermont Auvergne, France, further noted that education needs to re-examine the relationships between people and society, between people and technology, and between people and the planet, and that its educational aims should go beyond meeting present knowledge and skill needs to cultivate learners' capacity to cope with complexity and uncertainty, participate in collective life, and shape the future. The rapid development and widespread application of AI further underscore the importance of guiding technological progress and shaping a sustainable future through human value choices. **Mr. GONG Ke**, Executive Director of the Chinese Institute for the New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Strategies, pointed out that intelligent transformation is not the ultimate end of human development; the sustainable development of humanity and the planet is the fundamental goal. To achieve this goal, education must not only help learners “make good use of AI,” but also cultivate individuals who combine professional competence with a sense of social responsibility, enabling them to develop and use AI responsibly and to steer technology toward beneficial, safe, fair, and green directions, so that it better serves human well-being and the sustainable development of the planet.

Sustainable Development of Education: Enhancing Educational Adaptability through Systemic Transformation

While education promotes economic and social sustainable development, it also faces the practical imperative of its own sustainability. From the perspective of education's own development, this sustainability comprises two interrelated dimensions. **The first is sustainability in education**—embedding the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into teaching and learning, organizational management, and governance processes, so that the way education operates itself meets sustainability requirements. **The second is sustainability of the education system**—through continuous adjustment between the system and its internal components and between the system and its external environment, the education system develops the capacity for long-term adaptation, self-renewal, and sustained development in the face of external changes. **Datuk Dr. Habibah Abdul Rahim**, Director of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat, summarised the core of educational sustainability as “long-term systemic adaptability.” She noted that, facing AI's continuous reshaping of occupational structures, skill demands, and learning modalities, education systems need to transcend the limitations of stage-based education and continuously adjust the structure and mode of educational provision to adapt to the changing needs of learners and the social environment, through flexible learning pathways, recognition of learning outcomes, and systematic connections among vocational education,

higher education, enterprises, and community learning spaces.

In the intelligent era, achieving the sustainable development of education requires both continuous transformation of the education system and the embedding of sustainability principles—such as equity, inclusion, safety, and responsibility—throughout the entire process of digital transformation. Facing the new opportunities brought by digital technologies, the international community increasingly views digitalisation as a crucial opportunity to promote global educational transformation and systemic change, emphasizing the full unleashing of the potential of digital technologies and the advancement of digital innovation from localized application to systemic transformation through the coordinated adjustment of educational elements, optimization of organizational structures, and reconfiguration of institutional mechanisms, so that the digital revolution better serves public education and the long-term development of education systems. **Mr. QIAO Sheng**, Deputy Director of the Tianjin Municipal Education Commission, noted that empowering education with AI should not stop at equipping smart devices and building digital platforms, but should promote the co-evolution of the technological system and the education system. Taking curriculum, teachers, and assessment as its three reform main threads, Tianjin drives educational change from localized technical application toward the collaborative transformation of core elements through curriculum restructuring, teacher capacity building, and assessment mechanism reform, gradually converting stage-based technological innovation into the institutional and operational drivers of the education system's continuous improvement. From a governance perspective, **Prof. Shafika Isaacs**, Director a.i. of UNESCO IITE, emphasized that the application of AI in education should uphold the public-good nature of education, and that the governance lens should extend from end-use to the full lifecycle of technology design, research and development, deployment, and application, embedding principles such as equity, inclusion, safety, and responsibility within it, so as to enhance the governance adaptability of education systems amid the rapid evolution of technology and strengthen system resilience.

Promoting the Sustainable Development of Education through School Innovation and Transformation

As the frontline where educational transformation occurs and where the sustainable development of education is realized, a school's capacity for continuous innovation and transformation is directly linked to the education system's ability to respond to environmental change and achieve sustainable development. The arrival of the intelligent era is profoundly affecting schools' organizational structures, schooling philosophies, operating mechanisms, and teaching models, pushing schools from localized teaching innovation toward holistic organizational transformation. According to organizational change theory, this process can be manifested as first-order change—continuous improvement within existing organizational goals and basic structures—and second-order change—restructuring involving an organization's philosophy, structure, institutions, roles, and their operating logics. Different levels of actors play different roles in this change process: frontline teachers are the main practitioners of teaching and learning innovation; middle managers promote the diffusion of teaching innovation through organizational coordination and professional support; and senior managers drive the adjustment of organizational structures, the improvement of institutional mechanisms, and the reshaping of school culture through transformative leadership. Thus, school innovation and transformation is a process of synergy between bottom-up practical innovation and top-down organizational leadership, ultimately forming the endogenous capacity of schools for self-renewal and sustainable development.

Empowering the Innovation of Teaching and Learning Methods with Intelligent Technologies

Innovation in teaching and learning methods is an important foundation for driving school transformation. As generative AI penetrates the teaching process, the traditional teaching paradigm characterized by knowledge transmission and teacher dominance is gradually shifting toward a new paradigm that pays greater attention to students' active learning, teachers' professional guidance, intelligent model support, and human–AI collaboration.

First, changing student learning. Intelligent technologies can expand students' learning approaches and support their active inquiry, knowledge construction, and thinking development. In a lesson on "Classifying Quadrilaterals" presented by **Ms. LI Lingjing**, Mathematics Teaching Researcher in Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, students autonomously classified quadrilaterals along the path of "conjecture—verification—discussion—induction," used an AI platform to manipulate figures and verify conjectures, and accomplished conceptual construction and developed spatial awareness and reasoning consciousness through embodied interaction. **Mr. SHI Yuan**, Director of the IT Center at Haidian Experimental Primary School in Beijing, shared a "Digital Soil" AI-supported cross-disciplinary inquiry project in which students conducted inquiry around the care of classroom greenery, using AI as a "cognitive sparring partner" that does not provide standard answers, and used sensor-measured data to verify the reference hypotheses given by AI, thereby developing critical thinking. **Second, empowering teaching.** Through resource generation, learning analytics, and feedback support, intelligent technologies shift teachers' focus from knowledge transmission toward learning design, process guidance, and professional judgment. **Mr. QIAN Yongchang**, Vice Principal of Xiamen Foreign Language School, introduced a "low-cost moisture-proof system for the plum-rain season" project in which teachers organised learning activities around real problems, provided cognitive support for student inquiry with AI, and, through value guidance and continuous questioning, prompted students to think deeply, so that the teacher's role was manifested more in problem design and learning guidance. Moreover, as AI evolves into a "teaching agent" with a high degree of autonomy, its role gradually takes on the characteristics of an educational agent participating in teaching activities. For example, as introduced by **Mr. SONG Tao**, Principal of the Primary School Affiliated to East China Normal University, the school built a domestically developed education-specific large model for primary schools, formed digital avatars of teachers and AI learning companions exclusive to students, and applied them in scenarios such as smart homework, five-domain education evaluation, and cross-disciplinary learning, enabling the agent to begin undertaking some teaching functions such as learning support and interactive feedback. **Third, transforming teaching interaction.** The involvement of AI is pushing teaching interaction from a "teacher–student" binary structure toward a "teacher–student–machine" ternary structure, bringing teaching into an intelligent collaborative space of human–machine coexistence and multi-dimensional interaction. Based on hundreds of thousands of AI conversation records from more than 20,000 students, **Prof. CHEN Kaiquan** of Ocean University of China proposed a "five-level questioning model" from facts, explanation, analysis, evaluation, to transfer, in which teachers design progressive questions, students engage in multiple rounds of dialogue with AI, and the three parties jointly verify knowledge through feedback. **Mr. LI Yuzhen**, Vice Principal of Beijing No. 20 Middle School, built a "teacher–student–machine" five-stage closed-loop classroom model centered on students' higher-order thinking, organizing students to think independently first and then dialogue with AI, with teachers providing learning scaffolds based on the interaction process.

Deepening Educational Reform through Collaborative Innovation

Collaborative innovation transforms individual teaching exploration into shared school practice. Through organizational coordination, school management teams promote teachers' collaborative lesson preparation, curriculum co-development, and resource co-construction and sharing, so that teaching innovation supported by intelligent technologies can diffuse, integrate, and continuously improve.

First, organizing collaborative teacher research. Through backbone-teacher leadership and teacher-team collaboration, schools carry out collaborative lesson planning, classroom observation, and collective discussion, and use intelligent technologies to strengthen classroom analysis and teaching improvement. **Mr. GAO Guohua**, Vice Principal of Hengshui High School in Hebei Province, explained that the school formed discipline-based smart teaching-research groups with leading teachers at the core, promoting the complementarity of experienced teachers' pedagogical experience and young teachers' digital skills, and moving classrooms from teachers “fighting alone” to a “community of teaching-research collaboration.” **Mr. ZUO Peng**, Principal of Beijing Jianhua Experimental School, organised teachers to conduct online collaborative lesson planning and collective lesson observation and evaluation around generative assessment, forming a collaborative improvement process of “lesson review—data analysis—professional commentary—group discussion” based on classroom data. **Second, promoting collaborative curriculum innovation.** The educational application of intelligent technologies is pushing curricula from single, isolated, fully preset group courses toward interdisciplinary, personalised courses, forming a more integrated, connected, and permeable curriculum system. **Ms. WEI Yuexiang**, Principal of Yindu Ziteng Junior High School in the Chengdu High-tech Zone, explained that the school built a three-stage interdisciplinary curriculum around the theme of “Exploring the Mushroom Kingdom,” relying on an ePBL platform to support cross-disciplinary teacher collaborative research, co-construction of plans, and project design, integrating learning tasks in science, art, programming, and engineering into authentic inquiry. **Mr. KONG Lingjiang**, Vice President of the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, shared the school's “AI–3S” three-tier progressive curriculum system, covering general education courses, basic theory courses, and AI-integrated professional courses, and built smart-course-group agents and teacher–student co-created courses to promote the integration of AI into new-engineering practical teaching. **Third, facilitating resource co-construction and sharing.** Through teacher co-construction, platform aggregation, and school–enterprise cooperation, schools promote resource sharing, professional collaboration, and the opening of practical scenarios to schools. **Ms. MA Hong,** General Principal of the Chongqing Bashu Primary School Group, explained that the school organised all teachers to jointly build more than 90,000 high-quality teaching resources aligned with the new curriculum standards, and built an “Online Bashu” digital sharing platform to sediment teachers' experience into school-based resources. **Mr. ZHANG Wei**, Principal of Hefei No. 8 High School, explained that the school jointly built a “Changxin Science and Technology Class” with ChangXin Memory, relying on immersive laboratory experiences and a dual-mentor education mechanism to carry out coherent cultivation, bringing enterprises' professional strength and practical scenarios into the school's science education.

Promoting Holistic School Transformation through Organizational Restructuring

When a school's educational teaching reform is further institutionalized and touches upon organizational structure and school culture, school transformation moves from partial improvement to holistic reconfiguration. Through optimizing organizational structures, improving institutional mechanisms, and reshaping school culture, school leaders turn localized innovation into sustained organizational-level change.

First, optimizing organizational structure. In the intelligent era, schools' educational tasks are increasingly heavy, and the traditional organizational structure characterized by functional division and

fixed boundaries urgently needs adjustment; it is necessary to form a more open and flexible organizational form by reorganizing functional units, breaking organizational boundaries, and expanding collaboration networks. **Mr. CHEN Hao**, Vice Principal of Shenzhen Cloud School, explained that the school connects 27 resident schools with a physical school at its core, conducts cross-school class formation, collaborative teaching, and virtual teaching research through a digital platform, and incorporates teachers, students, and teaching resources from different schools into a common operating system, breaking through the organizational boundaries of a single physical school and forming an operating model of "physical school + resident schools" in collaborative operation. **Second, improving institutional mechanisms.** As intelligent technologies gradually integrate into schools' daily operations, schools need to transform stage-based innovative practices into normalized and standardized operating mechanisms through institutional building, providing stable support for continuous improvement. **Mr. YU Yongshui**, Executive Principal of the Central Campus of Shandong Experimental High School, explained that the school established a group-school operating mechanism centered on "five unifications"—unified teaching research, progress, examinations, evaluation, and resource allocation—promoting campuses from "fighting their own battles" to collaborative management. **Mr. JIANG Tao**, Party Branch Secretary of the Shenyang Shangpin Dongjia Education Group, explained that the school built a "three beauties and four dimensions" teacher development evaluation mechanism, refining teacher development goals into 4 dimensions and 12 indicators, and formed teacher profiles based on multimodal data to provide continuous support for teacher training and professional development. **Third, reshaping school culture.** School transformation requires not only technological and institutional change, but also the formation of a shared vision, value consensus, and collaborative culture compatible with it, integrating technological innovation with the school's educational philosophy. Shenzhen Cloud School established "clouds pushing clouds, souls awakening souls" as its shared schooling philosophy, emphasizing mutual inspiration among teachers and students, students and students, teachers and teachers, and across schools, and forming a collaborative culture of joint learning and open sharing through the cloud platform. Chongqing Shapingba District Shuren Jingrui Primary School takes "orchid" as its cultural core, integrating the schooling philosophy of "silent orchid rhyme, cultivating people with heart" and the schooling vision of "adding fragrance to the world" into its digital transformation, so that technology serves the educational goal of "agility, virtue, wisdom, and elegance."

Promoting Sustainable Development through the Reconfiguration of Regional Education Ecosystems

Reconfiguring the education ecosystem is the true "element" of educational development; only when the education ecosystem is optimized can the path of educational development be consolidated. The reconfiguration of regional education ecosystems is not a simple supplement to existing educational practices, but requires piloting local explorations to identify feasible models of educational teaching innovation, advancing holistic improvement around key elements such as digital infrastructure, high-quality resource supply, teacher professional development, curriculum reform implementation, and educational evaluation, and coordinating the forces of government, schools, and society, so as to optimize the regional education operating mechanism, promote coordinated development among regions, schools, and individuals, and thereby realize the sustainable development of regional education.

Conducting Local Pilots to Explore Regional Educational Innovation Practices

AI is accelerating profound changes in education, yet regional educational transformation cannot be advanced holistically following a uniform model; it is necessary to select representative schools, projects, or educational scenarios for pioneering exploration, and to identify, intervene in, and adapt

technology-driven educational transformation through forward-looking, empirical educational social experiments, verifying the effectiveness boundaries of intelligent technology applications and revealing the mechanisms and conditions of successful practices, so as to provide generate transferable and replicable lessons for regional educational innovation.

First, cultivating educational innovation models through pilot and demonstration projects. Pilots are both an important task and an important method of reform. **Mr. XIA Guoliang**, President of the Xiaoshan Education Society in Zhejiang Province, explained that Xiaoshan District built a “1+10+N” layered advancement mechanism with the construction of a digital early-childhood education community as the starting point, in which one pilot kindergarten drives ten demonstration kindergartens to form practical experience in curriculum, evaluation, and teacher cultivation, which then radiates to N practice kindergartens. **Mr. ZHANG Weidong**, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Science, Technology and Informatization of the Ministry of Education, explained that since the pilot on “information technology supporting the comprehensive evaluation of students' overall competence” was launched in 2022, it has been implemented for five consecutive years, covering 38 pilot regions, and has formed a batch of empirically tested digital solutions for empowering the comprehensive evaluation of students' overall competence with regional characteristics. **Second, focusing on typical application scenarios to explore digital teaching effectiveness.** The educational value of digital and intelligent technologies needs to be tested in real scenarios; regions should base themselves on teaching problems and drive practical exploration through scenario applications, continuously forming effective digital teaching models. **Ms. CUI Lianna**, Deputy Director of the Daxing District Education Commission in Beijing, explained that Daxing District takes smart homework as an entry point, and through the full-process collection and analysis of homework data, builds an application closed loop of “homework design—intelligent grading—learning diagnosis—personalised push,” supporting teacher workload reduction and precise teaching. **Mr. LIU Yunpeng**, Deputy Director of the Nangang District Education Bureau in Harbin, explained that Nangang District uses AI to analyze classroom video and teaching-behavior data, forming an evidence-based improvement closed loop of “data collection—intelligent analysis—diagnostic reflection—optimized design—effect verification,” pushing classroom teaching from experience-based judgment toward data-supported continuous improvement.

Advancing Specialized Coordination to Promote Holistic Regional Educational Improvement

Holistic regional improvement requires advancing specialized reform across all domains and elements of education, strengthening the coordinated allocation and collaborative linkage of educational elements, and pushing regional education from single-point improvement toward holistic high-quality development.

First, coordinating the construction of digital infrastructure. Sound digital infrastructure is an important support for regions to advance educational digitalisation and enhance the universal sharing of digital services. **Mr. QU Guangrong**, Deputy Director of the Ordos Education and Sports Bureau, pointed out that, in response to problems such as high thresholds for individual school construction and unstable application promotion effects, the city uniformly builds an education cloud and an AI teaching application foundation, so that schools only need to configure necessary basic hardware to share citywide AI capabilities, reducing the cost of schools' intelligent construction and application. **Second, comprehensively expanding the supply of high-quality educational resources.** The regional coordination and cross-school sharing of high-quality educational resources can expand the opportunities for disadvantaged areas to access high-quality educational services. **Mr. HU Weifeng**, First-Class Inspector of the Department of Education of Sichuan, pointed out that Sichuan implements a “Network Chain Sharing Plan,” forming 35 provincial public-interest and inclusive teaching alliances, selecting 178

high-quality schools as leading schools, grouping more than 8,000 primary and secondary schools across the province into chains, and relying on live broadcasting, on-demand services, and the "Sichuan AI Teaching Assistant" to promote the normalized sharing of high-quality teaching resources. **Third, continuously strengthening support for teacher professional development.** As the acting subjects of educational transformation in the intelligent era, teachers' professional development level is an important guarantee for the continuous improvement of regional education and teaching. **Mr. XU Rikang**, Deputy Director of the Teacher Development Center of Hunan Xiangjiang New Area, explained that the new area built a three-stage teacher development model of "daring to use, able to use, adept at using": "daring to use" eliminates teachers' technical anxiety through AI hands-on workshops; "able to use" embeds technology application into subject teaching scenarios; and "adept at using" focuses on innovative application and demonstration leadership, promoting teachers' continuous advancement in AI literacy. **Fourth, promoting the scaled and normalized implementation of AI curricula.** AI curricula are an important vehicle for cultivating students' AI literacy and enhancing their adaptability to the intelligent society. **Mr. KANG Yongjun**, Deputy Director of the Tianjin Binhai New Area Teacher Development Center, explained that the Binhai New Area built a "1+4+N" AI general-education curriculum advancement model, incorporating AI general-education curricula into a rigid institutional arrangement at the regional level, clarifying curriculum-hour requirements for different school stages, and bringing the relevant curricula of all 121 primary and secondary schools in the district into the timetable, realizing the normalized implementation of AI education across the whole district. **Fifth, systematically deepening regional education evaluation reform.** In educational teaching practice, the "baton" role of education evaluation must be brought into full play, using evaluation reform to lead the change of the regional education ecosystem. **Mr. SHI Yiqi**, Vice President of the Nanshan District Institute of Education Sciences in Shenzhen, explained that Nanshan District is driven by the reform of comprehensive competence evaluation, deeply integrating evaluation data with educational scenarios such as moral education, classroom teaching, reading, science and technology education, and social practice, pushing evaluation from a relatively independent assessment activity into daily education and teaching, and giving play to evaluation's guiding role in changing the mode of educating people.

Deepening Collaborative Governance to Promote the Reconfiguration of Regional Education Ecosystems

Facing the increasing complexity and openness challenges of education systems in the intelligent era, regional education governance urgently needs to break through the traditional model of a single subject and fragmented blocks, adhere to the value orientation of "people-centered education," strengthen the collaboration of multiple subjects such as government, schools, families, society, and enterprises, give play to the supporting role of data for educational governance, and promote the effective linkage of various governance subjects and educational elements through institutional mechanism innovation, forming an open and collaborative regional education governance ecosystem.

First, adhering to the value anchor of "people-centered education." People-centered education is the fundamental value orientation of collaboration. **Mr. XIANG Haigang**, Director of the Shangcheng District Education Bureau in Hangzhou, proposed that AI-empowered education should adhere to being people-centered and upward-and-toward-good, promoting a shift from efficiency-first to student development, from technology-driven to scenario-driven, and from knowledge transmission to whole-person education. **Mr. JIN Jing**, Director of the Nanhu District Education, Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau in Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, emphasized that while giving play to the precise advantages of data, the humanistic underpinning of education must be upheld, so that technology always serves human growth. **Second, improving the collaborative education pattern of multiple subjects.** The reconfiguration

of regional education ecosystems needs to connect government, schools, families, society, and professional institutions, giving play to the collaborative role of each subject in resource supply, professional services, and growth support. **Mr. LI Li**, Deputy Director of the Social Affairs Bureau of the Rizhao Economic and Technological Development Zone in Shandong Province, explained that the Rizhao Development Zone builds a home–kindergarten–community smart platform with core kindergartens as hubs, and connects other kindergartens in the region and education subjects such as government, enterprises, universities, families, and society through the core kindergartens, forming a "six-in-one" education network. **Third, improving the data-driven educational decision-making mechanism.** Data-driven educational governance emphasizes the deep integration of data and governance business, providing evidence support for the identification of regional education problems, decision adjustment, and effect verification, and enhancing the scientificity and precision of educational decision-making. **Mr. WANG Wei**, Deputy Director of the Heping District Education Bureau in Tianjin, explained that Heping District built a four-step closed-loop mechanism of "data collection—analysis and feedback—decision adjustment—effect verification," organised schools to conduct "joint data diagnosis," and implemented differentiated interventions, promoting the transformation of data from result presentation into an important basis for educational decision-making and continuous improvement. **Fourth, optimizing the regional digital-intelligent education governance system.** Regional governance needs to coordinate data, resources, and business at different levels, promoting the formation of a vertically connected and collaboratively operating governance system. **Mr. CAO Yonghao**, Director of the Dongguan Education Development Research and Evaluation Center, explained that Dongguan upholds the concept of "one chessboard for the whole city," advances the construction of "five integrations"—one education dedicated network, one education cloud, one education service platform, one education database, and integrated security protection—promoting the vertical connection of city, town, and school levels, realizing data interconnection, resource sharing, and business collaboration, and promoting regional education governance from fragmented operation toward integrated collaboration.

Promoting the Sustainable Development of Education through International Open Cooperation

From the perspective of sustainable development, international open cooperation is an important mechanism for education systems to respond to global common challenges, participate in global education governance, and serve the Sustainable Development Goals. Facing the rapid development and widespread application of AI, education systems need to promote educational cooperation from project-based exchange toward a sustainable cooperation ecosystem through national strategic leadership, partnership building, teacher capacity co-construction, governance rule consultation, and equity and inclusion safeguards, providing open support for the sustainable development of education.

Guiding the Direction of Educational Transformation with National Digital Education Strategies

Digital education promotes the sustainable development of economy and society and enhances the sustainability of education by expanding the accessibility of educational opportunities, improving learning quality, enhancing educational inclusion, and changing the ways of educational management and governance. Hon. Mr. REN Youqun, Vice Minister of Education of China and Chairperson of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, stated that China attaches great importance to the integrated development of AI and education, has implemented the national education digitalisation strategy in depth,

launched the “AI + Education” action plan, and promoted the integration of AI into all elements, the whole process, and all scenarios of education, achieving remarkable results in educational digital transformation. Facing the global epochal question of “Rethinking Education in the Age of Intelligence,” the international community urgently needs to act in coordination, build consensus on development strategies, and conduct exchanges and consultations on key issues such as development planning, technical standards, digital ethics, and digital security, so as to jointly draw a blueprint for the development of smart education toward a sustainable future. **Hon. Prof. Jacques Fame Ndongo**, Minister of State and Minister of Higher Education of Cameroon, pointed out that, facing challenges such as the massification of higher education, quality improvement, and cost control, Cameroon is advancing its “University 4.0” initiative, improving the digital infrastructure of its universities, and promoting the development of ethical, responsible, and people-centered AI, so as to support the digital transformation and sustainable development of education with technology.

Expanding the Space for Educational Action through Partnership Building

The United Nations *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* emphasizes strengthening global partnerships for sustainable development, mobilizing stakeholders and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources to support all countries, especially developing countries, in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2022, the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, together with six founding members, took the lead in establishing the Global Smart Education Network (GSENet), which has now developed into a global multilateral education cooperation platform covering 28 member institutions, with the aim of deepening global education cooperation, sharing high-quality educational resources, and promoting the universal and inclusive development of smart education for all. In 2026, the network launched the *Global Smart School Initiative*, aiming to build an open, inclusive, and evidence-oriented global cooperation platform that supports schools in different countries and regions to conduct practice exchange, professional evaluation, transformation consulting, and school accreditation, and promotes smart education cooperation from resource sharing to a sustained support mechanism oriented toward school transformation. **Prof. Elijah I. Omwenga**, Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Kenya, explained that, facing practical challenges such as a large youth population and insufficient youth employment and skills training, the Open University of Kenya adopts the schooling philosophy of “bringing the university to your doorstep” to break through the constraints of geographic isolation, admission thresholds, and learning costs. The university has signed more than 50 memoranda of understanding with institutions such as Arizona State University and the Indira Gandhi National Open University, and relies on flexible admission, short-term courses, qualification frameworks, and online course systems to support learners' continuous development, providing more accessible, flexible, and affordable higher education opportunities for learners from different regions and backgrounds.

Enhancing the Endogenous Dynamics of Education Systems through Teacher Capacity Co-construction

The teaching workforce is both a key subject in implementing the strategy of sustainable educational development and a driver of innovative educational transformation in the AI era. **Hon. Mr. REN Youqun**, Vice Minister of Education of China, proposed that, facing educational development in the intelligent era, the international community needs to cooperate in developing competency standards for teachers' application of AI, support education technology developers, teaching-research experts, and frontline teachers in jointly conducting educational innovation practices, and rely on platforms such as the Global Teacher Development Academy and the UNESCO Category II centers established in China to enhance the digital literacy and learning capacity of teachers worldwide, providing strong support for educational

digital transformation. **Ms. Natalia Amelina**, Chief of the Unit of Teacher Professional Development and Networking at UNESCO IITE, emphasized that AI can provide teachers with data insights and personalised support, but teachers should still be responsible for goal setting, instructional design, and process supervision; for scaled application, it is necessary to simultaneously advance teacher professional training and the building of data privacy and ethical norms, and to build a responsible AI-in-education ecosystem through the collaboration of government, schools, enterprises, research institutions, and society. **Dr. Abdulrahman Almedaires**, Director-General of the UNESCO Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE), pointed out that teachers in the AI era need all the more to become designers of learning, subjects of professional judgment, and bearers of ethical responsibility, actively participating in technology design, application, and governance; the Arab region is advancing in coordination across teacher capacity building, leadership and ethics, policy and infrastructure, and the reconstruction of teaching and assessment, so that AI serves teacher development and student learning within a people-centered, responsible, and quality system.

Co-building a Credible Order for Educational Development through Global Education Governance

As the governance of intelligent society deepens, AI governance and education transformation governance, as two highly related strategic domains, urgently need to be incorporated into an overall framework planned and advanced in coordination. Taking “dual governance” as the basic approach, we should systematically identify and respond to the complex problems arising from their overlap, and promote the credible application of AI in education and the sustainable development of educational transformation. **Prof. Lampros Stergioulas**, Holder of the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence and Data Science for Society and Professor of Data Science at The Hague University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, pointed out that AI in education must be built on the basis of effective governance. Facing the risks brought by generative AI and large language models—misinformation, disinformation, bias, privacy and human-rights threats, environmental impact, and the widening digital divide—the international community needs to establish ethical safeguard mechanisms to avoid technology application exacerbating discrimination, division, and harm to vulnerable groups. The *Smart Education Around the World: Partners' Perspectives from Seven Regional Reports* further shows that a sound technology governance system has become one of the core pillars of high-quality smart education development. Although regional governance models differ in their emphasis—for example, Europe highlights human-rights protection, ethical governance, and institutional integration, while Latin America and the Caribbean face challenges such as imperfect regulatory systems and prominent data-security risks—their common principle is to embed safety, equity, privacy protection, and social-impact assessment into system design from the outset, rather than remedying them afterward.

Safeguarding the Basic Educational Rights of the Global South through Equity and Inclusion

The sustainable development of education in the intelligent era cannot be built on a new digital divide, but should safeguard the basic educational rights of the Global South countries and vulnerable groups through equity and inclusion. **Puan Fadzliaton Binti Zainudin**, Deputy Director of the Digital Education Policy Unit, Educational Resources and Technology Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, pointed out that digital transformation should not serve only urban education development, but should take digital equity as a basic policy principle and earnestly respond to the practical needs of learners in rural and remote areas. Facing the reality that about 70% of the country's schools are located in rural and remote areas, Malaysia coordinates state education departments, local education offices, and centers of

excellence through a national policy framework, and, with satellite connectivity, offline synchronization, AI educational resource libraries, and solar-powered community learning spaces, strives to ensure that students in different regions equally enjoy high-quality digital education resources, reducing the restrictions that network connectivity, energy supply, and geographic location impose on learning opportunities. **Ms. AI Yuxin**, Senior Programme Management Officer of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), warned that AI may exacerbate educational inequality, benefiting first those groups with superior network conditions, advanced equipment, abundant resources, and stronger teacher digital capacity, while impoverished populations, remote rural residents, women, persons with disabilities, and linguistic minority groups face higher risks. Especially when AI model training data mainly comes from resource-rich countries, learners in the least developed countries may only passively consume foreign technology, and their local realities, cultural experiences, and development aspirations are difficult to fully express. Therefore, safeguarding the basic educational rights of the Global South requires not only expanding the supply of digital infrastructure and high-quality resources, but also maintaining the educational rights of different countries and groups to equal participation, equal benefit, and autonomous development through low-cost, adaptable, localized, and sustainable digital education solutions.

Conclusion

The convening of the 2026 Global Smart Education Conference has further consolidated the global consensus on promoting educational transformation and advancing the sustainable development of education with AI. As a leading, strategic, and disruptive force, AI is ushering us into a “singularity” moment, posing unprecedented transformation requirements for education. Facing the future, we must take “AI + Education” as the starting point, systematically advance six directions—“AI for School Education,” “AI for Lifelong Education,” “AI for Sci-Tech Innovation,” “AI for International Exchange,” “AI for Teacher Development,” and “AI for Education Governance”—and, from school innovation and transformation, the reconfiguration of regional education ecosystems, to national strategic leadership and international open cooperation, promote the deep integration of AI and education, so that technology truly serves the all-round development of people, educational equity, and quality improvement, and jointly build an open, inclusive, and sustainable global smart education community.



2026 GLOBAL SMART EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability

08.18 - 08.20 Beijing · China

Date	Beijing Time	Sports Hall	Lecture Hall Ⅰ	Lecture Hall Ⅱ	BNU Square	Lecture Theatre	Closed-door Meeting
Tue 18th Aug	8::45-12:00	Opening Ceremony and Plenary Session: Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability					
		Parallel Sessions			Workshop	Competition	High-level Dialogue
	14:00-18:00	AI in Higher Education: From Disruption to Transformation	AI and the Future of Schools	AI for Inclusive and Sustainable Education: High-level Dialogue on Capacity Building, Equity and Special Needs	CHINA-ASEAN Capacity Development Programme on STEM and AI & Workshop on AI-Powered Educational Transformation Through the Lens of the Science of Learning	Global Finals of the 9th Global Competition on Design for Futures (K-12 Track)	Senior Policy Roundtable: AI in Education and the Future of Governance
Wed 19th Aug	8:00-9:00	Plenary Session: Rethinking Education in the Age of Intelligence					
		Parallel Sessions					Closed-door Meeting
	9:00-12:00	Personalised Learning at Scale	AI and Research Frontiers: Editors' Forum	Seminar on AI-Empowered School Education Innovation and Development	AI for Early Childhood Care and Education	AI and STEM Education	GSENet Partners Meeting
	13:00-14:00	Plenary Session: Technology-Enabled Ecosystems for Smart Education					
		Parallel Sessions					Closed-door Meeting
	14:00-18:00	Towards Smart Education Ecosystems	Safe, Green and Healthy Smart Campuses	Beyond Grades: Holistic AI-Enabled Assessment	Digital Learning and Adolescent Well-being	Seminar on AI-Empowered School Education Innovation and Development	Bridging Industry, Academia and Research for Smart Education
Thu 20th Aug	8:00-9:00	Plenary Session: A New Social Contract for Education and Learner Agency					
		Parallel Sessions					Closed-door Meeting
	9: 00-12: 00	Distinguished Teachers Share Insights on Future Classrooms	Transforming TVET: On-Demand Learning and Skills for a Changing World	Advancing High-Quality Early Childhood Education in the Age of AI	Smart Villages and Education for Rural Transformation	Students' Voices: Empowered Youth for Shaping the Future	UNESCO IITE Governing Board Meeting
	13: 30-17: 00	Reimagining Teachers' Roles: Harnessing the Potential of AI	Principals as Change Agents: High-Quality School Development	Human–AI Collaborative Classrooms and Future Learning Centres	Open, Lifelong and Borderless Learning	Smart Education in Practice: Teachers' Forum	
	17: 30-19: 00	Plenary Session and Closing Ceremony					

* Note: The colours indicate the primary focus of each session: orange for Equity, blue for Quality, and green for Sustainability. However, there may be overlaps across the three pillars.

Opening Ceremony & Plenary Session
Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability

At this critical juncture following the inaugural year of smart education, education is undergoing a major digital transformation, signalling a new phase in the intelligent age. The deep integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and education offers significant potential to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, while also raising global challenges related to technological adaptation, ethical boundaries and educational equity.

How can we uphold the human-centred nature of education and ensure that AI serves educational purposes rather than contributing to new imbalances or distortions? How can innovation in AI be aligned with educational principles so as to support the holistic development of learners? And how can the international community foster consensus and strengthen cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaboration to promote mutual learning and shared progress in harnessing AI for the sustainable development of education? These questions have become central to the global education agenda.

As a new educational paradigm in the intelligent age, smart education is both a critical pathway for addressing these challenges and an essential strategy for promoting inclusive, equitable and high-quality education, as well as lifelong learning opportunities for all. It is increasingly recognised as a shared strategic vision for countries seeking to respond to the challenges of the digital era and advance progress towards SDG 4.



Photo of Guests from Opening Ceremony

SPEAKERS

Hon. Mr. REN Youqun
Vice Minister of Education, China; Chairperson, Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

Prof. YU Jihong
President, Beijing Normal University; Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences

Dr. TANG Qian
Co-Chair of the Conference; Former Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO

H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima
Under Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, United Nations

H.E. Mr. CHEN Qun
Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

Mr. Lester G. Huang
Deputy Chairman, The Hong Kong Jockey Club; Deputy Chairman, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust; Chairman, Institute of Philanthropy, Hong Kong, China

Prof. HUANG Ronghuai
Co-Dean, Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, China; UNESCO Chair on AI in Education

Prof. Shafika Isaacs
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Hon. Dr. Kaviraj Sukon
Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research, Mauritius

Hon. Mr. Bright Msaka
Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Malawi

Hon. Mr. Idrissa Samb
Minister of Employment, Vocational and Technical Training, Senegal

Hon. Mr. Mo'ale 'Otunuku
Minister for Education and Training, Tonga

Hon. Prof. Stella Christie
Vice Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Indonesia

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Mr. SUN Zhidong
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Mr. LI Yi
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Mr. LIU Xiaodong
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Human-Centred Transformation for Sustainable Education

Sustainable development in education lies at the heart of the UN 2030 Agenda and provides a critical reference point for educational transformation in the age of AI. As artificial intelligence reshapes economies and societies at unprecedented speed, education systems face a fundamental challenge: how can AI be harnessed not simply to drive technological change, but to advance human development, educational equity and quality? Throughout the opening speeches, a broad consensus emerged: technological progress must not displace the fundamental purpose of education. Realising AI's potential will require a sustained focus on holistic human development, a careful balance between innovation and ethical responsibility, and stronger cooperation across countries and education systems.

Hon. Mr. REN Youqun, Vice Minister of Education, China; Chairperson, Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, said that China has made the integration of AI and education a national priority. Through its national strategy for education digitalisation and the launch of an “AI + Education” action plan, China is working to integrate AI across educational processes, settings and practices. Addressing the wider question of education’s role in the intelligent era, he called for stronger international coordination, greater consensus on development strategies, expanded platforms for sharing digital education resources, and joint efforts to strengthen teachers’ digital competencies and teaching capacity worldwide.



I am delighted to join you at the 2026 Global Smart Education Conference. With the theme “Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality, and Sustainability,” this conference explores the integrated development and governance of AI and education at a most timely and important moment.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education of China and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, I extend my warm congratulations on the opening of this conference, offer a sincere welcome to all

participants, and express my heartfelt gratitude to the organisers and all colleagues who care about the development of education in China.

China has always attached great importance to the integration of AI and education. As early as 2019, President XI Jinping emphasized in a congratulatory letter to the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Education that we should attach great importance to the profound impact of AI on education, actively promote the deep integration of AI and education, and promote educational reform and innovation.

In recent years, China has deeply implemented the national education digitalisation strategy, launched the “AI + Education” action plan, and promoted the integration of AI into all elements, processes, and scenarios of education. We have achieved remarkable results in transforming education and teaching, evaluation, scientific research, and governance.

We have organised the development of high-quality online learning resources and continuously upgraded the National Smart Education Platform. The platform has now gathered more than 130,000 high-quality resources for primary and secondary schools, 13,000 premium courses for vocational education, and 145,000 high-quality courses for higher education, all freely accessible. The platform has developed 23 education-specific large models and 13 subject-specific vertical models, and launched 14 AI tools to enhance interactive learning experiences.

We have launched pilot projects for AI-empowered education, exploring personalised learning paths, using digital technology to precisely profile students and provide customized learning solutions.

We are exploring reforms in comprehensive and holistic assessment, leveraging the National Big Data Center to let data do more of the work, reduce the need for teachers and students to handle matters in person, and enhance the intelligence of educational governance.

We have promoted interdisciplinary integration and transformed the research paradigm in universities. We have timely advanced the optimization and adjustment of disciplines and majors, implemented the Basic Discipline and Interdisciplinary Breakthrough Plan, built collaborative innovation platforms, and constructed technology achievement trading platforms to accelerate the cultivation of new quality productive forces.

We have focused on international cooperation and jointly promoted the global digital transformation of education. We have continuously held four editions of World Digital Education Conference, initiated the World Digital Education Alliance, and expanded and upgraded the international version of the National Smart Education Platform, which now covers more than 200 countries and regions.

Ladies and gentlemen, The current global AI technology iteration cycle is constantly shortening, bringing new opportunities and challenges to human civilization and sustainable development.

In his keynote address at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference, President XI Jinping called on all countries should uphold the people-centered and technology-for-good philosophy, making AI an important source of momentum for promoting common prosperity and maintaining common security.

Facing the global question of what education should be in the age of intelligence, the international community urgently needs to deepen cooperation and act in solidarity.

I would like to propose three suggestions:

First, deepen strategic coordination and jointly draw the blueprint for smart education development. We should make good use of dialogue and exchange platforms, conduct exchanges and consultations on key issues such as development planning, technical standards, digital ethics, and digital security, and build global strategic consensus on cooperation. China will build more policy dialogue and exchange platforms and explore new paths for smart education development with all countries.

Second, build resource-sharing platforms and forge a digital education community. We should jointly build cross-national digital education resource platforms and learning certification systems, support the Global South in benefiting equally in the AI development process, and meet everyone's lifelong learning needs. China will continue to upgrade the National Smart Education Platform, build a multilingual learning resource library, and expand high-quality resource sharing services relying on AI and other technologies.

Third, strengthen cooperation to enhance teacher competencies and support the development of future education. We should jointly develop competency standards for teachers' application of AI, support cooperation among educational technology developers, teaching research experts, and frontline teachers to carry out educational innovation practices.

China is willing to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with all parties through the Institute of Global Teacher Development, UNESCO Category II Centers and UNESCO Chairs established in China, and other relevant platforms, to support the improvement of global teachers' digital literacy and learning capabilities, providing strong support for the digital transformation of education.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I believe that through our joint efforts, smart education will surely become a bridge to the future, injecting new vitality into building a community with a shared future for mankind, achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and creating a better future for humanity. Finally, I wish this conference complete success.

Prof. YU Jihong, President, Beijing Normal University; Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, highlighted the growing potential of intelligent technologies to advance sustainable development in education. She outlined BNU’s efforts to promote AI-enabled educational transformation, including initiatives in higher education reform, innovative teacher education and the development of large language models (LLMs) for classical Chinese and basic education. She stressed that while technologies continue to evolve, education must remain fundamentally human-centred. AI should be developed and used for social good, she said, while innovation in curricula, disciplines and teacher development should advance together with greater international openness and collaboration.



In this midsummer season, I am very happy to gather with old and new friends at Beijing Normal University to jointly attend the 2026 Global Smart Education Conference. On behalf of Beijing Normal University, I extend a warm welcome to all guests, sincere thanks to friends who have long cared for and supported BNU's development, and deepest respect to all researchers and practitioners who are actively exploring educational reform in the age of intelligence.

Today, artificial intelligence is profoundly reshaping all sectors of the economy and society, and education is at the center of this transformation. Technological iteration continues to reconstruct the educational ecosystem, injecting strong momentum into global sustainable development in education.

China’s practices in digital education have not only helped improve and upgrade the quality of education at home, but have also provided practical solutions for bridging the global digital divide and promoting more balanced educational development worldwide. At the same time, we clearly see that the use of technology to empower education is not a straightforward path. New issues such as technology adaptation, ethical regulation, and ensuring fairness are becoming increasingly prominent, testing the wisdom of education policymakers and academic communities in all countries.

Smart education is increasingly becoming an important strategic pathway for building global consensus and advancing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To build a strong country, we must first strengthen education; to strengthen education, we must first strengthen teacher professionalism. Normal universities shoulder the special mission of connecting higher education with basic education, linking pre-service training with in-service development. They are strategic supports for promoting high-quality development of teacher education and serving the construction of a strong education nation.

In recent years, Beijing Normal University has deeply implemented the “AI +” strategic deployment, carried out the education digitalisation demonstration project, implemented the “AI + Higher Education” teaching reform and the “Top Innovative Excellent Teacher Training Plan,” comprehensively promoted the AI-enabled development of academic programs and curricula, and built an interdisciplinary training system that combines multiple disciplines with teacher education.

At the same time, the university has actively explored AI-empowered basic education application practices. The independently developed Classical Chinese large language model and basic education large model have been launched one after another, helping to shape a future-oriented new education ecosystem.

On this basis, we continue to deepen international cooperation, giving full play to the bridging role of international platforms such as the World Digital Education Alliance, the Institute of Global Teacher Development, the UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education, and the UNESCO Chair on AI in Education, expanding international cooperation networks, and striving to contribute BNU's expertise to the global development of smart education.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, Technology can expand the boundaries of education, enrich teaching methods, and optimize governance approaches, but nurturing people remains the unchanged fundamental mission of education.

Around the conference theme, I would like to share four thoughts with you.

First, align with strategic priorities and drive a leap forward in the education system through AI. AI is not only a powerful tool for promoting educational equity and quality but also an important support for promoting innovation and breakthroughs in higher education. We should be good at using data algorithms and intelligent platforms to promote the coordinated leap of education in three dimensions: scale, quality, and equity, strongly supporting the construction of a strong education nation and helping to achieve global sustainable development in education.

Second, remain anchored in our fundamental values and consistently uphold the principles of putting people first and using AI for good. Education is concerned with living, developing human beings; its essence lies in calling the soul, enlightening wisdom, and shaping personality. The more powerful technology becomes, the more clearly we must see: we should use technology wisely without becoming dependent on it, and empower education without allowing it to be replaced—ensuring that human agency always remains the firmest point of reference amid the advance of artificial intelligence.

Third, deepen integrated innovation and promote the coordinated reform of curriculum, disciplines, and teachers. The deep integration of AI and education is a system-wide project. We should use curriculum reform to guide disciplinary directions, use disciplinary frontiers to improve teacher literacy, and use excellent teachers to activate teaching innovation, forming a virtuous interactive synergy. At the same time, we should actively promote university-enterprise collaboration and the integration of science and education, transforming cutting-edge industrial achievements into high-quality teaching resources to cultivate fertile ground for training future innovative talents.

Fourth, embrace openness and jointly build a global smart education community. Smart education concerns the common future of humanity; there are no bystanders, only fellow travelers. Beijing Normal University is willing to work with global colleagues, gathering wisdom in openness, sharing achievements in coordination, and planning the future in innovation, so that the benefits of smart education can reach every corner of the world. Finally, I wish this conference complete success. I wish all guests deep exchanges and rich harvests.

Dr. TANG Qian, Co-Chair of the Conference; Former Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO, called for the vision of smart education to be translated into shared, sustainable and equitable action. He highlighted three priorities: advancing a humanistic approach to education that enables everyone to fulfil their potential; responding to an increasingly complex global environment through more open and flexible lifelong learning systems; and recognising education and knowledge as global common goods essential to sustainable development in an interdependent world.



It is my great pleasure and privilege to attend the Global Smart Education Conference 2026 and to join colleagues from the global education community in Beijing to exchange perspectives and explore together the profound question of how artificial intelligence can contribute to the sustainable development of education.

Our shared vision is precisely to translate smart education into global action and practice that are **open and shareable, sustainable and forward-looking, human-centred and firmly grounded in equity and inclusion.**

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, this conference comes at a particularly important moment for global education. Having served in the United Nations system, including 25 years with UNESCO, I have had the privilege of witnessing—and contributing to—many of the major transformations that have shaped international education policy.

Over the past decade, UNESCO has published a series of landmark reports that have helped guide and advance educational reform and transformation around the world. In 2015, during my tenure as Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO published Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good, a report that had a profound global impact. It called for a fundamental shift in the way we understand education—from education as a private or public good towards education and knowledge as a **global common good**.

At the heart of this perspective lies knowledge. Knowledge is fundamental to all learning and can be understood as a means through which individuals and societies interpret and make sense of their experiences. Learning may be understood as the process through which knowledge is acquired, while education is a form of learning that is **intentional, purposeful, structured and organised.**

In recent years, however, the global digital transformation of education has reached a new turning point. Artificial intelligence is now being integrated, in increasingly diverse forms, across virtually every level of education systems. It has emerged as one of the most consequential forces driving educational transformation.

At the same time, this transformation has generated profound questions and concerns across the world: How can technology be meaningfully adapted to diverse educational contexts? How should we address ethical considerations and establish effective governance? How can we bridge the digital divide? And, most fundamentally, how can we ensure that technological progress advances rather than undermines educational equity?

As this transformation continues to unfold, UNESCO has provided an important platform through which Member States and the international community can engage in dialogue, exchange experiences and collectively address these emerging challenges. A growing global consensus has emerged around the need to fully unleash the transformative power and potential of the digital revolution, while ensuring that quality education and lifelong learning remain a common good and a fundamental human right, accessible to all. And in doing so, we must place particular emphasis on those who are most disadvantaged and most vulnerable—those who risk being left furthest behind by technological and social transformation.

The theme of this year's Global Smart Education Conference—"Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality, and Sustainability"—responds directly to one of the most urgent and consequential questions confronting the global education community today. This conference therefore provides an important platform for dialogue, mutual learning and collaboration, enabling us to explore solutions together and to turn shared aspirations into meaningful action.

Allow me to share several reflections with you.

First, we must remain committed to a humanistic vision of education grounded in a global perspective. This has long been a shared understanding among UNESCO Member States. We need to embrace open, flexible and comprehensive approaches to lifelong learning, making full use of the opportunities offered by smart education and emerging technologies. Our objective should be to create opportunities for every individual to realise their full potential, to contribute to a sustainable future, and ultimately to live a life of dignity.

Second, we must pay close attention to the challenges that a complex and rapidly changing world is creating for educational policy and decision-making. Today, we can see the widening gap between education and employment. At a time when people around the world—and particularly students and workers—are becoming increasingly mobile, there is an urgent need to move towards more open, flexible and inclusive systems of lifelong learning. This also requires new approaches to recognising, validating and certifying the knowledge, skills and competencies that people acquire through multiple pathways and in diverse learning environments.

Third, we need to understand education and knowledge as global common goods. The concept of the global common good enables us to move beyond the individualistic and socio-economic assumptions traditionally embedded in the notion of education as a public good. Knowledge constitutes part of the shared heritage of humanity. In a world characterised by ever-deepening interdependence, sustainable development requires us to recognise education and knowledge as global common goods that belong to humanity as a whole. And in this transformation, the smart education that we are discussing today will undoubtedly play a vital role.

Dear colleagues, allow me to emphasise one further point. We know that we are approaching a critical juncture in the 2030 Agenda. There are now only four years remaining until 2030—the target year for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular SDG 4 on quality education. Since the Goals were adopted in 2015, however, progress towards their achievement has been far from even. UNESCO's monitoring reports have shown that progress remains highly uneven, with many countries, particularly the least developed countries, still significantly off track in meeting the agreed targets.

Against this backdrop, I believe global education faces two particularly important challenges and responsibilities. **First, we must help countries that are falling behind to accelerate their progress.** We need to explore new approaches and make effective use of new tools—including artificial intelligence—to help these countries bridge existing gaps and accelerate their educational development. Achieving SDG 4 ultimately means ensuring that no country—and no learner—is left behind.

Second, we must begin thinking seriously about what comes after 2030. What kind of educational future do we envision beyond the 2030 Agenda? Will we need to revisit and renew the Education 2030 framework? Will our goals and priorities need to be adjusted in light of the profound technological, demographic, social and economic changes now underway? More fundamentally, do we need a new global development agenda for education—one that can look beyond 2030 and provide a longer-term pathway towards 2050?

I believe that such a future agenda will inevitably be different from the goals we have today. It will need to respond to a fundamentally transformed world and provide direction for the development of education over the next two or three decades.

I am confident that, in the near future, the global education community will come together for broad-based dialogue, consultation and collective reflection, just as the international community did in the years leading up to and following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. We should therefore begin preparing now. We should encourage more voices, more dialogue and more forward-looking thinking about the future of education—and about the kind of world we wish education to help create.

H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima, Under Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, United Nations, described inclusive, equitable and sustainable education enabled by AI and digital technologies as an urgent global priority. She called for greater investment in digital infrastructure and sustainable connectivity, stronger institutional digital capacity and digital skills, and a continued commitment to human-centred, quality-focused and inclusive development. She stressed that international cooperation will be essential to ensuring that the benefits of technology reach all learners.



I thank Beijing Normal University and the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education for convening this important conference and for inviting me to address you virtually.

The theme “Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality, and Sustainability”, speaks to a defining question of our time: How can we harness technological transformation to expand human opportunity rather than deepening existing divides? For the 92 most vulnerable countries—the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states, supported by my office—this question is particularly urgent.

Long-standing structural vulnerabilities continue to constrain their digital transformation and human capital development. Limited fiscal space, inadequate infrastructure, shortages of qualified personnel, high connectivity costs, and geographical barriers restrict access to quality education and digital learning. This challenge is particularly acute in the least developed countries. Only about one-third of their population is online. Gross tertiary enrollment stands at only 11.2%, compared with over 43% globally. Institutions in the least developed countries account for just 4.6% of recorded STEM degree programs, despite these countries being home to almost one-fifth of the world's youth. Digital exclusion and weak human capital development are therefore reinforcing one another.

Without technology, learners cannot access knowledge and opportunities, and without the skills to use technology, connectivity alone cannot deliver transformation. Smart education can help break this cycle, but it must mean more than just creating online access. We must advance digital access and human capital development together. Smart education must strengthen educational institutions, build local capabilities, and respond to national priorities.

The proposed Online University for LDCs, a key deliverable of the Doha Programme of Action, can advance this vision by strengthening existing institutions and expanding access to quality postgraduate STEM education, especially for women and those left behind.

Excellencies, distinguished participants, allow me to highlight five priorities.

First, we must urgently close the digital access gap. Millions of learners still lack affordable internet, reliable electricity, and appropriate devices. We must invest in resilient digital infrastructure while expanding low-bandwidth platforms, offline learning, community digital hubs, and accessible technology for women, persons with disabilities, and remote communities.

Second, we must close the skills and institutional capacity gap. Technology is advancing faster than many education systems can adapt to. We must equip teachers with digital pedagogical skills, students with digital literacy, and strengthen institutions' capacity to govern technology, protect data, and develop locally relevant content. Local languages and knowledge systems must also be fully integrated and reflected.

Third, we must overcome the constraints of geography and scale. Many vulnerable countries cannot independently sustain specialized faculty, laboratories, or advanced programmes. Shared platforms, open educational resources, virtual laboratories, and cross-border academic networks can pool expertise and expand access. These efforts must be supported by strong quality assurance and the recognition of qualifications.

Fourth, we must connect education to economic opportunities. Too many young people leave education without the skills demanding by a changing labor market. Curricula must respond to opportunities in the digital and green economies. Partnerships with employers should create pathways through mentorship, practical training, internships and entrepreneurship.

Finally, we must address fragmented and insufficient international support. We need to build sustained, nationally-owned partnerships among governments, the United Nations, development partners, universities and the private sector. South-South and triangular cooperation can help scale proven solutions. I deeply appreciate China's valuable contributions to advancing South-South and triangular cooperation. I also commend the important work of the Global Smart Education Network, including promoting joint research, teacher exchanges, and open educational resources and capacity building for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, home to 1.4 billion people, large majority of them being youth.

Excellencies, AI and other emerging technologies hold immense promise, but they must remain human-centered, inclusive, safe, and accountable. The real test of technological progress is not how advanced it becomes, but who benefits. Can it help a young woman in a LDC to acquire advanced STEM skills? Can it enable a student in a landlocked country to access world-class knowledge? Or a teacher on a remote island to access expertise from around the world? That is the promise of smart education. Let us make the digital revolution a force for convergence, not divergence, and ensure that no country and no learner is left behind.

H.E. Mr. CHEN Qun, Assistant Director-General for Education at UNESCO, said in a video address that education systems worldwide are facing a range of pressures, including demographic change, geopolitical tensions, insufficient investment, and a growing mismatch between skills development and societal needs. He noted that UNESCO is working with partners worldwide to address three critical questions: how to ensure the safe and effective use of AI in education; how to prevent digital and AI divides from widening; and how intelligent technologies can be used to improve learning outcomes.



It's my great honor to welcome you to the Global Smart Education Conference 2026. Let me begin by thanking President Yu Ji Hong for her kind invitation and Beijing Normal University for its longstanding partnership and cooperation with UNESCO.

We live in a year of profound transformation marked by pervasive uncertainty. Education, too, faces a complex set of interconnected challenges, shifting demographic trends, recurring geopolitical tensions, insufficient investment in learning, and a growing mismatch between talent development and the needs of society. Among these, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence has emerged as one of the most closely watched developments.

In the three months since assuming office as UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, I have had the privilege of meeting with more than 30 ministers of education from around the world. Artificial intelligence and education have consistently been at the forefront of our discussions. Across these exchanges, three key questions have emerged repeatedly.

First, how can we ensure the safe and ethical use of AI in education? Second, how can we prevent the digital divide and the emerging AI divide from widening further? Third, how can we harness AI to strengthen education and improve learning outcomes?

The world is looking for credible answers to these questions, and it is our collective responsibility to help find them. The international community has already begun exploring these issues extensively. Recently, the first UN global dialogue on AI governance held in Geneva called for collective action to make AI safer, fairer, and more inclusive. The United Nations Independent International Scientific Panel on AI has cautioned that the pace of technology development is already challenging our capacity to govern it effectively. Most recently in Shanghai, President Xi Jinping called on all countries to work together to build a just and equitable global AI governance system. At UNESCO, our mandate is to provide clear and timely guidance on the governance of AI in education.

Our guidance for generative AI in education and research supports ministries of education and educational institutions in addressing pricing policy, and implementation questions within their national contexts. At the same time, our AI competence frameworks for teachers and students provide a strong foundation for adaptation and application around the world. Many countries, cities, schools, and enterprises have already launched pioneering AI-enabled education initiatives. These efforts include using AI to support personalised learning, assist teachers in lesson preparation, and innovate approaches to educational assessment. Yet we all recognise that these efforts remain insufficient in the face of the challenges ahead. Within UNESCO, we have recently established a dedicated task team on AI and education, supported by specialized thematic clusters. During this year's Digital Learning Week, AI and education will feature prominently across all discussions. We are convinced that addressing these challenges requires mobilizing the full strength of UNESCO's global network of partners, including world-renowned research institutions such as Beijing Normal University.

This conference therefore comes at a particularly timely moment. I wish you every success in your discussions and look forward to the contributions this conference will make toward addressing the critical questions before us.

Mr. Lester G. Huang, Deputy Chairman, The Hong Kong Jockey Club; Deputy Chairman, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust; Chairman, Institute of Philanthropy, Hong Kong, China, highlighted the value of connecting educational practices across regions, sharing experience, co-creating solutions and jointly exploring the future of schooling so that all students can benefit from equitable learning opportunities.



It is a great honour for me to be back in Beijing once again to attend the Global Smart Education Conference 2026, the seventh edition of this important international gathering. The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust has been participating in and supporting the Conference over the years. It has become a valuable cross-sectoral platform for international dialogue, collaboration and innovation.

This year's theme, "Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability," resonates strongly with the mission of our Charities Trust. Over the past decade, we have been supporting the development of digital education in Hong Kong, from computational thinking to AI literacy, and increasingly to exchanges among students and schools on the responsible and creative use of artificial intelligence. Our aim is to ensure that technological development contributes to a better and more inclusive future.

Let me also briefly introduce The Hong Kong Jockey Club. We are a world-class racing and entertainment organisation with a longstanding commitment to the betterment of society. More than 90 per cent of the Club's annual operating surplus is donated to The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust each year to support a wide range of charitable and community initiatives. The Trust is one of the largest philanthropic funders in Asia.

At the heart of our social mission is a commitment to bridging the digital divide, inspiring creativity and building a future-oriented learning pathway from computational thinking to artificial intelligence. These efforts also align with broader national priorities for high-quality development and the integrated advancement of education, science and technology, and talent.

For us, this journey began in 2016 with CoolThink@JC, which aims to strengthen computational thinking among primary school students. Computational thinking helps students break complex problems into manageable parts, identify patterns and develop solutions. From the beginning, equity has been central to the programme. We want every student to have the opportunity to develop these capabilities and prepare for the future.

Since its launch, CoolThink@JC has benefited more than 100,000 students and has been adopted across all publicly funded primary schools in Hong Kong. In 2023, the Education Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government adopted and adapted its learning materials for use in the mainstream curriculum.

Building on this foundation, we have also supported the CUHK Jockey Club AI for the Future Project, extending learning from computational thinking at the primary level to AI literacy at the secondary level. These initiatives help students understand not only how artificial intelligence works and how it can be applied, but also its ethical and social implications.

We are also pleased to see these experiences being shared more widely. Within China, our cooperation with Beijing Normal University has been particularly important. Through sister-school initiatives, CoolThink@JC learning resources and practices have been shared with primary schools across 25 provincial-level administrative regions in the Chinese Mainland, creating opportunities for teachers and students to exchange ideas and learn from one another.

Our work has also extended internationally. In Cambodia, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust is working with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport to adapt the CoolThink@JC curriculum for local primary schools. The programme is being introduced to 100 public schools between 2025 and 2028 and is expected to benefit approximately 30,000 students and 500 teachers.

CoolThink@JC has received international recognition, including the QS Reimagine Education Awards, the ISTE Seal of Alignment and Education Alliance Finland certification. More importantly, however, we hope that these initiatives can continue to promote digital literacy, educational equity and sustainable capacity building.

Our commitment does not stop at the school gate. We also seek to extend digital learning opportunities to the wider community, so that children and families from different backgrounds can participate in and benefit from technological change.

Looking back over the past decade, our journey has evolved from computational thinking to AI literacy, from individual schools to wider system adoption, and from Hong Kong to deeper collaboration with the Chinese Mainland and international partners. Throughout this process, our commitment to educational equity and responsible innovation has remained unchanged.

As we reimagine education in the age of artificial intelligence, our task is not simply to introduce more technology into classrooms. We must ensure that technology helps create better learning opportunities and supports the development of responsible, creative and capable young people.

We hope to cultivate the next generation not only to understand and use AI, but also to question it, shape it and apply it responsibly, so that they can become future leaders and contribute to a better society.

High-level Dialogue: Collaborative Action to Deepen AI-Enabled Transformation

Education ministers from different countries shared their national perspectives on governing AI-enabled transformation.



Hon. Mr. Kaviraj Sukon, Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research of Mauritius, argued that schools and universities need to reconsider what education should teach in the age of AI. He opened with the case of a student at risk of failing whose difficulties surface only at the end of term, and asked whether tools capable of detecting weaknesses early and matching learners to the support they actually need are being used, and how such choices are justified. Citing UNESCO projections that more than 300 million young people will still lack basic literacy and numeracy by 2030 — many already in school — he challenged policymakers to ask whether governance itself has failed to guarantee every learner a fair opportunity. Invoking Howard

Gardner's suggestion that AI may fundamentally reshape learning by 2050 and call upon disciplined, synthesising and creative thinking alongside distinctly human judgement, he asked what remains worth teaching once much of what schools and universities do can be automated. He called for AI to become part of university curricula, alongside stronger teacher training and curriculum reform, so that teachers are prepared to guide students' use of AI and AI can contribute directly to improved learning outcomes.



Hon. Mr. Bright Msaka, Minister of Education, Science and Technology of Malawi, emphasised the importance of equipping teachers to use intelligent teaching tools effectively. He framed AI as a profound transformation rather than another innovation, one that has moved from research laboratories into daily life and reshapes how knowledge is created and accessed. The decisive question, he argued, is whether AI replaces teachers or empowers them: machines accelerate the processing of information, but technology cannot substitute for the human relationships at the core of education, and learners must use AI to advance real learning without becoming over-reliant. He insisted that the digital divide be placed at the centre of the AI inclusion agenda, since in countries such as Malawi unreliable connectivity, unstable power supply and limited digital skills mean that AI-driven platforms simply do not function; closing the gap requires investment in infrastructure, skills and institutions rather than the delivery of technology alone. He said that future education should combine AI with distinctly human capabilities—including judgement, empathy, critical thinking, communication and collaboration—enabling teachers and learners to become informed, active and responsible users of AI. Pointing to Malawi's data protection law and a national AI strategy nearing completion, he concluded that education aims not to create machines but to shape people capable of rational thought, innovation and compassion.



Hon. Mr. Idrissa Samb, Minister of Employment, Vocational and Technical Training of Senegal, said the sustainable use of AI in education requires simultaneous attention to the social, institutional and environmental dimensions. Social sustainability requires that no learner be disadvantaged by geography, income, gender, disability or language, and that teachers help select the technologies they use. Institutional sustainability requires national capacity to understand, audit and adapt solutions, underpinned by open standards, interoperability and data sovereignty, with privacy, algorithmic transparency and human accountability built in from the outset, rather than delegating decisions about young people's futures to opaque systems. Environmental sustainability acknowledges that data centres and devices consume energy and resources, calling for efficiency, resilient supply and longer device lifespans. In Senegal, where 75 per cent of the population is under 35 and only 5 per cent of training institutions enjoy adequate connectivity, these priorities are embedded in the 2025–2029 national development strategy; AI is expected to update curricula, personalise pathways and align training with labour-market demand. He further urged that isolated initiatives be consolidated into public policy and that cooperation move beyond equipment transfer towards capacity building and standard-setting. He argued that digital transformation can only be truly sustainable when it serves human-centred and inclusive development. AI should ultimately function as a public good—supporting teachers, expanding access to quality education, strengthening young people's employability and reducing inequalities.



Hon. Mr. Mo'ale 'Otunuku, Minister for Education and Training of Tonga, stressed that AI should not become a resource available only to a privileged few. For a small island state whose isolation digital technology has dissolved, AI can connect communities across the ocean yet may equally widen divides without deliberate policy; equity is therefore the first

obligation, requiring that children in remote outer-island classrooms enjoy the same access to advanced learning tools as their peers. The stakes are concrete where specialist science, technology, engineering and mathematics teachers are in short supply: adaptive platforms and remote classrooms can extend personalised tutoring and targeted remediation. He emphasized that equal access must go hand in hand with cultural inclusion and preservation. Countries should be able to participate in developing locally relevant AI systems that respect their languages, cultures and Indigenous knowledge, rather than allowing technology to drive cultural homogenisation; AI must learn local languages if children are to engage the world without surrendering their identity. He also maintained that quality education must pair technical capability with character, balancing data with wisdom and guiding digital intelligence with human empathy. Two operational priorities follow: embedding AI literacy in the national teacher-training framework while using administrative AI to release teachers from routine tasks, and linking AI-driven climate modelling to the protection of schools against sea-level rise and extreme weather, since for Pacific states sustainability is inseparable from climate resilience — a transformation no small island state can accomplish alone. Behind every dataset, he concluded, stands a young person — not a passive recipient of the future but its architect.



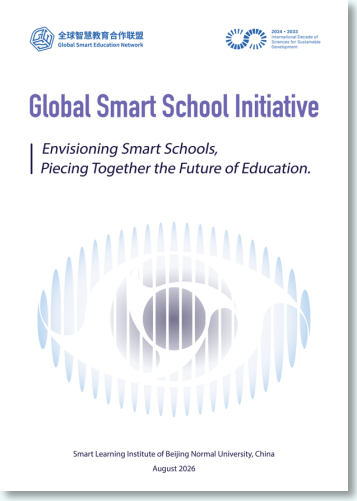
Hon. Prof. Stella Christie, Vice Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology of Indonesia, invited universities to reconsider the meaning of knowledge itself. She first questioned whether AI is sustainable in material terms: current estimates place the energy demand of large language models on a trajectory towards national-level consumption, while the water footprint of a single reasoning model equals the annual drinking water of more than a million people — costs incurred against benefits still largely promised rather than delivered. She then asked whether the university model itself is sustainable, rejecting both wholesale substitution of university functions by AI and a purely human-led retreat, and pressing universities to decide which knowledge to pursue once machines can generate content. She argued that knowledge is more than an accumulation of facts; it acquires value through selection, organisation and interpretation — the curation that distinguishes a university from the mere generation of information. As AI becomes increasingly capable of generating content and processing vast amounts of information, universities need to revisit their core roles in creating, transmitting and curating knowledge, as well as the distinctive contribution of human beings to those processes. She concluded, the purpose is to make humans wiser, not machines smarter.

Outcome Release: Global Smart Education Initiative: Envisioning Smart Schools, Piecing Together the Future of Education

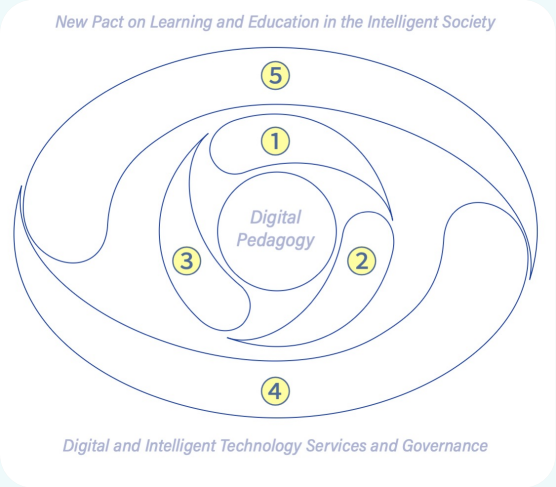
Prof. HUANG Ronghuai, Co-Dean of the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University and UNESCO Chair on AI in Education, and **Prof. Shafika Isaacs**, Chief of Section for Technology and AI in Education at UNESCO and Director a.i. of UNESCO IITE, jointly launched the Global Smart School Initiative. Initiated by the Global Smart Education Network (GSENet), the Initiative seeks to build an open, inclusive and evidence-informed global platform through which schools can exchange practices, undertake professional evaluation, receive transformation consultancy support and participate in school certification.



The Initiative responds to two fundamental questions in the age of AI: *What is changing and what should remain constant in schools? What should schools change, and how can that change be achieved and sustained?* While innovative models of future schooling are emerging around the world, there remains a need for shared frameworks that can help schools understand, evaluate and advance their transformation.



Global Smart School Initiative



Five Pillars of Smart School

Pillar One: Smart Learning Experiences Conducive to Student Development

Focused on student agency, deeper learning, personalised growth and inclusive participation, enabled by smart campuses and future learning spaces. Examples: Wings Agora (Netherlands) organises learning around student-selected challenges; Beijing No. 18 High School fosters critical, independent inquiry with AI.

Pillar Two: Teaching Innovation Empowered by Digital and Intelligent Technologies

Technology is used to enrich interaction and improve learning through human–AI collaboration, growth-oriented assessment and evidence-based teaching. Examples: Savremena Primary School (Serbia) extends interaction through human–robot collaboration; Yinchuan Huaxi Middle School uses learning evidence to refine teaching.

Pillar Three: Teacher Professional Development Focused on Enhancing Digital Competence

Teachers learn continuously through practice, collaboration and reflection, strengthening their capacity to integrate digital technologies into teaching. Examples: Crescent Girls' School (Singapore) builds competence through collaborative lesson design; Shenzhen Mingde Experimental School advances practice-based training.

Pillar Four: Forward-Looking School Planning Geared towards Sustainable Development

Combines vision, leadership, data-informed governance and continuous improvement to support sustainable transformation. Examples: Royal Arts High School (Canada) builds a school-validated culture of continuous improvement; Shuren Jingrui Primary School (Chongqing) pursues phased, evidence-based transformation.

Pillar Five: Home–School–Community Collaboration Anchored in Students' Holistic Development

Brings families, schools and communities together, connected by digital technology, around students' well-being and holistic development. Examples: Aga Khan Academy Mombasa (Kenya) links community partnerships to student development; Leifeng Huizhi Primary School (Changsha) advances multi-sector, technology-empowered collaboration.

Keynote Speech: Strengthening Cross-Sector Collaboration for a High-Quality Smart Education Ecosystem

Cross-sector partnerships and international collaboration are playing an increasingly important role in accelerating the digital transformation of education worldwide. Through international organisations and collaborative platforms such as UNESCO, the Global Smart Education Network (GSENet) and the World Digital Education Alliance, universities, governments and educational technology companies are working together to explore innovative applications of AI in education, share expertise and resources, and foster an open and high-quality smart education ecosystem.

Theme 1: Global Vision and Future Education



Ms. AI Yuxin, Senior Programme Management Officer, United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), delivered a keynote speech on "Online University for the Least Developed Countries (OUL)." She described OUL as a global public good designed to expand access to affordable, flexible and inclusive STEM education; strengthen higher education systems and institutional capacity; improve quality through accreditation and international recognition; and build partnerships among UN agencies, academia, governments and the private sector.



Prof. Mohamed Jemni, Director of ICT Department, Arab LeagueEducational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), used his keynote speech, "From Artificial Intelligence to Collective Intelligence: Shaping the Future of Education," to call for stronger connections between human, artificial, institutional and global collective intelligence. He outlined five priorities: keeping people at the centre; empowering rather than replacing teachers; developing multilingual, accessible and inclusive AI for education; strengthening ethical governance and responsible innovation; and advancing international collaboration and digital solidarity.

Theme 2: AI Technology Innovation and Industry-Academia-Research Collaboration



Mr. ZHANG Chengtao, President of Huawei's Basic Education Business Unit, highlighted several barriers to implementing AI in education, including an overly theoretical curricula, limited opportunities for practical application and insufficient computing and data infrastructure. He outlined efforts to develop AI general education centres and AI practice laboratories for schools and universities, and called for secure computing infrastructure, open AI platforms and collaborative talent-development ecosystems to support practical AI education across different stages of learning.



Dr. LIU Dejian, Founder of NetDragon and Co-Dean of the SLI of BNU, delivered a recorded keynote speech titled "The Stronger AI Becomes, The More Humans Must Learn How to Learn." Drawing on the concept of on-demand learning, he highlighted three priorities: building pathways from fragmented questions towards personalised and systematic learning; pursuing efficiency without sacrificing deep thinking; and clearly defining responsibilities in human–AI collaboration. He argued that the AI era requires stakeholders to go beyond platforms, traditional curricula and research outputs to jointly rethink learning goals, content, tools, assessment and ethical boundaries.



Mr. NIE Xiaolin, Co-Founder, Director, and Senior Vice President, iFLYTEK Co., Ltd.; Vice President, China Educational Technology Association, China, stressed the importance of developing reliable general-purpose and education-specific large language models, alongside tools and implementation guidance tailored to educational contexts. He called for evidence-informed, iterative development, with close attention to content safety, values, knowledge accuracy, educational appropriateness and educational purpose. He also advocated joint work on governance standards for AI in education and a more open ecosystem for shared development.



Mr. SUN Zhidong, Head of Technology R&D and the AI Research Institute of Yuanfudao, presented the company's work on an AI-powered reading agent built on multimodal large language models. The system combines multimodal perception, learning-path planning and guided instruction. He stressed that educational AI agents should be grounded in sound pedagogical principles, aligned with curriculum standards and responsive to learners' cognitive development. He argued that AI should serve as scaffolding for learning rather than a substitute for the learner, thereby helping to make high-quality personalised education more widely accessible.

Theme 3: Building a Smart Education Ecosystem Together



Mr. LI Yi, Director, Beijing Municipal Education Commission; Director, Beijing Municipal Government Education Supervision Office, China, noted in his presentation, "Expanding New Educational Spaces: Exploring the Development of a New Smart Education Ecosystem," that AI-enabled new educational spaces have four defining features: the reconfiguration of time and space, enabling ubiquitous and continuous education across contexts; cross-domain integration, driving iterative renewal in the content and functional positioning of education; shifting roles, enabling dynamic changes in the roles of participants in bilateral and even multilateral interactions; and the upgrading of educational consumption, reshaping its modes, content and levels.



Mr. LIU Xiaodong, Mayor of Changping District, Beijing; Director of the Administrative Committee of Future Science City, China, outlined three key areas of his district's smart education practices in a presentation titled "Deepening University–City Collaboration: Jointly Exploring the 'Changping Practice' of Smart Education." These include developing a district-wide, progressive AI curriculum system; strengthening university–district collaboration and industry–education integration; and expanding two-way channels for international cooperation. He said Changping would take GSE2026 as an opportunity to deepen the district's collaboration with Beijing Normal University, further strengthen university–city integration, and continue to enhance its smart education practices, systems and ecosystem.



Datuk Dr. Habibah Abdul Rahim, Director, SEAMEO Secretariat, focused on a central question in her keynote speech, "Smart Education in Asia: What Are We Really Transforming?" She argued that smart education should be designed around the needs of the most vulnerable learners, teachers, workers and institutions. Alongside investment in technology, she called for stronger institutional capacity in governance, leadership, teacher development, data protection and technological safeguards. She also highlighted the need for closer connections among basic, higher and vocational education, lifelong learning and the labour market as well as technologies and partnerships that respect linguistic and cultural diversity while strengthening human capabilities.

The perspectives shared by international organisations, as well as academic and industry bodies conveyed a common message: high-quality smart education will depend on deep collaboration across sectors and on the responsible use of AI. In his congratulatory message to the conference, Prof. Justin Yifu Lin, Dean of the Institute of New Structural Economics at Peking University, noted that countries need to develop digital infrastructure in line with their own circumstances, strengthen the digital capacities of teachers and learners, and improve mechanisms for technology use and governance. He pointed out that only then can the potential of AI be translated into equitable, high-quality and sustainable educational development, allowing more people to benefit from technological progress.

The Opening Ceremony and Plenary Session on "Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability" were moderated by Prof. KANG Zhen, Vice President of Beijing Normal University, China; Hon. Ms. Faatamaalii Jenny Lauano, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Education, Samoa; Prof. Shafika Isaacs, Co-Chair, Program Committee; Chief, Section for Technology and AI in Education, UNESCO; Director a.i, UNESCO IITE; Hon. Prof. Wilfred Nyongbet Gabsa, Secretary General, Ministry of Higher Education, Cameroon; and Dr. Sarena Shivers, Member-at-Large, Board of Directors, ISTE+ASCD, USA.











Parallel Session: AI in Higher Education— From Disruption to Transformation

AI is reshaping the fundamental logic and operational paradigms of higher education with unprecedented depth and breadth. The session brought together university leaders, researchers, and industry experts to examine how AI is transforming higher education across teaching and learning, research, institutional management, and student services. Particular attention was given to the growing role of generative AI and AI agents in curriculum and programme renewal, talent development, research innovation, and institutional decision-making. Discussions also considered the enabling conditions for sustainable transformation, including digital infrastructure, data governance, and emerging AI ecosystems, as well as the need to balance technological innovation with quality assurance, academic integrity, ethical responsibility, and effective institutional governance. Taken together, the session highlighted that the future of AI-enabled higher education will depend not only on technological advancement, but also on universities' capacity to redesign educational models, strengthen institutional readiness, and develop responsible and internationally connected approaches to transformation.



Photo of Parallel Session: AI in Higher Education: From Disruption to Transformation

SPEAKERS

Hon. Mr. REN Youqun
Vice Minister of Education, China; Chairperson, Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

Mr. ZHU Rui
Deputy Director-General, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, China

Mr. ZHANG Chengtao
President, Basic Education Business Unit, Huawei, China

Hon. Mr. Bright Msaka
Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Malawi

Mr. DU Min
President, Huawei Higher Education Corps, China

Prof. Hamish Coates
Editor-in-Chief of Policy Reviews in Higher Education; Professor, Australian National University, Australia; Tsinghua University, China

Prof. KONG Lingjiang
Member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Committee and Vice President, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, China

Mr. QIN Botao
General Manager, Chaoxing Fanya Group; Vice Chairman, Digital and Intelligent Education Practice and Innovation Alliance; Executive Council Member, Smart Education Branch of the China Association of Higher Education; Member, Ministry of Education Steering Committee on Educational digitalisation and Teaching Method Innovation, China

Prof. Teng Komhiol Waninga
Vice Chancellor, University of Goroka, Papua New Guinea

Prof. Sandra D'Agostino
Undersecretary, Digital Government, Government of the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina; Professor, National University of La Plata (UNLP), Argentina

Prof. HUANG Ronghuai
UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education

Prof. HU Xiangen
Director, Educational Research & Technology Center, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China

Prof. ZHOU Zuoyu
Former Vice President, Beijing Normal University; Director, UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED), China

Hon. Dr. Madhura Senevirathna
Deputy Minister of Education and Higher Education, Sri Lanka

Prof. LI Hongfei
Member of the CPC Committee and Vice President, Central China Normal University, China

Ms. Trine Jensen
Manager, HE & Digital Transformation, Publication and Events, International Association of Universities (IAU), France

Prof. DENG Fang
Professor, Executive Vice Dean of the Graduate School and Executive Vice Dean of the School of Artificial Intelligence, Beijing Institute of Technology, China

Prof. Datin Dr. Santhi Raghavan
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learner Experience and Technology), Open University Malaysia, Malaysia

Prof. ZENG Zhu
Member of the Standing Committee of the Party Committee and Vice President, Guizhou Medical University, China

Prof. Mayada Belal
Chair, UNESCO Chair on Integrating Intercultural Education in Higher Education Institutions for Global Citizenship; Director, International Relations Office (IRO) -Helwan University (HU), Egypt

Assoc. Prof. JING Anlei
Institute of Higher Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Assoc. Prof. ZHUANG Tengteng
Institute of Higher Education, Beijing Normal University, China

MODERATORS

Prof. ZHOU Haitao
Dean, Institute of Higher Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Opening Remarks: Strategic Vision and the Future of AI in Higher Education



Mr. ZHU Rui, Deputy Director-General, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, China, emphasized that artificial intelligence is driving social transformation with unprecedented breadth and depth. As the forefront of talent cultivation and scientific innovation, and as the leading force in building a strong education nation, higher education must proactively embrace this change. He noted that the Ministry of Education has systematically advanced a new paradigm for talent supply, new infrastructure for smart education, and new benchmarks for AI-enabled teaching and educational openness. The National Smart Higher Education Platform has been established, featuring discipline-specific vertical models and teaching intelligent agents, alongside the release of a large number of AI textbooks and integrated courses, providing solid digital support for innovation in higher education. Looking ahead to the 15th Five-Year Plan period, Zhu called for the integration of AI across all elements, processes, and scenarios of higher education. He stressed the need to strengthen core enablers, shape the future of higher education, promote openness and international collaboration, and reinforce safeguards for security. These efforts, he said, will help usher in a new paradigm for the 2.0 phase of China's National Education digitalisation Strategy.



Mr. ZHANG Chengtao, President, Basic Education Business Unit, Huawei, China, noted that AI is driving a new phase of deep integration with higher education, bringing systemic changes to educational philosophies and talent development. He highlighted that AI-enabled education is not simply a matter of technology overlay, but rather a systemic transformation covering educational philosophy and the entire talent cultivation system. He pointed out that Huawei upholds a "learning through practice" philosophy, collaborating with universities to establish AI practice laboratories and promoting bidirectional industry–academia synergy. This allows AI to integrate from thousands of industries into hundreds of academic disciplines, connecting the full chain from teaching and practical training to research and employment. He called for joint efforts to develop replicable AI+higher education models, strengthen domestic computing infrastructure, and foster new models of high-quality industry–education integration.



Hon. Mr. Bright Msaka, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Malawi, emphasized that AI is transforming teaching and learning, making inclusive, equitable, and sustainable education a key priority for future research. He stressed that AI should empower rather than replace teachers, while developing countries must address persistent challenges in connectivity, electricity, devices, and digital skills. He called for ethical and inclusive AI development that balances technological advancement with human cognition, agency, and cultural values, enabling learners to think, create, and make informed decisions in an AI-shaped world.

Thematic Speech: Governance, Ethics, and the Future of AI in Higher Education

Mr. DU Min, President, Huawei Higher Education Corps, China, delivered a keynote address titled "Exploring Pathways for AI-Enabled Transformation in Higher Education." He pointed out that artificial intelligence is accelerating the intelligent transformation of all industries. Higher education is shifting from "knowledge transmission" to "competency cultivation," and from "teaching-centered" to "learning-centered" models. The core mission is to cultivate "irreplaceable people" equipped with innovative thinking, critical thinking, and human–machine collaboration capabilities. He emphasized that hands-on AI practice is a critical pathway for connecting competency development with the evolving needs of society. Based on real scenarios and real data, Huawei has built AI practice laboratories. Relying on computing infrastructure and intelligent research services, these laboratories empower new paradigms in higher education research. Through deep industry–academia–research integration, Huawei is building a new ecosystem for AI+higher education.

Prof. Hamish Coates, Editor-in-Chief of Policy Reviews in Higher Education; Professor, Australian National University, delivered a keynote address titled "Advancing Academic Integrity through Generative Artificial Intelligence." He pointed out that generative AI poses systemic challenges to academic integrity, and the current academic governance system still has shortcomings in addressing these issues. He proposed a dual-track approach centered on developing comprehensive academic integrity indicators and strengthening the underlying infrastructure for academic governance. He advocated for coordinated governance involving both internal and external stakeholders to safeguard the authenticity, credibility, and public trust associated with higher education degree awards.

Prof. KONG Lingjiang, Member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Committee and Vice President, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, delivered a presentation titled "UESTC's Exploration of Cultivating Top Innovative Talent in the Age of Artificial Intelligence." He stated that AI is driving a fundamental shift in the underlying logic of higher education and a paradigm switch. UESTC has built an "AI-3S Curriculum System + Teacher Competency Enhancement" foundation, created intelligent course-group agents, and developed co-created courses by teachers and students, constructing a new "teacher–student–machine" collaborative teaching model. AI is being used to reconstruct the new engineering practical teaching system. He emphasized that education in the AI era must move beyond the mere "addition of tools" toward a fundamental transformation in its underlying logic. Education should remain grounded in the principle that "knowledge can be replicated, but thinking cannot." The focus should therefore be on cultivating top innovative talent with advanced cognitive abilities and strong innovative capacities.

Mr. QIN Botao, General Manager, Chaoxing Fanya Group, delivered a presentation titled "Exploring the Application and Practice of Artificial Intelligence in Empowering Higher Education Teaching." He noted that AI is driving a shift in university teaching from an "experience-driven" to a "data-driven" approach. Chaoxing has established three pillars—smart courses, smart classrooms, and smart disciplines—and a vision of "four futures": future teachers, future classrooms, future learning centers, and future schools. The company is building a smart teaching ecosystem centered on intelligent teaching agents and supported by AI knowledge bases, achieving integration of courses and classrooms and blending virtual and physical interactions. This provides systematic support for individualized teaching and improved teaching quality in higher education.

Prof. Teng Komhiol Waninga, Vice Chancellor, University of Goroka, Papua New Guinea, delivered a presentation titled "Challenges in Applying Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education Teaching in Papua New Guinea." He pointed out that AI should become a "thinking partner" in education rather than merely a tool. Education should focus on cultivating students' reasoning abilities and critical thinking while preserving distinctly human qualities such as empathy and cultural wisdom. He emphasized that improving AI infrastructure and building a sound intelligent education ecosystem are important prerequisites for developing countries to advance the intelligent transformation of higher education.

Prof. Sandra D'Agostino, Undersecretary, Digital Government, Government of the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina; Professor, National University of La Plata (UNLP), Argentina, delivered a presentation titled "Higher Education, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation." She pointed out that AI-enabled social governance must be oriented toward public needs. Governments cannot alone build the talent, data, and infrastructure required for AI; universities are indispensable strategic partners. She emphasized that higher education institutions should serve as a policy bridge in regional development, leveraging university–government collaboration to advance the intelligent transformation of public services. She also advocated for the development of a transparent and explainable "glass-box" governance framework for sovereign AI.









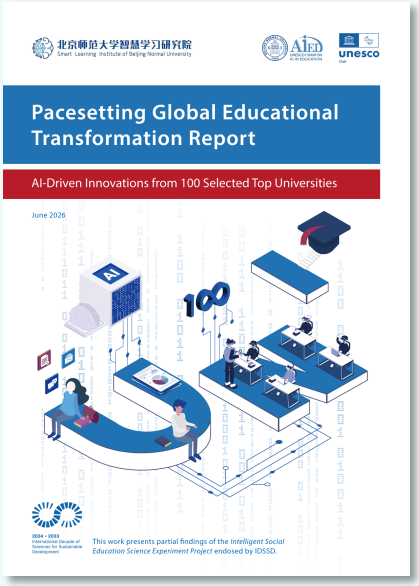
Outcome Release: Pacesetting Global Educational Transformation Report: AI-Driven Innovations from 100 Selected Top Universities

Prof. HUANG Ronghuai, UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education, and **Prof. HU Xiangen**, Director, Educational Research & Technology Center, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, jointly released the "Pacesetting Global Educational Transformation Report: AI-Driven Innovation from 100 Selected Top Universities." The report systematically reviews the strategic layout, practical pathways, and typical experiences of 100 top global universities in AI-driven innovation, and puts forward targeted recommendations to provide reference and inspiration for the global intelligent transformation of higher education.





Key Findings



- AI infrastructure is shifting toward service-oriented, secure, and shared digital foundations.
- Universities are expanding AI-enabled social services across education, industry, and public welfare.
- AI for Science is becoming a core driver of autonomous and interdisciplinary research.
- Teaching is transforming through human–AI collaboration, integrated curricula, and AI-driven assessment.
- Educational resources are becoming increasingly digital, adaptive, and platform-based, with dynamic sharing mechanisms.
- AI literacy and soft skills are being widely integrated into general and interdisciplinary education.
- Universities are implementing system-wide AI governance and coordinated institutional transformation.
- Governance is being strengthened through AI ethics, intelligent management, and a stronger focus on sustainability.
- Industry partnerships are fostering innovation incubation and creating integrated talent–research ecosystems.
- Global collaboration is expanding through alliances, joint training, and resource sharing.

Recommendations

- Advance a new pact for learning and education empowered by AI.
- Strengthen Human-AI Teaming research and co-generative knowledge building.
- Enhance community engagement and cultural inheritance toward an intelligent society.
- Build institutional capacity and competencies for AI-driven transformation.

High-level Dialogue
Smart Adoption: Human-Centered AI Leadership for High-Quality Higher Education

Prof. ZHOU Zuoyu, Former Vice President, Beijing Normal University; Director, UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED), China, stressed that AI is reshaping society, the economy, and higher education. He emphasized the need to leverage AI for learning innovation while addressing risks such as academic integrity, cognitive offloading, the digital divide, algorithmic bias, and data privacy. In the research field, it is necessary to re-examine the value orientation of scientific research and adhere to the goal of serving social development and human well-being. He proposed that AI has the potential to empower open educational resources and bridge global education gaps. This requires all parties to share ideas, networks, computing power, and educational infrastructure to prevent some countries and universities from being marginalized. He stressed that strong leadership, clear strategies, and long-term vision are essential for high-quality development in higher education.

Hon. Dr. Madhura Senevirathna, Deputy Minister of Education and Higher Education, Sri Lanka, highlighted that AI adoption in higher education is inevitable, with the key challenge being the establishment of human-centered governance. He stated that university administrators, educators, researchers, and policymakers all have governance responsibilities. Taking Sri Lanka's higher education AI policy as an example, he pointed out that AI governance should safeguard human rights, focusing on equal opportunity, risk management, data privacy, public trust, and educational inclusion. AI should only serve as a tool for learning interaction and research assistance, and cannot replace human agency. He advocated greater collaboration and resource sharing among universities and research laboratories, allowing AI to handle routine tasks such as data processing and literature searches so researchers can focus on more creative work.

Prof. LI Hongfei, Member of the CPC Committee and Vice President, Central China Normal University, China, proposed an integrated AI talent development system linking general education, professional training, and interdisciplinary learning. General education should focus on cultivating students' human–AI collaboration capabilities, independent judgment, data and critical thinking, and ethical awareness to guard against cognitive "outsourcing." Professional talent cultivation requires multi-party collaboration to jointly build laboratories and supercomputing platforms, and to develop vertical domain large models and intelligent agents. He noted that the main bottleneck of "discipline + AI" lies in disciplinary barriers and institutional mechanisms. Interdisciplinary innovation should be driven by disciplinary frontiers and real industrial problems. Industry–education integration must adhere to an "education-centered, scenario-driven, data-controlled" approach to achieve coordinated development of talent and industry.

Ms. Trine Jensen, Manager, HE & Digital Transformation, International Association of Universities (IAU), France, noted that AI literacy should be a core interdisciplinary competency for all students. Universities should teach students not only how to use AI, but also to understand its capability boundaries, technical limitations, and potential risks. AI should only serve as a supplement to learning and cannot replace students' autonomous learning and independent thinking. Universities need to strengthen critical thinking and guard against the "outsourcing" of learning to AI. While advancing STEM education, it is also important to value the humanities and social sciences in order to assess the social and cultural impacts of AI. She pointed out that in response to resource disparities among universities, institutional exchanges, case sharing, and international cooperation networks can enhance institutional capacity. Universities

should uphold their mission of academic integrity and the pursuit of truth, and when necessary, "slow down" research appropriately to avoid undermining academic excellence through one-sided pursuit of speed.

Prof. Teng Komhiol Waninga, Vice Chancellor, University of Goroka, Papua New Guinea, emphasized that AI is ultimately a human-created tool, and its development depends on human development. Compared with technology itself, universities should pay more attention to human potential, leadership, and value-based judgment. When applying AI, university administrators should respect the ethics, culture, beliefs, and values of different societies, avoiding practical contradictions caused by a lack of cultural sensitivity. The transformation of AI cannot be separated from capacity building; teachers, researchers, and administrators all need to understand the impact of AI on teaching, learning, and research. He proposed that while infrastructure and software conditions are certainly key, leadership determines whether resources can be effectively implemented. Universities can achieve complementary advantages through institutional exchanges, international cooperation, and sharing of talent and research resources.



Photo of High-level Dialogue

Thematic Speech: AI in Action: Innovations, Ethics, and Institutional Practice

Prof. DENG Fang, Professor, Executive Vice Dean of the Graduate School and Executive Vice Dean of the School of Artificial Intelligence, Beijing Institute of Technology, China, delivered a presentation titled "Smart Empowerment, Boundless Transformation: BIT's Practice of AI-Enabled Education." He pointed out that AI is comprehensively penetrating educational scenarios. BIT aims to build a world-class smart

education system, constructing a "Green · Five-Element" education ecosystem. Through AI-enabled reforms across five dimensions—disciplines, resources, cultivation, outcomes, and mechanisms—the university is advancing systemic reform. He showcased initiatives such as AI tutors and AI courses, as well as the world's first AI practice laboratory jointly established with Huawei, offering a BIT approach to transforming postgraduate education in the AI era.

Prof. HU Xiangen, Director, Educational Research & Technology Center, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China, delivered a presentation titled "Beware of Excessive Fluency and Value the Productive Struggles in Learning." He pointed out that the core risk of AI lies not merely in factual errors, but in its "seamless" outputs. Content that appears adequate may actually undermine authentic learning processes. He proposed the concept of "agency anchoring," arguing that while AI can extend human cognition, education must remain human-centered and anchored in learners' agency.

Dr. Santhi Raghavan, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learner Experience and Technology), Open University Malaysia, delivered a presentation titled "AI in Higher Education: From Disruption to Transformation." She noted that AI's impact on higher education is shifting from localized disruption to systemic transformation, with early challenges centered on academic integrity and assessment. Traditional evaluation methods struggle to identify authentic learning outcomes under AI assistance. She emphasized the need to redesign educational models and assessment systems to ensure that AI enhances education rather than replaces human development.

Ms. Trine Jensen, Manager, HE & Digital Transformation, International Association of Universities (IAU), France, presented the findings of the International Association of Universities (IAU) global survey on digital transformation in higher education, drawing on data from 430 institutions across 125 countries and regions. She highlighted global trends in GenAI adoption, governance, and ethics, emphasizing that AI transformation in higher education should remain guided by educational and human development goals. She called for greater international exchange of experiences and collective efforts to shape the future of higher education.

Prof. ZENG Zhu, Member of the Standing Committee of the Party Committee and Vice President, Guizhou Medical University, China, delivered a presentation titled "The 'Guiyi Approach' to Digital and Intelligent Transformation in Local Medical Universities in Western China." He pointed out that the digital and intelligent transformation of local medical universities in western China should start from real pain points in medical education rather than simply putting courses online or updating equipment. He highlighted Guiyang Medical University's six-dimensional ecosystem integrating learning environments, governance, teaching, learning, assessment, and student development, supported by a Future Learning Center and an AI-powered smart education hub. This approach, oriented toward the integration of five domains of education, offers a practical model for the digital and intelligent transformation of local medical universities in western China.



This parallel session was jointly moderated by Prof. ZHOU Haitao, Dean of Institute of Higher Education, Beijing Normal University, China; Assoc. Prof. JING Anlei, and Assoc. Prof. ZHUANG Tengteng, Institute of Higher Education, Beijing Normal University, China.







*The Parallel Session: AI in Higher Education: From Disruption to Transformation was organised by the Institute of Higher Education, Beijing Normal University, the International Association of Universities (IAU), the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education, Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd., and the Binglin Education Fund, Beijing Normal University.

Parallel Session:
AI and the Future of Schools

AI is transforming how schools teach, support learning, and operate, while opening up new possibilities for the future development of schools. The session brought together education leaders, researchers, and practitioners to examine how AI can support diverse pathways of school transformation in response to changing educational, technological, and societal needs. Discussions focused on new approaches to teaching and learning, the redesign of learning environments, curriculum innovation, assessment, and school governance. Particular attention was given to how AI can help schools move beyond traditional models of knowledge delivery towards more open, adaptive, and learner-centred environments that support the holistic development of students. The session also explored the key features, practical pathways, and institutional conditions required to advance school transformation, including strategies for scaling innovation across schools and strengthening coordination at the regional and system levels. Overall, the discussions highlighted the importance of building school systems that are more equitable, high-quality, resilient, and capable of continuous innovation in the age of AI.



Photo of Parallel Session: AI and the Future of Schools

SPEAKERS

Mr. Ricaud Auckbur
Secretary-General, National Commission of Mauritius for UNESCO; Chief Technical Officer of the Ministry of Education of Mauritius, Mauritius

Mr. Justin Valentin
Former Minister of Education, Seychelles; Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Seychelles, Seychelles (Video)

Prof. ZHU Zhiting
Emeritus Professor, East China Normal University, China

Prof. Helen Meng
Patrick Huen Wing Ming Chair Professor of Systems Engineering and Engineering Management, The Chinese University of Hong Kong; Director, Centre for Perceptual and Interactive Intelligence (CPII), Hong Kong, China

Prof. Dicky Sofjan
Vice-President, Globethics

Prof. DONG Yuqi
Professor, Shanghai Normal University; Adjunct Professor, Northeast Normal University; Distinguished Professor, Zhejiang Open University, China

Ms. Jyoti Rahaman
Project Manager/Project Lead, Education Innovation at the Education Department, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

Mr. Paul Pu
Director, Erindale Academy and Toronto Central Academy; President, The Global Youth Challenge (GYC), Canada

Mr. LI Haipeng
Executive President, Onion Academy Group, China

Mr. CAO Longmin
Deputy General Manager, Specialized Solutions for Tencent Cloud Education Business, China

Ms. XU Mingyi
Director, Minhang District Education Bureau, Shanghai, China

Mr. WANG Hui
Deputy Secretary of the CPC Leading Party Members Group and Deputy Director, Shuangliu District Education Bureau, China

Mr. FU Zhongwei
Member of the CPC Leadership Group and Deputy Director, Longyan Municipal Education Bureau, China

Mr. HONG Nianguo
Member of the CPC Leadership Group and Deputy Director, Gushi County Education and Sports Bureau, Xinyang, China

Ms. YAN Haixia
Vice Dean, Haidian Institute of Education Sciences, China

Dr. Pornpun Juntaronanont
President, Krirk University, Thailand

Mr. YANG Linsheng
Vice President, Ningbo Polytechnic University, China

Ms. ZHANG Jie
Secretary of the CPC Committee and Chief Principal, Renhe Street Primary School Education Group, Yuzhong District, Chongqing, China

Mr. FENG Zhenghua
Chief Principal, Songshan Lake Wuhen Education Group; Secretary of the CPC Committee, Songshan Lake North District School, Dongguan, China

Mr. WENG Shiteng
Vice Principal, SKH All Saints' Middle School, Hong Kong, China

Ms. JIANG Libing
Director, Teaching Research Office, Department of Education of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region; Senior Teacher; Special-Grade Teacher, China

Ms. PI Mengling
Principal, Yuelu District No. 2 Primary School, Changsha, China

MODERATORS

Prof. YU Liang
Professor, Southwest University, China

Assoc. Prof. BAO Haogang
Deputy Director, Institute of Digital Education, National Institute of Education Sciences, China

Opening Remarks: Changes in School Functions and Sustainable Development in the Intelligent Era



Mr. Ricaud Auckbur, emphasized in his opening remarks that artificial intelligence is exerting a sustained impact on school functions, teaching methods, and educational governance. Future schools need to proactively respond to technological changes, explore the potential of AI to improve learning support and educational services, while paying close attention to technology accessibility and educational equity, so that intelligent development benefits more learners and aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals in education.



Mr. Justin Valentin, stressed that the integration of artificial intelligence into schools should always serve human development. In promoting teaching innovation, schools must simultaneously emphasize ethical norms, boundaries of responsibility, and human agency, ensuring that technological applications consistently serve the fundamental purpose of education. The two speakers deepened the forum's discussion on the reshaping of future school functions, educational equity, and the responsible application of artificial intelligence from an international perspective.

Thematic Speech: Reimagining Education in the Era of AI: New Theories and Future Directions



Prof. ZHU Zhiting, Emeritus Professor, East China Normal University delivered a keynote address titled "Reimagining Education in the Era of AI: New Theories and Future Directions". He stated that when artificial intelligence can rapidly provide numerous answers, education needs to pay greater attention to human agency and meaning-making, pushing education from knowledge-focused instruction toward wisdom education that unifies mind and practice. He proposed that "Integrated Intelligence Education" should promote "human-machine collaborative intelligence, cross-domain integration, and ecological co-nurturing," while safeguarding the boundaries of human agency—problem posing, goal setting, value weighing, action selection, and responsibility bearing should not be simply delegated to artificial intelligence. For future schools, he proposed that schools will evolve from "class, lesson, and school" toward "learning journey, learning field, and learning community," forming an open educational ecosystem that supports continuous learning, meaning growth, and life excellence.

Invited Speech: Rethinking Learning, the Classroom, and the School in the Age of Artificial Intelligence



Prof. Helen Meng, delivered a keynote address titled "Operationalizing Human-Centered AI Literacy Across Subjects in Hong Kong Schools". She shared the "JC Go AI" project. With "human-centered" as the core, the project organically integrates AI technology, curriculum, pedagogy, teacher professional development, and a safe, governable platform, guiding students to understand the capabilities and limitations of AI, verify AI-generated results, and develop responsible usage awareness during subject learning. She emphasized that AI applications should not only promote deeper subject learning but also develop students' AI literacy, forming a collaborative relationship of "AI support, teacher guidance, and student observation, verification, and explanation," ultimately cultivating learners who can think critically, act responsibly, and use AI with human judgment.



Prof. Dicky Sofjan, Vice-President, Globethics delivered a keynote address titled ” Generative AI and Learning Disorders in Schools“. Drawing on his own experience, he stated that generative AI can provide more flexible, personalised, and privacy-protected learning support for students with learning disorders. At the same time, issues such as equitable access to AI, cultural bias, and cognitive dependency need to be fully addressed. He emphasized that the key to judging the educational value of AI should return to whether students truly understand problems, develop analytical and problem-solving abilities, and maintain independent thinking. Generative AI should serve as a tool to support learning, not the endpoint of learning itself.



Prof. DONG Yuqi, Professor, Shanghai Normal University; Adjunct Professor, Northeast Normal University; Distinguished Professor, Zhejiang Open University, China delivered a keynote address titled “Classroom Models and Teacher Learning in Future Schools”. He proposed that future school construction should start from the classroom—only when technology truly enters the classroom and drives teaching reform can educational value be generated. Based on long-term classroom empirical research, he stated that

future classroom transformation needs to redesign learning processes from students' cognitive starting points, while placing higher demands on teachers. Teacher development should be closely integrated with teaching innovation, moving from general technical training toward "teacher learning," grounding teachers' AI literacy in real classrooms, and making the promotion of student cognitive development a key orientation of teacher learning.



Ms. Jyoti Rahaman, Senior Project Manager/Project Lead, Education Innovation at the Education Department, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) delivered a keynote address titled "Re-thinking Intelligence: What Should Schools Teach in the Age of AI". She proposed that the rapid development of AI is prompting education to rethink the connotation of "intelligence" and the cultivation goals of schools. In the new environment shaped by AI and sustainable development, schools need to further develop learners' key competencies such as forward-thinking, critical thinking, and systems thinking, with particular emphasis on human judgment, enabling students to judge the credibility of information, evaluate AI-generated results, and make responsible choices. She also stressed the need for collaboration among teachers, school leaders, and researchers to integrate systems thinking and real educational issues into teacher learning and educational innovation processes.



Mr. Paul Pu, Director, Erindale Academy and Toronto Central Academy; President, The Global Youth Challenge (GYC), Canada delivered a keynote address titled "An Educational Framework for Sustainable Development in the AI Era". He shared his reflections on educational goals in the AI era, proposing the "Education 2.0" framework. He emphasized cultivating learners' AI wisdom, hands-on practical wisdom, and social wisdom, and reconstructing learning from four dimensions: drive, creation, connection, and moral compass. For an intelligent era with increasingly abundant knowledge and information, he advocated that future learning should start more from real problems, promoting student practice, creation, and social connection through interdisciplinary projects and authentic outcomes, making schools learning communities for co-learning, understanding society, and developing genuine human relationships.

Enterprise Partners Speech & Outcome Release

Exploring the Future Classroom from Both Ends: Learning and Teaching



Mr. LI Haipeng, Executive President, Onion Academy Group, China delivered a keynote address titled "AI-Empowered Transformation of Student Learning: Practices and Explorations at Onion Academy". He stated that artificial intelligence has lowered the threshold for acquiring knowledge and answers, while placing higher demands on students' autonomous learning, question-posing, and authentic inquiry abilities. For future classrooms, students need to gradually move from passive reception under a unified pace toward personalised autonomous learning,



Photo of Launch of Onion AI Future Classroom

while teachers provide more guidance and nurturing support around student learning. Onion Academy explores student autonomous learning through digital learning content, AI learning support, and learning data feedback, and jointly launched the "Onion AI Future Classroom" with multiple schools, further exploring a new "student-centered" classroom paradigm.



Mr. CAO Longmin, Deputy General Manager, Specialized Solutions for Tencent Cloud Education Business, China delivered a keynote address titled "Unlocking a New Paradigm for Innovative Teaching: Launch of Tencent Cloud LearnBuddy Teacher Assistant". She proposed that as cultivation goals shift from knowledge mastery toward deep understanding, independent judgment, problem construction, and value creation, AI support for education is also evolving from content generation toward learning design and nurturing support. LearnBuddy provides teachers with instructional design and professional scaffolding across interdisciplinary teaching, project-based learning, personalised instruction, and intelligent lesson preparation, supporting teachers to devote more time to student development and the nurturing process. The conference also launched the "Tencent Cloud LearnBuddy Innovative Teaching Ecosystem Co-Construction Plan," inviting teachers, teaching research experts, education experts, and industry partners to jointly accumulate and share innovative teaching practices, promoting the transformation of individual experience into reusable educational capabilities and a continuously growing innovative teaching ecosystem.



Photo of Launch of Tencent Cloud LearnBuddy Teacher Assistant

Invited Speach: Outlining the Future School Construction Blueprint at Multiple Levels

At the invited speech session, distinguished guests — including **Ms. XU Mingyi**, Director of the Minhang District Education Bureau in Shanghai; **Mr. WANG Hui**, Deputy Director of the Shuangliu District Education Bureau Party Leadership Group in Chengdu; **Mr. FU Zhongwei**, Deputy Director of the Longyan Municipal Education Bureau; **Mr. HONG Nianguo**, Deputy Director of the Education and Sports Bureau of Gushi County, Xinyang City; **Ms. YAN Haixia**, Vice President of the Haidian Institute of Education Sciences in Beijing; **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pornpun Juntaronanont**, President of Krirk University, Thailand; **Prof. YANG Linsheng**, Vice President of Ningbo Vocational and Technical University; **Ms. ZHANG Jie**, Party Committee Secretary of Renhe Street Primary School in Yuzhong District, Chongqing; **Mr. FENG Zhenghua**, General Principal of the Traceless Education Group at Songshan Lake, Dongguan; **Ms. JIANG Libing**, Director of the Teaching and Research Office of the Ningxia Department of Education; **Mr.WENG Shiteng**, Vice Principal of SKH All Saints' Middle School in Hong Kong; and **Ms. PI Mengling**, Principal of the Second Primary School in Yuelu District, Changsha — shared their insights on topics including AI-empowered large-scale individualized education, development of regional AI education ecosystems, advancement of future schools in county-level areas, smart teaching and research and enhancement of teachers' digital competence, AI curriculum development, digital transformation in vocational education, and reform of school education models. Their presentations collectively showcased practical explorations in advancing future school development across different regions and at different educational stages.

The forum brought together theoretical research, international experience, technological innovation, and regional school practice. Starting from the question of "what kind of people should we cultivate in the AI era," the discussion further extended to "how to reconstruct learning, teaching, and schooling." The sharing by the participating guests indicated that artificial intelligence is driving future schools to move from being places of knowledge transmission toward a more open, intelligent, and collaborative educational ecosystem. Human subjectivity, judgment, creativity, and social connection will also become increasingly important educational values as technology becomes more deeply embedded in education.



This parallel session was jointly moderated by Prof. YU Liang, Southwest University, China and Assoc. Prof. BAO Haogang, Deputy Director at the Institute of Digital Education, National Institute of Education Sciences, China



*The Parallel Session: AI and the Future of Schools was organised by the National Engineering Research Center of Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology, the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, ONION Academy, Tencent Education, and Globethics.

Parallel Session:
AI for Inclusive and Sustainable Education
High-level Dialogue on Capacity Building, Equity and Special Needs

The rapid development of artificial intelligence is creating new opportunities to address persistent challenges in special education, improve accessibility, and enhance the quality and effectiveness of learning for students with special educational needs. Guided by the principle of harnessing technology for the common good and ensuring accessibility for all, the session brought together researchers, practitioners, and education professionals to examine how AI can be integrated into special education and accessible learning. Discussions focused on personalised AI-enabled learning support, accessibility frameworks and standards, and the application of AI in teaching and learning, rehabilitation, assessment, resource recommendation, and school–family collaboration. The session also highlighted the importance of ensuring that technological innovation remains responsive to the diverse needs of learners, while addressing risks such as algorithmic bias, the digital divide, and the potential weakening of human interaction and care. Particular attention was given to ethical governance, risk mitigation, and mechanisms for safeguarding equity, dignity, and inclusion in AI-enabled special education.



Photo of Parallel Session: AI for Inclusive and Sustainable Education

SPEAKERS

Prof. Mohamed Jemni
Director, ICT Department at the ALECSO, Tunisia

Mr. Mario Franco
Founder and Chairman, Millennium@EDU Sustainable Education

Prof. CHEN Liangying
Professor, Central China Normal University, China

Dr. Zied Bouida
Assistant Professor, Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST), Kuwait

Prof. Alejandra Carboni
Professor, Faculty of Psychology, Universidad de la Repóblica, Uruguay

Mr. Oussama El Ghoul
ICT Accessibility Research Specialist, Mada Center for Assistive Technology, Qatar (Online)

Ms. ZHANG Jing
Principal, Chengdu Shuangliu District Special Education School, China

Ms. DONG Yansha
Vice Principal, Changsha Special Education School, China

Ms. ZHANG Xianlan
Research Director of Hangzhou Yang Lingzi School, China

Mr. WANG Jianguo
Teacher, Baotou Special Education School, China

Ms. Jamilah Binti Kadir
Director, SEAMEO Regional Centre for Special Educational Needs (SEAMEO SEN)

Prof. FU Wangqian
Associate Dean, Faculty of Education for Students with Special Needs, Beijing Normal University, China

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MODERATORS

Prof. Ahmed Tlili
Associate Professor, Beijing Normal University, China; Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Smart Learning Environments

Dr. WANG Chaoyi
Lecturer, College of Child Development and Education, Zhejiang Normal University, China

Opening Remarks: ALECSO Advances AI Accessibility Guidelines for Inclusive Education



Prof. Mohamed Jemni, emphasized in his opening remarks that AI is reshaping learning, education, and the design of educational systems at an unprecedented pace. However, the true measure of technological progress lies not in how sophisticated the systems become, but in how many people are empowered and how many barriers are removed as a result. He stressed that inclusivity must be built into AI from the outset, not added as an afterthought. ALECSO is advancing the release of accessibility guidelines for educational institutions and disability education, constructing a regional accessibility standards framework, developing educational resources compliant with W3C standards, and localizing relevant guidelines into Arabic, ensuring that learners with special needs are not only beneficiaries but also active participants.

Keynote Speech

From AI to Inclusive Intelligence: Global Perspectives on AI-Driven Accessibility in Education



Mr. Mario Franco, Founder and Chairman, Millennium@EDU Sustainable Education, delivered a keynote address titled "AI@EDU: From Artificial Intelligence to Inclusive Intelligence". He presented empirical research on students with disabilities, showing that generative AI significantly reduces student anxiety, provides more timely learning feedback, and offers greater support when students face language and knowledge barriers. He emphasized that AI should support learners rather than replace the learning process; for students with limited hand operation or voice input, equal communication with AI assistants can be achieved through voice control, gaze interaction, or adaptive switches. He noted that the "accessibility gap" still persists—much digital content remains inaccessible to certain groups—and must be accompanied by accessibility tools such as subtitles and reading support, as well as personalised learning solutions.



Prof. CHEN Liangying, Central China Normal University, delivered a keynote address titled "AI-Driven Assessment and Adaptive Intervention for Children with Autism". She pointed out that the incidence of autism continues to rise, with the latest CDC data in the United States reaching 1 in 31, and the population of individuals with autism in China exceeding 10 million. Given the significant individual differences among children with autism, traditional assessment and intervention methods struggle to meet diverse needs. She introduced her team's construction of a full-chain "intelligent assessment–adaptive intervention" technical system: on the assessment side, head poseestimation accuracy reaches 99.88% and physiological arousal recognition accuracy reaches 93.5%, establishing a four-dimensional learning state model of "joint attention, pleasure, arousal, and cognition"; on the intervention side, an adaptive intervention closed loop of "quantitative evaluation–path planning–activity recommendation" has been formed. She noted that related achievements have obtained medical device registration certificates, forming a solution covering the entire process of screening–assessment–intervention, and undertaking an autism screening project for nearly 1,100 children in Zhenhai District, Ningbo, with a cloud platform serving Tibet, Xinjiang, and other regions, using technology to promote educational equity.



Dr. Zied Bouida, Assistant Professor, Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST), Kuwait, delivered a keynote

address titled "Building Resilient Learning Ecosystems: Empowering Inclusive and Sustainable Education through 5G, 6G, and AI". He presented an AI system blueprint under a three-tier architecture of "learner–teacher–family": the bottom layer comprises data and standards for accessible content, user preferences, and universal learning design; the middle layer consists of AI services driven by language processing, speech processing, computer vision, and large language models; and the top layer includes applications for learners, teachers, and families such as subtitles, translation, editing support, and content adaptation. He emphasized that "universal learning design" is the core concept for building inclusive learning systems—inclusivity should not be an afterthought, but a design prerequisite.



Prof. Alejandra Carboni, Universidad de la República, delivered a keynote address titled "AI Equity in Latin America: Lessons from Uruguay". She presented the latest exploration of AI-enabled "bidirectional communication": when a teacher lectures, AI can translate speech into sign language in real time; when a student uses sign language, AI can translate it into text or speech. The real challenge is not merely achieving high-accuracy sign language recognition, but enabling natural, smooth, and continuous real-time interaction between deaf and hearing individuals—especially in content-dense classroom environments, where complex scenarios such as variations in sign language users' movements and camera occlusion must be addressed.



Mr. Oussama El Ghoul, delivered a keynote address titled "AI Accessibility in the Arab Region: Practices and Challenges". He pointed out that approximately 240 million children worldwide live with persons with disabilities, that children with disabilities are 49% more likely never to attend school than their peers, and that 96% of website homepages have detectable accessibility issues—the accessibility gap far exceeds imagination. The Mada Center is an excellence center for Arabic accessibility, helping Qatar rank first globally in the G3ict 2020 Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation (DARE) Index. He emphasized that moving education online does not automatically bring accessibility, and AI cannot fix a platform that is not designed to be accessible from the start. Implementation should follow a five-step path: "understand needs–co-design with users–pilot and improve–scale with support–continuously monitor." Technology should adapt to learners, not the other way around.



Prof. Ahmed Tlili announced that the "Joint Laboratory on Artificial Intelligence in Special Education" has been officially endorsed by the United Nations as part of the Global Dialogue on AI Governance. Established through international collaboration and involving partners from multiple countries, the laboratory will serve as a platform for advancing research, policy dialogue, technological innovation, and practical applications in AI-enabled special education. Its work will focus on developing more inclusive and accessible learning environments, strengthening international knowledge exchange, and exploring responsible approaches to the use of AI in supporting learners with special educational needs. The initiative is expected to further connect research, policy, and practice, while contributing to broader global efforts to promote educational equity, inclusion, and accessibility through responsible and human-centred AI.



Release Session: Joint Laboratory on Artificial Intelligence in Special Education (Arab Region & China)

The “Arab Region-China Joint Laboratory on Artificial Intelligence in Special Education” has been officially endorsed by the United Nations as part of the Global Dialogue on AI Governance.



Vision of the Joint Lab

To advance inclusive and equitable education for learners with special needs through artificial intelligence and innovative technologies, fostering cross-cultural collaboration and social inclusion across the Arab region and China, and beyond.

The Joint Lab aims to:

- Developing and promoting AI-driven tools and solutions for special education.
- Supporting personalised learning and development for children and youth with disabilities.
- Building cross-regional and cross-cultural partnerships to share knowledge, resources, and best practices.
- Advancing inclusive education policy and teacher training via research and innovation.

Endorsement by United Nations

The Joint Lab initiative has been endorsed by the United Nations as part of the Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

Established by the UN General Assembly, the AI Dialogue is the United Nations platform where all governments, private sectors, academia, and civil society will convene to discuss international cooperation, share best practices and lessons learned, and facilitate open, transparent, and inclusive discussions on artificial intelligence governance.

Chinese Practices: AI Exploration on the Front Lines of Special Education



Ms. ZHANG Jing, delivered a k eynote address titled "Intelligent and Inclusive Special Education for Precision Empowerment: Enabling Every Individual to Thrive in Their Own Unique Way". She noted that Shuangliu District has been designated as a national special education reform experimental zone twice, in 2015 and 2025. The school has constructed a three-dimensional progressive model of "data-driven foundation–curriculum empowerment–resource integration" for intelligent inclusive special education. The school has achieved 100% coverage of dynamic student assessment and digital profiling, with the overall efficiency of Individualised Education Plan (IEP) formulation improving by approximately 45%. Teachers have independently developed an "AI agent for medical practice teaching" and a "Shu-brocade cultural study AI agent," and opened innovation classrooms such as LEGO Little Makers and robotic dog programming, promoting differentiated development for students with special needs.



Ms. ZHANG Xianlan, delivered a keynote address titled "Digital Intelligence Empowerment: Illuminating the Growth Path of Students with Special Needs". She noted that the school has built the "Yang Ling Brain" system, in which AI automatically generates Individualised Education Plans based on students' disability types and ability levels. The school has developed an AI learning companion "Ling Xiaozhi," forming a ternary collaborative classroom model of "teacher–student–intelligent agent." In partnership with Alipay, the school has created the "Yang Ling Digital-Intelligence Bank" growth incentive system, which unobtrusively captures students' incremental progress, with digital tokens automatically accumulated and redeemed. The school has also opened an autism-specific 3+2 secondary–vocational integrated training pathway, building a dual-track training path of "data annotation + Chinese and Western pastry" from a strengths-based perspective.



Ms. DONG Yansha, delivered a keynote address titled "Precision Education: AI-Driven Innovation in the Comprehensive Competency Assessment of Students with Special Needs". She noted that the school, formerly the Changsha School for Blind Girls founded in 1908 and the Changsha School for the Blind founded in 1916, integrates education for the blind, deaf, and intellectually disabled. The school has developed a "five-dimension three-level" indicator system—5 core dimensions, 15 key points, and 40 observable and quantifiable behavioural indicators—with differentiated indicators designed for intellectually disabled, deaf, and blind students. An AI system with a "multi-subject, multi-scenario, tiered, and dynamic" evaluation mechanism has been built, forming a closed loop of "diagnosis→decision-making→evaluation→optimization," pushing evaluation from "single judgment" toward "developmental guidance."



Mr. WANG Jianguo, delivered a keynote address titled "When AI Meets 'Little J': An Evidence-Based Story of Digital Intelligence Empowering Inclusive Education in Baotou". He presented the case of "Little J," a student with multiple disabilities (developmental language disorder with ADHD). Through a dual-track assessment of "medical diagnosis + intelligent platform scales," following a five-step closed-loop path of "preliminary screening–assessment–IEP–individual training–evaluation," he constructed a four-dimensional system of "environmental optimization–specialised training–subject integration–home-school collaboration." After one year of systematic intervention, Little J's comprehensive functional score increased by 8.5%, cognitive function score rose from 13.5 to 19, effective classroom focus duration improved from less than 10 minutes to 20–25 minutes, and disruptive behaviour decreased by 85%, achieving a transformation from "bystander" to "participant."

Panel Discussion: Achieving Inclusive Education: What Can and Cannot AI Do?

The panel discussion focused on the theme of was moderated by **Dr. WANG Chaoyi**, Lecturer at College of Child Development and Education of Zhejiang Normal University, China. **Prof. Mohamed Jemni**, Director of the ICT Department at ALECSO; **Ms. Jamilah Binti Kadir**, Director of the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Special Educational Needs (SEAMEO SEN); **Prof. Ahmed Tlili**, Associate Professor at Beijing Normal University; and **Prof. FU Wangqian**, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Education for Students with Special Needs at Beijing Normal University, gathered to engage in an in-depth dialogue on the theme *"Achieving Inclusive Education: What Can and Cannot AI Do?"* The guests unanimously agreed that what AI can do is "empower"—making learning more efficient and reducing teachers' burdens; what it cannot do is replace teachers' judgment or the students' growth process. International cooperation is not an "option" but a "necessity." Prof. Mohamed Jemni quoted: "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." The "three pillars" for advancing global inclusive education in the future include: raising inclusive awareness across society; co-building and sharing open datasets and open resources; and establishing transnational, interdisciplinary, and cross-sectoral cooperation networks to avoid the imbalance of "technology first, ethics later."



Photo of Panel Discussion Session

Site Visit : The Joint Laboratory on Artificial Intelligence in Special Education (Arab Region & China)

After the parallel session, guests visited the Joint Laboratory on Artificial Intelligence in Special Education at Beijing Normal University to examine the latest achievements and demonstration applications of AI-empowered special education research. The Parallel Session on *AI for Inclusive and Sustainable Education—High-level Dialogue on Capacity Building, Equity and Special Needs* represents not only an important initiative of the 2026 Global Smart Education Conference to promote AI-empowered special education and accessible learning, but also a landmark node for deepening cooperation between the UN AI Capacity Building Partnership and the Asia-Pacific and Arab regions. As Prof. Mohamed Jemni stated: "The future of artificial intelligence in education should not be defined solely by technological possibilities, but by human values—by human dignity, and by the promise of 'leaving no one behind.'"



Photo of Site Visit Session

This parallel session was jointly moderated by Prof. Ahmed Tlili, Associate Professor, Beijing Normal University, China; Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Smart Learning Environments; Dr. WANG Chaoyi, Lecturer, College of Child Development and Education, Zhejiang Normal University, China





*The Parallel Session: AI for Inclusive and Sustainable Education—High-level Dialogue on Capacity Building, Equity and Special Needs was organised by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Joint Laboratory on Artificial Intelligence in Special Education (Arab Region & China), Smart Learning Institute, Beijing Normal University, and the Institute of Special Education, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University.

Smart Education · Distinguished Experts' Views Showcase

Human-Centred AI: A Vision for Sustainable Education



Prof. Fabrizio Hochschild, Former UN Under-Secretary-General, situates AI within the SDG framework, noting that only four years remain and SDG 4 is key to the others. UNESCO estimates that 300 million children who should be in school are not, despite the 17 goals and 169 targets of 2015. AI can extend access through video conferencing where teachers are unavailable. Yet with roughly thirty per cent unconnected, those who would benefit most risk being left behind, and systems trained on particular cultures may perpetuate bias. AI can also replace, not enhance, learning, since students relying on it retain less than those using textbooks. He warns of isolation, lost social and emotional learning, and data-centre energy. AI must be used critically: humanity must master it and direct it to those most in need.



Prof. Stephanie Marshall, Vice-President (Education) at Queen Mary University of London, argues that AI can strengthen climate, environmental and disaster modelling, and can deliver personalised learning at unprecedented scale. The opportunities are extraordinary, she observes, and their magnitude makes scrutiny all the more necessary. Citing the UN Higher Education Sustainability Initiative, she cautions that technological capability alone cannot guide action, and AI must be examined through the lenses of sustainability, human rights and equity. The governing question is therefore not what AI can do, but what it should do, for whom, and at what cost. This shift, she concludes, is critical: the purpose of AI should be human and planetary wellbeing rather than efficiency alone, and higher education institutions bear particular responsibility for holding that purpose in view.



Prof. Daniel A. Wagner, UNESCO Chair in Learning and Literacy, reviews fifty years of research on educational technology, from radio to AI: each wave promised transformation, but the evidence told a humbler story—technology improves learning only when it reinforces good teaching, support and access. Pedagogy must come before technology, since computer-assisted instruction yields small gains only when teachers integrate it into lessons. Quality matters more than access to devices: one-laptop-per-child produced little gain, and heavy computer use in wealthier countries correlates with lower scores, whereas Mexico's Telesecundaria raised rural outcomes cheaply and at scale. Learning equity is the new challenge, since roughly ninety per cent of adolescent girls in low-income countries remain offline; teacher-first applications that cut planning time and work offline offer the best prospect.



Prof. Rose Luckin, CEO of Educate Ventures Research and Professor Emerita at University College London, UK, states that AI cannot read a child's or a student's mood, motivation, history, or what that learner needs today. Emotion recognition systems can perform some of this work, she concedes, but not the whole of what a human does for a student, since such judgement is formed through sustained relationship rather than measurement. AI reasons well, yet still falls short of humans in reasoning from first principles: novel problems

expose its weaknesses quickly, and it remains poor at judging what really matters, because such judgements depend on purposes and values the system does not share. Humans must remain in the loop, since deciding what is worth doing is human work that cannot be delegated.



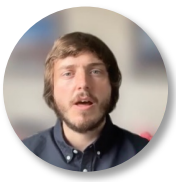
Prof. François Taddei, Co-founder and President of the Learning Planet Institute and UNESCO Chair on Learning Science, argues that education should help children build the necessary skills early, and that the educational community should redefine what a planetary baccalaureate, an engineering diploma for the planet, a doctoral degree for the planet, or a business school for the planet would involve. Such programmes require students not only to master classical skills, but also to understand that the planet has finite boundaries which humanity is approaching and must respect throughout their working lives. Education must integrate far more dimensions than the optimisation of grades or financial return—criteria designed for a world without such limits. It must optimise for sustainability, aiming to be best for the world rather than best in the world.



Prof. Dr. Ebba Ossiannilsson, CEO of Innovation for Quality and ICDE Board Member, presented on "Purpose-Driven Higher Education: Human Wisdom, Trusted AI and Sustainable Futures." She argued that the future of higher education is not a question of keeping pace with AI, but of ensuring that human intelligence is guided by wisdom, human flourishing, purpose and responsibility. Drawing on the OECD human flourishing framework, she made flourishing education's ultimate purpose and the SDGs its societal impact. She identified on-demand learning as the catalyst of a new paradigm, enabled by open education, OER and open pedagogy, and enriched by micro-credentials, stackable learning and lifelong learning. Her framework casts trusted AI as technological partner and leadership through uncertainty as governance. Universities, she stressed, should cultivate what AI cannot replace, keeping education human-centred, inclusive, scalable and sustainable.



Prof. Daniel Burgos, Professor at the International University of La Rioja and UNESCO Chair on eLearning, warns that AI's implications for education and society demand extreme care. Where some people know how to use it and others do not, he observes, a divide opens up. It appears to concern digital tools, but in fact becomes social exclusion: a person who cannot book a medical appointment online, receives no answer by telephone, and cannot travel to the surgery in person is effectively excluded, however capable that person might otherwise be. Distributing devices will not close the gap, because exclusion operates through ordinary services that increasingly presuppose digital competence. Homeless people, the elderly, children and other disadvantaged groups bear this cost first, intended or not. A divide, he concludes, is a divide.



Dr. Jordan Allison, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Educational Computing Research and Senior Lecturer in Computer Science at the University of Gloucestershire, UK, argues that the fundamental challenge generative AI poses to educational research is epistemological: it is reshaping how knowledge is produced, validated, communicated and trusted. Drawing on the recently developed RAISE framework—Reporting AI Studies in Education—he contends that it offers more than a reporting checklist, providing instead a foundation for maintaining epistemic integrity in increasingly AI-mediated research environments.

Plenary Session: Rethinking Education in the Age of Intelligence

The transformation of education in the age of intelligence entails far more than an upgrade in the use of technology; it calls for a profound rethinking of educational governance, the purposes of education, and the ways in which teaching and learning are organised. Artificial intelligence is reshaping how knowledge is accessed and created, how teaching and assessment are conducted, how educational institutions operate, and how learners are supported and developed. At the same time, these changes raise fundamental questions about how education can remain human-centred, support the holistic development of learners, and respond to broader social needs. The session examined how education systems can navigate technological change while rethinking their missions, structures, and approaches to learning in an increasingly intelligent society.



Photo of Plenary Session: Rethinking Education in the Age of Intelligence

SPEAKERS

Hon. Prof. Jacques Fame Ndongo
Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, Cameroon

Mr. QIAO Sheng
Deputy Director, Tianjin Municipal Education Commission; Vice Chairman, Professional Committee of Education Administration of the China Education Association; Expert Committee Member, Basic Education Evaluation of the Ministry of Education, China

Mr. GONG Ke
Executive Director, Chinese Institute for the

New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Strategies, China

Prof. CHENG Kai-ming
Emeritus Professor, The University of Hong Kong; Former Vice-President and Former Dean of the Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong, China

MODERATOR

Ms. Torunn Gjelsvik
Secretary General, International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)

Rethinking Education in the Age of Intelligence



During the opening remarks session**, Hon. Prof. Jacques Fame Ndongo**, Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, Cameroon, observed that, confronted with such challenges as the massification of higher education, quality enhancement, and cost containment, Cameroon is advancing its 'University 4.0' initiative to upgrade the digital infrastructure of its universities and underpin the development of higher education. He stressed that Cameroon intends to explore pathways for transforming its higher education system through dedicated seminars and dialogues, and will continue to deepen cooperation with international partners to advance ethical, responsible, and human-centered artificial intelligence—leveraging technology to support the digital transformation and sustainable development of education.

Keynote Speech



Mr. QIAO Sheng, Deputy Director, Tianjin Municipal Education Commission, introduced Tianjin's '1+3' policy framework for the digital transformation of education, which drives reform across three key domains—curriculum, teachers, and assessment. Tianjin is building a progressively layered smart-education environment comprising a foundation layer, an application layer, and an ecosystem layer, moving digital education from isolated point applications toward systemic reconfiguration. He stated that, going forward, Tianjin will continue to focus on safeguarding students' creative thinking, building teachers' capacity for human–AI collaboration, bridging the digital divide, and strengthening data security and ethical governance, thereby harnessing AI to modernize educational governance.



Mr. GONG Ke, Executive Director, Chinese Institute for the New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Strategies, stated that higher education in the AI era carries a dual mission: first, to adapt to the age of artificial intelligence by drawing on AI to empower teaching, research, and governance; and second, to steer the healthy development of AI by educating people who combine professional competence with a sense of social responsibility. He warned that without the second mission; education would lose its direction. In his view, the essence of education remains the growth of the person. Higher education should break down the boundaries between disciplines, institutions, and industry, reform its curricula and modes of assessment, and cultivate a more open educational ecosystem.



Prof. CHENG Kai-ming, Emeritus Professor, The University of Hong Kong; Former Vice-President and Former Dean of the Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong, observed that AI's impact on students' development depends not on the technology itself but on how education guides students to understand and use it correctly. He emphasized that in the AI era the teacher's role is not diminished but rather shifts toward that of a learning facilitator and growth supporter—helping students grasp the boundaries of technology, strengthen their judgment, and cultivate humanistic literacy throughout the learning process. He added that education should not restrict students from using AI; rather, it should create authentic problems and practical contexts that guide them, through their engagement with the technology, to develop self-directed learning, creativity, and a sense of responsibility.

Artificial intelligence is profoundly reshaping the landscape of education, yet the foundation of education remains the growth of the person. As technology evolves at an ever-quickening pace, education must hold fast to its essential purpose of nurturing people, clarify its values and direction, and ensure that artificial intelligence truly serves students' development, teachers' growth, and the transformation of education systems.



This Plenary session was moderated by Ms. Torunn Gjelsvik, Secretary General, International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE).

*The Plenary Session: Rethinking Education in the Age of Intelligence was organised by Global Smart Education Network (GSENet)

Parallel Session:
personalised Learning at Scale

AI is creating new opportunities to deliver personalised learning and support at scale, enabling education systems to respond more effectively to the diverse needs, interests, and potential of individual learners. The session explored how AI-enabled diagnostics, adaptive learning pathways, real-time feedback, and targeted interventions can support learning and optimise cognitive load, while promoting students' holistic development across academic achievement, well-being, digital competencies, and social-emotional skills. Discussions also examined how AI can support career guidance, help students identify and develop their interests and strengths, and foster creativity, critical thinking, self-regulation, and resilience.

Alongside these opportunities, participants addressed critical issues related to data privacy, algorithmic fairness, the responsible use of student data, and the evolving role of teachers and teacher–student relationships in the age of generative AI. Moving beyond individual classrooms, the session considered how personalised learning can be implemented at scale through digital education platforms, shared resources, cross-school collaboration, curriculum redesign, innovative teaching approaches, and stronger teacher digital competencies. Overall, the discussions highlighted the importance of coordinated action among policymakers, schools, teachers, students, families, and technology providers in building supportive learning ecosystems in which every learner has the opportunity to develop their potential and pursue a more personalised learning journey.



Photo of Parallel Session: Personalised Learning at Scale

SPEAKERS

Hon. Ms. Faatamaalii Jenny Lauano
Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Education and Culture, Samoa

Mr. Shai Reshef
Founder and President, University of the People, USA

Prof. Fred Paas
Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands; Professor, UNSW Sydney, Australia; Editor-in-Chief, Educational Psychology Review

Prof. LI Ping
Dean, School of Humanities and Social Science, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, China

Mr. Peter Polozhevets
Executive Director, "Investment to the Future" Charitable Foundation, Russian Federation

Ms. ZHANG Siqin
Head, High School Curriculum and Services Center, Yuanfudao; Director of High School Curriculum Development across All Subjects, China

Ms. MIAO Yaqin
Former Deputy Director, Changsha Municipal Education Bureau; Expert Committee Member, Research Center for Education Informatization Strategy, Ministry of Education (Beijing), China

Mr. XIANG Haigang
Secretary of the CPC Committee and Director, Education Bureau of Shangcheng District, Hangzhou, China

Ms. DOU Guimei
Principal, Tsinghua University Primary School, China

Mr. CHEN Shilian
Member of the Leading Party Members Group, Education Bureau of Wuhou District, Chengdu, Sichuan Province; Director, Education Examination Center, China

Mrs. YANG Chenghui
Founder of Yuanfudao's Innovative Mathematical Thinking Programme, China

Mr. REN Kun
Lead Teacher of Junior High School Physics, Yuanfudao, China

Ms. HA Ruxue
Head, High School Mathematics Curriculum Product Center, Yuanfudao, China

Dr. WANG Jiuju
Associate Research Professor, Department of Translational Medicine, Peking University Sixth Hospital; Member of a Professional Committee, China Medicine Education Association; Member of the Cognitive Neuropsychology Expert Group, China

Prof. LI Feng
Professor, Department of Educational Information Technology, East China Normal University; Secretary General, Professional Committee for Information Technology Education in Primary and Secondary Schools, Chinese Society of Education, China

Mr. LUO Renhua
Principal, Tenglong School, Honggutan District, Nanchang, China

Ms. WANG Caiyun
Vice Principal in Charge of Teaching and Learning, Minhou Road Primary School, Hexi District, Tianjin, China

Ms. BAI Lin
Distinguished High School Teacher, Yuanfudao; Former High School Mathematics Teacher at a Leading Public School in Beijing, China

MODERATORS

Prof. FU Qian
Professor, School of Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Mr. LI Bo
Teacher Collaborator with CCTV News; CCTV Top 10 Innovative Teaching Pioneer of the Year, China

Opening Remarks: Strategic Vision and the Future of AI in Higher Education



Hon. Ms. Faatamaalii Jenny Lauano, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Samoa, stated in her address that AI brings new opportunities and challenges to education, and that teachers need to pay closer attention to how technology is applied and to the cultivation of students' capabilities such as critical thinking. She pointed out that countries should ground their efforts in national realities, exploring the appropriate use of AI on campuses and in classrooms, unlocking technology's positive value while supporting students' genuine growth and nurturing fundamental human qualities such as kindness, respect and care for others.



Mr. Shai Reshef, Founder and President, University of the People, USA, stated that smart education must be inclusive and equitable because education is a basic human right rather than a privilege for a few—his tuition-free, accredited online university now serves over 170,000 students from more than 200 countries and territories, including tens of thousands of refugees and displaced persons. He described three ways the university integrates AI—personalizing learning at scale, automating operations to keep costs low, and empowering rather than replacing human instructors—and emphasized that, delivered equitably, AI is the engine of educational expansion rather than a threat. He urged the community to use AI to open the gates of education and build a university without walls, so that no one is left behind.

Thematic Speech: Staying People-Centred – the Philosophy of Personalised Growth

Prof. Fred Paas, Professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands and UNSW Sydney in Australia, and Editor-in-Chief of Educational Psychology Review, delivered a report titled "Cognitive Fitness in the Age of AI." He noted that while AI can reduce task load and improve immediate performance, it may also weaken learners' independent thinking and learning ability if it replaces key cognitive processes such as reasoning, retrieval, evaluation and problem-solving. He stressed that AI should serve more as a "coach" or a "gym"—through prompting, guidance and gradually fading support—to preserve necessary cognitive exercise for students and promote genuine learning and capability development.

Prof. LI Ping, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, China, delivered a report titled "Cognitive Neuroscience and Education Research in the Era of AI." From the perspective of educational neuroscience, he explored how AI affects learning processes, introducing research that draws on multimodal data such as EEG and eye-tracking to study real classroom learning, individual cognitive differences, and the mechanisms of AI teachers versus human teachers. He noted that learners differ in working memory, attention and social-emotional needs, and that AI offers new possibilities for understanding and supporting individual learning more precisely—calling for further integration of cognitive neuroscience, education science and AI to explore diverse human–AI collaboration models that promote students' well-rounded and personalised development.

Mr. Peter Polozhevets, Executive Director of the "Investment to the Future" Charitable Foundation of the Russian Federation, delivered a report titled "*AI Literacy as a Resource for Future Readiness.*" Around AI literacy, he proposed the concept of "calibrated trust"—the degree of reliance on AI outputs should match the reliability of the results, the nature of the task and the potential consequences. He stressed the need to build measurable and cultivable AI literacy frameworks that, while improving technical capabilities, also value human autonomy, responsibility and ethical judgement, enabling learners to better understand and harness AI in a rapidly changing environment.

Ms. ZHANG Siqin, Head of the High School Curriculum and Services Center at Yuanfudao and Director of High School Curriculum Development across All Subjects, delivered a report titled "*Developing Curriculum Products with the Rigour of Scientific Research.*" She pointed out that, facing divergent student levels, changing examination requirements and the uneven distribution of high-quality educational resources, curriculum development should be advanced with a research mindset. Based on curriculum standards, the national college entrance examination evaluation system and years of accumulated learning data, her team analyses high-frequency points of error, identifies students' genuine weaknesses, and uses AI to form a closed learning loop of "learn–practise–correct–re-practise," matching more targeted learning content to different students. She stressed that AI's key value lies in making personalised learning solutions scalable, so that more students can access educational support suited to their needs.






Ms. MIAO Yaqin, Former Deputy Director of the Changsha Municipal Education Bureau and Expert Committee Member of the Research Center for Education Informatization Strategy, Ministry of Education (Beijing), delivered a report titled "*From Standardised Education to the Personalised Learning Paradigm: AI-Empowered Personalised Student Growth*." She noted that AI is driving education from standardised cultivation toward personalised teaching according to aptitude, but personalisation does not mean rejecting standardisation—rather, differences should be respected and potential developed on the basis of a shared bottom line of education. Drawing on Changsha's practice, she proposed precise identification, precise provision, precise evaluation and precise intervention, connecting teaching, evaluation and home–school support through students' dynamic digital profiles to advance personalised teaching at scale.

Mr. XIANG Haigang, Secretary of the CPC Committee and Director of the Education Bureau of Shangcheng District, Hangzhou, delivered a report titled "Context-Driven, AI for Good: Shangcheng's Practice of AI-Empowered Personalised Student Growth." He pointed out that AI-empowered education should stay people-centred and oriented toward good—shifting from efficiency first to student development, from technology-driven to scenario-driven, and from knowledge transmission to whole-person education. He introduced Shangcheng District's application scenarios for student growth, teacher development, regional governance and education services supported by the "Education Brain," stressing that technology must respond to real problems in education so that every student is seen and supported, achieving fairer and warmer personalised growth.

Ms. DOU Guimei, Principal of Tsinghua University Primary School, delivered a report titled "*'Rose Whispers': Reconstructing a New Learning Ecology in the Chinese Language Classroom*." Focusing on questions of knowledge authenticity, disciplinary professionalism and human–AI collaborative thinking in AI application, she shared the school's development of "Rose Whispers," a vertical subject model for Chinese language learning. Built on curriculum standards, textbook research and frontline teaching experience, the model creates a dedicated subject knowledge engine that empowers teachers' teaching, research, training and evaluation, and supports classroom scenario creation, inquiry-based learning and teaching optimisation. She stressed that AI should be a partner supporting teachers' professional growth and students' thinking, and cannot replace teachers' educational value or the humanistic experience of the Chinese language subject.

Mr. CHEN Shilian, Member of the Leading Party Members Group of the Education Bureau of Wuhou District, Chengdu, and Director of the Education Examination Center, delivered a report titled "I*ntegrating In-Class and Out-of-Class Learning: A New Paradigm of Personalised Education Empowered by Digital Intelligence*." He introduced Wuhou District's practice of advancing personalised education along the lines of "smart learning in class, connected learning beyond class, and adaptive learning," continuously collecting and analysing students' in-class and out-of-class learning data through big-data precision teaching, classroom behaviour analysis and digital homework to provide personalised learning reports and resource support. He noted that the district is actively exploring student growth portfolios and intelligent learning companions, pushing AI from an auxiliary tool toward a growth partner.







Outcome Releases: Exploring New Pathways for Personalised Teaching at Scale

Mr. YANG Chenghui, Founder of Yuanfudao's Innovative Mathematical Thinking Programme, released "Scaling Personalisation: How AI Resolves the Dilemma of Online Education." He pointed out that large-scale online classes have long faced the dilemma of balancing scale and personalisation. By applying AI to content production, learning process recording, essay marking, pronunciation correction and after-class Q&A, the capacity for personalised content provision can be improved, and students' learning difficulties and needs identified in time. He noted that AI cannot replace the warmth of teachers, but it can amplify teachers' professional capabilities, giving personalised teaching the chance to benefit more students.

Mr. REN Kun, Lead Teacher of Junior High School Physics at Yuanfudao, released "AI-Empowered Online Practice for Cultivating Core Competencies in Junior High School Physics." He pointed out that core competencies form through genuine thinking processes, and that AI's key value lies in making students' thinking processes, error causes and capability trajectories more visible through process-data collection, analysis and immediate feedback. Drawing on online physics teaching practice, he introduced AI applications in classroom interaction, learning diagnosis, teaching decision-making and growth evaluation, stressing the use of process data for precise intervention to help students not only

"learn" but gradually develop the ability to "learn how to learn."

Ms. HA Ruxue, Head of the High School Mathematics Curriculum Product Center at Yuanfudao, released the "AI-Powered Personalised Learning and Targeted Instruction in Senior High School: A Research Report." She pointed out that senior high students commonly "practise a lot but not necessarily accurately," and that AI offers new possibilities for combining personalisation, quality and scale. Based on learning behaviour data and teaching experience, her team diagnoses students' genuine weaknesses, generates personalised learning reports, and further explores "targeted courses" that match students at different levels with more focused content and training. She noted that the key to personalised learning is ensuring every student is truly seen and matched, directing limited time toward the problems that most need solving.







Panel Discussion: Exploring the Boundaries and Possibilities of personalised Teaching at Scale

Under the theme "How Can personalised Growth Truly Happen in the AI Era? The Possibilities and Limits of Large-Scale personalised Teaching," the panel discussion—joined by **Dr. WANG Jiuju** of Peking University Sixth Hospital, **Prof. LI Feng** of East China Normal University, **Mr. LUO Renhua**, Principal of Tenglong School in Nanchang, **Ms. WANG Caiyun**, Vice Principal of Minhou Road Primary School in Tianjin, and **Ms. BAI Lin**, Distinguished High School Teacher at Yuanfudao—explored, from the perspectives of cognition and emotion, school governance, teacher development, classroom teaching and human–AI collaboration, how AI can identify student differences and support personalised learning, as well as the practical challenges and boundaries of personalised teaching at scale.



Photo of the Panel Discussion

The session offered a multidimensional answer to how personalised growth can truly happen in the AI era: technology should act as a coach rather than a substitute for thinking, AI literacy frameworks must keep learners autonomous and responsible, and data should make every student visible. From cognitive neuroscience to classroom practice, speakers converged on a people-centred path in which AI amplifies teachers' professional capabilities and supports every student's full and individual development.

This parallel session was jointly moderated by Prof. FU Qian, Professor, School of Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, China; Mr. LI Bo, Teacher Collaborator with CCTV News; CCTV Top 10 Innovative Teaching Pioneer of the Year, China





*The Parallel Session: Personalised Learning at Scale was organised by the National Engineering Research Center of Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology; the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (UNESCO MGIEP); the School of Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University; and Yuanfudao.

Parallel Session:
AI and Research Frontiers [Editors' Forum]

AI is opening new frontiers in educational research and reshaping how knowledge is produced, evaluated, and communicated. Bringing together editors-in-chief of leading academic journals and distinguished education researchers from China and abroad, the session examined the profound changes AI is bringing to research practices, academic publishing, scholarly assessment, and emerging learning and cognitive paradigms. Discussions explored the evolving role of generative AI across the research process, from literature discovery and data analysis to academic writing, peer review, and knowledge dissemination. Particular attention was given to the ethical boundaries of human–AI collaboration, shifts in research methodologies and paradigms, new approaches to scholarly evaluation and peer review, and the competencies researchers need in an AI-enabled research environment. The session also highlighted the importance of safeguarding academic integrity, scholarly responsibility, and the core values of research while embracing the opportunities created by AI. Overall, the dialogue provided a forward-looking perspective on how educational research and academic publishing may evolve in the age of AI.



Photo of Parallel Session: AI and Research Frontiers [Editors' Forum]

SPEAKERS

Prof. LIU Baocun
Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Comparative Education Review; Dean, Institute of International and Comparative Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Dr. Luci Pangrazio
Editor, Learning, Media and Technology; Associate Professor, Centre for Research for Educational Impact (REDI), Deakin University, Australia

Prof. GUO Jiong
President, e-Education Research; Dean, College of Educational Technology, Northwest Normal University, China

Prof. CHEN Xiangdong
Professor, East China Normal University, China

Dr. Linda Corrin
Co-Editor, Australasian Journal of Educational Technology; Associate Professor, Deakin University, Australia

Prof. TAN Mingjie
Editor-in-Chief, Modern Distance Education Research, China

Prof. CEN Hongxia
Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Distance Education, China

Prof. JIA Yuchao
Editor-in-Chief, Chinese Journal of Distance Education, China

Dr. WANG Shuai
Executive Editor, Distance Education; Associate Professor, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China

Dr. LI Tao
Director of the Editorial Office, Journal of Educational Studies, China

Dr. Jürgen Rudolph
Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching, Singapore

Prof. Santosh Panda
Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Learning for Development; Professor of Distance Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University, India

Prof. XU Huifu
Executive Editor-in-Chief, Open Education Research, China

Dr. SONG Lingqing
Director of the Editorial Office, China Educational Technology; Senior Editor, China

Prof. Henk Huijser
Co-Editor, Australasian Journal of Educational Technology; Professor of Educational Technology and Learning and Teaching Academic Lead, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

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MODERATORS

Prof. XU Guangtao
Professor, Jing Hengyi School of Education, Hangzhou Normal University, China

Mr. HUANG Wei
Director of New Media and Senior Editor, China Higher Education, China

Prof. Cristina Conati
Editor-in-Chief, International Journal of AI in Education; Professor, University of British Columbia, Canada

Dr. MU Jianya
Deputy Director, Periodicals Editorial Department and Associate Senior Editor, People's Education Press; Director of the Editorial Department, Education Sciences in China; Contributing Editor, Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method, China

Keynote Speech: From Research Norms to Human–AI Symbiosis – Responding to Change in Educational Research

Prof. LIU Baocun, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Comparative Education Review and Dean of the Institute of International and Comparative Education at Beijing Normal University, delivered a speech titled "*Developing Norms for the Use of GenAI in Research: Global Landscape, Key Concerns, and Implications from China,*" systematically reviewing the global landscape of norms for AI participation in research. He noted that the international community is forming an evolving normative system around AI authorship and subject status, grant applications and peer review, use disclosure and transparency, data security and privacy protection, and content verification and reproducibility. AI does not possess subject status in a legal or academic sense and should not be listed as a paper's author; ultimate responsibility for research output must rest with human researchers. When unpublished manuscripts, student data and sensitive information are involved, confidentiality and authorisation requirements must be strictly observed.

Dr. Luci Pangrazio, Editor of Learning, Media and Technology and Associate Professor at the Centre for Research for Educational Impact (REDI) at Deakin University, Australia, delivered a speech titled "*Being an Editor on the AI Frontier,*" analysing the impact of generative AI on academic writing and the publishing ecosystem from the realities of a journal editor's work. She pointed out that AI has lowered the writing barrier for non-native English-speaking researchers, but has not automatically produced higher-quality papers—instead, editors and reviewers now shoulder more work in literature checking, data judgement and fact verification. Facing rising submission volumes, growing AI text patterns and "publish-or-perish" pressure, the academic community needs to rethink the evaluation standards for research quality, public value, copyright and privacy, and academic success.

Prof. GUO Jiong, President of e-Education Research and Dean of the College of Educational Technology at Northwest Normal University, delivered a speech titled "*Learning Paradigms in the Context of Human–AI Symbiosis,*" focusing on learning mechanisms and paradigms in human–AI symbiosis. She noted that AI is bringing changes such as the normalisation of cognitive offloading, the anthropomorphisation of interaction partners and the decentralisation of knowledge production, and that educational research should move further from "how technology empowers teaching" to "how learning happens in human–AI symbiosis." Learning should retain necessary memorisation and practice while moving toward AI-supported active navigation and value creation; learners also need to develop new capabilities such as questioning AI, identifying bias, evaluating information and arguing independently.







Thematic Session I – The Landscape of Educational Research: Identifying New Risks of Technological Intervention

Prof. CHEN Xiangdong of East China Normal University, in his speech "No Plagiarism, Yet Disciplined: An Educational Examination of 'Reverse Distillation' in Generative AI," introduced the concept of "reverse distillation," alerting the academic community to a risk more insidious than plagiarism: knowledge compressed and probabilistically processed by AI may reshape human cognitive structures. Because AI expression is fluent, fast and low-friction, researchers may unconsciously adopt high-probability expressive pathways, leading to representational narrowing, monitoring failure and cognitive assimilation. In response, educational research should shift from merely detecting text to protecting cognition, jointly safeguarding independent human thinking across teaching interventions, AI system design and research evaluation.

Dr. Linda Corrin, Co-Editor of the Australasian Journal of Educational Technology and Associate Professor at Deakin University, Australia, drawing on her journal experience, discussed how AI is changing and expanding the research agenda in education. She noted that questions such as whether AI can be credited as an author, how the use of AI-generated content should be disclosed, whether peer review can draw on AI, and how AI can support learning design and research processes are becoming new research topics. However, some AI-generated submissions still show concept stacking, literature splicing, insufficient research grounding and weak analysis. She stressed that technology can improve language and figure presentation, but cannot replace genuine research, deep analysis, reliable data and the responsibility of human researchers.

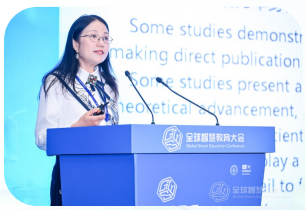
Prof. TAN Mingjie, Editor-in-Chief of Modern Distance Education Research, analysed the ethical risks brought by generative AI from the perspective of academic publishing. He pointed out that AI may trigger direct academic misconduct such as plagiarism, fabricated content and fictitious references, and also creates new difficulties for author responsibility, privacy protection and peer-review confidentiality. Academic publishing norms should clearly define the stages where AI can assist and the boundaries it must not cross, adhering in particular to three principles: human authors bear ultimate responsibility, key facts must be verified by humans, and substantive use of AI must be fully disclosed.

Prof. CEN Hongxia, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Distance Education, discussed theoretical contribution and argumentative responsibility in speculative educational research. She argued that AI "can" assist in literature synthesis, concept organisation, framework drafting and language polishing, and can help researchers generate candidate propositions, examine argumentative structures and compare alternatives—but it cannot independently undertake judgments of educational value, judgments of theoretical contribution, judgments of evidential qualification, or academic responsibility. The deeper AI's participation, the heavier the researcher's responsibilities for verification, judgment and defence; speculative research must safeguard both its intellectual and its responsible character.









Thematic Session II – Emerging Topics in Educational Research: From Chasing Hotspots to Exploring Frontiers

Prof. JIA Yuchao, Editor-in-Chief of Chinese Journal of Distance Education, reminded researchers to distinguish "research hotspots" from genuine "academic frontiers." He pointed out that discussions around specific tools, prompts and classroom applications have practical significance but may not determine the discipline's future direction. Frontier questions truly worth long-term pursuit include how to understand AI agency, what "knowing" and "learning" mean in the age of AI, whether technology is widening the digital divide, and what educational assessment should actually measure. Researchers should not merely follow the turnover of technical buzzwords, but seek new breakthroughs in foundational questions.

Dr. WANG Shuai, Executive Editor of Distance Education and Associate Professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, drawing on research on open educational resources and AI-IoT classrooms, discussed the conditions for moving from "access to resources" to "high-quality classrooms." Research shows that open educational resources can help students earn more course credits, but resources alone do not automatically translate into high-quality learning; in classrooms, school support and teacher motivation directly affect deep technology integration, and whether teachers have time to learn and absorb technology is particularly critical. He stressed that for technological intervention to genuinely promote learning engagement, it must be grounded in high-quality instructional design and sustained support for teachers.

Dr. LI Tao, Director of the Editorial Office of the Journal of Educational Studies, elaborated on human agency in human–AI collaborative education in the AI age. He pointed out that over-reliance on AI may lead to the degeneration of deep thinking, weakened independent judgment, the flattening of knowledge, and humans being defined by technology. Whether one adopts an instrumental, limited-agency, distributed-agency or triadic-symbiotic understanding, it must be maintained that AI at this stage does not possess full human agency: value judgments, personality cultivation and spiritual exchange in education are ultimately the responsibility of humans. Future education should clarify the division of labour among teachers, learners and AI, developing auxiliary AI aimed at human growth.

Dr. Jürgen Rudolph, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching, Singapore, proposed responding to the technological hype and "AI-omnipotence" narratives with critical AI literacy. He argued that AI literacy should not be merely about whether one can use tools, but should also include an understanding of the political economy, social power, ecological environment and labour structures behind the technology—guarding against the reduction of complex social problems to purely technical ones. Education should cultivate learners who can recognise AI's limitations, maintain independent judgment, reflect, and take public responsibility, rather than merely training skilled tool operators.






Thematic Session III – New Missions of Educational Research: Responding to Practice and Knowledge Autonomy

Prof. Santosh Panda, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Learning for Development and Professor of Distance Education at Indira Gandhi National Open University, India, pointed out that AI can assist with literature reviews, data coding, interview material organisation, qualitative analysis and report structure optimisation, but cannot replace original ideas, unique contextual understanding and independent academic judgment. Facing the high concentration of global AI platforms and knowledge expression, developing countries should pay special attention to knowledge autonomy, avoiding having their own educational experiences and problems pre-shaped by external platforms; researchers, editors and reviewers must retain the ability to verify independently, think independently and overrule AI judgments.

Prof. XU Huifu, Executive Editor-in-Chief of Open Education Research, reflected on the value of educational research starting from the question "what has educational research gained?" He argued that educational knowledge is highly contextual, and that research faces contradictions between the whole and the part, between methodological sophistication and intellectual mediocrity, and between data and practical experience. Educational research should not exist merely for projects and papers: "good educational research" must be redefined, the links between research and policy and between research and practice must be opened up, and researchers must keep asking why educational research exists and how it can genuinely advance education.

Dr. SONG Lingqing, Director of the Editorial Office of China Educational Technology, stated that building an independent knowledge system for Chinese education is an important mission for the discipline in responding to the era's call for building a leading country in education. Education journals should not only disseminate existing achievements, but should also actively participate in knowledge production—by building branded columns and special features, focusing on real educational problems, organising exchanges of views and innovating modes of dissemination—so as to transform China's educational experience into theoretical achievements with explanatory and communicative power, becoming important infrastructure connecting national educational practice, academic originality and public communication.

Prof. Henk Huijser, Co-Editor of the Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, focusing on the cognitive offloading risks brought by generative AI, proposed three learning-design interventions: "pre-prompt framing," "post-prompt reflection" and "comparative evaluation." He noted that AI can help learners take the first step in complex tasks, but may also lead them to accept the first seemingly complete answer too early, skipping problem definition, solution exploration and independent judgment. Students, therefore, must not become mere "prompt engineers," but should remain genuine learners who can pose problems, compare pathways, make choices and take responsibility for their output.

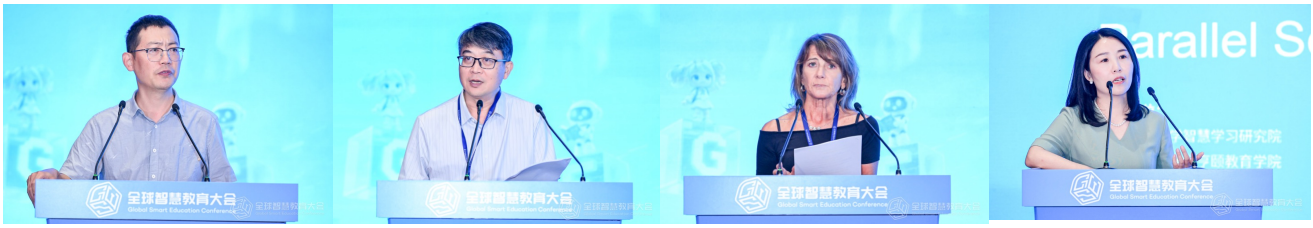






AI is reshaping research tools, the speed of knowledge production and the forms of educational practice—but educational research in the intelligent age must not slide into techno-centrism. Facing new technological conditions, educational research needs all the more to safeguard human judgment, intellectual originality, research responsibility and learner agency, maintaining its responsiveness to the real world and real people. While answering "what AI can do," the community must keep asking "why education exists, why research matters, and how human value is to be upheld."

This parallel session was jointly moderated by Prof. XU Guangtao, Professor, Jing Hengyi School of Education, Hangzhou Normal University, China; Mr. HUANG Wei, Director of New Media and Senior Editor, China Higher Education, China; Prof. Cristina Conati, Editor-in-Chief, International Journal of AI in Education; Professor, University of British Columbia, Canada; Dr. MU Jianya, Deputy Director, Periodicals Editorial Department and Associate Senior Editor, People's Education Press; Director of the Editorial Department, Education Sciences in China; Contributing Editor, Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method, China



*The Parallel Session: AI and Research Frontiers [Editors' Forum] was organised by the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University; the Jing Hengyi School of Education, Hangzhou Normal University; and Xuexi.cn | Qiangguo Education.

Seminar on AI-Empowered School Education Innovation and Development

Under the theme of “AI-Empowered Innovation and Development in School Education,” the seminar was held in conjunction with the 2026 Annual Conference of the Innovative Experiment Project for Leapfrog Development of Basic Education. It brought together experts and scholars from China, Ethiopia, the Netherlands and other countries, as well as education administrators, school principals, teachers and education technology representatives from across China. Drawing on recent practices and experiences, participants examined how AI is reshaping classroom teaching and learning, personalised support for student development, teachers’ digital competencies, school governance and the development of smart education ecosystems. Discussions highlighted the transition from the use of AI as a supporting tool towards more collaborative models of human–AI interaction in education, while identifying effective and scalable practices and exploring new pathways for school transformation. By connecting research, policy and practice, the seminar contributed practical insights and experience from China to the broader global dialogue on the high-quality development of smart education.





Photo of Seminar on AI-Empowered School Education Innovation and Development

SPEAKERS

Prof. YU Shengquan
Executive Director, Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Prof. SONG Huan
Dean, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University; Director, Graduate Education Center for Professional Degrees in Education; Deputy Director, Center for Teacher Education Research, Beijing Normal University; Zhongying Young Scholar, China

Prof. Admasu Tsegaye
Professor, Addis Ababa University; Former President, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Mr. RAO Tao
Chief Editor, Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, China

Prof. LU Yu
Professor, Deputy Dean, School of Educational Technology, Beijing Normal University, China

Prof. GUO Hongyong
Secretary of the CPC Committee, Langfang Normal University; Director, Hebei Key Laboratory of Child Cognition and Educational digitalisation, China

Mr. ZHANG Chengtao
President, Basic Education Business Unit, Huawei, China

Prof. Lampros Stergioulas
UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence and Data Science for Society; Professor of Data Science, The Hague University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands

Mr. WANG Pengfei
Vice Principal, The Second High School Attached to Beijing Normal University; Secretary of the CPC Committee and Executive Principal, Beijing Normal University Changping Affiliated School, China

Ms. LI Yuzhen
Vice Principal, Beijing No. 20 High School, China

Mr. ZUO Peng
Principal, Beijing Jianhua Experimental School, China

Ms. WANG Yuehong
Principal, Nanyou Primary School, Nanshan District, Shenzhen, China

Ms. NIE Lianghong
Principal, Zhiyuan Primary School Affiliated to Changsha Normal University, China

Ms. WANG Jing
Head of Teacher Development Department, Beijing Haidian No. 2 Experimental Primary School, China

Mr. MA Yaoguo
Principal, Yuyuantan Middle School, Beijing Haidian Teachers Training College Education Group, China

Mr. WANG Yifei
Principal, Xiangnan Primary School, Nanshan District, Shenzhen, China

Ms. WEI Yuexiang
Principal, Yindu Zijing Junior High School Education Group, Chengdu Hi-tech Industrial Development Zone; Secretary of the CPC Branch and Principal, Yindu Zijing Junior High School, Chengdu Hi-tech Industrial Development Zone, China

Ms. SUN Min
Principal, Jingshi Experimental Primary School, Tianqiao District, Jinan, China

Ms. HAN Yunan
Head of Science and Technology Innovation Education, Yuxin School Affiliated to Capital Normal University; Leading Teacher in Artificial Intelligence, Haidian District, China

MODERATORS

Mr. ZHANG Xiang
Director, Office of Cooperation and Development, Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Ms. GUO Jiali
Deputy Director, Office of Cooperation and Development, Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Ms. LI Xiaoqing
Director, Office of Subject Education, Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Dr. CUI Jingjing
Director, Learning Sciences Laboratory, Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Ms. LIU Weina
Deputy Director, Subject Education Laboratory, Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Opening Remarks: Looking Back to Grasp the Era's Question of Human–AI Collaboration



Prof. YU Shengquan, Executive Director of the Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education at Beijing Normal University, noted in his opening address that smart education is at a critical juncture of deepening advancement: the national education digitalisation strategic action is proceeding in full swing, and "AI + education" is moving from concept to practice and from pilot to normalisation. AI is beginning to embed itself deeply in the teaching and learning process as a "cognitive participant," driving a structural reshaping of the relationship among education, technology and talent. He reviewed the more than two decades of exploration of the "Innovative Experiment for Leapfrog Development of Basic Education" project, noting that it has always resonated with the national education informatization strategy—evolving from technical assistance to deep integration and on to today's human–AI collaboration, taking root in hundreds of experimental schools nationwide and accumulating rich practical wisdom. Looking toward the "15th Five-Year Plan" cycle of educational development, he stressed that making good use of AI to expand human cognitive boundaries and stimulate higher-order thinking—so that technology truly becomes a booster for people's all-round development—is the important mission of school education in the intelligent age.

Thematic Speech: Building Cognitive Frameworks for AI-Empowered Education from Multiple Perspectives

Prof. SONG Huan, Dean of the Faculty of Education at Beijing Normal University, in his report "AI-Empowered Transformation in Teaching and Innovation in Teaching Research," pointed out that generative AI is profoundly changing classroom ecology and China's unique teaching-research system. Surveys show, however, that many teachers still mainly use AI to "one-click generate" lesson plans, while the proportion of higher-level applications such as data analysis, teaching evaluation and teaching reflection remains low. He emphasised that good "AI + teaching" should aim at competencies rather than knowledge memorisation, play a cognitively supportive role rather than replace students' thinking, and be collaborative rather than one-way output. He warned in particular that much AI-assisted teaching still serves lecture-based instruction, with relatively insufficient support for deep inquiry—risking the "efficient" reinforcement of traditional teaching rather than its transformation. At the teaching-research level, he advocated "evidence-based teaching research," calling for empirical research evidence to be incorporated into lesson preparation, classroom observation and discussion, driving teaching research from experience-based to data-driven.

Prof. YU Shengquan, in his report "Chunked Connections in Human–AI Collaborative Intelligence: A Key Mechanism for Effective Cognitive Offloading," proposed that one of the most significant social phenomena of the intelligent age is "cognitive offloading"—individuals delegating part of their cognitive activities to external intelligent systems, forming composite cognitive subjects in which human and machine intelligence participate together. He noted that AI is moving from "tool compensation" toward "structural migration of cognitive processes," and argued that the core principle of effective cognitive offloading lies in maintaining balance and building effective connections between internal cognitive networks and external intelligent networks. He cautioned that cognitive offloading shows a clear Matthew effect and K-shaped divergence: those with well-structured knowledge may grow stronger with use, while those with weak cognitive foundations may become increasingly dependent on algorithms and trapped in information cocoons. He concluded that future competition will not be between humans and machines, but between different levels of human–AI collaborative capability—and that humanity should move from being "owners of knowledge" to "creators of meaning."

Prof. Admasu Tsegaye, Professor and Former President of Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, noted that Ethiopia is positioning AI as a national development strategy tool, hoping to improve education, agriculture, healthcare and public services through AI. Although the numbers of primary school students and universities have increased significantly nationwide, challenges such as huge student populations, teacher shortages and urban–rural gaps remain prominent. He stressed that technology alone cannot solve educational challenges—development must remain people-centred and grounded in excellent teachers and ethical principles. He called for building an "AI-ready" education system and looked forward to more partnerships with Chinese universities in the field of AI.



Launch Ceremony of the *Exploring Artificial Intelligence in Education Book Series*

The "Exploring Artificial Intelligence in Education Book Series," compiled by the Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education of Beijing Normal University and published by Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, distils the team's years of theoretical exploration and practical accumulation in AI education. **Mr. RAO Tao**, Chief Editor of Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, noted that the series originates from real questions and real experience from more than two decades of frontline classrooms, featuring three distinctive qualities: "rooted in practice, focused on scenarios, and understandable and usable." Covering themes such as AI-enhanced subject-teacher competencies, AI-assisted instructional design, precision homework and AI-empowered educational evaluation, the

series comes with concrete teaching cases, lesson plans and code resources, aiming to help educators use AI more efficiently and scientifically and to move teaching from technical assistance toward intelligent collaboration. **Prof. LU Yu** Deputy Dean of the School of Educational Technology of Beijing Normal University, speaking as an author representative, introduced the volume "Enhancing AI Literacy for Subject Teachers," which provides complete course cases and supporting resources for AI general education for teachers of different school stages and subjects.



Prof. GUO Hongyong, Secretary of the CPC Committee of Langfang Normal University and Director of the Hebei Key Laboratory of Child Cognition and Educational digitalisation, shared how the university, relying on the laboratory, has built a smart education ecosystem of "three-teacher collaboration, dual-student growth, and dual-platform support," achieving initial results in professional curriculum development, teaching innovation and student competitions. At the same time, he noted that local normal universities still face difficulties in advancing smart education—the distance between "recognising" and "truly implementing," the tension between technology and human-centredness, and the contradiction between resources and needs. The university will continue to deepen this model to cultivate new-era teachers who can command intelligent technologies and lead future classrooms.

Mr. ZHANG Chengtao, President, Basic Education Business Unit, Huawei, China, introduced Huawei's dual-wheel strategy in AI education: "AI for Education" focuses on using AI to improve core education businesses such as teaching, management, evaluation and services, while "Education for AI" concerns how the education system helps every student learn AI. For primary and secondary schools, Huawei has designed a tiered, progressive AI general-education curriculum system for grades one to twelve, together with an experimental teaching platform and digital and intelligent computing infrastructure; each course comes with lesson plans, teaching materials and assignments so that teachers can teach directly in class. He noted that Huawei has invested continuously in education for over a decade and now cooperates with education departments of multiple countries and numerous universities, and looks forward to working with more education clients and ecosystem partners to provide better services for the education industry.

Prof. Lampros Stergioulas, UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence and Data Science for Society and Professor of Data Science at The Hague University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands, pointed out in his report that while AI brings positive value, it also generates significant risks such as misinformation, bias, privacy threats and digital inequality. He introduced the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence adopted in 2021, stressing core values including the protection of human rights and dignity, transparency, fairness, and continued human oversight of AI. A common principle of AI governance across countries, he noted, is that safety and fairness are best embedded in AI system design from the outset, rather than remedied after problems occur. He emphasised that the real challenge now is how to enable humans to use AI better—data and AI literacy for all must be cultivated starting from primary school—and called for a global AI cooperation ecosystem and transnational platforms, arguing that upholding equity and people-centredness and improving governance are tasks that must be accelerated now.







Practice Sharing Theme I – New Scenarios

The practice sharing session focused on three themes—New Scenarios, New Spaces and New Curriculum—with principals and teachers from across China presenting authentic explorations of AI in school education.

Mr. WANG Pengfei, Vice Principal of The Second High School Attached to Beijing Normal University and Secretary of the CPC Committee and Executive Principal of Beijing Normal University Changping Affiliated School, shared the construction experience of the "Future Learning Space Station," which uses multi-screen collaboration and dot-matrix-pen accompanying data collection to transform students' thinking processes into teachable, intervenable resources.

Ms. LI Yuzhen, Vice Principal of Beijing No. 20 High School, shared his school's practice of cultivating students' higher-order thinking by innovatively building a "teacher–student–machine" five-stage closed-loop classroom paradigm, insisting that "students think first, then dialogue with AI."

Mr. ZUO Peng, Principal of Beijing Jianhua Experimental School, shared the school's practice of using digital technology to empower generative assessment in classroom teaching, moving assessment from vague to precise and upgrading from "teaching–learning–assessment consistency" to "teaching–learning–assessment–discussion consistency."

Ms. WANG Yuehong, Principal of Nanyou Primary School in Shenzhen's Nanshan District, emphasised that curriculum culture is not designed but grows in classrooms, and that learning should move from virtual tasks toward real social meaning.

Ms. NIE Lianghong, Principal of Zhiyuan Primary School Affiliated to Changsha Normal University, introduced how the school has built a digital twin campus that connects data silos and provides unified data support for the evaluation of teachers and students.











Practice Sharing Theme II – New Spaces

Ms. WANG Jing, Head of the Teacher Development Department of Beijing Haidian No. 2 Experimental Primary School, demonstrated AI's catalytic role in aesthetic education, interdisciplinary projects and the smart farm, stressing that "technology should step back so that people can come to the fore."

Mr. MA Yaoguo, Principal of Yuyuantan Middle School of the Beijing Haidian Teachers Training College Education Group, emphasised that AI application must be grounded in a school's own culture and educational goals; centring on the three dimensions of "smart management, smart teaching research and smart learning," the school has further broken the boundaries of space, time and subject, helping every child discover their own growth points.

Mr. WANG Yifei, Principal of Xiangnan Primary School in Shenzhen's Nanshan District, introduced how the school has built a "1+N" all-subject reading model through spatial reconstruction, digital empowerment and model navigation.







Practice Sharing Theme III – New Curriculum

Ms. WEI Yuexiang, Principal of Yindu Zijing Junior High School Education Group in the Chengdu Hi-tech Industrial Development Zone, introduced how the school transformed underground space into a smart learning laboratory and built a three-stage interdisciplinary curriculum system around the theme of "exploring the mushroom kingdom."

Ms. SUN Min, Principal of Jingshi Experimental Primary School in Jinan's Tianqiao District, introduced the school's exploration of standardised, evidence-based project-based learning pathways with the EPBL platform.

Ms. HAN Yunan, Head of Science and Technology Innovation Education at Yuxin School Affiliated to Capital Normal University, introduced how the school, using a primary–junior–senior integrated STEM curriculum system as the vehicle, empowers students through AI to develop scientific spirit, engineering thinking and social responsibility through trial, error and iteration.



Achievement Showcase and Award Ceremony

At the achievement showcase, award-winning teachers shared practical cases spanning history, Chinese language, mathematics, biology, chemistry, and military and physical education, answering through authentic frontline classroom exploration the core question of "how AI, once it enters teaching, can truly serve human development."



Photos of the Award Ceremony

From cognitive offloading to evidence-based teaching research, from national development strategies to county-level classrooms, the seminar traced how AI is moving from a technical aid to a human–AI collaborative force in school education. The cases shared showed that meaningful AI integration must remain people-centred—supporting higher-order thinking rather than replacing it, and embedding technology in real teaching scenarios rather than reinforcing traditional instruction. The leapfrog development project's two decades of experience, together with the newly launched book series, offers a practical foundation for scaling these explorations in the coming development cycle.

This parallel session was moderated by Mr. ZHANG Xiang, Director, Office of Cooperation and Development, Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University, China; Ms. GUO Jialil, Deputy Director, Office of Cooperation and Development, Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University, China; Ms. LI Xiaoqing, Director, Office of Subject Education, Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University, China; Dr. CUI Jingjing, Director, Learning Sciences Laboratory, Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University, China; Ms. LIU Weina, Deputy Director, Subject Education Laboratory, Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University, China.



*The Parallel Session: Seminar on AI-Empowered School Education Innovation and Development was organised by the Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, Beijing Normal University (AICFE); the Joint Laboratory for Mobile Learning, Ministry of Education–China Mobile Communications Corporation; and the Modern Educational Technology Institute, Beijing Normal University.

Parallel Session:
AI for Early Childhood Care and Education

As China advances high-quality and inclusive early childhood care and education alongside the digital transformation of education, strengthening early childhood educators' capacity to understand and use artificial intelligence has become an increasingly important priority. The session brought together experts, scholars, policymakers and practitioners from the Ministry of Education, universities, research institutions, local education authorities and frontline kindergartens to examine the professional development of early childhood educators in the age of AI. Drawing on UNESCO's AI Competency Framework for Teachers, discussions addressed AI awareness and the evolving roles of educators, ethical and safe uses of AI, foundational knowledge and practical skills, and the integration of AI into teaching and learning. Perspectives from policy guidance, regional initiatives, kindergarten leadership and teacher practice highlighted practical pathways for technology-enabled professional development. Through the exchange of policies, experiences and practices, the session explored how AI can strengthen teacher capacity, support innovation in early childhood education, and contribute to more inclusive, high-quality and future-oriented early childhood care and education.



Photo of Parallel Session: AI for Early Childhood Care and Education

SPEAKERS

Mr. XIAO Hang
Deputy Director, Center for Educational Technology and Resource Development, Ministry of Education, China

Mr. ZHU Shengying
Secretary of the CPC Committee and Chairman, Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, China

Ms. LI Ahui
Director, Kaiyue Early Childhood Education Group, Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Prof. FENG Wanzhen
Professor, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Prof. HONG Tian
Associate Professor, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China

Mr. XIA Guoliang
Education Inspector of Zhejiang Province; President, Xiaoshan District Education Society, Hangzhou, China

Ms. LI Li
Member of the CPC Committee and Deputy Director, Social Affairs Bureau, Rizhao Economic and Technological Development Zone, Shandong Province, China

Ms. JIA Yuzhi
Principal, Futai Kindergarten, Anding District, Dingxi, Gansu Province, China

Ms. HUANG Shuijuan
Education Inspector, Beigan Kindergarten, Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Ms. XU Ali
Principal, Xiangyang Kindergarten, Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Ms. QIN Xia
Principal, Yinchuan Road Kindergarten, Rizhao Economic and Technological Development Zone, Shandong Province, China

Ms. HE Wenqin
Principal, Liupanshui Experimental Kindergarten, Guizhou Province, China

Ms. SHEN Liping
Principal, Shangde Kindergarten, Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Ms. XU Wei
Principal, Jinhaitang Kindergarten, Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Ms. SU Guilan
Principal, Tiexi Experimental Kindergarten, Dongsheng District, Ordos, Inner Mongolia, China

Ms. WANG Guoqin
Principal, Bole Kindergarten, Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Ms. ZHANG Yan
Principal, Fengdan Licheng Kindergarten, Ganjingzi District, Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

Ms. LIU Mingxia
Executive Principal, Chengzhi Kindergarten Affiliated to Tsinghua University Primary School, China

Ms. ZHANG Rongni
Principal, Shiji Jiajing Kindergarten, Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Ms. DONG Yan
Director, Training Center, College of Child Development and Education, Zhejiang Normal University, China

Principals include: Ms. XU Qin, Ms. WANG Wei, Ms. SHAO Lifang, Ms. SHAN Chengli, Ms. ZHOU Ping, Ms. SUN Li, Ms. LIU Shuangshuang, Ms. ZHAO Xia

MODERATORS

Prof. CHEN Guangju
Former Vice President, Beijing Normal University, China

Mr. JIANG Yu
Member of the CPC Committee, Deputy General Manager and Senior Editor, Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, China

Prof. ZHAO Yilun
Professor, Zhejiang Normal University, China

Mr. YAO Guiping
Director, Higher Education and Vocational Education Publishing Center, Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, China

Ms. LUO Peizhen
President, Early Childhood Education Branch, Center for Local Textbooks for Basic Education and Children's Education Publishing, China

Opening Remarks: Anchoring a New Direction for AI-Enabled Early Childhood Education



Mr. XIAO Hang, Deputy Director of the Center for Educational Technology and Resource Development of the Ministry of Education, pointed out in his address that AI is profoundly reshaping the education ecosystem, and that early childhood education, as the foundation of the national education system, must actively embrace technological change. He emphasised that this parallel session is both an active implementation of a series of national policy directives and an important practical step to bring AI through all stages of schooling, empowering children's cognitive development and habit formation.



Mr. ZHU Shengying, Chairman of Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, introduced how Beijing Normal University Publishing Group and Xiaoshan District of Hangzhou have jointly advanced digital and intelligent early childhood education, gradually forming a clear pathway of "platform building–scenario application–process streamlining–outcome transformation," and building a digital and intelligent early childhood education community platform centred on Kaiyue Kindergarten in Xiaoshan District, so that high-quality resources can flow across urban–rural and regional boundaries.

Outcome Release: The Digital and Intelligent Early Childhood Education Community Delivers Interim Results

At the outcome release session, the Digital and Intelligent Early Childhood Education Community presented its phased achievements of the past year: first, the 2026 Best Practices of Smart Education (Early Childhood Education) were officially announced, with 15 cases receiving awards; second, the community appointed four advisory experts, 24 practice experts and 20 specially-appointed experts; and third, it released the nation's first practice outcome focused on AI application by kindergarten teachers—the AI Application Guide for Early Childhood Teachers, produced by the Xiaoshan District Digital and Intelligent Early Childhood Education Community.



Photo of the Outcome Release

Thematic Speech: Advancing Theoretical Construction and Practical Pathways in Tandem



Prof. FENG Wanzhen, Faculty of Education of Beijing Normal University, delivered a speech titled "Professional Development of Kindergarten Teachers in the Digital and Intelligent Age," systematically reviewing the theoretical framework and development pathways for the reshaping of kindergarten teachers' roles amid the digital and intelligent transformation.



Prof. HONG Tian, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, delivered a speech titled "AI-Empowered Professional Development for Kindergarten Teachers: Supporting Child Development and Innovating Educational Practice from a Human–AI Collaboration Perspective," exploring how AI technologies can effectively support child development and innovation in educational practice from a human–AI collaboration perspective.

Regional Case Sharing and Principals' Report: From Regional Breakthroughs to Frontline Cultivation

Mr. XIA Guoliang, Education Inspector of Zhejiang Province and President of the Xiaoshan District Education Society of Hangzhou, introduced the "1+10+N" tiered advancement mechanism—led by one pilot kindergarten, with ten demonstration kindergartens achieving breakthroughs in curriculum, assessment and teacher development, and driving the coordinated development of N practice kindergartens.

Ms. LI Li, Member of the CPC Committee and Deputy Director of the Social Affairs Bureau of the Rizhao Economic and Technological Development Zone in Shandong Province, shared the case "Regional Innovation in Building an Education Consortium for Digital Intelligence-Empowered Kindergarten–Family–Community Collaboration." He introduced how the zone, building on its industrial strengths, has constructed a "six-in-one" education pattern involving government, enterprises, universities, kindergartens, families and society, achieving "one platform managing the whole region and one set of data running through the entire process" through the "1+N" education consortium model and the "four-module linkage" platform.

Subsequently, more than ten principals from seven provinces and cities across China shared diverse explorations and practical achievements in AI-empowered teacher professional development: Ms. JIA Yuzhi, Ms. HUANG Shuijuan, Ms. XU Ali, Ms. HE Wenqin, Ms. SHEN Liping, Ms. XU Wei, etc., spanning play observation, character development, mathematics teaching, fairy-tale curricula, and home–kindergarten collaboration.

Prof. ZHAO Yilun of Zhejiang Normal University, **Ms. WANG Wei**, Principal of Chengxiang Kindergarten of Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou, and **Ms. XU Qin**, Principal of the District-level Government Kindergarten of Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, joined the expert panel discussion and offered commentary.







The parallel session provided rich theoretical support and practical reference for advancing the professional development of kindergarten teachers in the age of AI, and laid a solid foundation for deeper cooperation within the Digital and Intelligent Early Childhood Education Community. Going forward, the community will continue to deepen its work in resource sharing, collaborative teaching research and model innovation, contributing to a more equitable, inclusive and intelligent early childhood education ecosystem.

This parallel session was moderated by Prof. CHEN Guangju, Former Vice President, Beijing Normal University, China; Mr. JIANG Yu, Member of the CPC Committee, Deputy General Manager and Senior Editor, Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, China; Prof. ZHAO Yilun, Professor, Zhejiang Normal University, China; Mr. YAO Guiping, Director, Higher Education and Vocational Education Publishing Center, Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, China; Ms. LUO Peizhen, President, Early Childhood Education Branch, Center for Local Textbooks for Basic Education and Children's Education Publishing, China.



* The Parallel Session: AI for Early Childhood Care and Education was organised by Beijing Normal University Publishing Group; the National Engineering Research Center of Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology; and Shushan Guangyuan Kindergarten, Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou, under the guidance of the Zhejiang Provincial Early Childhood Teacher Training Center.

Parallel Session:
AI and STEM Education

In the age of AI, science and STEM education are being reimagined in terms of both their goals and approaches. Bringing together university scholars from around the world, local education administrators, frontline school representatives, and industry researchers, the session examined the knowledge, competencies, and learning experiences students need for an AI-enabled future. Discussions explored how AI can support scientific inquiry, experimentation, project-based learning, and interdisciplinary STEM education, while fostering AI literacy, scientific literacy, computational thinking, creativity, and innovation. Participants also shared research findings, technological tools, and practical cases related to new approaches to assessment, teacher professional development, and the meaningful integration of AI into classroom practice. At the system level, the session considered how AI and STEM education can be advanced across regions and schools through scalable models that connect policy and practice, pilot initiatives and school-level implementation, and disciplinary learning with interdisciplinary innovation. Overall, the discussions highlighted the importance of human–AI collaboration in strengthening the quality, relevance, and future orientation of STEM education.



Photo of Parallel Session: AI and STEM Education

SPEAKERS

Dr. Kessara Amornvuthivorn
Centre Director, SEAMEO STEM-ED

Mr. David Petty
Education Program Manager, App Inventor Foundation, USA

Prof. CAO Xiaoming
Professor, Shenzhen University; Director, Intelligent Education Research Center; Member, Information Technology Teaching Professional Committee, Basic Education Teaching Guidance Specialty Committee, Ministry of Education, China

Prof. Hiroaki Ogata
Professor, Kyoto University, Japan

Prof. Kyungmee Lee
Professor, Department of Education, College of Education, Seoul National University, Korea

Mr. YAO Yongan
Deputy Director, Education Bureau of Yuhang District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Mr. ZHOU Xiaoqing
Director, Division of Basic Education, Changsha Municipal Education Bureau, China

Mr. LUO Guangxiong
Director, Office of the Admissions and Examinations Committee, Education Bureau of Wenjiang District, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

Prof. Panrasee Ritthipravat
Associate Professor, Mahidol University, Thailand

Ms. HOU Aiqin
Vice President, Fengtai Academy of Educational Sciences, Beijing, China

Ms. ZHANG Wei
Director, Library of Haidian Academy of Educational Sciences, Beijing, China

Dr. Vuk Vujović
Assistant Professor, MB University, Serbia

Ms. CHEN Shaokao
Secretary of the CPC Committee, Xinning Middle School, Taishan, Guangdong Province, China

Dr. Fahd Ali Raza
Head, Education Research Cluster, Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation (APU), Malaysia

Mr. CAI Shuo
Vice Principal, Beijing No. 5 High School Education Group, China

Ms. LUO Xizhuoma
Dean, Primary Education Literacy Innovation Institute, Yuanfudao; Founder, New Bilingual Education, China

MODERATORS

Prof. WANG Cixiao
Associate Professor, School of Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Dr. ZHANG Xiangling
Beijing Institute of Education, China

Opening Remarks



During the opening remarks session, **Dr. Kessara Amornvuthivorn**, Centre Director of the SEAMEO STEM-ED, stated that amid rapid technological iteration, education should return to the essence of nurturing people and hold fast to its core mission. She pointed out that AI is a powerful assistant to teachers but cannot replace teachers' professional judgement; educators should be vigilant about the "capability gap" and distinguish between the external performance enabled by tools and students' genuine abilities. She also advocated using project-based learning to connect schools with communities, safeguarding the trust between teachers and students, and holding fast to the cultivation of character and values.

Thematic Speech: Tools, Platforms, Data Infrastructure and Classroom Realities in International Perspective

Mr. David Petty, Education Program Manager at the App Inventor Foundation, USA, and a global expert in youth AI and computational thinking education, delivered a thematic report titled "App Inventor & AI in Education." He argued that STEM is interdisciplinary teaching and learning, emphasising that computing is a creative human activity. MIT App Inventor, as a free and open-source block-based programming platform, upholds the principles of constructionism, self-efficacy and computational action, encouraging students to create works that solve real community problems. He proposed a four-quadrant framework for AI education, stressing that AI education must not be confined to teaching tool operation—it must balance the two dimensions of "learning with AI" and "learning about AI itself," with ethics first.

Prof. CAO Xiaoming, Professor at Shenzhen University, Director of the Intelligent Education Research Center, and Member of the Information Technology Teaching Professional Committee of the Basic Education Teaching Guidance Specialty Committee of the Ministry of Education, delivered a thematic report on "Building a System for the Integrated Cultivation of Innovative AI Talent: Framework and Practice." He reviewed the practical difficulties facing AI education in Chinese primary and secondary schools—insufficient class hours, structural teacher shortages, poor articulation between school stages, inadequate technical environments and inter-regional and inter-school gaps—and distilled four major blockages: goals, curriculum, assessment and ecosystem. He proposed a "three-stage, six-dimension" model: vertically, three cultivation levels—general, advanced and top-notch innovative—spanning all school stages from kindergarten to university; horizontally, six dimensions covering goals, competencies, content, textbooks, assessment and resources. He advocated building a collaborative university–government–enterprise–school ecosystem and developing supporting digital textbooks and teaching resources to resolve frontline implementation difficulties.

Prof. Hiroaki Ogata of Kyoto University, Japan, focused on digital learning infrastructure, arguing for evidence-driven learning analytics systems: by collecting full-process learning data such as students' reading, answering and group collaboration, schools can build learning record repositories and analytics dashboards that visualise and inform judgments about student learning behaviour, precisely supporting people-centred, personalised intelligent education. Using an English-writing AI chatbot as an example, he noted that AI tools can only avoid over-rewriting

students' original expression—and truly fit classroom scenarios and serve frontline teaching—when they are iteratively optimised with local classroom teaching data.

Prof. Kyungmee Lee of the Department of Education at Seoul National University, Korea, analysed the practical obstacles to bringing AI into real classrooms. She identified six "gatekeepers" in real classrooms: account permissions, network environments, hardware devices, software platform defects, AI's own performance, and the unpredictable human and situational factors of classrooms. She pointed out that even with full equipment and completed teacher training, a smooth AI teaching experience does not arrive automatically—and reminded the industry not to simply attribute every practical problem to shortcomings in teachers' competence. There is no universal solution for AI-empowered classrooms; the complexity of the classroom ecosystem itself must be fully acknowledged.



Regional Development Report: Localising AI + STEM Education

Mr. YAO Yongan, Deputy Director of the Education Bureau of Yuhang District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, introduced the district's integrated exploration of the "Liangzhu cultural lineage and digital engine." Yuhang has invested special funds to build laboratories and innovation spaces, and has set up a four-tier curriculum system of "basic popularisation–interest stimulation–capability development–innovation practice"; drawing on local historical and cultural resources such as the Liangzhu ancient city and its water conservancy system, it has developed big-science-education themed courses and created a "15-minute youth science education circle." Relying on the smart education platform, the district has digitalised the entire chain of teaching, management and assessment, exploring pathways for the early identification and cultivation of top-notch science and innovation talent.

Mr. ZHOU Xiaoqing, Director of the Division of Basic Education at the Changsha Municipal Education Bureau, introduced Changsha's achievements in building AI-empowered new educational scenarios. The city has built large numbers of smart campuses and smart classrooms and a municipal smart education cloud platform aggregating city-wide education big data; it has integrated AI into the implementation of the five domains of education, creating diverse scenarios such as red study tours, smart playgrounds and digital aesthetic education; intelligent systems support comprehensive student quality assessment and smart early warning for campus and food safety; and the city has improved mechanisms for cultivating teachers' digital literacy, offering tiered AI general-education courses in primary and secondary schools and building school–enterprise collaborative practice channels.

Mr. LUO Guangxiong, Director of the Office of the Admissions and Examinations Committee at the Education Bureau of Wenjiang District, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, introduced Wenjiang's practice of empowering high-quality basic education development with AI. The district

has promoted AI general-education courses in every school and built an evidence-based teaching-research mechanism that uses classroom data analysis to move teaching research from experience-based to evidence-driven; it has created "one school, one brand" distinctive AI application scenarios, built a smart education governance system, and explored process-based, developmental student assessment. He argued that AI is a teacher's assistant and a student's learning companion—technology's value lies in making education warmer—and called for breaking down barriers between school stages to build an integrated, spiralling talent-cultivation chain.

Prof. Panrasee Ritthipravat, Associate Professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering at Mahidol University, Thailand, shared Thailand's experience in transforming STEM project-based learning. She argued that education should shift from "training students to answer questions" to "training students to create solutions." In the AI era, a teaching pathway of "exploration and experience first, conceptual explanation second, and creative practice last" better stimulates curiosity: starting from technology experiences such as deepfakes and object recognition, students learn to weigh pros and cons, and then build devices to solve real problems such as community waste management—turning knowledge into genuine creativity.

Ms. HOU Aiqin, Vice President of the Fengtai Academy of Educational Sciences in Beijing, shared Fengtai's regional exploration of AI-empowered STEM education. Relying on local industrial resources, the district has built a youth AI innovation academy with government–school–enterprise–research collaboration and a full-stage curriculum chain of "primary enlightenment–junior foundation–senior empowerment–university articulation"; in partnership with museums and research institutes, it conducts museum–school cooperation and dual-mentor programmes, carrying out project-based learning around real local issues such as Liangshui River treatment, pollen monitoring and wetland carbon cycles; and it has established a STEM education incubation system that upholds an evaluation philosophy tolerant of failure, valuing the protection of students' curiosity and sense of social responsibility.

Ms. ZHANG Wei, Director of the Library of the Haidian Academy of Educational Sciences in Beijing, introduced innovative practice in smart library services. Haidian has created the AI digital librarian "Xiaoyue," upgrading the library from a mere book-storage space into a future learning centre covering knowledge recommendation, themed reading courses, virtual–physical blended spaces, research literature mining and cultural experiences; through district–school collaboration, it provides specialised resource support for the cultivation of top-notch innovative talent, expanding the library's educational value in informal learning.



School Practice Report: Multi-Actor Exploration of Human–AI Collaborative Education



Dr. Vuk Vujović, Assistant Professor at MB University, Serbia, shared the STEM talent-cultivation practice of a small-scale school. He argued that a small system need not wait for complete hardware before starting STEM education: competitions can serve as an entry point for interest, AI can lower the barriers to programming and simulation verification to broaden student participation, and competition achievements can attract industry resources to co-build shared laboratories. He noted that his school, though small, has cultivated multiple students who went on to pursue STEM degrees at top overseas universities—proof that small systems have their own distinctive advantages.



Ms. CHEN Shaokao, Secretary of the CPC Committee of Xinning Middle School in Taishan, Guangdong Province, shared the smart teaching practice of a county-level junior high school. Facing the resource constraints of a county region, the school proposed building a "teacher–student–AI" triadic human–machine community and a "Huile Education" philosophy system, establishing an internally regenerative training model led by seed teachers, implementing differentiated "one subject, one model" classroom models, building maker and innovation spaces, and insisting on a practical-tool orientation—enabling county-level schools to use AI as a lever for overtaking on a new track.



Dr. Fahd Ali Raza, Head of the Education Research Cluster at Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation (APU), Malaysia, focused on why university AI policies fail at the point of implementation. Surveys show that while most students already use AI, only a minority are aware of their institution's AI policy, and very few proactively disclose their AI use; over half of teachers lack confidence in evaluating AI-generated content and handling ethical issues. He argued that institutions should not simply add new policy documents, but should focus on building teachers' professional capacity to identify, judge and verify AI outputs, establish regularised AI-use declaration mechanisms, and evaluate policy effectiveness through monitorable indicators.



Mr. CAI Shuo, Vice Principal of the Beijing No. 5 High School Education Group, analysed the group's explorations and difficulties in integrating AI into teaching. Grounded in real teaching pain points, the schools use learning data to optimise lesson preparation before class; in class, AI serves as a tool for making thinking visible, guiding students through a complete thinking chain of "questioning–probing–evaluating–critiquing"; after class, a school knowledge base enables precise Q&A. The group is exploring an ecosystem of on-campus agent clusters in whichstudents, teachers and administrators each have dedicated agents—with the ultimate goal of cultivating not people who can use AI, but new-era individuals who can think independently and create autonomously.



Ms. LUO Xizhuoma, Dean of the Primary Education Literacy Innovation Institute at Yuanfudao and Founder of New Bilingual Education, proposed a new paradigm for STEM education in bilingual settings. She argued that language is not merely a tool for communication but a carrier of thinking, and that bilingual learning and scientific inquiry can grow together; AI-enabled companion learning partners—exemplified by the "AI Plant Laboratory"—integrate language acquisition, scientific inquiry and thinking training in one, using technology to lower the cost of high-quality personalised education so that more children can access high-quality learning companionship.

The session brought together outstanding practice samples from around the world, and participants reached a consensus: AI brings major opportunities to science and STEM education, but technology cannot replace the essence of education. Looking ahead, coordinated efforts among governments, universities, enterprises and schools are needed to hold fast to the fundamentals of nurturing people, attach importance to ethics and evidence, strengthen project-based learning, narrow the capability gap, and jointly cultivate innovative talent for the future.

This parallel session was jointly moderated by Prof. WANG Cixiao, Associate Professor, School of Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, China; Dr. ZHANG Xiangling, Beijing Institute of Education, China





*The Parallel Session: AI and STEM Education was organised by the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education; the UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED); the SEAMEO Regional Centre for STEM Education (SEAMEO STEM-ED); the School of Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University; and the National Engineering Research Center of Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology.

Plenary Session: Technology-Enabled Ecosystems for Smart Education

The development of smart education is moving beyond the deployment of isolated technologies towards a more systemic transformation that integrates knowledge organisation, educational practice, and ecosystem building. The session examined how artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies can be more deeply embedded in teaching, learning, governance, and educational services through authentic application scenarios. Discussions highlighted the importance of structuring and activating educational knowledge, connecting technological innovation with real educational needs, and strengthening collaboration among schools, universities, governments, research institutions, and industry. Particular attention was given to how technology can support the development of open, interconnected, and sustainable smart education ecosystems, enabling innovation to move from individual applications towards broader institutional and system-level transformation.



Photo of Plenary Session: Technology-Enabled Ecosystems for Smart Education

SPEAKERS

Prof. XU Bin
Researcher and Doctoral Supervisor, Department of Computer Science and Technology, Tsinghua University; Scientist and Co-Founder, Zhipu AI, China

Mr. SHU Peidong
Deputy Director-General, Department of Education of Zhejiang Province, China

Mr. CHEN Emil
Vice President, NetDragon Websoft; Vice Dean, Smart Learning Institute, Beijing Normal University, China

MODERATOR

Prof. Mohamed Jemni
Director, ICT Department at the ALECSO



Prof. XU Bin, Researcher and Doctoral Supervisor in the Department of Computer Science and Technology at Tsinghua University, recipient of a national talent program, and Scientist and Co-Founder of Zhipu AI, argued that the development of smart education is inseparable from artificial intelligence, and that for AI to truly serve education the first imperative is to represent, organise, and apply the knowledge embedded in teaching and learning in a standardized manner. He noted that, through knowledge standardization, knowledge graphing, and intelligent content generation, artificial intelligence can transform static knowledge into personalised learning content for individual learners, thereby providing the technological underpinning for an open, intelligent, and sustainably developing smart-education ecosystem.



Mr. SHU Peidong, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Education of Zhejiang Province, introduced Zhejiang's efforts to advance the national education digitalisation strategy, accelerate the integration of intelligent technologies across all elements of education, throughout the entire process, and in every scenario, and strive to build a fairer, higher-quality, and more dynamic new ecosystem for smart education. He stated that Zhejiang, guided by the principles of learner-centered education, human–AI collaboration, 'application first,' and collaborative innovation, is embedding artificial intelligence throughout teaching, learning, assessment, and management—enabling teachers to become learning designers and growth facilitators, and students to become active learners and creative innovators.



Mr. CHEN Emil, Vice President of NetDragon Websoft and Vice Dean of the Smart Learning Institute at Beijing Normal University, presented NetDragon's exploration of new, technology-supported pathways for smart education built around its 'AI employees' and the 'Open-Q' ecosystem. He stated that, in the face of such challenges as fragmented AI tools, insufficient collaboration, high content-production costs, and rising demands for data security and compliance, NetDragon will continue to deepen international cooperation and provide low-cost, compliant, and scalable smart-education solutions, sharing China's smart-education experience with global partners for joint development.



Website: 66.99.com



This plenary session was moderated by Prof. Mohamed Jemni, Director, ICT Department at the ALECSO.

*The Plenary Session: Technology-Enabled Ecosystems for Smart Education was organised by Global Smart Education Network (GSENet)

Parallel Session:
Towards Smart Education Ecosystems

The transition from digital transformation to smart education represents a broader shift towards more connected, adaptive, and integrated education systems. Bringing together representatives of education authorities, university scholars, research experts, and industry leaders from different countries and regions, the session examined the systemic transformation required to advance smart education in the age of AI. Discussions focused on digital infrastructure, public platforms, data systems, emerging technologies, and regional practices, while exploring how technological innovation can be aligned with changes in teaching and learning, education governance, and institutional organisation. Participants also considered strategies for narrowing digital divides across urban and rural areas, regions, and different groups of learners, as well as approaches to monitoring and evaluating the development and impact of smart education. Particular attention was given to ecosystem building, ethical governance, and collaboration among education, technology, and talent development. Overall, the session highlighted pathways for moving beyond digitalisation towards more inclusive, sustainable, and innovative smart education ecosystems.



Photo of Parallel Session: Towards Smart Education Ecosystems

SPEAKERS

Hon. Dr. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon
Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research, Mauritius

Hon. Prof. Stella Christie
Vice Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Technology, Indonesia

Mr. REN Changshan
Director, Division of Education Informatization and Cybersecurity, Department of Science, Technology and Informatization, Ministry of Education, China

Mr. CHEN Ming
Deputy Director-General, Department of Education of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China

Prof. TANG Ruikang
Vice President (in Charge of Daily Administrative Operations), Hangzhou Normal University, China

Dr. Joshua Polchar
Analyst, Directorate for Education and Skills, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), France

Mr. Daniel LAI
Director, Coolthink@JC Programme; Director, JC GoAI Programme, Hong Kong, China

Dr. Indira Ochoa Carrasco
Director of Educational Digital Transformation Projects, Coordination of Open University, Educational Innovation and Distance Education (CUAIEED), National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Mexico

Prof. YANG Xianmin
Dean, School of Smart Education, Jiangsu Normal University; Executive Deputy Director, Jiangsu Engineering Research Center for Educational Informatization, China

Ms. REN Pingping
Deputy Secretary of the CPC Committee and Senior Vice President, iFLYTEK, China

Mr. LIU Chang
Founder, Chairman and CEO, 17 Education & Technology Group, China

Mr. XIAO Fangming
Secretary of the CPC Committee and Director, Yuzhong District Education Commission, Chongqing, China

Ms. CUI Lianna
Member of the Education Working Committee of the CPC Daxing District Committee; Deputy Director, Daxing District Education Commission, Beijing, China

Ms. CHEN Guojing
Director, Karamay Municipal Education Bureau, Xinjiang, China

Mr. ZHANG Lilei
Member of the Leading Party Members Group and Deputy Director, Yichang Municipal Education Bureau, China

Mr. ZHANG Yi
Party Secretary and Director of the Chengdu Educational Technology Equipment Management Center

Mr. CAO Yonghao
Director, Dongguan Education Development Research and Evaluation Center, China

Ms. JIN Jing
Director, Education and Sports Bureau of Nanhu District, Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, China

Mr. WANG Yongjun
Party Secretary and Director, Education and Sports Bureau of Licheng District, Jinan, Shandong Province, China

Ms. QU Qingyue
Deputy Director, Education, Health and Sports Bureau, Zhengzhou Airport Economy Zone, Henan Province, China

MODERATORS

Prof. YANG Junfeng
Professor, Jing Hengyi School of Education, Hangzhou Normal University; Deputy Director, Research Center for Education Informatization Strategy, Ministry of Education (Beijing), China

Prof. WANG Zhuzhu
Expert, Expert Group for the Ministry of Education's "Smart Education Demonstration Zones" Initiative, China

Opening Remarks



Hon. Dr. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon, Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research of Mauritius, stated in his address that digital transformation is a core lever for enhancing national education competitiveness. Mauritius is accelerating the improvement of digital education infrastructure and promoting the inclusive sharing of high-quality educational resources, and looks forward to deepening cooperation with the international community to jointly address global challenges such as the digital divide and data security.



Hon. Prof. Stella Christie, Vice Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Technology of Indonesia, pointed out that smart education requires two-way empowerment between technology and education. Indonesia is advancing its national digital education strategy, with a focus on strengthening digital literacy among teachers and students, developing localised digital resources and optimising the education governance system, so that technology truly serves people's all-round development.



Mr. REN Changshan, Director of the Division of Education Informatization and Cybersecurity at the Department of Science, Technology and Informatization of the Ministry of Education of China, stressed that China will continue to deepen the national education digitalisation strategic action, advancing the implementation of the "3I" strategy under the guidance of the "3C" concept and accelerating the building of a smart education public service system, and stands ready to work with all countries to build a global smart education community.

Thematic Speech: Building Consensus for the Leap from Digital Transformation to Smart Education

Mr. CHEN Ming, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, delivered a report titled "Making Solid Progress in Digital Transformation of Education: Practice and Exploration in Inner Mongolia." He shared Inner Mongolia's practical achievements in advancing new education infrastructure, building an "Internet + Education" platform and launching digital literacy improvement initiatives based on the characteristics of the border ethnic region, highlighting distinctive educational measures such as synchronised interactive classrooms for pastoral areas and the development of multilingual educational resources.

Prof. TANG Ruikang, Vice President of Hangzhou Normal University, proposed that normal universities should leverage their disciplinary and talent strengths to deepen frontier education technology research, cultivate teachers' digital literacy and explore future school forms, building a collaborative innovation and education mechanism linking universities, local governments and primary and secondary schools.

Dr. Joshua Polchar, Analyst at the Directorate for Education and Skills of OECD, delivered a report titled "Teaching to the Test? Preparing for the Future of Education in Uncertain Times." He argued that the digital transformation of education must move beyond an exam-oriented focus, concentrating instead on cultivating students' core competencies such as critical thinking, creativity and social-emotional skills.







Mr. Daniel LAI, Director of the Coolthink@JC Programme and Director of the JC GoAI Programme, Hong Kong, China, delivered a report titled "Unleashing Digital Creativity: Computational Thinking Education Practices for Primary School Students in Hong Kong." He introduced Hong Kong's curriculum system, teacher training model and outcome evaluation mechanisms for systematically advancing computational thinking education for primary school students.

Dr. Indira Ochoa Carrasco, Director of Educational Digital Transformation Projects at the Coordination of Open University, Educational Innovation and Distance Education (CUAIEED) of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), delivered a report titled "Building Smart Digital Education: Open Learning, Student Support and an AI Responsibility Framework." She shared Mexico's local experience in digital education transformation, highlighting the development of open educational resources, digital access projects for remote areas and teacher digital capacity improvement programmes.

Prof. YANG Xianmin, Dean of the School of Smart Education at Jiangsu Normal University and Executive Deputy Director of the Jiangsu Engineering Research Center for Educational Informatization, delivered a report titled "Global Trends in Responsible Innovation in AI for Education and China's Path Forward." He systematically reviewed the policy orientations, technological hotspots and ethical challenges of global AI-in-education innovation, and proposed building a full-chain responsible innovation system of "technology R&D–scenario validation–ethical norms–standards leadership."







Enterprise Partners Speech: Exploring New Pathways for AI-Driven Educational Innovation

Ms. REN Pingping, Deputy Secretary of the CPC Committee and Senior Vice President of iFLYTEK, delivered a report titled "Latest Technological Advances in Large Models and Their Innovative Applications in Education." She presented the iterative achievements of iFLYTEK's Spark large model in education, highlighting scenario applications such as AI teaching assistants, AI learning companions and intelligent assessment, and stressed that technology must deeply understand the laws of education to truly empower teaching and learning.

Mr. LIU Chang, Founder, Chairman and CEO of 17 Education & Technology Group, delivered a report titled "From Regional AI Agents to Teachers' 'JARVIS': Exploring the Implementation of AI Agents for Personalised Teaching." He shared practices in building "regional education AI agents," demonstrating their application in assisting lesson preparation, personalised homework design and precise learning diagnosis, and argued that technology should serve as teachers' "intelligent assistant" rather than a replacement.





New Ecosystem of Regional Smart Education: Regional Practices in Building a Coordinated Smart Education Ecosystem

Mr. XIAO Fangming, Secretary of the CPC Committee and Director of the Yuzhong District Education Commission of Chongqing, in his report "From 'Using Tools' to 'Governing an Ecosystem': The Yuzhong Model of Using AI to Safeguard Students' Physical and Mental Health," pointed out that Yuzhong District is upgrading AI application from a single teaching tool to systemic governance, focusing on building an integrated "monitoring–early warning–intervention–feedback" digital protection system for students' mental health. Through multimodal data fusion and analysis, the system enables early detection and early intervention of psychological risks, making technology an "invisible shield" safeguarding students' physical and mental health.

Ms. CUI Lianna, Member of the Education Working Committee of the CPC Daxing District Committee and Deputy Director of the Daxing District Education Commission of Beijing, in her report "Digital and Intelligent Technologies Driving Homework Reform and Data Empowering Precision Teaching: Smart Homework Reform in Daxing District, Beijing," introduced how Daxing District uses smart homework as a small entry point to leverage a major transformation towards precision teaching: through full-process collection and analysis of homework data, the district has

built a closed-loop system of "homework design–intelligent marking–learning diagnosis–personalised recommendation," effectively reducing teacher workload and enabling tailored resource provision for every student, making homework a true "stethoscope" for precision teaching.

Mr. ZHANG Lilei, Member of the Leading Party Members Group and Deputy Director of the Yichang Municipal Education Bureau, in his report "Yichang's Practice of Coordinating AI-Empowered, High-Quality and Balanced Education Development at the Municipal Level," stressed that Yichang adheres to municipal-level coordination and urban–rural linkage, building an integrated education digital foundation, breaking down data barriers between urban and rural schools, and channelling high-quality courses, teacher training and teaching-research outcomes down to rural schools—forming a new pattern of smart education development that is urban-led, urban–rural integrated, high-quality and balanced.

Mr. ZHANG Yi, Party Secretary and Director of the Chengdu Educational Technology Equipment Management Center, in his report "Chengdu's Practical Exploration of Developing AI Application Scenarios in Primary and Secondary Schools," shared Chengdu's experience of focusing on core scenarios such as classroom teaching, education management, assessment reform and after-school services to build an "AI + education" application matrix, encouraging schools to develop distinctive applications suited to local conditions and forming a smart education ecosystem of "one school, one feature; full regional coverage."

Mr. CAO Yonghao, Director of the Dongguan Education Development Research and Evaluation Center, in his report "Building a Digital and Intelligent Foundation through Citywide Collaboration: Dongguan's Practice of Integrated Smart Education Development," introduced how Dongguan, upholding the principle of "the whole city as one chess game," has advanced smart education by building an integrated digital platform with three-tier city–town–school linkage, achieving data interconnection, resource sharing and application coordination, and effectively solving the problems of fragmented efforts and duplicated construction in regional education digital transformation.

Ms. JIN Jing, Secretary of the CPC Committee and Director of the Education and Sports Bureau of Nanhu District, Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, in her report "Human-Centred, Tech-for-Good: Redefining Smart Education – Nanhu's Digital-Empowered Practice," stressed that Nanhu District consistently upholds the values of "technology for good and people first." In advancing digital and intelligent education, the district both leverages the precision advantages of data empowerment and preserves the humanistic essence of education, using digital profiles to care for students' all-round development—making technology a "warm companion" for student growth rather than a "cold yardstick."

Mr. WANG Yongjun, Executive Deputy Secretary of the Education Working Committee of the CPC Licheng District Committee, Secretary of the CPC Leading Group and Director of the Education and Sports Bureau of Licheng District, Jinan, Shandong Province, in his report "Cultivating Innovative Minds in a Digital-Intelligence Hub: Licheng's Regional Practice of Empowering Top-Notch Innovative Talent Development through Smart Education," introduced how Licheng District, relying on big data and AI, has built a system for the early identification and personalised cultivation of top-notch innovative talents—identifying student potential through multidimensional data profiles, customising growth pathways, and building interdisciplinary innovation laboratories and mentor teams, cultivating fertile "digital soil" for innovative talent.

Ms. QU Qingyue, Deputy Director of the

Education, Health and Sports Bureau of Zhengzhou Airport Economy Zone, Henan Province, in her report “Foundation, Scenarios, and Equity: The ‘Airport Economy Zone Model’ of AI-Empowered Integrated Urban–Rural Education,” presented a digital solution for integrated urban–rural education: by building three platforms for synchronised urban–rural classrooms, remote teaching research and resource sharing, the zone has enabled urban and rural schools to achieve “synchronised management, equal teaching quality, shared teaching-research platforms and shared resources,” offering a replicable “Airport Economy Zone model” for breaking the urban–rural dual structure in education.



The session built a broad consensus on the leap from digital transformation to smart education. From ministerial policy dialogue and frontier research to enterprise innovation and regional practice, participants demonstrated that smart education ecosystems are built on solid digital foundations, responsible AI governance and citywide coordination. The experiences shared offered replicable pathways for narrowing urban–rural divides and advancing high-quality, balanced education development.

The parallel session was jointly moderated by Professor YANG Junfeng, Deputy Director of the Educational Informatization Strategy Research Base (Beijing) under the Ministry of Education and Professor WANG Zhuzhu, Expert of the Expert Group for the Smart Education Demonstration Zone Pilot Project under the Ministry of Education.





**The Parallel Session: Towards Smart Education Ecosystems was organised by the Educational Informatization Strategy Research Base, Ministry of Education, P.R.C. (Beijing, Central China and Northwest China) and iFLYTEK Co., Ltd., with 17Edtech as partner.*

Parallel Session:
Safe, Green and Healthy Smart Campuses

Safety is the baseline, green is the responsibility, health is the foundation, and smart technology is the means. Amid the global push for sustainable development, smart campuses are increasingly understood not as an accumulation of devices and systems, but as environments in which technology serves human development and educational needs. The session brought together policymakers, educators, researchers, and technology providers to examine the interconnected dimensions of campus safety and digital security, green and low-carbon operations, the health and well-being of teachers and students, and AI-enabled campus governance. Discussions also addressed standards and technical frameworks for smart campuses, regional and international practices in campus transformation, and industry–education collaboration. Across these areas, participants highlighted the importance of people-centred, culturally responsive, and practically effective approaches to technology deployment. Overall, the session underscored the need to balance technological innovation with safety, sustainability, well-being, and the core mission of education in building smart campuses for the future.



Photo of Parallel Session: Safe, Green and Healthy Smart Campuses

SPEAKERS

Mr. ZENG Dehua
Former Deputy Director, Education Management Information Center, Ministry of Education; Vice President, China Association for Educational Technology, China

Prof. ZHANG Yuhu
Professor, Capital Normal University; Principal Investigator, National Key R&D Program Project on Safe and Green Campus Group Wisdom Linkage and Collaborative Prevention and Control, China

Mr. Ashyrgeldi Atayev
Chief Specialist, Information Security Systems Administration, Innovation and Information Center, Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan

Prof. Dato' Dr. Ahmed Ansary
Founder President and CEO, Asia e University (AeU), Malaysia

Mr. CHENG Jiaming
Chairman, Wuhan Xingtu Xinke Electronics Co., Ltd., China

Mr. LIU Zhenhua
Director, Enterprise Marketing Execution Department, Huawei, China

Mr. ZHOU Zhihua
Founder and CEO, OUR SCHOOL AI, China

Mr. QU Guangrong
Member of the Leading Party Members Group and Deputy Director, Ordos Municipal Education and Sports Bureau, China

Prof. Patila Amosa
Vice Chancellor and President, National University of Samoa, Samoa

Mr. WANG Dong
Executive Deputy Director, Chongqing Smart Education Innovation Center, China

Mr. NI Hong
Deputy Director, Chengdu Educational Technology and Equipment Center, China

Mr. ZHANG Liang
Distinguished Principal, Shandong Normal University Basic Education Group; Secretary of the CPC Committee, Wanning Middle School, Hainan Province, China

Prof. Kgomotso Moahi
Vice Chancellor, Botswana Open University, Botswana

Mr. CHEN Rihong
Principal, Dingzhou Yucai Experimental Middle School, Hebei Province, China

Mr. WEI Caiyu
Vice President, Wuhan Xingtu Xinke Electronics Co., Ltd., China

Ms. LIAO Xi
Co-Founder and Executive President, UNIS Modu Technology, China

Dr. ZHU Lixin
Senior Engineer, National Engineering Research Center for Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology, China

Dr. Canhui Liu
Research Fellow in AI Policy, UCL Centre for Artificial Intelligence, University College London, UK

Mr. PENG Yaning
Deputy Director, Division of Science, Technology and Informatization, Department of Education of Henan Province, China

Mr. ZHANG Jingyue
Secretary of the CPC Committee, Kazuo No. 1 Senior High School, Chaoyang, Liaoning Province, China

Mr. YI Xiangbo
Deputy General Manager, Noobie Technology (Guangzhou) Co., Ltd., China

MODERATORS

Mr. SUN Qiurui
Deputy Director, Information Network Center, Beijing Normal University, China

Dr. QI Binbin
Special Research Fellow, South China Normal University, China

Prof. TONG Lili
Professor, Beijing Normal University; Deputy Director, National Engineering Research Center for Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology, China

Opening Remarks: Building a Digital Safety Baseline for Campuses



Mr. ZENG Dehua, Former Deputy Director of the Education Management Information Center of the Ministry of Education and Vice President of the China Association for Educational Technology, pointed out in his address that smart campus development must move from device accumulation towards the deep integration of systems and applications. "Safety is the baseline of campus digitalisation," he emphasised: the more devices, data and users there are, the greater the security responsibility, and data classification and personal information protection must be standardised across the entire process.

Thematic Speeches: Converging Technical Pathways and Global Practices



Prof. ZHANG Yuhu, Capital Normal University, delivered a speech titled "Technical Pathways and Demonstration Applications for Safe, Green and Smart Campuses." Drawing on the "Safe and Green Campus Group Wisdom Linkage and Collaborative Prevention and Control" project he leads, he pointed out that schools already have monitoring, human-defence and physical-defence foundations; what truly needs strengthening is "technical defence"—namely multimodal data fusion. He advocated "building the new on the basis of the existing," overlaying AI capabilities onto current systems, so that campus safety shifts from reviewing footage after incidents to intelligent recognition and advance early warning.



Mr. Ashyrgeldi Atayev, Chief Specialist of the Information Security Systems Administration at the Innovation and Information Center of the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan, argued that the true value of a smart campus depends on what it connects—when smart classrooms, schools, regions and national education institutions are interconnected, educational equity can "be seen." He also drew a clear distinction between "digitalisation" and "digital transformation."



Prof. Dato' Dr. Ahmed Ansary, Founder President of Asia e University, set out four pillars of a sustainable smart campus—safety, green, health and responsible AI. In his view, a campus is not smart because it owns machines, but because it can cultivate better people: "Wisdom should guide intelligence; technology should serve humanity, rather than humanity being driven by technology."

Technical Solutions and Standards Release: Starlight Program - Illuminating Every School



Mr. CHENG Jiaming, Chairman of Wuhan Xingtu Xinke Electronics Co., Ltd., officially launched the "Starlight Plan," an AI product and service system for education: deploying edge AI infrastructure with the campus as the node, and building a regional smart education network through a "cloud–edge–device" architecture, so that every school in urban and rural areas can share inclusive AI capabilities, and campus safety shifts from "reviewing footage after the fact" to "AI early warning in advance."



Mr. LIU Zhenhua, Director of the Enterprise Marketing Execution Department at Huawei, proposed that "without intelligent connectivity there is no AI, and without security there is no intelligent connectivity," stressing that the large-scale deployment of AI is impossible without high-quality network connectivity. He introduced a new-generation campus network suited to high-uplink scenarios such as VR teaching and live surgical broadcasts, an innovative attempt to use wireless channel sensing to cover video surveillance blind spots, and an AI-based tidal energy-saving solution that "uses bits to manage watts."



Mr. ZHOU Zhihua, Founder and CEO of OUR SCHOOL AI, shared a practical roadmap for the "AI Super Teacher": a teacher who "understands technology" is not one who can write code, but one who truly embeds AI into daily work such as lesson preparation, resource production and tiered assignments, ultimately returning to the mission of educating people. The scarcest ability in the AI era, he noted, is asking good questions—and when using a large model, one should explicitly tell it "what not to do."

Smart Campus Development and Application: Regional Practices and Global Experience



Mr. QU Guangrong, Member of the Leading Party Members Group and Deputy Director of the Ordos Municipal Education and Sports Bureau, introduced Ordos' practice as a pilot city of the Ministry of Education's AI-Empowered Education initiative: with a municipal AI service foundation advancing "dual-track development," schools only need to configure essential basic hardware to share city-wide AI capabilities at low cost. At present, the time some teachers spend on routine mechanical marking has been cut from about two hours to around ten minutes.



Prof. Patila Amosa, Vice Chancellor and President of the National University of Samoa, shared Samoa's smart campus framework, which places sustainability, digital transformation, safety and human well-being at the centre. She stressed that "being people-centred and culture-centred is as important as the technology itself," and that sustainability, safety and human well-being must be built into campus development from the planning stage.



Mr. WANG Dong, Executive Deputy Director of the Chongqing Smart Education Innovation Center, took the digital governance of school meals as an example, pointing out that smart campus development must first clarify the attributes of the problem, the system and the scenario. By reshaping the "three chains" of supply, food safety and funding, school meals become transparent and controllable across procurement, food safety and the use of funds.



Ms. NI Hong, Deputy Director of the Chengdu Educational Technology and Equipment Center, introduced Chengdu's city-wide, all-scenario and whole-chain deployment of AI in basic education: advancing eight types of scenarios and 26 categories of actionable practice through "four driving forces" (goal-driven, technology support, institutional guarantees and evaluation-driven) and "sixfold coordination," and incorporating AI ethics norms into the curriculum.



Mr. ZHANG Liang, Distinguished Principal of the Shandong Normal University Basic Education Group and Secretary of the CPC Committee of Wanning Middle School in Hainan Province, noted that the most fundamental question across the stages of informatisation, digitalisation and intelligentisation is finding a true "medium" between technology and education—one that can only exist within the whole process of teaching and learning. His school has developed three learning models: problem-based autonomous cooperation, semi-adaptive, and fully adaptive.



Prof. Kgomotso Moahi, Vice Chancellor of Botswana Open University, said that, facing a semi-arid climate, high energy prices and urban–rural connectivity gaps, universities in the Global South cannot simply copy the technology models of developed regions. "Smart" should not mean buying the most advanced and expensive equipment, she argued, but choosing technology that is appropriate, affordable, resilient and able to operate over the long term.



Mr. CHEN Rihong, Principal of Dingzhou Yucai Experimental Middle School in Hebei Province, said that what schools need most at present is "efficiency and practicality." He believes AI may offer a breakthrough in "open-ended questions and diverse assessment" for the tension between exam-oriented education and the cultivation of innovative ability. The one-way structure of "teachers ask, students answer" should change, he argued—asking a good question demonstrates a higher level of thinking than answering a preset one.

Release Session: Products and Standards



Mr. WEI Caiyu, Vice President of Wuhan Xingtu Xinke Electronics Co., Ltd., released the "Campus-Wide AI-Enabled Edge Computing Security Early-Warning Service": with single-device multi-channel access, edge computing and a combination of large and small models, it covers scenarios including school gates, playgrounds, corridors, dormitories and perimeter walls without altering schools' existing monitoring systems, moving surveillance from "watching recordings" to proactive risk discovery and early warning.

Ms. LIAO Xi, Co-Founder and Executive President of UNIS Modu Technology, launched new AI productivity products under the theme “Beyond Question Answering: Putting AI to Work,” proposing that AI move from an ordinary question-answering tool to a “teaching assistant” truly embedded in teachers’ workflows—through education-specific long-thread agents and a teacher Skill-sharing platform—so that excellent teachers’ lesson-preparation thinking and classroom processes are distilled into shareable organisational capability.





Dr. ZHU Lixin, Senior Engineer at CIT, presented the General Technical Requirements for Information Technology Education Terminal Systems in Primary and Secondary Schools. The standard builds a four-layer technical system from hardware, firmware and middleware to application software, highlights independent controllability, and configures computing power and functions in stages for primary, junior and senior secondary levels—making the terminal a “scaffold” for children to explore technology.

The session also saw the release of three “AI + Education” group standards: the Technical Architecture Design Specification for General-Purpose Educational LLMs, the Guidelines for Building Smart Education Systems Based on LLMs, and the Technical Specification for Intelligent Teachers. Under the purview of the China Association for the Promotion of International Science and Technology, the standards were jointly developed by the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, the China Quality Certification Centre, Beijing Normal University and related enterprises, aiming to address the fragmentation of AI applications in education and the lack of unified development standards.



Roundtable Discussion: Developing Digital Campus Infrastructure and Promoting Industry–Academia–Research Collaboration

The roundtable discussion focused on two directions that can truly be implemented—the "campus digital foundation" and "subject-specific intelligent agents"—with representatives from government, universities, schools, enterprises and international partners holding in-depth discussions on the current state of development, application needs and mechanisms for industry–academia–research collaboration.

Mr. PENG Yaning, Deputy Director of the Division of Science, Technology and Informatization of the Department of Education of Henan Province, stated that as the national education digitalisation strategy enters a new stage, digital infrastructure has become a basic condition for running schools. The next priority should centre on data—particularly high-quality education datasets that can genuinely support AI. Schools, which best understand real operational needs, should become important producers and providers of education data.

Mr. ZHANG Jingyue, Secretary of the CPC Committee of Kazuo No. 1 Senior High School in Chaoyang, Liaoning Province, said that less-developed regions cannot afford to stand still. County-level high schools face realities such as an ageing teaching workforce and cannot simply wait. AI should not replace teachers, he argued, but should help county-level schools improve classroom efficiency and bridge capacity gaps. He called on experts and enterprises to engage more with county-level schools and bring replicable, low-investment AI solutions into campus practice.

Mr. YI Xiangbo, Deputy General Manager of Noobie Technology (Guangzhou) Co., Ltd., shared a practical path from classroom digitalisation to teaching-research intelligent agents: drawing on years of accumulated structured classroom data and evaluation standards to constrain agents and reduce hallucinations, and setting up multiple "digital experts" holding different educational philosophies to generate a collision of views—so that validated teaching experience can spread across schools and iterate continuously.



Photo of the Panel Discussion

Prof. TONG Lili, Professor at Beijing Normal University, summarised the discussion in three words: the campus digital foundation must be "thick"—thick enough to carry teacher data, student learning profiles and ever-evolving AI applications; subject-specific intelligent agents must be "thin"—thin enough for teachers to open and use immediately with real effect; and industry–academia–research collaboration must be "solid"—forming stable, long-term partnerships built on mutual understanding.

Technology matters, but the "smartness" of a smart campus must ultimately be embodied in people. Participants expressed their commitment to guarding the baseline with safety, fulfilling responsibility with green, laying the foundation with health, and using smart technology as the means—so that technology truly serves people's all-round development and contributes to the digital transformation of education and the building of a leading country in education.

Effective transformation hinges on multimodal data fusion, affordable edge AI, and context-sensitive solutions that bridge urban–rural and global divides. Ultimately, the "smartness" of a campus is measured not by its devices, but by its capacity to nurture better people—and achieving this requires thick digital infrastructure, thin intelligent agents, and solid industry–education–research collaboration to ensure technology genuinely serves education's core mission.

This parallel session was jointly moderated by Mr. SUN Qiurui, Deputy Director, Information Network Center, Beijing Normal University, China; Dr. QI Binbin, Special Research Fellow, South China Normal University, China; Prof. TONG Lili, Professor, Beijing Normal University; Deputy Director, National Engineering Research Center for Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology, China.







**The Parallel Session: Safe, Green and Healthy Smart Campuses was organised by the National Engineering Research Center of Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology; the Center of Information and Network Technology, Beijing Normal University; Asia e University (AeU); and Wuhan Xingtu Xinke Electronics Co., Ltd.*

Parallel Session: Beyond Grades—Holistic AI-Enabled Assessment

AI is opening new possibilities for moving beyond traditional grades towards more holistic approaches to student assessment. Held in conjunction with the work conference of the Ministry of Education's pilot programme on "IT-Supported Comprehensive Student Quality Assessment," the session brought together representatives from the programme's 34 pilot regions, experimental regions of the national key R&D project on large-scale cross-stage student growth tracking, as well as universities, research institutes, and enterprises. Discussions showcased phased achievements and emerging practices in using AI and digital technologies to capture and understand multiple dimensions of student development, while highlighting innovative models, regional experiences, and practical lessons from implementation. Participants also explored how AI can support more continuous and evidence-informed approaches to understanding student growth, strengthen the use of assessment to support learning and development, and advance the transformation of holistic student assessment. Overall, the session highlighted pathways for building more comprehensive, meaningful, and future-oriented assessment systems in the digital age.



Photo of Parallel Session: Beyond Grades: Holistic AI-Enabled Assessment

SPEAKERS

Mr. ZHANG Weidong
Deputy Director-General, Department of Science, Technology and Informatization, Ministry of Education, China

Mr. REN Changshan
Director, Division of Education Informatization and Cybersecurity, Department of Science, Technology and Informatization, Ministry of Education, China

Prof. CHEN Li
Professor, Beijing Normal University; Chair, Expert Group for the Ministry of Education Pilot Programme on IT-Supported Holistic Student Assessment, China

Ms. DAI Yiou
Director, Division of Basic Education, Department of Education of Heilongjiang Province, China

Ms. ZHANG Xuan
Deputy Director, Division of Basic Education, Department of Education of Hebei Province, China

Ms. YU Haixia
Director, Fangshan District Education Commission and Education Supervision Office, Beijing, China

Mr. LI Bin
Deputy Secretary, Education Working Committee of the CPC Urumqi Municipal Committee; Member of the Leading Party Members Group and Deputy Director, Urumqi Municipal Education Bureau, China

Mr. LIANG Bo
Member of the Leading Party Members Group and Chief Education Inspector, Yangquan Municipal Education Bureau, China

Mr. GU Chunqing
Secretary of the Leading Party Members Group and Director, Education Bureau of Suzhou Industrial Park, China

Mr. LIU Xiaobin
Deputy Director, Education Bureau of Dadong District, Shenyang, China

Mr. WANG Wei
Deputy Director, Education Bureau of Heping District, Tianjin, China

Mr. SHI Yiqi
Vice President, Nanshan District Institute of Educational Sciences, Shenzhen, China

Mr. ZHOU Shaowei
President, Nanhai Institute of Educational Development, Foshan, China

Mr. QIN Xiaogang
Secretary of the CPC Branch and Director, Guilin Educational Technology and Equipment Center, China

Mr. LONG Ronghua
Director, Division of Science, Technology and Informatization, Education Bureau of Longquanyi District, Chengdu, China

Prof. ZHENG Qinhua
Professor, Beijing Normal University, China

MODERATOR

Prof. LI Shuang
Professor, Beijing Normal University, China

Opening Remarks



Mr. ZHANG Weidong, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Science, Technology and Informatization of the Ministry of Education, spoke highly of the pilot program's remarkable achievements over the past four years in his address. He pointed out that, against the backdrop of accelerating AI development, advancing the deep integration of AI and educational assessment is not only an important part of the education digitalisation strategic action and education assessment reform, but also a critical link in fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and promoting students' well-rounded and personalised development. Since the pilot's launch, all pilot regions have fully leveraged their initiative, carried out innovative explorations suited to local conditions, and achieved remarkable results in expanding application scale, improving support mechanisms and developing regionally distinctive solutions. Looking ahead, he stressed that all pilot regions should build on the momentum, shoulder their mission, continue advancing the pilot work in depth, systematically review and distil practical experience, and contribute Chinese wisdom to global educational assessment.

Keynote Speech



Prof. CHEN Li, Professor at Beijing Normal University and Chair of the Expert Group for the Ministry of Education Pilot Programme on IT-Supported Holistic Student Assessment, delivered a keynote report titled "Summary of the Outcomes of the Ministry of Education of China Pilot Program on IT-Supported Comprehensive Student Quality Assessment," systematically summarising the program's phased achievements. She noted that, with the joint support of the MoE pilot program and the national key R&D program of the Ministry of Science and Technology, an "innovative AI-based solution for holistic student assessment" has been iteratively developed, effectively breaking through the practical bottlenecks of "what to assess," "how to assess" and "how to use the results." Looking ahead, she proposed that, to fully leverage the pilot's demonstration role, it is necessary both to accelerate the building of a "three-in-one" holistic assessment system—encompassing education-oriented process assessment, diagnosis-oriented level assessment and selection-oriented identification assessment—and to grasp AI as the key variable, continuously advancing assessment model innovation and institutional reform.

Thematic Speech: Pilot Regions Share Innovative Practices

Ms. DAI Yiou, Director of the Division of Basic Education at the Department of Education of Heilongjiang Province, shared Heilongjiang's pilot experience. She introduced the province's "four-in-one" advancement model of administrative coordination, teaching-research improvement, school integration and home–school collaboration, noting that assessment results have been applied in multiple schools to form an evaluation application paradigm. Going forward, Heilongjiang will plan ahead for the 2027 pilot acceptance, deepen the application of results, and drive the transformation of education governance from experience-driven to data-driven.

Ms. ZHANG Xuan, Deputy Director of the Division of Basic Education at the Department of Education of Hebei Province, shared Hebei's practice of empowering comprehensive assessment with information technology to advance the five domains of education together. She introduced the province's regularised four-party collaborative pilot organisation model—"school-led, home–school linkage, student-centred, and coordinated planning"—which adheres to voluntary participation without mandatory ranking and exerts a "baton effect" through continuous application across teaching, learning, assessment and management. She noted that Hebei will accelerate the building of a provincial foundational database of primary and secondary students' comprehensive quality development, creating a digital assessment ecosystem with Hebei characteristics.

Mr. LI Bin, Deputy Secretary of the Education Working Committee of the CPC Urumqi Municipal Committee and Member of the Leading Party Members Group and Deputy Director of the Urumqi Municipal Education Bureau, introduced Urumqi's exploration of "digital assessment empowering students' all-round development," demonstrating the supporting role of long-term tracking data in school education planning. He noted that Urumqi has formed a comprehensive application model integrating "online data assessment" and "offline practical cultivation," turning the five-domain education concept into quantifiable, implementable routine school work, and will continue to promote two-way empowerment between digital assessment and five-domain practice, building an integrated education pattern.

Ms. LIANG Bo, Member of the Leading Party Members Group and Chief Education Inspector of the Yangquan Municipal Education Bureau in Shanxi Province, shared Yangquan's practice of promoting education through assessment. She introduced how the city has made the pilot a "top-leader project," building a six-stage closed-loop management process and forming a set of referable regional practices that have produced positive changes at the student, parent and school levels. Going forward, Yangquan will deepen data mining and integrated application, build an assessment system with local characteristics, and safeguard students' healthy growth through assessment-driven education.



Mr. GU Chunqing, Secretary of the Leading Party Members Group and Director of the Education Bureau of Suzhou Industrial Park, introduced the park's digital and intelligent assessment practice centred on "assessment as education." He described the "three-stage, three-dimension" assessment framework and the "three transformations, four coverages" assessment paradigm, through which locally distinctive five-domain dimensions were bidirectionally mapped with the SEED platform's assessment points and deployed locally, forming a replicable regional model. The park will continue to iterate and upgrade in supporting students' diverse development and serving the building of a leading country in education.

Mr. LIU Xiaobin, Deputy Director of the Education Bureau of Dadong District, Shenyang, focused on the district's exploration of advancing five-domain education through digital technology. He noted that Dadong District has been rated as an "excellent" comprehensive development region for three consecutive years, and has

actively undertaken the development and experimental application of accompanying, imperceptible data-collection technologies to enrich student growth data. The district will further advance imperceptible collection applications and expand the reach of its pilot experience by forming inter-school reform communities and broadening assessment application scenarios.

Ms. WANG Wei, Deputy Director of the Education Bureau of Heping District, Tianjin, introduced the district's practice of using assessment data to improve education governance in a high-density urban area. He described the four-step closed loop of "data collection–analysis and feedback–decision adjustment–effect verification," through which schools conduct "joint data diagnosis" and implement differentiated interventions; adhering to the "three no's principle," the district has shifted assessment from "rating and ranking" to "development diagnosis," recording students' longitudinal development through growth portfolios. Toward the pilot's conclusion in 2027, Heping District will deepen "one school, one policy," explore a private-domain large model for educational assessment, and distil a replicable "Heping solution."

Mr. SHI Yiqi, Vice President of the Nanshan District Institute of Educational Sciences in Shenzhen, shared innovative practice in deeply integrating the SEED platform with the regional digital foundation. He introduced Nanshan's approach of "one guidance, three integrations," naturally embedding assessment tasks into daily scenarios such as moral education, subject teaching, reading promotion and science-technology education, so that assessment data genuinely serves curriculum improvement and student development—forming a teaching–learning–assessment integration model of "no assessment for assessment's sake, no data for data's sake." Nanshan will continue to deepen integration pathways to support the regularised conduct of assessment.







Mr. ZHOU Shaowei, President of the Nanhai Institute of Educational Development in Foshan, shared the district's exploration from "labelling students" to "profiling students" and on to "reconstructing the education environment," demonstrating how teachers use assessment reports to identify students' developmental needs beyond academics and work with families to create practical scenarios that help students achieve growth breakthroughs. He noted that Nanhai will continue to use assessment results to deeply empower student growth, letting growth truly happen through quiet, everyday care.

Mr. QIN Xiaogang, Secretary of the CPC Branch and Director of the Guilin Educational Technology and Equipment Center, shared Guilin's advancement pathway of "collaborative empowerment and three-strength forging." Based on the realities of a western prefecture-level city, Guilin relies on the SEED platform working in synergy with the local comprehensive quality assessment system to forge coordination capacity, foundational support capacity and reform-driving capacity, offering a referable practice model for similar regions. The city will further expand home–school collaboration coverage and cultivate typical application cases featuring its landscape, ethnic and rural characteristics.

Mr. LONG Ronghua, Director of the Division of Science, Technology and Informatization at the Education Bureau of Longquanyi District, Chengdu, shared the district's practice of using institutional innovation to ensure the sustained advancement of assessment reform. Based on the "one positioning, three goals" approach, the district has set up professional teams and issued institutional documents to safeguard pilot progress, standardised assessment organization through "eight work reminders," and insisted that tasks be completed at school as far as possible without being passed on to parents—making assessment "stress-free, visible, understandable and development-promoting." The district will further unlock data value and distil a pilot model that combines technical precision with educational warmth.







Special Report



Prof. ZHENG Qinhua, Professor at Beijing Normal University, systematically introduced the work arrangements for the pilot's fifth year. He proposed that in the 2026–2027 academic year, the pilot's assessment work will be completed in the autumn semester, with the spring semester focused on summary and acceptance—systematically reviewing pilot outcomes around data quality, implementation, outcome application and continued deepening, in preparation for the next stage of deeper exploration and application.

Regional Awards for Advanced Pilot Regions

At the regional awards session, **Mr. REN Changshan**, Director of the Division of Education Informatization and Cybersecurity at the Department of Science, Technology and Informatization of the Ministry of Education, together with **Prof. CHEN Li**, commended advanced pilot regions—those with large student participation and broad application coverage, sound support mechanisms and well-organised implementation, and those actively exploring diversified applications. The awards recognised the phased demonstration achievements of the advanced regions and encouraged all regions to prepare fully for the pilot's successful conclusion.





Conclusion

Four years of pilot practice have shown that AI-enabled holistic assessment is shifting education governance from experience-driven to data-driven across regions. The pilot regions' explorations share a common direction: embedding assessment naturally into teaching and learning, making student growth visible, and using data to serve development rather than ranking. As the program moves toward its 2027 acceptance, the distilled regional models are expected to contribute Chinese experience to the global transformation of educational assessment.



This parallel session was moderated by Prof. LI Shuang, Professor, Beijing Normal University, China

**The Parallel Session: Beyond Grades: Holistic AI-Enabled Assessment was organised by the Research Institute of K-12 Educational Big Data Application, Beijing Normal University, and the National Engineering Research Center of Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology.*

Parallel Session:
Digital Learning and Adolescent Well-being

Digital learning and adolescent well-being are closely interconnected, each shaping and influencing the other. Well-designed digital learning environments can stimulate students' interest in learning, expand opportunities for interaction, and provide new forms of support for mental health and well-being, while physical health, emotional well-being, and positive social relationships remain essential foundations for meaningful and sustainable digital learning. Bringing together experts, scholars, education administrators, health professionals, and frontline teachers from international organisations, universities, local education authorities, primary and secondary schools, and the medical and health sector, the session examined the effects of digital learning on adolescents' physical and mental health, social interaction, and learning outcomes. Discussions explored how artificial intelligence, digital platforms, and blended learning environments influence attention, emotions, self-identity, and digital well-being, and considered responses from the perspectives of theory, technology, institutions, and classroom practice. Participants also highlighted the importance of collaboration among schools, families, health professionals, policymakers, and education technology providers in creating digital learning ecosystems that support both effective learning and healthy development. Overall, the session contributed international perspectives and practical approaches to balancing the benefits of digital learning with the protection of adolescent health and well-being.



Photo of Parallel Session: Digital Learning and Adolescent Well-being

SPEAKERS

Mr. Tigran Yepoyan
Chief, Unit of ICT in Health Education, UNESCO IITE

Prof. Didier Jourdan
Co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Global Health and Education; Director, WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in Education and Health; Professor, Université Clermont Auvergne, France

Prof. QIAN Qiujin
Director, Child Psychiatry Research Division, Peking University Sixth Hospital, China

Dr. Nicola Gray
Co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Global Health and Education; Vice President for Europe, International Association for Adolescent Health

Prof. TAO Sha
Professor, State Key Laboratory of Cognitive Neuroscience and Learning and Faculty of Psychology, Beijing Normal University, China

Ms. Ekaterina Khaustova
Head of International Projects, "Investment to the Future" Charitable Foundation, Russian Federation

Prof. Veronica McKay
Emeritus Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa

Prof. Hal Abelson
Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA

Mr. LEI Mingguang
Director, Feicheng Municipal Education and Sports Bureau, Tai'an, Shandong Province, China

Mr. ZENG Xianlin
Secretary of the CPC Branch and Principal, Jiujiang Experimental School, Chengdu Shuangliu High School, China

Ms. LI Hua
Secretary of the CPC Branch and Principal, Shuren Jingrui Primary School, Shapingba District, Chongqing, China

Mr. WANG Xu
Principal, Changsha No. 6 High School, China

Dr. WANG Liting
Assistant Researcher, Department of Electronic Engineering, Tsinghua University; Senior Engineer, China

Ms. LIAO Xuewen
Secretary of the Discipline Inspection Commission, Changsha Experimental High School, China

Ms. YAO Yao
Vice Principal, Tianfu Experimental Primary School, Gushi County, Xinyang, Henan Province, China

Prof. Sachi Tomokawa
Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Shinshu University, Japan

MODERATORS

Dr. WANG Huanhuan
Focal Point, UNESCO Chair on AI in Education

Ms. WANG Lili
College of Educational Technology, Northwest Normal University, China

Opening Remarks



Mr. Tigran Yepoyan, Chief of the Unit of ICT in Health Education at the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE), stressed in his address that AI, digital platforms and blended learning are now deeply integrated into adolescents' daily learning and lives—expanding the boundaries of learning and enriching their growth experiences, while also bringing entirely new risks and challenges to their physical and mental development, emotion management and social interaction skills. Digital learning and adolescent health form a mutually influential, symbiotic whole; how to make good use of the dividends of digital technology while avoiding the growth risks of digitalisation has become a major issue of shared concern for the global education, psychology and health communities.

Thematic Speech: Theoretical Insights – Digital Well-being Frameworks and Mental Health Risk Assessment

Prof. Didier Jourdan delivered a speech titled "When Digital Learning Shapes Adolescent Well-being." He argued that addressing adolescent digital well-being requires "bridge thinking" that breaks down barriers among education, technology and mental health. He proposed three core conditions for this work: grounding it in the developmental patterns of adolescents with a developmental perspective; building an integrated policy–structure–practice pathway; and constructing a knowledge-production paradigm that brings together the diverse perspectives of experts, frontline educators and young people themselves. He stressed that the core value of digital learning lies not in the technology itself, but in empowering adolescents' learning, physical and mental health and all-round development—digital inequality must be addressed and adolescents' agency fully mobilised.

Prof. QIAN Qiujin, Director of the Child Psychiatry Research Division at Peking University Sixth Hospital, spoke from a clinical perspective on "AI + Child and Adolescent Mental Health," noting the real difficulty of insufficient accessibility in psychological diagnosis and treatment for Chinese adolescents. AI holds broad promise in psychological screening and assessment, but still faces implementation shortcomings such as insufficient interpretability and poor adaptation across developmental stages. She stressed that AI can only serve as infrastructure for tiered care, and that human review must be retained in high-risk scenarios; ethics should be embedded throughout the AI lifecycle, a closed-loop hospital–family–school intervention model should be built, and algorithms must not replace human decision-making responsibility.





Dr. Nicola Gray, Co-Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair on Global Health and Education, introduced the United Nations' "6+ conceptual framework" for adolescent well-being, analysing it around health and nutrition, social connection, safe and supportive environments, learning and literacy, and agency and resilience. She argued that AI is a tool for enhancing education rather than a substitute for it, and called for strengthening health literacy among teachers and students, balancing online and offline activities, improving platform regulation, and promoting collaboration between health and education professionals in safeguarding adolescent growth.

Prof. TAO Sha, Faculty of Psychology at BNU, speaking on "Growing Up in the Digital Era: Challenges and Opportunities," noted that digitalisation is an unavoidable environment for adolescent development, and that technology itself is neither good nor bad—its impact depends on usage scenarios, duration and individual differences. She dialectically analysed the opportunities and risks brought by AI applications, social media and screen reading, while emphasising that non-digital experiences—reading, exercise, sleep and closeness to nature—remain indispensable foundations for adolescents' brain development and physical and mental health.





Thematic Speech: Multiple Perspectives – Teacher Development, Tool Innovation and Global South Realities

Mr. Tigran Yepoyan focused on teacher well-being in his speech "Teacher Well-being as a Factor of Learners' Well-being in the Age of AI," pointing out that teachers' physical and mental health directly determines the quality of student growth. He called on education policymakers to place teacher well-being on the institutional agenda, and to assess carefully when introducing AI technologies: does the technology reduce teachers' workload, can teachers receive adequate training, and does it strengthen human connection? He stressed that education must not hand human thinking and judgement over to AI.

Ms. Ekaterina Khaustova, Head of International Projects at the "Investment to the Future" Charitable Foundation of the Russian Federation, started from adolescents' three psychological needs—autonomy, competence and relatedness—to introduce a digital monitoring tool for well-being indicators. The tool diagnoses schools' educational environments and assesses risks, stimulating adolescents' potential through environmental optimisation, and offering a practical instrument for building educational environments in schools worldwide.

Prof. Veronica McKay, Emeritus Professor at the University of South Africa, spoke from a Global South perspective on "Rethinking Education in the Age of Intelligence." She noted that while AI brings opportunities for personalised learning, developing countries still face practical difficulties such as weak infrastructure, the digital divide and teacher shortages. The yardstick for evaluating digital education transformation, she argued, is learners' well-being, sense of belonging and agency; teachers play a key role in information discernment and maintaining community connection. AI-driven change should be used to shore up the weaknesses of basic education and build inclusive education systems that respond to adolescents' real needs.

Prof. Hal Abelson, presents computational action as a framework for digital learning and youth development. App Inventor, an open-source platform developed over fifteen years with Google, repositions learners — including those without technical training and children as young as five — as creators rather than consumers of technology. The platform serves roughly 29 million users who have built over 130 million applications, with strong adoption in the United States, Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan (China), Mexico, and Latin America. Four projects illustrate its reach: Appa Pura (Moldova), Dharavi Girls for Change (Mumbai), Farm Alarm (Kentucky), and Kampal, an MIT AI-based diagnostic system piloted in Nicaragua. Abelson argues such work yields both societal and developmental returns, enabling young people to mobilise lived experience as a design resource and participate in democratising emerging technologies. He identifies two frontiers — natural-language application generation and sensor-based IoT integration — and concludes that the binding constraint on impact is no longer technological capability but educators' collective willingness to act.



Release Session: Building a Global Observatory for Evidence-Based Practice

Prof. Didier Jourdan released the initiative “Contribute to a Global Permanent Observatory to Track the Impact of Digital Learning on Adolescent Health and Well-being and to Produce Regular Evidence-Based Recommendations for Policymakers, Practitioners and EdTech Developers.” Jointly initiated by several UNESCO Chairs and collaborating centres with the support of UNESCO and the World Health Organization, the observatory is currently under construction and will perform three functions: conducting global tracking and observation; integrating multi-source evidence into knowledge syntheses; and translating evidence-based practice recommendations for policymakers, school leaders and frontline teachers. The observatory is committed to making digital learning a positive force for adolescents’ education, health and confident growth, insisting on cross-sector collaboration and focusing on multi-stakeholder co-design and cross-domain policy coordination, while actively incorporating international academic research, school practices and the voices of young people—with a Youth Professional Advisory Board to be established.



Photo of the Launch Ceremony

Invited Speech: Diverse Pathways Safeguarding Adolescent Growth in the Digital Age

At the invited speech session**, Mr. LEI Mingguang**, Director of the Feicheng Municipal Education and Sports Bureau in Shandong Province**; Mr. ZENG Xianlin**, Principal of Chengdu Shuangliu High School Jiujiang Experimental School; **Ms. LI Hua**, Principal of Shuren Jingrui Primary School in Chongqing's Shapingba District; **Mr. WANG Xu**, Principal of Changsha No. 6 High School; **Dr. WANG Liting**, Assistant Researcher in the Department of Electronic Engineering at Tsinghua University; **Ms. LIAO Xuewen**, Secretary of the Discipline Inspection Commission at Changsha Experimental High School; **Ms. YAO Yao,** Vice Principal of Tianfu Experimental Primary School in Gushi County; **and Prof. Sachi Tomokawa**, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education of Shinshu University, Japan, shared practices and research spanning high-quality and balanced county-level education, digital health education, intelligent education on mental health and safety, AI-enabled traditional Chinese medicine for adolescent health, smart physical education, digital classroom teaching, and adolescent well-being and international digital learning design—demonstrating diverse pathways and innovative explorations in using digital technology to empower education governance, promote students' all-round development and safeguard adolescents' physical and mental health.



Photos of the Invited Speech Session

Across theory, clinical practice, tool innovation and school-level exploration, the session converged on a shared position: digital learning and adolescent well-being form a symbiotic whole, and technology must be evaluated by whether it genuinely serves young people's learning, health and all-round development. AI should remain an enhancement rather than a replacement—high-risk scenarios require human review, teacher well-being must enter the institutional agenda, and non-digital experiences remain irreplaceable foundations of healthy development. The newly launched global observatory initiative offers a standing mechanism for turning this consensus into evidence-based policy and practice.



This parallel session was jointly moderated by Dr. WANG Huanhuan, Focal Point, UNESCO Chair on AI in Education; Ms. WANG Lili, College of Educational Technology, Northwest Normal University, China.

**The Parallel Session: Digital Learning and Adolescent Well-being was organised by the WHO Collaborating Center for Research in Education and Health; the UNESCO Chair on Global Health and Education; the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education; the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE); and the Faculty of Psychology, Beijing Normal University.*

Smart Education · Distinguished Experts' Views Showcase

Systemic Transformation towards Equity in Education



Prof. Marcia C. Linn, Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, USA, observes that students learn more when they are asked to explain than when they answer multiple-choice questions, because explaining obliges them to think more deeply about what is happening and gives them the opportunity to distinguish among their own ideas, which is the central emphasis of knowledge integration pedagogy. She is candid about its limits, since even with the guidance her team developed, many students were unable to make productive revisions to their explanations, which suggests that prompting alone cannot secure deeper reasoning. Advances in AI have nonetheless made it possible to score explanations for the ideas they contain, and ideas are precisely the focus of knowledge integration. The aim, she notes, is that students learn to distinguish among their ideas and actually elicit all of them, since sorting promising from unpromising ideas is itself the work of learning.



Prof. Hannele Niemi, Professor and Research Director at the University of Helsinki; Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair on Educational Ecosystems for Equity and Quality of Learning, and Chair of the University Board of the University of Lapland, Finland, points to equipment simulators as one of the tools shaping future skills learning. Such simulators help learners understand how a system can be managed and build hazard recognition, since people can rehearse through simulations and AI chatbots how to take control and overcome risks. Predictive maintenance training works in the same way, requiring comparable rehearsal before action is taken under real working conditions. She explains that training is now largely system-based and concerned with recognising change, so it no longer focuses on a single step of the work process but on how to handle the entire system. Students, learners and workers must therefore master autonomous operations and learn to work with new tools alongside devices that run autonomously, and vocational curricula organised around discrete tasks will need to be reorganised around whole systems and around the judgement they demand.



Mr. Michael C. Mitchell, MCM Group International Founder & CEO, USA, draws on a lifetime spanning every communication technology from television to AI, and argues that education has believed the same promise and been disappointed every time. Radio was to place the best teacher in every classroom, reaching some two and a half million students through CBS's American School of the Air; instructional television had 242 reserved channels behind it. Yet a major 2015 study found heavy computer use at school associated with worse results, and a 2024 meta-analysis put the loss at roughly half a year of learning. Each technology confused delivering information with causing learning. Every medium exacts a trade in which something is gained, something is lost and something is handed off. His five principles are to rebuild the room around person-to-person contact, to let students play with the tools, to use AI without needing to understand it, to question the machine, and to decide which capacities to keep.



Prof. Ig Ibert Bittencourt, Professor at the Universidade Federal de Alagoas (Federal University of Alagoas), Brazil, proposes an approach he calls AI Unplugged, designed to leapfrog the digital divide and reach resource-constrained environments and under-resourced schools. He describes five principles, of which the first three are decisive. The first is conformity, which means considering the infrastructure actually available rather than assuming that ideal conditions are in place. The second is disconnection, which means using the internet whenever it is available while not expecting to be online at all times or to enjoy good bandwidth. The third is proxy, which asks how AI and other digital technologies will be delivered when students have no device of their own or must share one, and requires building a proxy between the target user and the AI. Taken together, these principles move the burden of adaptation from the learner to the design of the technology itself.



Prof. Danimir Mandic, Dean and Professor of the Faculty of Teacher Education at the University of Belgrade, Serbia, argues that education must shift from reproducing knowledge to developing thinking. The school of the future, he suggests, will not measure its success by how much content it has delivered, but by how far it has developed the understanding, independence and intellectual strength of its students. Society does not need students who only memorise, nor does it need passive executors of information; it needs people who can think, evaluate, argue and act responsibly in complex circumstances. Above all, he adds, society needs young people who know how to ask the right questions, because the ability to ask quality questions is one of the highest marks of mature thinking and precedes research, innovation, scientific work and any serious problem solving. Assessment organised around recall must therefore give way to assessment organised around reasoning and judgement, and schools should be judged accordingly.



Prof. Josep M. Duart, Editor-in-chief of International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education and Professor of Psychology and Education Sciences Department, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain, presents an analysis of articles in the International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education since 2010, identifying four phases. Between 2020 and 2022 the field was driven by pandemic-related and structural concerns, notably student engagement and the redesign of assessment. The years 2022 to 2023 marked an inflection point, as generative AI shifted attention towards adoption, academic integrity and AI literacy, with Chan and Hu's study of students' voices much cited. Between 2024 and 2026 research matured towards learning outcomes, critical thinking, governance and AI-generated feedback, together with self-critique regarding weak replicability. Three themes persisted: student engagement, teacher professional development, equity, diversity and inclusion, although authors from the Middle East, South America and Africa remained under-represented. He summarises the trajectory as smarter tools and harder questions, and expects research on agentic AI, the reinvention of assessment and equity at scale, and stronger standards, including replicability and pre-registration.

Plenary Session: A New Social Contract for Education and Learner Agency

Artificial intelligence is not merely transforming teaching tools; it is reshaping the foundations of education itself. As AI changes how knowledge is produced, accessed, validated, and shared, it is also redefining the roles of teachers and learners and prompting deeper reflection on the purposes, structures, and relationships that underpin education. Against this backdrop, the session examined how education can respond to technological change by rethinking the social contract of education, placing learners more meaningfully at the centre, strengthening their autonomy, agency, and critical capacities, and empowering teachers as designers and facilitators of meaningful learning. Discussions also highlighted the importance of ensuring that artificial intelligence serves human development and contributes to more equitable, inclusive, and high-quality education. Overall, the session explored how education systems, institutions, and communities can work together to shape a future in which AI expands human potential while preserving the human-centred values and purposes of education.



Photo of Plenary Session: A New Social Contract for Education and Learner Agency

SPEAKERS

Prof. Didier Jourdan
Co-Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Global Health and Education; Director, WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in Education and Health; Professor, Université Clermont Auvergne, France

Prof. FAN Lianghuo
Chair Professor of Education, University of Macau, China

Mr. Edward (HAO Junxiong)
Ph.D. Candidate, Beijing Normal University, Indonesia

MODERATOR

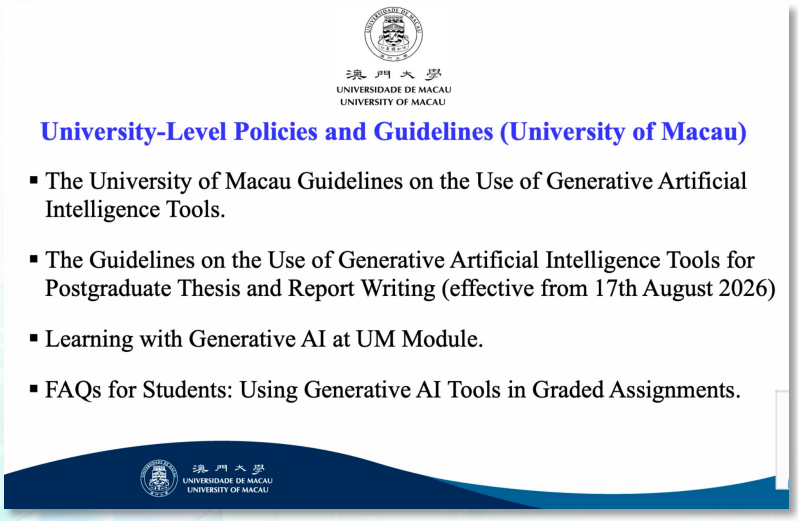
Dr. Abdulrahman Almedaires
Director General, UNESCO Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE)

Keynote Speech: Reconstructing the educational social contract to foster learners' self-empowerment



Prof. Didier Jourdan, Co-Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair on Global Health and Education; Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in Education and Health; and Professor at Université Clermont Auvergne, France, emphasizes that the new social contract for education is, first and foremost, a moral and political commitment aimed at ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to learn and the capacity to navigate a complex and uncertain future. He argues that this new social contract for education encompasses at least four key dimensions—rethinking the purposes of education, the organizational forms of education, the nature of knowledge, and educational responsibility—with learner agency at its core.





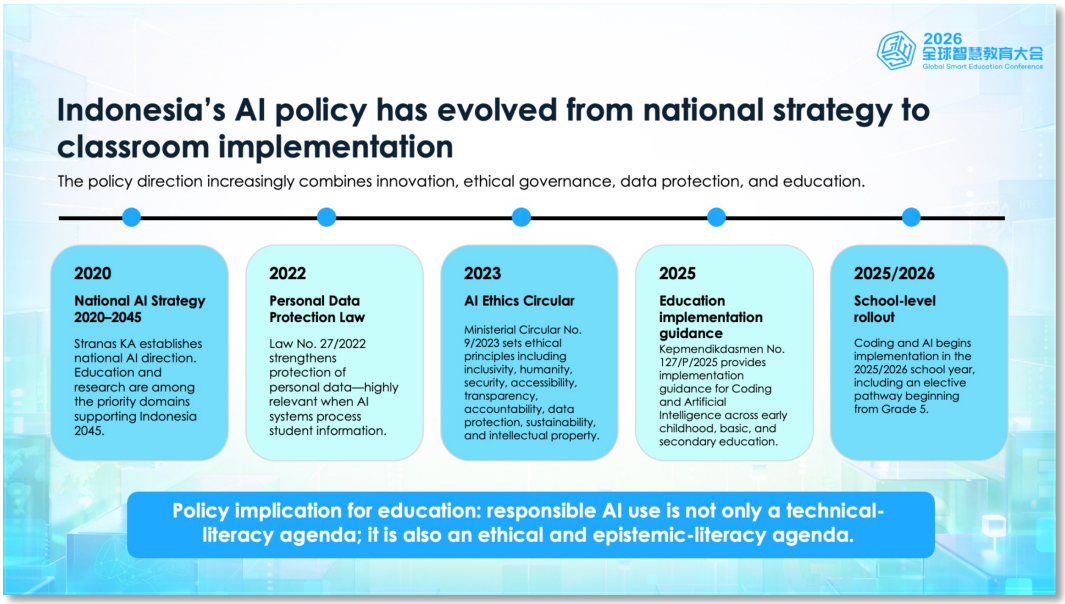


Prof. FAN Lianghuo, Chair Professor of Education, University of Macau, delivered a keynote address titled "Enhancing Teachers' AI Literacy for Education: Research and Practice in Teacher Education in Macao". He stated that in the age of artificial intelligence, teachers need not only to master AI tools, but also the ability to guide students in understanding,

applying, and using AI in a well-regulated manner. Macao is building a teacher AI literacy development system covering both pre-service training and in-service development through collaboration among the government, universities, and schools, advancing AI education and training from fragmented practice toward institutionalization, systematization, and sustainability, thereby supporting teachers' professional development and the advancement of smart education.



Mr. Edward (HAO Junxiong), Ph.D. Candidate, Beijing Normal University, Indonesia, delivered a keynote address titled "Rethinking the Educational Contract in the Age of AI: Epistemic Trust, Critical Thinking, and Learner Self-Empowerment across Indonesian K–12 Education". He stated that artificial intelligence is reshaping the relationship among teachers, learners, and knowledge, requiring education to move beyond "how to obtain information" toward "how to judge whether information is true, reliable, and relevant". He noted that epistemic trust is neither blind trust nor wholesale rejection, but rational judgment grounded in evidence, verification, and reflection.



The future of education depends not merely on technology itself, but on the choices humanity makes today. Trust, human agency, critical thinking, teacher empowerment, learner empowerment, and social responsibility all demonstrate that education must remain people-centered, and that teachers, learners, researchers, policymakers, and all sectors of society must work together to build a more open, trustworthy-centered, and humanistic educational ecosystem.



This plenary session was moderated by Dr. Abdulrahman Almedaires, Director General, UNESCO Regional Center for Quality and Excellencein Education (RCQE)

*The Plenary Session: A New Social Contract for Education and Learner Agency was organised by the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education.

Parallel Session:
Distinguished Teachers Share Insights on Future Classrooms

Teachers are at the heart of shaping future classrooms. As leaders of educational change, distinguished teachers play an important role in translating new ideas and technologies into meaningful improvements in teaching and learning. The session examined the competencies teachers need in future classrooms, including digital teaching skills, curriculum leadership, and the ability to work effectively with AI. Participants shared innovative practices in redesigning learning tasks, rethinking teaching processes, and creating new forms of classroom interaction, while exploring how AI can support differentiated instruction, timely feedback, and deeper learning. Discussions also highlighted the role of digital tools in supporting teachers' continuous professional learning by connecting teaching, research, assessment, and reflection, as well as the importance of professional learning communities and teacher leadership in turning individual expertise into shared knowledge and collective improvement. The session further explored new approaches to classroom assessment and stronger collaboration among regional teaching and research networks and distinguished teacher studios, with the aim of extending the impact of teacher expertise and supporting the development of more innovative, responsive, and future-ready classrooms.



Photo of Parallel Session: Distinguished Teachers Share Insights on Future Classrooms

SPEAKERS

Dato' Goh Hin San
President, Han Culture Centre Malaysia, Malaysia

Prof. QI Junguo
Dean, School of Continuing Education and Teacher Training, Beijing Normal University, China

Prof. Cherno Omar Barry
President, International Open University; Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Teacher Education, Digital Learning and Assessment, The Gambia

Dr. Sarena Shivers
Member-at-Large, Board of Directors, ISTE+ASCD, USA; Executive Director, Michigan Talent Coalition

Prof. CHEN Kaiquan
Professor, Ocean University of China, China

Prof. Abtar Darshan Singh
Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Harnessing Innovations in Technology to Support Teachers and Quality Learning; Professor, Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation, Malaysia

Mr. WU Haiming
Founder & Chairman, References-AI Technology (Beijing) Co., Ltd., China

Mr. DU Xuanjie
Director, Department of Technology Facilitation and Practical Training, Center for Faculty Development, South China Normal University, China

Mr. WU Ying
Principal, Changsha Zhongya Experimental School, China

Mr. GAO Guohua
Principal, Hengshui High School of Hebei, China

Mr. KUANG Shiguo
Secretary of the CPC General Branch and Principal, School Affiliated to Shuangliu Academy of Educational Sciences, Chengdu, China

Ms. LI Lingjing
Participant, Ministry of Education Leading Teacher Programme; Primary Mathematics Teaching Researcher, Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, China

MODERATORS

Ms. GUO Wanrong
College of Educational Technology, Northwest Normal University, China

Ms. CHEN Wen
School of Continuing Education and Teacher Training, Beijing Normal University, China

Mr. ZHU Yu
Teaching Researcher, Linping Institute of Educational Development and Research, Hangzhou, China

Opening Remarks: Advancing AI Education Globally and Empowering Educators for the Intelligent Era



Dato' Goh Hin San noted that Malaysia possesses the most comprehensive Chinese-language education system outside mainland China. He introduced the Malaysian Ministry of Education's newly launched National Blueprint for AI in Education and expressed optimism regarding prospects for collaboration in AI education. He affirmed the Han Culture Centre's commitment to working with Chinese partners to advance AI education internationally.



Prof. Qi Junguo emphasized that teachers constitute the core force driving the digital transformation of education, while distinguished teachers serve as the vanguard propelling classroom reform and educational innovation. He posited that the age of intelligence demands responses to three fundamental imperatives: the competency requirements of distinguished teachers, the morphological evolution of future classrooms, and the integration of technology with pedagogy.

Thematic Speech: Teacher Development and Classroom Transformation in the AI Era



Prof. Cherno Omar Barry delivered a keynote address entitled "Hold the Lamp, Not the Gavel: Forming the Teacher for Africa's Artificial-Intelligence Classroom." He argued that teachers represent education's most powerful instrument, and that technological applications can only achieve optimal efficacy under the scientific guidance of teachers. He proposed that cultivating teachers' critical capacity to interrogate AI requires focusing on seven key competencies: AI literacy, awareness of bias and equity, pedagogical integration capability, assessment literacy, ethics and data management, language and cultural stewardship, and professional agency.



Dr. Sarena Shivers presented "Harvesting Teacher Talent: Preparing Teachers in the Age of AI," in which she introduced the Michigan Talent Coalition's teacher development model. She argued that teachers must master AI across three dimensions: comprehending what AI is, understanding how to use it professionally, and leveraging it to enhance instruction. She maintained that AI should amplify human agency rather than supplant it, and that teachers should harness AI to deepen pedagogy and cultivate students capable of thriving in the AI era.



Prof. Chen Kaiquan of Ocean University of China presented "Dialogue + AI: Pathways to Building Future Classrooms through Teacher–Student–AI Collaboration." Drawing upon an analysis of hundreds of thousands of AI dialogue records generated by more than 20,000 students, he revealed that current human-machine interaction generally remains confined to shallow, fragmented information retrieval. He innovatively proposed the "Five-Layer Inquiry Model"—progressing from facts through interpretation, analysis, and evaluation to transfer—which guides AI to generate more profound responses through progressively layered questioning. This model has been implemented in teaching experiments across all grade levels and subject areas in Qingdao, significantly enhancing students' learning interest, autonomy, and classroom engagement.



Prof. Abtar Darshan Singh presented “The Future Classroom Has Already Arrived. Has Teaching?” She observed that although AI technology has permeated classrooms, pedagogy has yet to undergo substantive transformation. She contended that the future classroom is not merely a physical

space but a learning relationship—a novel mode of interaction among learners, educators, and intelligent technology. In the AI era, knowledge is no longer scarce, and the value of teachers must shift from knowledge transmission toward judgment, design, and guidance

Outcome Release and Public Welfare Initiative: AI Empowering Equitable Education



Mr. WU Haiming, Founder & Chairman, References-AI Technology (Beijing) Co., Ltd., China, articulated a vision of "a super AI teacher for every child and a super AI assistant for every teacher." He noted that traditional education confronts bottlenecks in teachers' time, energy, and capacity, whereas the AI era can address individual student differences through personalised solutions and promote the equitable sharing of high-quality educational resources.



Photo of Launch Ceremony of the Initiative

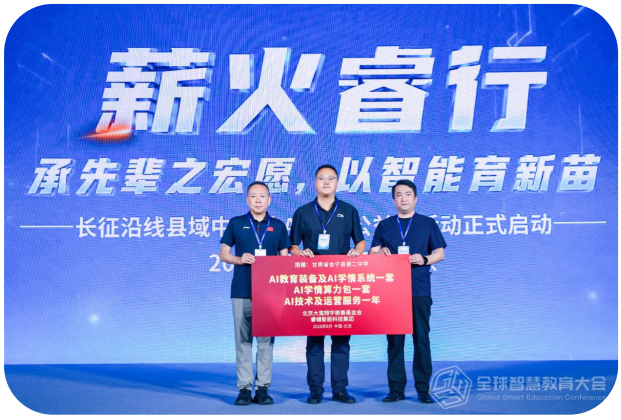


Photo of Donation Ceremony

Invited Speech: Strategies for AI Literacy, Smart Systems, and Evidence-Based Teaching

Mr. DU Xuanjie presented "Research on Key Technologies for Evidence-Based Classrooms from a Human–AI Collaboration Perspective." He argued that evidence-based classrooms must address three critical challenges: privacy and security, precise data collection, and the integration of technology with teaching research. He delineated a clear division of labour between humans and machines: teachers assume responsibility for posing questions and making instructional decisions, while machines handle evidence collection, computational analysis, and recommendation generation.

Mr. WU Ying, Principal of Changsha Zhongya Experimental School, shared his school's "Five Steps, Ten Strategies" framework for enhancing teachers' AI literacy, which fosters professional growth through productive output. The school has developed a "Four-Stage, Five-Loop, Three-Safeguard" micro-project training model that enables teachers to progress from basic competency to sophisticated application. This initiative has significantly advanced students' cognitive development and classroom interaction, and the school has been admitted to the National Digital Transformation Thousand-School Alliance.

Mr. GAO Guohua, Vice Principal of Hengshui High School, Hebei, elaborated on how the school's "135 Smart Education Strategic System" has catalysed three fundamental classroom shifts:

from uniform instruction to precision teaching with differentiated instruction, from knowledge delivery to competency-oriented generative learning, and from individual practice to collaborative inquiry within teaching research communities. He emphasised that technological evolution increasingly demands distinguished teachers who serve as guardians of educational values, masters of digital tools, and leaders of professional communities.

Mr. Kuang Shiguo, Secretary of the Party General Branch and Principal of the School Affiliated to the Shuangliu Academy of Educational Sciences, Chengdu, proposed the "Dual-Track Evidence-Based Teaching Research" model, in which one track employs AI to collect classroom data while the other engages teachers in professional judgment. Through concrete case studies, he demonstrated that teachers' capacity for deep attribution and instructional design remains irreplaceable.



Model Classroom: AI-Empowered Mathematical Inquiry Teaching

Ms. Li Lingjing, a participant in the Ministry of Education's Distinguished Teacher Programme and Primary Mathematics Teaching Researcher from Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, together with 30 students from Beijing Changping No. 2 Experimental Primary School, presented a compelling exemplar of AI deeply integrated into mathematics instruction. Using "Classification of Quadrilaterals" as the lesson focus, the session was structured around the inquiry sequence of *conjecture–verification–discussion–induction*.

Students initially classified quadrilaterals based on the number of parallel lines, then utilised the AI platform to drag line segments, rotate and scale them, and independently verify whether different combinations could form parallelograms, trapezoids, or general quadrilaterals.

Throughout the lesson, the AI platform functioned as a "scaffold" for student inquiry, transforming static knowledge into a dynamic construction process and enabling students to experience concept formation through embodied interaction. Spatial reasoning and logical awareness were effectively cultivated, vividly embodying the smart education philosophy that "technology serves the development of thinking."



Photo of Classroom Demonstration Scene

Expert Commentary: AI-Enabled Pedagogical Innovation and Embodied Learning

Prof. Zhang Chunli of the Institute of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, observed that the lesson's most exquisite feature was its transformation of static graphical cognition into a dynamic concept construction process. She attributed this pedagogical achievement to the support of AI software, which substantially reduced instructional costs and merits wider adoption.

Prof. Li Yushun of the School of Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, examined the lesson through the lens of "instructional structure empowering knowledge structure," identifying three defining characteristics of the AI-enabled classroom: the dynamic quality of spatial concepts, the logical rigour of reasoning awareness, and the systematic structuration of knowledge—precisely the vivid manifestation of embodied learning generating classroom vitality.

Mr. Lan Yanju, Deputy Director of Primary and Preschool Education Research at the Wenzhou Institute of Education and Teaching Research and Distinguished Teacher of Zhejiang Province, evaluated the lesson from the perspective of concept instruction, noting that AI technology renders dynamic demonstrations—previously difficult to achieve—readily accessible, and that the teacher leveraged the digital platform to guide students through the complete process of mathematical concept formation.

Mr. Jiao Zhenzhou, Vice Principal of Beijing Changping No. 2 Experimental Primary School, remarked that contemporary teachers and students are fortunate to think and imagine within an environment enriched by AI technology, and expressed his anticipation for continued exploration and refinement of AI-empowered classroom instruction.



Photo of Expert Commentary Session

This parallel session was jointly moderated by Ms. GUO Wanrong, College of Educational Technology, Northwest Normal University, China; Ms. CHEN Wen, School of Continuing Education and Teacher Training, Beijing Normal University, China; Mr. ZHU Yu, Teaching Researcher, Linping Institute of Educational Development and Research, Hangzhou, China







*The Parallel Session: Distinguished Teachers Share Insights on Future Classrooms was organised by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), the School of Continuing Education and Teacher Training, Beijing Normal University, the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, and References-AI Technology (Beijing) Co., Ltd.

Parallel Session:
Transforming TVET—On-Demand Learning and Skills for a Changing World

Digital transformation is creating new possibilities for how TVET is delivered, how skills are developed, and how learners prepare for a rapidly changing world of work. The session examined how digital technologies can support innovation in teaching and curriculum redesign, while responding to emerging skills needs driven by technological and industrial change. Discussions highlighted the potential of on-demand learning, micro-credentials, and modular courses to provide more flexible and personalised pathways for skills development, as well as the role of AI in practical training, skills assessment, and career guidance. Participants also explored ways to strengthen alignment between curricula and evolving workplace competencies, deepen collaboration between education and industry, and expand opportunities for upskilling and reskilling across different age groups and employment contexts. Overall, the session highlighted the importance of building a more open, responsive, and future-oriented TVET ecosystem that connects flexible learning with changing labour-market needs and supports lifelong learning and career development.



Photo of Parallel Session: Transforming TVET—On-Demand Learning and Skills for a Changing World

SPEAKERS

Mr. ZHANG Ze
Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Higher Education Press, China

Hon. Dr. Mo'ale 'Otunuku
Minister for Education and Training, Tonga

Mr. LI Yingli
Deputy Director of the Department of Vocational and Adult Education, Ministry of Education, China

Prof. WANG Qiong
Professor, Graduate School of Education, Peking University, China

Datuk Dr. Habibah Abdul Rahim
Director, SEAMEO Secretariat

Prof. ZHANG Wei
Secretary of the CPC Committee and Professor, Chongqing Vocational University of Electronic Science and Technology, China

Prof. LIU Yongsheng
President, Wuhan City College of Vocational Education, China

Prof. CHEN Jun
President, Suzhou Polytechnic University; Chair, Subcommittee on Transportation Engineering, Ministry of Education; Chair, Transportation Engineering Division, World Transport Convention (WTC), China

Prof. ZENG Wenquan
Vice President, Guangdong Polytechnic of Science and Technology; Chair, Vocational and Technical Education Committee, China Computer Federation (CCF), China

Ms. YANG Yan
Director, Institute of Lifelong Education, Tianjin Academy of Educational Sciences; Deputy Director, Tianjin Luban Workshop Research and Promotion Center, China

Prof. CAI Jun
Vice President, Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University, China

Ms. Xue Chunmei
Director, Science and Technology Innovation Center, Higher Education Press, China

Mr. LIN Wei
Rotating CEO, NetDragon Websoft, China

Prof. Paul Prinsloo
Emeritus Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa

Dr. Sylvie Mucyo
Vice-Chancellor, Rwanda Polytechnic, Rwanda

Prof. Santosh Panda
Editor, Journal of Learning for Development; Professor of Distance Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), India

Prof. Carlos Alberto Pereira de Oliveira
Director, Interdisciplinary Institute for Human Development and Technology, Rio de Janeiro State University, Brazil

Dr. Usama Kalim
Postdoctoral Fellow, Beijing Normal University, China

MODERATORS

Mr. ZHOU Xianhai
Director, Smart Vocational Education Development Center, Higher Education Press, China

Ms. LIU Zhiwei
Director, International Business Development of General Administration Office, Higher Education Press, China

Prof. Asha S. Kanwar
Chair Professor, Beijing Normal University; Chair, Advisory Committee of the GSENet; Former Chair, UNESCO IITE Governing Board; Former President, COL

Opening Remarks: Forging Consensus on Digital Intelligence to Chart a New Blueprint for TVET



Mr. ZHANG Ze, stated that TVET is currently undergoing profound transformation, characterised by deep industry-education integration, digital transformation and skills reshaping, and international collaboration. Leveraging the National Smart Education Platform for Vocational Education, Higher Education Press has focused on the integrated construction of majors, courses, teaching materials, teachers, and experimental training, accelerating the development of online courses, digital textbooks, teacher training, and virtual training resources. It has also advanced smart MOOCs, digital textbooks, and education-specific large models, built future classrooms and future training centres, and promoted the international sharing of quality resources through the Luban Workshop and "Future Africa" online education channels, forging new pathways for skilled talent cultivation through "platform + resources + services".



Hon. Dr. Mo'ale 'Otunuku, pointed out that for small island developing states in the Blue Pacific region, digital transformation is not only a means to improve education quality, but also a critical support for addressing climate change and achieving green transition. Tonga is relying on the Pacific Regional Education Framework and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent to embed green skills into on-demand learning training modules through the Pacific Australia Skills Programme, build a high-quality professional trainer workforce, and bridge geographical gaps through digital simulation tools and AI-driven skills mapping, ensuring that quality green TVET training reaches outer islands and that youth, women, and persons with disabilities are not left behind.



Mr. Li Yingli, noted that China has deeply implemented the national education digitalisation strategy, integrating AI into the entire education process and achieving positive progress in the digital transformation of TVET. China has completed the digital upgrade of 361 traditional majors and released 758 national professional teaching standards. The National Smart Education Platform for Vocational Education has aggregated 69,000 courses and over 80,000 virtual simulation training resources, with registered users exceeding 40.2 million. The high-skilled talent cluster cultivation programme has been launched, promoting the linked reform of five key teaching elements: majors, curricula, teaching materials, teachers, and internships. The international version of the platform has launched over 28,000 micro-courses, providing smart learning services for global learners. Looking to the future, he put forward three initiatives: first, to continuously deepen digital empowerment of teaching reform, integrating digital technology throughout major construction, classroom teaching, and practical training; second, to jointly cultivate future high-skilled talents, focusing on frontier fields such as AI and green manufacturing, and exploring the construction of future classrooms, future training centres, and future schools; and third, to share the fruits of smart education development, making digital innovation accessible to all, available at all times, and reachable everywhere.

Thematic Speech: Multi-Dimensional Perspectives on Digital-Intelligence Transformation

Prof. WANG Qiong, proposed that the AI era urgently needs compound talents centred on "human judgment," constructing an AI literacy "Five Competencies" framework encompassing knowledge comprehension, technology application, value judgment, cross-boundary

integration, and self-renewal capabilities. She advocated for a new "teacher-student-machine" ternary collaborative pedagogy to drive the transformation of teaching models from "experience-driven" to "data-driven."

Datuk Dr. Habibah Abdul Rahim, proposed in her report a shift from a training paradigm to a more forward-looking transformation and development model. She advocated incorporating AI literacy and digital skills into the core curriculum system of TVET, strengthening regional policy coordination and resource sharing, and jointly addressing the challenges and opportunities brought by technological change.

Mr. ZHANG Ze, proposed that TVET is entering a new stage of digital-intelligence development, where cultivating compound "knowledge + skills + scenario" leapfrog capabilities is the core proposition. Future training centres should be driven by real industrial tasks, underpinned by a data hub, powered by intelligent agent clusters, and supported by XR immersive technology, to overcome the "high investment, high loss, high risk" challenges of traditional practical training.







Prof. ZHANG Wei, systematically introduced the university's "digital-intelligence integration, digital-intelligence empowerment, and digital-intelligence convergence" three-in-one transformation pathway. The university has built a campus "one cloud" and a "5G + campus network" infrastructure, established eight major clusters aligned with Chongqing's "33618" modern manufacturing cluster, developed nearly 1,000 blended learning courses with an online course opening rate exceeding 98%, and empowered teaching reform and campus governance modernisation through digital-intelligence transformation.

Prof. LIU Yongsheng, introduced the practice of empowering the "Wuhan · China Auto Valley" industry-education consortium through the National Smart Education Platform. With 229 member units, the consortium has established a list-based operation mechanism of "enterprise orders, school responds," achieving "industrial new technologies entering the classroom within 60 days and going online within 90 days." The college has independently developed an AI digital teacher "Xiao Wu" to support teaching.

Prof. CHEN Jun, shared the practice of leading the formation of one of China's first national-level municipal industry-education integration consortia for robotics and intelligent manufacturing. The university independently developed the "Chan Jiao Tong" platform, integrating over 20,000 data entries to form a holographic map, achieving "five 100%" in industry-education integration. In 2025, 2,115 graduates remained in Suzhou, with a professional-post matching degree of 91%.







Prof. ZENG Wenquan, shared the university's experience in advancing AI+ teaching reform through the "Four-Step Method" (observation, listening, inquiry, and diagnosis). The university has built an intelligent computing centre with approximately 27.8 PFLOPS of computing power, jointly developed a vocational education-specific large model with enterprises, and constructed a school-based intelligent agent "supermarket" (with over 4,500 teaching intelligent agents built). It has implemented the "Hundred-Thousand-Ten Thousand Project" to build 100 smart courses, 1,000 competency map, and 10,000 teaching intelligent agents, promoting "teacher-student-machine" collaborative teaching through "AI-guided learning" to realise human-machine collaboration and personalised teaching.

Prof. CAI Jun, Vice President of Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University, presented "Exploration and Practice of Empowering Application-Oriented Teachers with 'Information Technology Application Innovation + Artificial Intelligence'." He pointed out that the university is exploring a "1+1+3" application-oriented talent cultivation model by building an application-oriented AI teacher platform, combining domestic technology ecosystems with AI teaching tools to provide teacher guarantees for cultivating high-quality technical and skilled talents adapted to industrial upgrading needs.

Ms. YANG Yan, Director of the Institute of Lifelong Education, Tianjin Academy of Educational Sciences, presented "Digital-Intelligence-Empowered International Cooperation in Vocational Education: From Technological Tools to Paradigm Restructuring." She analysed practical challenges in TVET international cooperation such as language communication and standard mutual recognition. She pointed out that AI is driving international cooperation from "technological tools" toward paradigm restructuring—competency generation paradigms are shifting from empirical induction to data modelling, and cooperation ecological paradigms are shifting from unilateral output to co-construction and sharing. She introduced the jointly developed AI intelligent courses and the Digital Luban Workshop launched on the National Smart Education Platform for Vocational Education in 2025, providing 311 bilingual digital courses and 178 bilingual virtual simulation practice courses, building an innovative international public service platform for global technical and skilled talent cultivation.



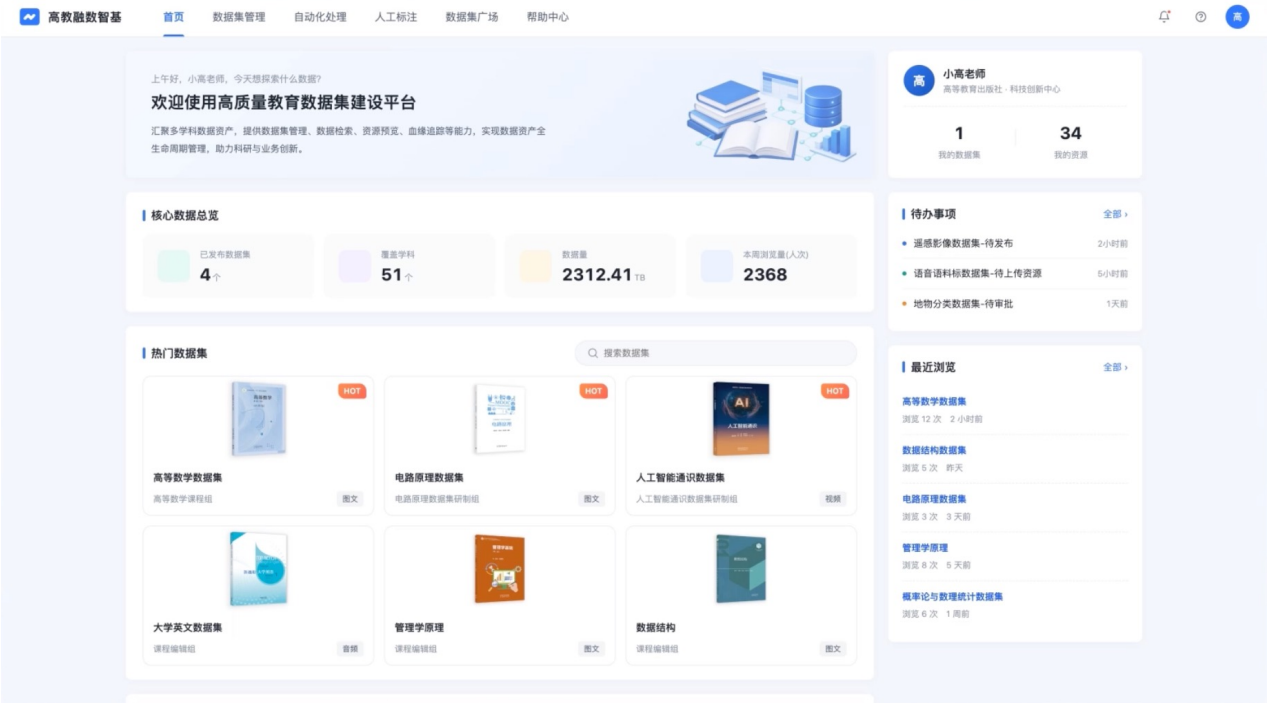




Outcome Release: Digital-Intelligence Platforms Empowering Educational Innovation



Ms. XUE Chunling, Director, Digital Production Review Center, Higher Education Press, China, released the " Higher Education Press Data Intelligence Foundation: a platform for building high-quality education datasets." Anchored on three goals—governable, operable, and replicable—the platform has built five functional centres. It has aggregated 2.35 PB of multimodal education raw data and completed over 2 million standardised fine-annotation resources, providing a solid data foundation for education large model training and intelligent teaching applications.





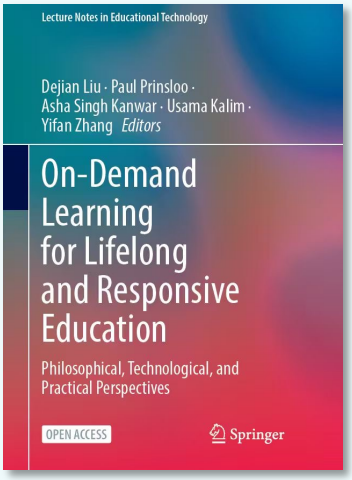
Mr. LIN Wei, Rotating CEO of NetDragon Websoft, released the initiative “E Enabling Every Student to Reach a Better Future" and launched the "AI Employee" Platform. Through "AI Employee" practices in real industrial positions such as AI digital humans and AI game operations, the platform transforms industrial needs into trainable learning projects, replacing examination scores with project outcomes as competency certification. It has already implemented empowerment solutions in eight core professional directions, supported by a dual-mentor system, achieving the fastest transition from signing to course opening in just two weeks.



Panel Discussion: Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on On-Demand Learning

Participants watched the release video of the new book *On-Demand Learning for Lifelong and Responsive Education*, co-edited by **Prof. Dejian Liu**, Co-Dean of the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, together with **Paul Prinsloo**, **Asha S. Kanwar**, **Li Hao**, and **Zhang Yifan**, and published by Springer. The video opened with soul-searching questions such as "What is uniquely human now?" "Should we teach 'prompts' or 'thinking'?" and "Can judgment be taught?" It pointed out that on-demand learning is entering its third stage characterised by human-machine collaboration, calling on every educator and policymaker to confront the essence of learning under technological transformation.





This open access edited volume explores the evolving relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) and mathematics education, offering a comprehensive, multidisciplinary examination of how AI technologies are transforming curriculum design, student learning outcomes, assessment methods, and pedagogical practices across diverse educational contexts. In light of the rapid development and adoption of AI in educational institutions, this book addresses critical questions, shares global perspectives, and provides practical guidance on the future of mathematics instruction. Each chapter—whether theoretical, empirical, or practice-based—offers a distinct perspective on AI's impact on pedagogy, equity, inclusion, and ethics, four critical dimensions of contemporary education. Bringing together educators, researchers, and technologists from regions including India, Latin America, the United States, and Europe, this book examines both the opportunities and challenges of integrating AI into mathematics education, and serves as a valuable resource for educators, researchers, and policymakers worldwide.

Moderated by **Prof. Asha S. Kanwar**, Chair Professor of Beijing Normal University, the panel discussion on "On-Demand Learning for Lifelong and Responsive Education: Philosophical, Technological and Practical Perspectives " featured **Prof. Paul Prinsloo** (Professor Emeritus, University of South Africa), **Dr. Sylvie Mucyo** (Vice-Chancellor, Rwanda Polytechnic), **Prof. Santosh Panda** (Editor, Journal of Learning for Development; Professor of Distance Education, IGNOU, India), **Prof. Carlos Alberto Pereira de Oliveira** (Director, Interdisciplinary Institute for Human Development and Technology, Rio de Janeiro State University, Brazil), and **Dr. Usama Kalim** (Postdoctoral Fellow, Beijing Normal University, China). The dialogue covered topics including institutional frameworks and certification, value orientations, equity and inclusion, health sector practices, and quality assurance.

Key insights from the panel included:

- On-demand learning is not merely 'just-in-time learning' but requires institutional mechanisms such as national qualification frameworks, credit accumulation and transfer, and recognition of prior learning to support the integration of formal, informal, and non-formal learning.
- At the value level, we must question 'whose values' are determining how systems operate. AI must serve human dignity, and efficiency should not be embraced without critical reflection.
- Regarding equity and inclusion, we must confront digital access barriers, gender disparities, and language obstacles, designing for marginalised populations, integrating learning into communities, and recognising informal learning to ensure the most vulnerable groups are not excluded.
- On-demand learning should enable continuous learning and development for everyone, including the 'silver generation', ensuring that lifelong learning becomes a reality across all age groups and employment contexts.

Participants unanimously agreed that building a learner-centred, industry-education integration-oriented, and international cooperation-supported new ecosystem for vocational education, driven by digital-intelligence technology, has become a global consensus. All parties will continue to strengthen exchanges and cooperation, jointly promoting the construction of a flexible, open, precisely adaptive, and future-oriented skills cultivation ecosystem.



Photo of Panel Discussion Session

This parallel session was jointly moderated by Mr. ZHOU Xianhai, Director, Smart Vocational Education Development Center, Higher Education Press, China; Ms. LIU Zhiwei, Director, International Business Development of General Administration Office, Higher Education Press, China; Prof. Asha S. Kanwar, Chair Professor, Beijing Normal University; Chair, Advisory Committee of the GSENet; Former Chair, UNESCO IITE Governing Board; Former President, COL.







*The Parallel Session: Transforming TVET—On-Demand Learning and Skills for a Changing World was organised by Higher Education Press, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, and the Center of Information and Network Technology, Beijing Normal University.

Parallel Session:
Advancing High-Quality Early Childhood Education in the Age of AI

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into early childhood education, it is opening new possibilities for understanding individual children's development, supporting teachers' professional practice, and enhancing the quality and accessibility of early childhood education. At the same time, its growing presence raises fundamental questions about how technology can be used in ways that respect children's developmental needs, preserve the essential values of early childhood education, and maintain appropriate boundaries between digital technologies and children's everyday experiences. Framed around the dual priorities of safeguarding and innovation, the session examined how quality in early childhood education should be understood and advanced in the age of AI. Discussions explored how AI can support the observation of children's development, strengthen teachers' professional judgement, and improve the quality of care and education while keeping children at the centre of learning. Particular attention was given to preserving play-based, experiential, and inquiry-oriented learning, and to ensuring that AI remains a supportive tool that enriches learning and development without diminishing the value of play, human interaction, and childhood itself.



Photo of Parallel Session: Advancing High-Quality Early Childhood Education in the Age of AI

SPEAKERS

Ms. WANG Cunxiang
Deputy District Mayor, People's Government of Nanhu District, Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, China

Mr. LIU Qingsheng
Chairman, Anhui ToyCloud Technology Co., Ltd., China

Ms. CHEN Lin
Director, Early Childhood Education Division, Center for Educational Technology and Resource Development (National Center for Educational Technology), Ministry of Education, China

Ms. PU Zhen
Director, Educational Technology Center, Department of Education of the Tibet Autonomous Region, China

Mr. HAN Weifeng
Director, Education and Sports Bureau of Nanhu District, Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, China

Prof. ZHANG Lixin
Deputy Director, Academic Department, National Training Center for Kindergarten Principals, Ministry of Education, China

Prof. ZHANG Heyi
Associate Professor, School of Early Childhood Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Ms. Ruetai Chongsrid
Senior Division Director, Academic Services and Curriculum Assessment for Human Capital Development Division, National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), Thailand

Ms. YANG Xiaoyu
Principal, Jiaxing No. 1 Kindergarten, Zhejiang, China

Mr. Sonam Wangdui
Deputy Principal, Experimental Kindergarten of the Tibet Autonomous Region, China

Ms. MENG Qingling
Principal, Dongyuefu Kindergarten, Zhaohua Early Education Group, Chaoyang District, Beijing, China

Ms. TANG Yanying
Principal, Jiaxing No. 2 Kindergarten, Zhejiang, China

Mr. WANG Zhengwei
Principal, Qingdao Experimental Kindergarten, Shandong, China

Ms. CAO Yuanyuan
Principal, Wenjing Kindergarten, Suzhou Industrial Park, Jiangsu, China

MODERATORS

Mr. YANG Yuankui
Assistant to the Director, Key Laboratory of Child Development and Learning Science, Ministry of Education, China

Ms. YE Juan
Executive Dean, Institute for Early Childhood Education Applications, ToyCloud Technology, China

Opening Remarks: Safeguarding the Child-Centred Stance Amid the Digital and Intelligent Wave



Ms. WANG Cunxiang, Deputy District Mayor of People's Government of Nanhu District, noted that Nanhu District is anchored to the goal of "quality preschool education for all" and adheres to "forward-looking planning, systematic integration, and innovation while upholding principles." She highlighted three priority areas: first, government coordination, with nearly RMB 100 million invested to build a full-chain "AI + Preschool Education" platform and the establishment of a "Future Academy" to enhance teachers' digital literacy at differentiated levels; second, strengthening technological support through partnerships with leading technology enterprises to implement scenarios such as AI teaching assistants and AI picture books, translating cutting-edge technology into practical tools for care and education; and third, deepening practical innovation by encouraging kindergartens to explore new models, promoting the transition from "two teachers and one caregiver" to "three teachers and one caregiver."



Mr. LIU Qingsheng, Chairman, Anhui ToyCloud Technology Co., Ltd., China, emphasized that "in developing AI for children, technology is always a tool, while children's developmental laws are the starting point; technology needs to evolve, but reverence for childhood must never be lost." He stressed the importance of using digital tools to enrich the forms of play and expand the boundaries of children's inquiry, ensuring that technology serves play rather than forcing play to accommodate technology. Looking ahead, digital-intelligent transformation in preschool education must not only develop technologies better aligned with children's physical and mental characteristics but also uphold the original mission of education while innovating in gamified applications, making AI an assistant for teachers, a helper for parents, and a playmate for children, jointly safeguarding every childhood and enabling children to grow naturally, healthily, and joyfully through play.

Keynote Speech: From Top-Level Design to Frontline Practice—Pathways and Boundaries of AI-Empowered Preschool Education



Ms. CHEN Lin, Director, Early Childhood Education Division, Center for Educational Technology and Resource Development (National Center for Educational Technology), Ministry of Education, China, delivered a keynote entitled "Some Reflections on AI-Empowered High-Quality Development of Early Childhood Education." She pointed out that preschool education in the AI era faces new propositions. She emphasised that the empowering role of technology must be transmitted indirectly through kindergartens, teachers, and parents, with the core philosophy centred on promoting children's healthy growth and holistic development. It is essential to safeguard the red line of safety and the bottom line of ethics, building a collaborative ecosystem where education and technology advance toward each other.



Ms. PU Zhen, Director, Educational Technology Center, Department of Education of the Tibet Autonomous Region, China, brought a practical sample from the snowy plateau. Tibet has launched AI application pilots in 71 schools and two prefecture-level cities, covering five scenarios: AI-assisted teaching, learning, research, assessment, and services. In kindergarten settings, AI physical education classes have made exercise more engaging, and AI interactive picture-book systems have transformed reading from "being asked to read" to "wanting to read," effectively stimulating the intrinsic motivation of plateau children to learn.



Mr. HAN Weifeng, Director, Education and Sports Bureau of Nanhu District, Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, China, stated clearly in her report that Nanhu District has integrated the digital transformation of preschool education into the district-wide strategic plan for educational AI, releasing the "Future Academy" Construction Plan for AI Applications in the Nanhu District Education Sector. She explained that the district answers the question of "where the future is headed" with "one planning blueprint," ensures data-informed management decisions with "one digital infrastructure," addresses the question of "how to learn" with "one application initiative," and forges a new intelligent teaching force meeting the demands of the era with "one digital-intelligent team."



Prof. ZHANG Lixin, noted that principals' overall digital leadership is at a moderately high level, with the strongest performance in digital vision planning and the weakest in digital care-and-education guidance. She recommended coordinated efforts across four levels—government, training institutions, kindergartens, and principals themselves—to enhance principals' digital leadership and promote the deep integration of digital technology with kindergarten management and teaching.



Prof. ZHANG Heyi, Associate Professor, School of Early Childhood Education, Beijing Normal University, China, presented "Early Reading in the AI Era: Reading Companions, Interaction Quality, and Educational Choices." She pointed out that while conversational AI can complete basic interactions, high-quality reading interactions are inseparable from emotional engagement and resonance. Teachers and parents possess unique value in supporting early reading. She called for the creation of a "teacher-led, AI-assisted" reading ecology in kindergartens, where teachers flexibly and appropriately utilise AI tools, determining the manner and extent of AI involvement based on activity objectives, children's developmental levels, reading content, and interaction needs.



Ms. Ruetai Chongsrid from NSTDA, shared inspiring practices from Thailand's "Little Scientists' House" project. Under the theme "Before AI, Before Coding", she highlighted curiosity as a foundational force in early childhood education. Through examples of children exploring fish in local markets and rivers, investigating Thai buffaloes, observing cave bats, and studying stingless bees in their communities, she showed how learning can grow out of children's everyday surroundings and authentic questions. She emphasized that early childhood education should encourage children to question, inquire and shape the future, while supporting each child's cognitive, creative, social, physical and environmental potential. Her presentation also underlined the value of safe learning environments, inquiry-based learning, teacher-child co-construction and metacognition, helping young learners develop the confidence and capacity to explore, reflect and engage with an increasingly complex world.

Outcome Release: Launch of the "7+X" Smart Early Childhood Education Ecosystem and Announcement of Outstanding Cases

The parallel session held the launch ceremony of the "7+X" Smart Early Childhood Education Ecosystem Co-Construction Programme. Distinguished guests including **Prof. CHEN Guangju**, former Vice President of Beijing Normal University; **Mr. HAN Weifeng**, Party Committee Member and Inspector General of the Nanhu District Education and Sports Bureau; **Ms. ZHAO Chaoying**, Party Committee Member of the Yiwu Education Bureau; **Ms. XIA Hui**, Teaching Researcher of the Guangde Education and Sports Bureau; **Ms. REN Pingping**, Vice President of iFlytek; **Ms. ZHU Cuiling**, Director of the Central-South Six Provinces Preschool Education AI Integration and Innovative Application Collaboration Center; and **Mr. RUAN Kai**, Vice President of Anhui ToyCloud Technology Co., Ltd., jointly inaugurated the programme. Subsequently, the conference announced the list of 2026 Outstanding Smart Education Cases (Early Childhood Education), with a total of 18 cases receiving this honour. The cases covered kindergartens and education departments from Zhejiang, Shandong, Tibet, Anhui, Hubei, Jiangsu, and other regions, encompassing regional cases and school-level cases that explored AI-empowered emotional expression, language development, physical competence, picture-book reading, transition from kindergarten to primary school, science education, home-kindergarten co-education, and evidence-based evaluation.



Photo of Launch of the "7+X" Smart Early Childhood Education Ecosystem



Photo of Announcement of Outstanding Cases

Cases Presentation: Principals Share Practical Strategies for Digital-Intelligent Transformation



Ms. YANG Xiaoyu, Principal, Jiaxing No. 1 Kindergarten, Zhejiang, China, introduced the "Two Departments and Four Centres" management structure and the "Three Major Digital Base Station Linkage System," comprising the Digital Panoramic Computing Station, the Care-and-Education Behaviour Evidence Station, and the Teacher Development Assessment Station. Through AI-generated teacher growth profiles, the system enables precise cultivation of teaching talent.



Mr. Sonam Wangdui, Deputy Principal, Experimental Kindergarten of the Tibet Autonomous Region, China, shared the kindergarten's practice of using AI picture-book reading to help preschool children in ethnic-minority areas master Mandarin. The kindergarten has built an AI picture-book reading room and constructed a three-stage circular model of "curiosity activation—immersive empowerment—radiation extension." Through intelligent interactive terminals that enable reading accompaniment with every page turn, the system creates an immersive Mandarin language environment that effectively stimulates children's reading interest and language expression confidence, enabling children on the snowy plateau to gradually acquire standard and clear Mandarin communication skills through joyful reading.



Ms. MENG Qingling, Principal, Dongyuefu Kindergarten, Zhaohua Early Education Group, Chaoyang District, Beijing, China, presented "Giving Technology Warmth and Childhood Wonder." She conducted systematic research around three core questions: how intelligent devices can align with children's cognitive characteristics, how intelligent technology can be integrated into daily care-and-education scenarios, and how human–machine collaboration can achieve complementary advantages. By introducing intelligent devices such as the Alpha Egg Go robot, teachers have moved from "fearing AI" to "making good use of AI," allowing them to concentrate on children's emotional nurturing, social guidance, thinking development, character building, and home-kindergarten co-education, making digital teaching both professional and imbued with the humanistic warmth of preschool education.



Ms. TANG Yanying, Principal, Jiaxing No. 2 Kindergarten, Zhejiang, China, shared new reforms in the "integration of healthcare and education" for kindergarten nursery classes empowered by AI. She demonstrated how, in care-and-education scenarios for two- to three-year-old nursery classes, AI assists teachers in integrating fragmented health information—such as morning check records, meal observations, and sleep monitoring—into comprehensive child profiles. This enables teachers to accurately identify the underlying causes of common issues such as separation anxiety, eating behaviours, and nap habits, truly achieving the shift from "experience-driven" to "data-driven" practice, and ultimately building a new educational ecology where "technological rationality" and "humanistic care" converge.



Mr. WANG Zhengwei, Principal, Qingdao Experimental Kindergarten, Shandong, China, presented the construction and practice of a digital-intelligent education system in kindergartens. The kindergarten established four principles: "children first, moderate application, integrated innovation, and safety controllability," and distilled the core philosophy of "nurturing wisdom by following nature, cultivating children's hearts through digital

intelligence." It built a five-dimensional collaborative smart education architecture spanning "management—teaching—training—assessment—nurturing." The related case won the Second Prize of Shandong Provincial Basic Education Teaching Achievement Award and was selected as a 2026 Outstanding Smart Education Case.



Ms. CAO Yuanyuan, Principal, Wenjing Kindergarten, Suzhou Industrial Park, Jiangsu, China, presented "Beyond Pictures: The Practical Call and Collaborative Pathways for AI Supporting Children's Independent Listening and Reading of Picture Books." She noted that over 90% of children spend less than three minutes on each picture book. AI reading robots, through OCR and NLP technologies, help children overcome literacy barriers to achieve independent listening and reading. She proposed three basic principles: "educational appropriateness," "dual-role positioning," and "data-driven decision-making," emphasising that "technology provides the pathway, while teachers determine the quality."

This parallel session was jointly moderated by Mr. YANG Yuankui, Assistant to the Director, Key Laboratory of Child Development and Learning Science, Ministry of Education, China; Ms. YE Juan, Executive Dean, Institute for Early Childhood Education Applications, ToyCloud Technology, China.





*The Parallel Session: Advancing High-Quality Early Childhood Education in the Age of AI was organised by the Nanhu District Bureau of Education and Sports, Jiaxing, China, the Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, the National Engineering Research Center of Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology, and Anhui ToyCloud Technology Co., Ltd.

Parallel Session: Smart Villages and Education for Rural Transformation

Advances in technology and digital transformation are creating new possibilities for educational innovation and sustainable rural development. In this context, digital innovation can expand opportunities for formal education, non-formal education, and informal learning, while strengthening the capacity of rural communities to respond to social, economic, and technological change. The session examined how education and digital technologies can contribute to the development of smart villages and foster more inclusive, resilient, and future-ready learning communities. Discussions focused on digital innovation in rural schools and communities, the role of STEM education as a catalyst for educational innovation and rural transformation, and strategies for reskilling and upskilling rural populations to participate in and benefit from digital transformation. Participants also explored diverse pathways and collaborative mechanisms for building learning villages in the digital age. Overall, the session highlighted the importance of connecting education, skills development, technology, and community participation to support sustainable rural transformation and lifelong learning.



Photo of the Parallel Session on Smart Villages and Education for Rural Transformation

SPEAKERS

Prof. ZHOU Zuoyu
Director, UNESCO INRULED; Vice Chairperson, University Council, Beijing Normal University, China

Dr. Azman bin Jusoh
Centre Director, SEAMEO RECSAM

Dr. Nicolás Patrici
Strategy and Development Director, Obreal

Dr. Badarch Kherlen
Member of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia, Mongolia

Puan Fadzliaton Binti Zainudin
Deputy Director, Digital Education Policy Unit, Policy, Planning and Research Sector, Educational Resources and Technology Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia

Dr. Kessara Amornvuthivorn
Centre Director, SEAMEO STEM-ED

Ms. ZHANG Yaqiong
Brand Center General Manager, Inner Mongolia Yinshan Youmai Food Co., Ltd., China

Prof. LIU Ji
Professor, Shaanxi Normal University; Director of the Shaanxi Provincial "Belt and Road" Discipline Innovation and Talent Introduction Base for Teacher Education, China

Ms. Elizabeth Colucci
Director for Education Policy and Programs, Obreal, Spain

Prof. DU Ruo
Dean, Institute of Lifelong Education, The Open University of China, China

Ms. Ahnee Lae Monzon Abutin
Policy and Planning Specialist, SEAMEO Secretariat

Mr. LIU Baoxiang
General Manager, Public Welfare Department, China Pocy Group, China

Prof. Sandra D'Agostino
Undersecretary of Digital Government, Government of the Province of Buenos Aires; Professor, National University of La Plata (UNLP), Argentina

Ms. ZHANG Liping
Deputy Director, Research and Guidance Center for Educational Technology and Equipment, Heilongjiang Institute for Teacher Development; Deputy Director, Heilongjiang Educational Technology Center, China

Hon. Dr. Kaviraj Sukon
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Mr. Danial Adam
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Dr. Muhammad Yaseen
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MODERATORS

Ms. LIU Ruixi
Programme Coordinator, UNESCO INRULED

Ms. Gayatiri Balasubramaniam
Education Specialist, SEAMEO RECSAM

Ms. FANG Yuan'an
Programme Coordinator, UNESCO INRULED

Opening Remarks: Prioritizing Digital Innovation and Educational Equity for Sustainable Rural Development



Prof. ZHOU Zuoyu, Director of UNESCO INRULED and Vice Chairperson of the University Council of Beijing Normal University, pointed out that the new round of the global digital revolution and the breakthroughs in generative artificial intelligence are profoundly reshaping the ways knowledge is created, disseminated, and acquired through lifelong learning, opening up unprecedented space for educational innovation. However, significant gaps still exist between urban and rural areas in terms of digital infrastructure, technological capabilities, and digital literacy. He emphasized that

future-oriented rural education should not be confined within school spaces, but should be further extended to communities, families, and daily life, achieving a flexible integration of formal, non-formal, and informal learning. He expressed the hope that participants would engage in in-depth discussions on key issues such as how digital innovation can expand equitable learning opportunities, how educational innovation can promote skills reshaping for the rural workforce, and how integrated development of education, industry, technology, and communities can be realized.



Dr. Azman bin Jusoh, Centre Director of SEAMEO RECSAM, stressed that the digital transformation of rural education should not be measured solely by device and network coverage; true wisdom lies in turning digital infrastructure into human capacity, so that learners can use knowledge, skills, and technology to solve local real-world problems and shape the future of their communities. He noted that empowering rural teachers is an important starting point for rural transformation, and that teachers should evolve from technology users into learning architects, innovators, and agents of change, so that STEM and AI education are truly integrated with the practical needs of communities as well as local knowledge and cultural traditions.



Mr. Nicolás Patrici, Strategy and Development Director of Obreal, pointed out that global challenges require global dialogue, but solutions must fully take into account the different stages of development, cultural traditions, and practical conditions across various regions. Universities and research centres should serve as vital forces in the innovation ecosystem, promoting knowledge sharing through cross-regional and cross-sectoral collaboration, while integrating global experience with local realities.

Thematic Speeches: Pooling Digital Practice Wisdom to Explore Innovative Pathways for Rural Education



Dr. Badarch Kherlen, Member of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia, shared practical experiences on leveraging artificial intelligence to promote personalised learning in remote areas, drawing on the realities of Mongolia's pastoral regions. She noted that some pastoral areas in Mongolia are vast in territory with sparsely distributed populations, and that AI and remote learning offer new possibilities for overcoming temporal and spatial constraints and providing personalised learning support. Mongolia is advancing digital education development through the Digital Community Information Worker Programme, training teachers and youth digital leaders, and exploring the use of AI to support animal husbandry, public services, entrepreneurship, and other fields, striving to bring digital education to every learner in remote areas.



Puan Fadzliaton Binti Zainudin, Deputy Director of the Digital Education Policy Unit, Policy, Planning and Research Sector, Educational Resources and Technology Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, delivered a speech titled "Driving Inclusive Transformation: Policy Framework and Digital Ecosystem for Smart Rural Schools". In response to the realities of a large number of schools in rural and remote areas and significant variations in network conditions, Malaysia is advancing digital equity through infrastructure development, equipment deployment, teacher professional development, and integrated online-offline digital learning environments. Some regions are also exploring the use of local data storage, satellite connectivity, and community digital learning spaces to ensure continuous access to learning resources for rural students.



Dr. Kessara Amornvuthivorn, Centre Director of SEAMEO STEM-ED, delivered a speech titled "Empowered Learning: Leveraging AI to Foster Community Citizenship and Real-World Impact". She stressed that rural schools have natural ties with their communities, and that STEM education can guide students through inquiry-based learning to pay attention to real community issues, applying STEM knowledge to real-world practice. She pointed out that rural education transformation requires strengthening teacher professional development, school leadership, interdisciplinary collaboration, and evidence-based practices, enabling students to truly become problem-solvers and community participants.



Ms. ZHANG Yaqiong, Inner Mongolia Yinshan Youmai Food Co., Ltd., China, shared the company's practice of promoting rural revitalization through the full oat industry chain and advancing local industrial development and farmers' income growth through the "enterprise + farmer" contract farming model. The company has turned industrial resources into educational classrooms through multiple approaches, including the building of an oat culture museum, an agricultural machinery culture museum. Through the establishment of diverse partnerships, the company supports education, training and sustainable development in rural communities, demonstrating a unique pathway for the private sector's participation in smart village development.

Launch Session: Launching the "Learning Villages in the Digital Era" Initiative to Build a New Global Ecosystem for Rural Learning



Prof. LIU Ji, Professor at Shaanxi Normal University and Director of the Shaanxi Provincial "Belt and Road" Discipline Innovation and Talent Introduction Base for Teacher Education, China, officially announced the "Learning Villages in the Digital Era" (LVDE) initiative launched by UNESCO INRULED. Proposed against the backdrop of digital transformation and the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, and in response to persistent challenges such as the widening urban-rural digital divide and the expanding learning crisis, the initiative calls for a rethinking of the connotations of rural education and the construction of learning villages. The initiative articulates five key objectives: providing inclusive rural education, strengthening capacity-building for lifelong learning, promoting the integration of digital technology and education, advancing partnerships and policy advocacy, and enhancing monitoring, evaluation, and roadmap for development. Following the "Learning Villages" framework first proposed by UNESCO INRULED in 2014, this newly launched initiative further emphasizes the empowerment of rural learning through technologies such as digital twins, artificial intelligence, and big data. It also expands its focus from improving individual learning outcomes to systemic changes generated by learning, with greater attention to social cohesion, economic resilience, and ecological sustainability.



Photo of the Launch Session

Concurrently, UNESCO INRULED, in partnership with SEAMEO RECSAM, Obreal, and other global partners, jointly launched the LVDE Case Collection, calling for submissions worldwide on themes including digital technology applications, community-led projects, culture-based teaching methods, and policy practices. The initiative aims to gather practical experiences from different regions and promote exchange and cooperation between the Global North and South.

Invited Speeches: Addressing Diverse Needs in Rural Education, Exploring New Pathways for Digital Empowerment and Talent Development



Ms. Elizabeth Colucci, Director for Education Policy and Programs at Obreal, Spain, delivered a speech titled "Smart Villages Need Smart, Local, Educational Institutions: Higher Education as a Partner for Rural Transformation". She pointed out that universities can serve as strategic actors in local development through policy dialogue, capacity-building, and community engagement, supporting youth in using AI to solve real community problems through initiatives such as smart village education AI incubators, and promoting North-South and South-South educational cooperation.



Prof. DU Ruo, Dean of the Institute of Lifelong Education, The Open University of China, delivered a speech titled "Exploring Practices in Digitally Empowered Capacity Building for Lifelong Learning in Rural Communities", introducing the rural community learning centre project, which lowers the barriers to digital learning through online platforms, short videos, and "seniors-teaching-seniors" approaches, integrating digital education with agricultural technology, e-commerce, and labour education to enhance lifelong learning capacities in rural communities.



Ms. Ahnee Lae Monzon Abutin, Policy and Planning Specialist of the SEAMEO Secretariat, delivered a speech titled "Insights from Southeast Asia on Rural Schools". She noted that rural education transformation must prioritize learning foundations, the teaching workforce, and inclusive policies, integrating digital skills, entrepreneurial competencies, and community participation to support rural learners and women in accessing vocational education systems.



Mr. LIU Baoxiang, General Manager of the Public Welfare Department of China Pocy Group, China, delivered a speech titled "From Philanthropic Education to Skills Training: China Pocy Group's Educational Path in Supporting Rural Revitalization". He shared a vocational education practice model of "public welfare sponsorship + skills development + return-to-hometown employment", forming a complete cultivation chain from enrolment to employment through public welfare funding, county-specific skills training, and employment support for returnees.



Prof. Sandra D'Agostino, Undersecretary of Digital Government of the Government of the Province of Buenos Aires and Professor at the National University of La Plata (UNLP), Argentina, delivered a speech titled "Smart Villages: AI for Territorial Development". She stressed that smart village development must be tailored to local conditions, and that, upon addressing connectivity, data, the Internet of Things, and AI should be leveraged to improve public services and governance.



Ms. ZHANG Liping, Deputy Director of the Research and Guidance Center for Educational Technology and Equipment of the Heilongjiang Institute for Teacher Development and Deputy Director of the Heilongjiang Educational Technology Center, China, delivered a speech titled "Provincial-Level Coordination, Three-Tiered Linkage, and Digital Empowerment: A Theoretical Model and Heilongjiang Practice of the 'Cloud Support' System for Border Primary and Secondary Schools". She introduced the provincial-level "provincial coordination, tri-school linkage, digital empowerment" cloud-based support system for.

border-area primary and secondary schools, promoting a shift from experience-driven to data-driven educational support through “three classrooms” and integrated online-offline teacher teaching and research mechanisms.

Panel Discussion: Deepening Multi-Stakeholder Exchange and Cooperation to Chart a New Vision for Smart Village Development

Hon. Dr. Kaviraj Sukon, Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research of Mauritius, pointed out that rural education needs to fully consider the local language environment, improving the accessibility and personalisation of learning resources through bilingual schools, bilingual teaching materials, and artificial intelligence.

Mr. Desmond AK Sandum, Assistant Director of the Ministry of Education of Malaysia, emphasized that whether a national digital education strategy can truly achieve results depends on whether it can reach the grassroots level, understand the actual needs of different rural schools, and promote policy implementation through teacher training and regional collaboration.

Dr. Monalisa T. Sasing, Deputy Director for Research and Extension of the National Institute for Science and Mathematics Education Development of the University of the Philippines, shared practices of empowering rural girls through coding and STEM education, helping students improve their programming skills and sense of agency through online learning, group tutoring, and community problem-based projects.

Mr. Danial Adam, Chief Executive Officer of Premier Infinitum Sdn Bhd, Malaysia, put forward the concept of “community-first, not technology-first”, emphasising that AI applications must start from local languages, digital literacy, network conditions, and real needs, and be continuously tested and improved in real-world environments.

Dr. Muhammad Yaseen, Assistant Professor at the Department of Food, Agriculture and Bioresources, School of Environment, Resources and Development, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Thailand, noted from the perspective of ecosystem-building for rural talent development that universities, governments, enterprises, and vocational education institutions should jointly participate in transforming knowledge, skills, and technology into the capacity to solve real rural problems.



The “Smart Villages and Education for Rural Transformation” parallel session focused on the real-world challenges and development opportunities facing rural education in the digital age, showcasing exploratory practices from different regions around the world across multiple dimensions, including policy, technology, teachers, schools, industry, communities, and higher education. The session concluded that rural education and sustainable development require the joint participation of diverse stakeholders, including education policymakers, regional organizations, rural schools, vocational education and training institutions, higher education institutions, communities, and the private sector. It is essential to uphold the principles of people-centredness, digital equity, and multi-stakeholder synergy, to ensure that digital technologies are genuinely transformed into educational opportunities, development capabilities, and social well-being, and to contribute educational strength to the building of inclusive, resilient, and sustainable smart villages.

The opening remarks and thematic speeches were moderated by Ms. LIU Ruixi, Programme Coordinator of UNESCO INRULED; the invited speeches were moderated by Ms. Gayatiri Balasubramaniam, Education Specialist of SEAMEO RECSAM; and the panel discussion was moderated by Ms. FANG Yuan’an, Programme Coordinator of UNESCO INRULED.



*The parallel session on “Smart Villages and Education for Rural Transformation” was hosted by the UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (UNESCO INRULED), the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Education in Science and Mathematics (SEAMEO RECSAM), the SEAMEO Regional Centre for STEM Education (SEAMEO STEM-ED), and Obreal.

Students' Voices:
Empowered Youth for Shaping the Future

The future of education will ultimately be shaped by the young people who experience it. The forum created a space for students to share their voices, exchange ideas, and reflect on a central question: how should young people learn and grow in the age of AI? From the perspective of learners themselves, discussions explored experiences of smart and personalised learning, expectations for future schools, and views on how technology is reshaping learning, human–AI collaboration, and relationships between students and teachers. Students also shared experiences and achievements in AI-supported inquiry, interdisciplinary projects, and creative expression, turning their everyday encounters with AI into reflections on the future of learning. By bringing students directly into the conversation on educational transformation, the forum highlighted young people not simply as learners, but as active participants in shaping the future of education, contributing their perspectives, creativity, and aspirations to educational innovation in the age of AI.



Photo of Students' Voices: Empowered Youth for Shaping the Future



Photo of Online and On-site Guests at the Students' Voices Forum

SPEAKERS

Ms. AN Lili
Deputy Secretary, Youth League Committee, Beijing Normal University, China

Prof. Fred Paas
Editor-in-Chief, Educational Psychology Review; Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands; Professor, University of New South Wales, Australia

Prof. Paul Prinsloo
Professor, Open University Malaysia, Malaysia; Professor Extraordinaire, University of South Africa, South Africa

Mr. JIANG Jiadong
Doctoral Student in Educational Technology, Beijing Normal University, China

Ms. CAO Wei
Doctoral Student in Education, Minzu University of China, China

Ms. TANG Yi
Master's Student in Curriculum and Instruction, Northwest Normal University, China

Ms. SHEN Xinyue
Master's Student in Mathematics Education, Shaanxi Normal University, China

Mr. Bidur K C
Doctoral Student in Marxism Adapted to the Chinese Context, Shaanxi Normal University, China

Ms. LIU Yingjie
Doctoral Student in Educational Technology, Capital Normal University, China

Ms. LIU Weijing
Master's Graduate in Learning Design, Innovation, and Technology, Harvard Graduate School of Education, China

Ms. LÜ Yanlei
Master's Student in Computer Science and Technology (Artificial Intelligence), Army Engineering University of PLA, China

Ms. WANG Shuting
Undergraduate Student in Early Childhood Education, Ningxia University, China

Ms. ZHONG Lixia
Doctoral Student in Educational Technology, School of Information Technology in Education, South China Normal University, China

Ms. Memah Amar
Undergraduate Student in Computer Science, Higher Institute of Computer Science and Mathematics of Monastir, Tunisia

Ms. Natalie Hungure
Undergraduate Student in Chemistry, University of Papua New Guinea, Papua New Guinea

Mr. Benjamin Adusei
Undergraduate Student in Computer Science, University of the People, USA

Ms. WU Tong
Master's Student in Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

Ms. TRAN THI MY DUYEN
Undergraduate Student in Educational Technology, Hanoi University of Science and Technology, Vietnam

MODERATORS

Dr. Boulus Shehata
Assistant Professor, Smart Learning Institute, Beijing Normal University, China

Dr. DA Ting
Postdoctoral Fellow, Beijing Normal University, China

Opening Remarks: People First: Experts Discuss Learning, Responsibility, and Agency in the Intelligent Era



Ms. AN Lili, Deputy Secretary of the Youth League Committee of Beijing Normal University, noted that the university continues to advance AI-empowered education and teaching reform, supporting young people in launching innovative practices that start from real educational problems. She expressed her hope that young people will become learners with agency, collaborators with human warmth, and actors with a global vision, integrating their personal growth into the shared educational future of humanity. She introduced that since its founding in 2022, the student forum has been held for five consecutive sessions, consistently handing the podium over to young people and guiding students from different countries and disciplinary backgrounds to share experiences and spark ideas through dialogue on an equal footing.



Prof. Fred Paas, Editor-in-Chief of Educational Psychology Review; Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands; Professor, University of New South Wales, Australia, pointed out that while artificial intelligence brings convenience, it may also weaken learners' "cognitive fitness". If thinking, writing, and creative problem solving are routinely delegated to machines, learners' ability to complete complex tasks independently may gradually decline. He hoped that students would maintain active cognitive engagement when using AI, so that technology genuinely supports learning rather than replacing it.



Prof. Paul Prinsloo, Professor, Open University Malaysia, Malaysia; Professor Extraordinaire, University of South Africa, South Africa, stated that AI is not a neutral technological tool: its design, deployment, and use are accompanied by complex power relations and ethical responsibilities. Evaluating the educational application of AI should not stop at "whether it works"; it should also ask whether it is appropriate in specific disciplines and contexts. He called for strengthened high-quality, context-sensitive research and theory building, with close attention to the impact of technology applications on disadvantaged groups.

Thematic Sharing: Learning with AI: Deep Learning Led by Learner Agency



Mr. JIANG Jiadong, Doctoral Student in Educational Technology, Beijing Normal University, China, delivered a speech titled "Growing in Dialogue: Redefining the Meaning of 'Co-Learning with AI'". He proposed that AI should not merely be an answer provider, but should become a "plastic cognitive other". He argued that human–machine collaborative learning should shift from "instruction" to "dialogue" and from "independence" to "mutual shaping", leaving room for unexpected information and cognitive collision, so that learners maintain their agency and critical thinking through questioning, challenging, and feedback.



Ms. CAO Wei, Doctoral Student in Education, Minzu University of China, China, delivered a speech titled *How to Uphold Academic Autonomy in the Context of Technology-Empowered Research?* She noted that generative AI can improve the efficiency of literature retrieval, reading, and information management, but the posing of research questions, the evaluation of evidence, and responsibility for

final conclusions must always rest with researchers themselves. She called on students to uphold the principle of "think before asking, dare to question without blind acceptance, verify carefully and take responsibility", treating AI as a research partner rather than a substitute for answers.



Ms. TANG Yi, Master's Student in Curriculum and Instruction, Northwest Normal University, China, delivered a speech titled *From 'Passive Reception' to 'Active Construction': Reconstructing the Learning Experience under the Support of Intelligent Technology*. She argued that the key to smart learning lies not in the technology itself, but in the quality of learners' cognitive engagement when interacting with it. She proposed a learning pathway of *questioning–dialogue–reflection –transfer*: starting from authentic problems, constructing understanding through probing questions and evidence checking, and then applying knowledge to new problem situations, always keeping the learner in the lead with tools in a supporting role.



Ms. SHEN Xinyue, Master's Student in Mathematics Education, Shaanxi Normal University, China, delivered a speech titled "How Artificial Intelligence Can Help Contextualize Senior High School Mathematics Assessment in China from an International Perspective". Drawing on the PISA 2022 mathematical literacy framework, she explored how AI can support contextualized assessment in senior high school mathematics. The framework divides problem contexts into four categories: personal, societal, occupational, and scientific. She proposed that AI should serve as an "amplifier" of assessment design rather than a substitute, helping teachers transform real-life materials into learning tasks and enabling personalised, dynamic assessment tailored to learner characteristics, thereby developing students' deeper capacities for modeling, critique, and communication.

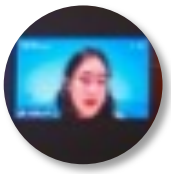


Mr. Bidur K C, Doctoral Student in Marxism Adapted to the Chinese Context, Shaanxi Normal University, China, delivered a speech titled *Connecting Educational Cultures: My Exploratory Journey from Beijing to Nepal in the AI Era*. Drawing on his learning journey from Nepal to China, he noted that generative AI turns learning from one-off question-and-answer into sustained dialogue, yet "getting an answer" does not equal genuine learning. AI can help process information, translate, and retrieve, but the meaning of knowledge still requires learners' active interpretation and construction within cultural, historical, and ethical contexts; nor can growing technological capability replace human judgment, reflection, and responsibility.

Thematic Sharing: Co-Creating with AI: Clarifying Human Roles and Boundaries in Collaboration



Ms. LIU Yingjie, Doctoral Student in Educational Technology, Capital Normal University, China, delivered a speech titled "Warmth · Symbiosis · Boundaries: Reflections on the Practice of Human–Machine Collaboration in the Intelligent Era". She noted that AI can take over repetitive work, freeing more time for teachers to understand students and provide individualized support; yet education deals with people who have emotions and differences, and technology applications should always safeguard human dignity, relationships, and agency, establishing clear boundaries of responsibility between efficiency and humanistic care.



Ms. LIU Weijing, Master's Graduate in Learning Design, Innovation, and Technology, Harvard Graduate School of Education, China, delivered a speech titled "Synergistic Effects of Generative AI and Human Mentorship in Creative Problem Solving", sharing a case in which generative AI and human mentors jointly support creative problem solving. The study was guided by the SCOPE framework, which integrates creative problem solving with education for sustainable development. She pointed out that AI can expand the "problem space", organise information, and support solution generation; in the evaluation and implementation stages, however, mentors are still needed to provide cognitive scaffolding, emotional support, and behavioral guidance, helping students prudently assess AI suggestions and translate them into real-world action.



Ms. LÜ Yanlei, Master's Student in Computer Science and Technology (Artificial Intelligence), Army Engineering University of PLA, China, delivered a speech titled "When the Mentor, Colleague, and Client Are All AI: Rethinking 'Professional Learning' through Multi-Role Assessment", introducing Career Craft, a self-developed AI-driven workplace simulation system. The system places learners in authentic professional situations with incomplete information and diverse interests, where they interact with and are assessed by multiple roles such as mentors, colleagues, and clients. She argued that human–AI collaboration should help students break free from training for the "single correct answer", building professional judgment and problem-solving ability through reflection and action.



Ms. WANG Shuting, Undergraduate Student in Early Childhood Education, Ningxia University, China, delivered a speech titled "Symbiosis and Self-Sustenance: Exploring the Optimization of Learning Pathways for Pre-Service Early Childhood Teachers in the Digital Age". Speaking from the perspective of a pre-service preschool teacher, she noted that AI cannot replace the warmth of a teacher's hand, but when people remain in the "driver's seat", technology can amplify educational care. She shared a self-regulated learning pathway built around goal management, process reflection, and outcome transfer, encouraging future teachers to use AI to assist in designing and improving teaching while protecting their real and vibrant connections with children.



Ms. ZHONG Lixia, Doctoral Student in Educational Technology, School of Information Technology in Education, South China Normal University, China, delivered a speech titled "When Should Agents Intervene and When Should They Step Back? Evidence-Based Inquiry and Teacher–Student–Machine Collaboration in the Science Classroom". Focusing on evidence-based inquiry in science classrooms, she introduced a teacher–student–machine collaboration practice involving the agent "Xiaotan". Addressing problems such as teachers' difficulty in providing in-depth guidance to every student and the randomness of peer interaction, she proposed that the agent offer probing questions, evidence checking, and hints at appropriate moments, stepping back once learners have developed the capacity for independent inquiry, so that AI becomes scaffolding that promotes evidence-based reasoning rather than replacing inquiry.



Ms. Memah Amar, Undergraduate Student in Computer Science, Higher Institute of Computer Science and Mathematics of Monastir, Tunisia, delivered a speech titled "When does AI help and when must you decide?" She argued that AI can either hand out "shortcuts" directly or offer directions, suggestions, and options. The former easily reduces thinking, while the latter preserves space for learners' autonomous decision-making and

capability development. She suggested understanding human–AI collaboration as a people-centered relationship: AI provides prompts and support, while people remain responsible for goals, judgment, and final choices.

Thematic Sharing: Imagining with AI: Equitable, High-Quality, and Sustainable Future Classrooms

Ms. WU Tong, Master's Student in Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China, delivered a speech titled "Equitable Learning in the AI Era: Bridging Confidence Gaps across Schools", examining the learning-confidence gap among students in different schools in the age of AI. She argued that device access does not automatically bring equity: students in under-resourced schools also need appropriate teacher guidance, curriculum support, and metacognitive training. Only by combining technology access, capability building, and confidence development can AI shift from a "dependency-inducing scaffold" into a partner that promotes students' cognitive growth.

Mr. Benjamin Adusei, Undergraduate Student in Computer Science, University of the People, USA, delivered a speech titled "Empowering Learners through AI: Connecting Equity and Creativity in the Future Classroom", sharing EduSay Labs, a virtual physics laboratory developed by a student team. Addressing shortages of laboratory resources, internet connectivity, and language support, the platform offers offline operation, multilingual support, and free interactive experiments, with AI supporting personalised practice and feedback. He noted that students can start from the educational problems they observe themselves, turning ideas into solutions that serve more learners through rapid prototyping and continuous iteration.

Ms. TRAN THI MY DUYEN, Undergraduate Student in Educational Technology, Hanoi University of Science and Technology, Vietnam, delivered a speech titled "How Can Learners Maintain Cognitive Agency and Self-Regulation in the Age of AI?" Drawing on the design practice of the JourneyMe platform, she emphasized the need to distinguish between "completing a task with AI support" and "truly mastering a capability". She proposed designing AI as a learning scaffold that is gradually withdrawn: offering help when learners need it and fading into the background as their abilities grow, preserving the necessary space for effortful recall, problem-solving attempts, mistakes, and correction, thereby safeguarding cognitive agency and self-regulation.

Ms. Natalie Hungure, Undergraduate Student in Chemistry, University of Papua New Guinea, Papua New Guinea, delivered a speech titled "Beyond Artificial Intelligence: Designing an Education Every Child Can Enjoy". Starting from local realities — children walking long distances to school and schools lacking electricity, connectivity, and resources — she asked "whose future" AI in education really serves. She argued that technology design must respond to equity, quality, and sustainability at the same time, and introduced Building Tech, an offline-first foundational literacy learning platform. Starting from the real needs of teachers and students, the platform uses AI to help teachers identify learning difficulties earlier and offers actionable intervention suggestions, while final decisions remain with teachers.








Interactive Exchange: Deepening Youth Reflections on Education through Dialogue

In the interactive exchange session, Dr. Boulus Shehata moderated discussions among participating teachers and students on topics including academic publishing for young researchers, AI-assisted reading and summarizing, learners' thinking structures, cognitive load and human–AI co-creation, and research on student agency. Prof. Fred Paas advised young researchers to observe academic norms, read extensively in the target journals, and carefully verify AI-generated content; in learning, knowledge should be consolidated through active retrieval, elaboration, and discussion, with vigilance against the "illusion of understanding" that technology can create. Dr. Glenda Cox of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, proposed that students and teachers should build partnerships in curriculum, assessment, and feedback design, so that students' thinking and voices genuinely enter the cycle of teaching improvement. The forum concluded amid open and in-depth exchange.



This forum was co-moderated by Dr. Boulus Shehata, Assistant Professor, Smart Learning Institute, Beijing Normal University, China, and Dr. DA Ting, Postdoctoral Fellow, Beijing Normal University, China.





*The Students' Voices: Empowered Youth for Shaping the Future forum was hosted by the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE), the Beijing Normal University Student Union, the Beijing Normal University Graduate Student Union, and the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University.

Parallel Session:
Reimagining Teachers' Roles—Harnessing the Potential of AI

As AI becomes increasingly embedded in education, the role of teachers is being redefined and expanded. Beyond their traditional responsibilities for teaching and knowledge transmission, teachers are increasingly expected to act as designers of learning, facilitators of student development, and active participants in human–AI collaboration. The session examined emerging models of human–AI collaborative teaching, the competencies teachers need to work effectively with AI, and the potential of intelligent technologies to enrich pedagogical practice and strengthen support for diverse learners. Discussions also explored new pathways for professional learning and personalised teacher development, alongside the ethical principles and governance frameworks needed to ensure that technology enhances rather than diminishes the human dimensions of education. Looking to the future, participants highlighted priorities for strengthening teacher development at regional and system levels and building a highly skilled, professional, innovative, and future-ready teaching workforce in which teachers remain central, AI serves as an enabling partner, and student development remains the ultimate priority.



Photo of Parallel Session: Reimagining Teachers' Roles—Harnessing the Potential of AI

SPEAKERS

Hon. Mr. Noureddine Nouri
Minister of Education, Tunisia

Ms. Natalia Amelina
Chief, Unit of Teacher Professional Development and Networking, UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE)

Dr. Abdulrahman Almedaires
Director General, UNESCO Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE)

Mr. Peter Polozhevets
Executive Director, "Investment to the Future" Charitable Foundation, Russia

Prof. HU Xiaoyong
Director, Teacher Development Center; Executive Deputy Dean, Institute of Artificial Intelligence in Education, South China Normal University, China

Mr. JIN Yuanjun
Director, Product Marketing Department, Guangzhou Aoweiya Electronic Technology Co., Ltd., China

Mr. LI Yi
Founder of Yuan Coding; Deputy Director of the Academic Committee, AI Education Research Centre, Department of Psychological and Cognitive Sciences, Tsinghua University, China

Ms. CAO Yin
CEO, Pearson China

Mr. ZHOU Wenyang
Director, Public Service Bureau, Chongqing Hi-Tech Zone, China

Mr. HUANG Mingyun
Member of the Education Work Committee of the CPC Quanzhou Municipal Committee; Member of the Party Leadership Group and Deputy Director of Quanzhou Education Bureau, China

Ms. YANG Lan
Deputy Secretary, Education Working Committee of the CPC Jinjiang District Committee, Chengdu, China

Mr. XU Rikang
Deputy Director, Teacher Development Center of Hunan Xiangjiang New Area; Deputy Principal, Bocai Meixihu Primary School, Changsha, China

Mr. WU Xin
Deputy Principal and Senior Teacher, Xiamen No. 1 High School, Fujian, China

Mr. ZHAO Xiaotian
Party Secretary and Principal, Songshan Lake No. 3 Primary School, Dongguan, Guangdong, China

Mr. CAI Yanghe
Principal, Lianhe Wuhan Primary School, Shishan Town, Nanhai District, Foshan, China

Ms. DING Suping
Principal, Heping Primary School, Yuhu District, Xiangtan, China

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MODERATORS

Prof. XU Guangtao
Professor, Hangzhou Normal University, China

Prof. FAN Xinmin
Research Fellow, Fujian Normal University; Member, Subcommittee on Educational Technology and Artificial Intelligence, Teaching Steering Committee for Higher Education, Ministry of Education, China

Opening Remarks: Addressing New Imperatives for Teacher Development through International Cooperation



Hon. Mr. Noureddine Nouri, Minister of Education of Tunisia, delivered the opening remarks. He expressed his interest in and expectations for AI-empowered teacher professional development, and looked forward to advancing teacher capacity building and educational innovation through policy coordination and international cooperation, opening a global dialogue on the future of teachers.

Thematic Speeches: Reshaping the Professional Value of Teachers amid Intelligent Transformation



Ms. Natalia Amelina, Chief of the Unit of Teacher Professional Development and Networking at the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE), delivered a report entitled "The AI Imperative in Education: Transforming Access, Quality, and Equity." Drawing on cases from different countries in special education,resource-constrained regions, and personalised learning, she noted that AI can expand educational access, improve learning quality, and promote educational equity, and that real impact comes from thoughtful design that accounts for learning barriers, cultural contexts, and cost conditions. She emphasized that AI can amplify teachers' professional impact by providing data insights and personalised support, while teachers should remain responsible for goal setting, instructional design, and process supervision. For application at scale, digital infrastructure, teacher professional training, data privacy, and ethical norms must advance in parallel, with governments, schools, enterprises, research institutions, and wider society working together to build a responsible AI education ecosystem.



Dr. Abdulrahman Almedaires, Director General of the UNESCO Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE), delivered a report entitled "Reimagining Teachers' Roles: An Arab Pathway to Quality Education in the Age of AI." He noted that AI offers new possibilities for improving education quality, advancing equity, and empowering teachers, but that its effectiveness depends on critical, ethical application and systemic governance support. In the age of AI, teachers need even more to become designers of learning, agents of professional judgment, and bearers of ethical responsibility, actively participating in the design, application, and governance of technology. Drawing on practices across the Arab region, he proposed coordinated progress in teacher capacity building, leadership and ethics, policy and infrastructure, and the reconstruction of teaching and assessment, so that AI serves teacher development and student learning within a people-centered, responsible quality system.



Prof. HU Xiaoyong, Director of the Teacher Development Center and Executive Deputy Dean of the Institute of Artificial Intelligence in Education at South China Normal University, delivered a report entitled "Building Lessons through Reflection, Creating Wisdom through Intelligence: The Wenke Large Model Empowering Teachers' Classroom Teaching and Research Innovation." Starting from the practical problems teachers face with AI—"unwilling to use it, unable to use it, unable to use it well, and unable to use it properly"—he stressed that AI applications in education must enter the real scenarios of classrooms and teaching research. Centered on the concept of "building lessons through reflection," he introduced the human–machine collaborative teaching research system his team has built on classroom data analytics, the "Wenke" large model, and practices such as "one question, three lessons." He noted that data can reveal classroom phenomena, while teachers' professional wisdom determines how data is interpreted, problems are identified, and improvement paths are chosen; classroom teaching research should aim at promoting student thinking and teacher growth, guarding against AI becoming a "cognitive substitute," so that technology truly serves as a professional scaffold for teachers to reflect on their classrooms and improve their teaching.

Enterprise Partners Speech: Supporting Teacher Professional Growth through a Collaborative Ecosystem



Mr. JIN Yuanjun, Director of the Product Marketing Department of Guangzhou Aoweiya Electronic Technology Co., Ltd., delivered a report entitled "Reflections on Coherent Teacher Development Pathways Based on Human-Machine Collaboration." He proposed that human-machine collaboration is moving teacher development from experience-based judgment toward data-informed evidence, placing new demands on teacher roles, technology application, and development systems. Across the continuum of pre-service preparation, induction training, and in-service development, classroom data collection and intelligent analysis should be combined with teachers' professional judgment to build a coherent support system spanning teaching, teaching research, evaluation, and management; at the same time, data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the appropriateness of feedback must be taken seriously, so that intelligent tools provide timely, precise professional support with a human touch.



Mr. LI Yi, Founder of Yuan Coding and Deputy Director of the Academic Committee of the AI Education Research Centre at the Department of Psychological and Cognitive Sciences, Tsinghua University, delivered a speech entitled "A New Code for AI Literacy: Empowering Children to Master Their AI-Driven Future." He noted that AI and the information environment are changing how young people learn, and that AI education should both help students master the technology and develop critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to solve problems proactively. In the intelligent era, programming further manifests as an educational vehicle through which students can experience debugging, reflection, and iteration in an environment that allows trial and error, and, with the help of AI, turn knowledge into works that solve real problems. The National Engineering Research Center for Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology and Yuan Coding jointly launched the "'AI + Basic Education' Typical Application Scenario Video Collection Campaign," inviting practical cases across scenarios including classroom teaching, personalised learning, educational evaluation, teacher training, five-education integration, and education governance.

Research Report Release: How Can Teachers 'Upgrade' in the Intelligence Era?



Ms. CAO Yin released the research report "How Can Teachers 'Upgrade' in the Intelligence Era? – Digital Literacy Frameworks, Assessment, and Cultivation from an International Perspective." Based on international frameworks, expert consultations, and surveys of Chinese teachers and students, the report proposes that teacher digital literacy should expand beyond tool use to encompass information comprehension, AI collaboration, ethical judgment, and pedagogical innovation. It offers recommendations on redefining professional roles, reconstructing the connotations of digital literacy, guiding development through competency frameworks, shifting assessment toward developmental diagnosis, and building sustainable professional growth systems, providing international reference and local insight for the cultivation, assessment, and professional development of teacher digital literacy in the intelligent era.



Photo of Research Report Release: How Can Teachers 'Upgrade' in the Intelligence Era?

Invited Speeches: Multi-Level Explorations of Future Teacher Cultivation Pathways

Mr. ZHOU Wenyang presented "Chongqing Hi-Tech Zone Fully Builds a 'Pioneer Zone for Basic Education Reform in Western China' through 'AI + Education'." **Mr. HUANG Mingyun** presented "Empowering Teachers with Digital Intelligence for the Future: Quanzhou's Exploratory Practice of Cultivating Future Teachers through AI." **Mr. LIU Yunpeng** presented "The 'Collaborative Leap' in the Digital-Intelligent Era—The Nangang Answer to Evidence-Based Data Empowerment and High-Quality, Balanced Education." **Ms. YANG Lan** presented "Safeguarding the Emotional Dimension of Education: A Regional Practice of Future Teacher Development under the E-TPACK Framework."

Mr. XU Rikang presented "Exploring a 'Feasible, Adaptable, and Principled' Three-Tier Development Path of 'Human–Machine Co-Education'—Reflections and Practice on Regional Teacher Transformation in Xiangjiang New Area." **Mr. WU Xin** presented "Nurturing New People through Human–Machine Collaboration: AI Expands the Second Classroom and Reshapes the Role of Future Teachers." **Mr. ZHAO Xiaotian** presented "Data-Driven + Experience-Guided—The Teaching and Research Practice of Dongguan Songshan Lake No.3 Primary School Based on Routine AI Diagnosis and Evidence." **Mr. CAI Yanghe** presented "The AI Era and the Reshaping of Future Teachers' Roles." **Ms. DING** Suping presented "One Body with Two Wings, Resonating in Sync—The School-Based Training Practice from 'Technology Empowerment' to 'Paradigm Reconstruction'."



The guests shared insights on topics including regional "AI + education" system building, strengthening teachers through digital means, routine AI-based classroom diagnosis, evidence-based teaching research, high-quality and balanced education, teachers' emotional competence under the E-TPACK framework, the tiered development of human–machine co-education, AI-enabled expansion of the second classroom, and the reconstruction of school-based training paradigms. Their presentations showcased multi-level practices ranging from regional coordination to school-level implementation, from infrastructure building to teacher capacity enhancement, and from data support to emotional nurturing. These explorations demonstrate that teacher development requires not only the support of platforms, data, and intelligent tools, but also the embedding of technology application into real classrooms, school-based teaching research, and teacher growth mechanisms, enabling teachers to continuously improve their intelligent literacy and educational capacity through sustained practice and reflection.

The Parallel Session brought together international experience, theoretical research, technological innovation, and regional and school practices, advancing the discussion from "what AI can do for teachers" to "how teachers can use AI to reconstruct teaching and nurturing." The guests' sharing demonstrated that AI is driving teacher professionalism beyond tool application toward instructional design, data-informed judgment, ethical governance, and educational innovation. The deeper technology reaches into classrooms, the more prominent teachers' professional roles become in value guidance, emotional connection, thinking stimulation, and responding to uncertainty. Looking ahead, the cultivation of intelligent literacy must be embedded throughout the entire process of teacher development, with professional learning, evidence-based teaching research, and collaborative governance mechanisms refined on the basis of real scenarios, so as to form a new educational ecology that is teacher-led, human–machine collaborative, and sustainably developing.

This parallel session was jointly moderated by Prof. XU Guangtao of Hangzhou Normal University and Prof. FAN Xinmin, Research Fellow, Fujian Normal University; Member, Subcommittee on Educational Technology and Artificial Intelligence, Teaching Steering Committee for Higher Education, Ministry of Education, China.





*The Parallel Session: Reimagining Teachers' Roles—Harnessing the Potential of AI was co-hosted by the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE), the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education, the Institute of Artificial Intelligence in Education of South China Normal University, Guangzhou AVA Electronics Technology Co., Ltd., and NetDragon Websoft Inc.

Parallel Session:
Principals as Change Agents: High-Quality School Development

AI and digital transformation are creating new possibilities for high-quality school development, placing school leaders at the forefront of educational change. The session highlighted the role of principals as change agents who translate vision into strategy, mobilise people and resources, and lead meaningful and sustainable transformation across their schools. Discussions focused on digital transformation and AI-enabled school development, the strengthening of principals' digital leadership, strategic planning, and organisational change capabilities, and the use of technology to support innovative approaches to student development and more holistic education. Participants also shared experiences in building smart education ecosystems, strengthening digital infrastructure, and developing future-ready schools, including practices involving cloud-based schooling, school networks, and mechanisms for sharing high-quality educational resources. Particular attention was given to strengthening school leadership teams, fostering distinctive approaches to school development, and translating successful experience into practical strategies for sustained, high-quality school improvement.



Photo of Parallel Session: Principals as Change Agents—High-Quality School Development

SPEAKERS

Ms. LI Youyi
Chair, Hundred-School Alliance for Digital Education Action, China

Ms. REN Pingping
Deputy Secretary of the CPC Committee and Vice President, iFLYTEK, China

Mr. Ayham Boucher
Director, AI Innovation Lab, Cornell University, USA

Prof. WEI Rui
Professor, Beijing Normal University, China

Prof. TIAN Jian
President, Chengdu Academy of Educational Sciences, Sichuan, China

Prof. ZHANG Dan
Director, Basic Education Teaching and Research Center, Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences; Vice Chair, Primary School Mathematics Teaching Committee, Chinese Society of Education, China

Mr. CHEN Hao
Deputy Secretary of the Party Branch and Vice Principal, Shenzhen Welkin School, China

Mr. MI Qi
Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, China

Mr. LIU Naizhong
Party Secretary, Beijing High School Education Group, China

Mr. ZHANG Wei
Principal, Hefei No. 8 High School, Anhui, China

Mr. YU Yongshui
Executive Principal, Central Campus, Shandong Experimental High School, Shandong, China

Ms. JIANG Tao
Secretary of the General Party Branch, Shenyang Shangpin Dongjia Education Group, Liaoning, China

Mr. LIU Jianqiang
Secretary of the CPC Committee, Linyi Experimental High School, Shandong, China

Mr. HUANG Shiju
Principal, Putian No. 1 High School, Fujian, China

Prof. TIAN Shulin
Specially Appointed National Education Inspector; Chair, Future Experimental School, Chaoyang District, Beijing, China

Ms. ZHANG Hua
Deputy Dean, School of Primary Education, Changsha Normal University; General Principal, Affiliated Primary School, Hunan, China

Ms. GAO Dongmei
Principal, Zhengxing High School, Changzhou, Jiangsu, China

Mr. CAI Lei
Secretary of the CPC Committee and General Principal, Guangqumen Middle School Education Group, Beijing, China

Prof. MA Hong
Secretary of the CPC Committee and Group General Principal, Chongqing Bashu Primary School, China

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MODERATORS

Prof. WEI Xuefeng
Dean, School of Education, Ludong University, China

Prof. WU Yinghui
Former Director, Haidian Academy of Educational Sciences, Beijing; Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Opening Remarks: Upholding the Educational Mission—Let Technology Empower and Strengthen Education



Ms. LI Youyi, Chair of Hundred-School Alliance for Digital Education Action, noted in her address that education digitalisation has now shifted from an optional "elective course" to a required subject for educational development, and has upgraded from a teaching aid to a core force reshaping the education ecosystem. High-quality school development requires all-round advancement across the three dimensions. At the governance level, big data should drive school management from experience-based judgment toward scientific and precise decision-making; at the teaching level, intelligent technologies should support teachers' professional growth and empower students' personalised and differentiated development; at the cultural level, the original aspiration of education must be upheld so that technology empowerment does not diminish the warmth of education. She emphasized: "Technology is only a means; educating people is the fundamental goal." Going forward, the Hundred-School Alliance will continue to build an open, collaborative, and resource-sharing platform for exchange and cooperation, helping every school proceed steadily and surely on the path of digital transformation and high-quality development.



Ms. REN Pingping, Deputy Secretary of the CPC Committee and Vice President, iFLYTEK, China, pointed out in her address that principals, as the core leaders of schools' digital transformation, directly determine the depth, breadth, and effectiveness of that transformation through their educational philosophy, cognitive vision, and professional competence. Relying on its fully self-developed and independently controllable Spark large model, iFLYTEK has promoted the deep integration of artificial intelligence into core educational scenarios such as classroom teaching, academic assessment, and teacher and student growth, with related products and solutions already serving more than 60,000 schools and over 160 million teachers and students nationwide. She noted that AI truly suited to education must have a deep understanding of educational laws, disciplinary logic, and student psychology. iFLYTEK will continue to serve as a "doer" of school digital transformation, an "enabler" of principals' digital leadership enhancement, and a "co-builder" of a healthy smart education ecosystem, supporting the high-quality upgrading of basic education.

Thematic Speeches: Pooling Frontier Insights—Empowering Teacher and Student Growth with Scientific Methodology



Mr. Ayham Boucher, Director, AI Innovation Lab, Cornell University, USA, proposed that the goal of education in the new era is not only to teach students to "learn with AI," but also to cultivate their core ability to "use AI to solve real-world problems," which is now a core criterion by which employers evaluate talent. He analyzed in depth two major challenges in the practical application of AI—verification and integration—and reinterpreted the principle of "human in the loop": the value of humans lies not in verifying AI outputs one by one, but in building safe and reliable intelligent systems and providing precise and complete application contexts. He also advocated upgrading the individual, standalone mode of AI use into collaborative intelligence scenarios with shareable contexts, making AI an important partner for teacher–student collaboration and teamwork.



Prof. WEI Rui, Professor, Beijing Normal University, China, pointed out that project-based learning is an effective breakthrough for cultivating students' innovation literacy, and highlighted the two-way AI-empowered education platform system developed by his team. The "intelligent mentor" for teachers focuses on three core competencies—abstraction and refinement, refined thinking, and relational structuring. Through functions such as visualized design processes, multi-role expert dialogues, and reflective questioning at key junctures, it helps teachers upgrade from completing a single teaching task to mastering a whole class of teaching methods and forming systematic teaching thinking. The interactive animation system for students follows the full process of authentic problem-solving, allowing students to immersively experience the complete problem-solving process rather than passively receiving fragmented knowledge. He emphasized that teachers and students share the same educational methodology: teachers master curriculum design methods through the intelligent mentor, while students develop scientific thinking through interactive animations, truly achieving deep integration and simultaneous improvement of teaching and learning.



Prof. TIAN Jian, President, Chengdu Academy of Educational Sciences, Sichuan, China, noted that the Chengdu Academy of Educational Sciences focuses on five development goals—"openness, academic rigor, humanism, intelligence, and excellence"—and has prioritized the development of three intelligent agents for governance, teaching research, and test-item development, building core digital support for teaching research. Through the three pathways of "leading teaching research, transformative teaching research, and embodied teaching research," the Academy has improved school curriculum systems, strengthened grassroots teaching research capacity, and innovated approaches to teaching and learning. It has also innovatively established an integrated "learning–researching–practicing–improving" teaching research model, creating a data-driven, precise, and efficient new paradigm of teaching research. He emphasized that no matter how intelligent technologies evolve, the essence of education will not change—shaping students' character and values, cultivating core disciplinary literacy, developing higher-order thinking and innovation capacity, nurturing an appreciation of life and social emotions, and valuing practical experience. These are the irreplaceable foundations of education in the AI era.



Prof. ZHANG Dan, Director, Basic Education Teaching and Research Center, Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences; Vice Chair, Primary School Mathematics Teaching Committee, Chinese Society of Education, China, pointed out that the core value of AI-empowered education lies in enabling students to experience "productive struggle" and achieve deep learning through personalised support and the guidance of deep thinking. This view draws on mathematics educator Hans Freudenthal's philosophy of "guided reinvention," as well as the core concept of the "slow use" of AI put forward in the Digital Education Outlook 2026. She elaborated on the "human–AI collaboration" action framework for regular classrooms: during the stage of students' independent inquiry, AI remains silent throughout and does not interfere with students' autonomous thinking; during the stage of teacher–student collaborative iteration, AI provides three types of differentiated scaffolding—supportive, optimizing, and expansive—based on students' real-time thinking states, adhering to the principle of "offering inspiration, not answers," so that large-scale, personalised teaching according to individual aptitude can truly take root in regular classrooms.

Outcome Release: Distilling a Model of Cloud-Based Schooling—Issuing Industry Construction Guidelines

The forum witnessed the official release of the group standard Guidelines for Building Cloud Schools in Primary and Secondary Schools. Developed under the guidance of the Chinese Society of Educational Development Strategy by Shenzhen Welkin School in collaboration with Beijing Normal University, the Shenzhen Educational Information Technology Center, and Ziguang Modu Co., Ltd., the Guidelines comprise seven chapters and one appendix. They innovatively establish a "four layers and two safeguards" technical support framework and distill a distinctive teaching paradigm of "one domain, two companions, three commonalities, and four dimensions," systematically setting out the standard system, practical pathways, and core paradigms of cloud school construction and providing replicable and scalable references for cloud school building and the large-scale implementation of smart education across the country.



Guidelines for the construction of Cloud-based schools in primary and secondary schools



Mr. CHEN Hao, Deputy Secretary of the Party Branch and Vice Principal of Shenzhen Welkin School, interpreted the content of the Guidelines and the school's practical achievements. Over five years of operation, the school has deeply engaged in smart education innovation and successfully created a Huawei global smart education model site; its "Four-Dimensional Classroom of Cloud Schooling in the AI Era" was selected among the world's top ten digital education innovation cases—the only benchmark case from basic education.

Principal's Reports: Eleven Renowned Principals Deepen Practice—Unlocking New Pathways for AI-Empowered Education

Eleven principals and education administrators from renowned schools across the country, drawing on their schools' hands-on experience in digital transformation, shared innovative practices of AI empowering school governance, classroom teaching, and student development, presenting a comprehensive picture of the diverse paths of high-quality smart education development in primary and secondary schools in the new era.

Mr. MI Qi from Renmin University of China, pointed out that the biggest misconception in AI education is that students use intelligent tools to produce higher-quality outputs without achieving deep growth in thinking and capability. He argued that the core of sustainable learning and development in the AI era is to enable students to build a stable cognitive system and value foundation while possessing the dynamic capacity to continuously update knowledge, reorganise abilities, and iterate thinking. He introduced in detail the "2468" overall framework and the four-dimensional driven education model of his school's Artificial Intelligence Action Plan, and emphasized that the highest level of AI literacy is not proficiency in using tools, but humanity's enduring core agency to define goals, selectively delegate, correct and optimize, and take responsibility for outcomes.

Mr. LIU Naizhong, Beijing High School Education Group, shared the school's "Beizhong Zhixi" AI companion-based education practice. Focusing on cultivating students' core underlying competencies, the school offers dedicated AI courses that emphasize structured expression, programming thinking, critical thinking, systematic thinking, and AI collaboration, using project-based learning to empower curriculum innovation. On the teaching side, teachers rely on intelligent agent tools to optimize lesson preparation and, through lightweight "building-block" operations, rapidly iterate traditional lesson plans into intelligent courses while constructing dedicated AI learning frameworks for students, enabling the co-construction, sharing, and continuous iteration of high-quality teaching resources. On the learning side, the system records students' learning trajectories throughout and generates multi-dimensional learning assessment reports, driving a fundamental shift in the teaching model from "teaching-centered" to "learning-centered" and making personalised, proactive learning a regular reality.

Mr. ZHANG Wei, Hefei No. 8 High School, shared the school's achievements from more than a decade of dedication to smart education. Since deploying smart classrooms in 2013 and achieving full campus-wide coverage in 2016, the school has built a data-driven, fully closed-loop precision teaching system. By innovating the "STPR large-unit collective lesson preparation model" and the "situation–task" large-unit teaching model, it has fostered a sound ecology for deep learning. The school has also established the "153" Ginkgo science education curriculum system and jointly launched the "Changxin Innovation Class" with ChangXin Memory Technologies, exploring new pathways for the early cultivation of top-notch innovative talent through immersive laboratory experiences, a dual-mentor education mechanism, and cultivation spanning the entire industry chain—practices that have received high recognition from Minister of Education Huai Jinpeng.





Mr. YU Yongshui, Executive Principal, Central Campus, Shandong Experimental High School, Shandong, China, noted that the school advanced its digital transformation in two steps—a "Year of Data Empowerment" and a "Year of Learning Reconstruction"—and innovatively built a complete seven-link education system of "precise learner identification, precise teaching, precise evaluation, precise consolidation, precise development, precise empowerment, and precise coordination." Relying on three layers of student profiles—process-based, stage-based, and comprehensive—the school has established personalised "one student, one plan" growth portfolios covering all three years of senior high school and, through the group-based "Five Unifications" school-running model, promotes the balanced flow of high-quality educational resources across campuses. He emphasized that the value of educational big data is by no means to label or rank students, but to serve as a "mirror" for student growth—shifting educational intervention from experience-based judgment to evidence-driven practice, and achieving mutual reinforcement of educational precision and human warmth.

Ms. JIANG Tao, Secretary of the General Party Branch, Shenyang Shangpin Dongjia Education Group, Liaoning, China, addressed head-on the industry pain point of "two separate tracks" between technology and teaching in smart education. To tackle this problem, the school defines AI as a "third educational agent" coordinating teacher and student development, building a "three elements, three loops, three stages" dynamic teaching ecology; it has created a "five-step cycle" human–AI collaborative evidence-based teaching research model, replacing traditional experience-based teaching research with data-driven approaches; and it has established a "three excellences, four dimensions" teacher development evaluation system, shifting teacher evaluation from "selecting the excellent" to "precise empowerment." Following the implementation of these measures, teachers' enthusiasm for participating in teaching research rose from 65% to 92%.

Mr. LIU Jianqiang, Secretary of the CPC Committee, Linyi Experimental High School, Shandong, China, introduced the school's smart education development pathway. The school has established a strategic positioning of "policy guidance, technological support, classroom centrality, and teacher and student development," following a three-step plan of "single-point breakthrough—full-scale adoption—deep integration" to create a "three-alls" smart education model featuring all-element integration, whole-process connectivity, and all-scenario coverage. The school has built a comprehensive smart education center integrating personalised learning, intelligent teaching research, smart IoT, AI experiments, and digital fabrication, applying AI technologies across core scenarios such as classroom teaching, academic assessment, and physical fitness monitoring, and setting a regional benchmark for AI-empowered educational innovation.







Mr. HUANG Shiju, Principal, Putian No. 1 High School, Fujian, China, pointed out that, in response to five major pain points of traditional teaching—difficulty in gauging learning conditions, selecting resources, facilitating classroom interaction, differentiating homework, and conducting process-based evaluation—the school has built a "1+1+7+4" overall smart

campus ecosystem framework and distilled a "three stages, three loops" digital classroom teaching paradigm. At the same time, the school adheres to the dual drivers of technological empowerment and moral education, consolidating the foundation of education through the progressive "Four Ceremonies and Eight Rites" moral education system. AI will not replace teachers, but teachers who cannot use AI or integrate innovation will eventually be left behind by the times. The school focuses on cultivating four core teacher competencies—technological understanding, classroom application, teaching creativity, and critical thinking—guiding teachers to master technology and empower teaching rather than depend on technology and adapt passively.

Ms. ZHANG Hua, Deputy Dean, School of Primary Education, Changsha Normal University; General Principal, Affiliated Primary School, Hunan, China, shared the school's decade-long iterative journey in smart education. The school has built a dual-drive system of "technological empowerment and teaching innovation," achieving a three-stage leap of "regularized foundation—integrated development—ecological maturity": from the regularized implementation of smart classrooms for all teachers and all subjects, to data-driven precision teaching and the innovative "1324" model of deep teaching–learning integration, and then to the overall smart campus architecture of "one data platform plus N intelligent applications," gradually forming a high-quality new smart education ecosystem featuring human–AI collaboration, data empowerment, and sustainable iteration.

Ms. GAO Dongmei, Principal, Zhengxing High School, Changzhou, Jiangsu, China, shared the school's four core keys to smart education: diversified classrooms, personalised learning, visualized evaluation, and customized curricula. Relying on a smart teaching platform to enliven classroom deliberation, the school uses an intelligent homework system to transform homework resources from "one-size-fits-all" universal provision to precisely matched "customized" assignments; panoramic digital portraits make students' implicit growth visible; and customized courses in science and innovation, sports, labor, aesthetics, and mental health support students' all-round and individualized development. She emphasized that AI-empowered education is first an educational question and only second a technical one: the core goal of bringing intelligent technology into classrooms is not to simplify students' thinking, but to upgrade it—enabling students to think better and grow deeply.







Mr. CAI Lei, Secretary of the CPC Committee and General Principal, Guangqumen Middle School Education Group, Beijing, China, explained the school's approach to educational transformation through three deep inquiries. He proposed that bringing AI into schools is by no means about arming an old education system with new technologies; rather, the school relies on the "BASE+" generative AI education ecosystem to reshape new forms of education. The core difficulty in implementing smart education lies not in technology, but in upgrading people's concepts and capabilities. The school has built an "intelligent agent seven-assist" empowerment matrix covering the seven educational scenarios of teaching, learning, evaluation, research, management, nurturing, and construction, cultivating an "AI-augmented" teaching

workforce. The ultimate value of smart education is to create fairer and warmer education: the greatest significance of AI lies not only in helping top students excel further, but also in providing safety-net support, ensuring that every student is seen, understood, and precisely empowered.

Prof. MA Hong, Secretary of the CPC Committee and Group General Principal, Chongqing Bashu Primary School, China, began with the true story of a frontline Chinese-language teacher's transformation—from resisting AI, to accepting it, to using it well—sharing the school's philosophy and practical mechanisms for deepening smart education. She proposed that in digital transformation, a principal's primary responsibility is to activate teachers' intrinsic motivation for growth: the school organised all teachers to co-build more than 90,000 high-quality teaching resources aligned with the new curriculum standards and established the "Online Bashu" digital sharing platform. The core task is to build long-term education mechanisms, embedding intelligent technologies throughout the entire process of preparation, teaching, learning, evaluation, and research to achieve the integration of research and application. The fundamental commitment is to uphold integrity while innovating, strictly safeguarding the bottom lines of students' physical and mental health, data security, and AI ethics. Technology is the bridge; growth is the core—what a principal safeguard is not the bridge, but the growth of every teacher and student.





This parallel session was jointly moderated by Prof. WEI Xuefeng, Dean, School of Education, Ludong University, China and Prof. WU Yinghui, Former Director, Haidian Academy of Educational Sciences, Beijing; Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, China.





*The Parallel Session: Principals as Change Agents—High-Quality School Development was organised by the School Alliance of Educational digitalisation, the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, and iFLYTEK Co., Ltd.

Parallel Session: Human–AI Collaborative Classrooms and Future Learning Centres

The integration of artificial intelligence into education is reshaping not only how teaching and learning take place, but also the environments in which learning occurs. The session examined emerging models of human–AI collaborative classrooms and future learning centres, exploring how AI, intelligent technologies, and flexible learning spaces can work together to support more personalised, interactive, and collaborative learning experiences. Discussions focused on the redesign of classroom environments, new forms of human–AI interaction, and the integration of physical and digital learning spaces to better respond to diverse learner needs. Participants also explored how intelligent learning environments can support teachers in designing learning activities, providing timely feedback, and facilitating deeper student engagement, while enabling learners to exercise greater agency in their own learning. At the institutional level, the session considered the infrastructure, organisational mechanisms, and pedagogical innovation required to move from isolated smart classrooms towards more connected and sustainable future learning environments. Overall, the discussions highlighted the importance of aligning technology, space, pedagogy, and human interaction in creating learner-centred environments for the future of education.



Photo of Parallel Session: Human–AI Collaborative Classrooms and Future Learning Centres

SPEAKERS

Prof. Fabrizio Hochschild
Former United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General (Video)

Prof. ZHANG Jingjing
Deputy Dean, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, China

Mr. HU Weifeng
First-Class Inspector, Department of Education of Sichuan, China

Prof. Cristina Conati
Editor-in-Chief, International Journal of AI in Education; Professor, University of British Columbia, Canada

Mr. LYU Hang
Deputy Director, Beijing Digital Education Center, China

Mr. Kom Mun Siong
Lead Specialist, Learning Partnerships Branch, Educational Technology Division (ETD), Ministry of Education, Singapore

Prof. Dato' Dr. Ahmad Izanee Awang
President/Vice-Chancellor, Open University Malaysia (OUM), Malaysia

Prof. LI Yanyan
Professor, Faculty of Education; Deputy Dean, Smart Learning Institute, Beijing Normal University, China

Ms. MA Nannan
Assistant Director, China Foundation for Rural Development, China

Mr. GAO Tiegang
Director, Educational Technology Center of Liaoning, China

Mr. MA Jianwei
Deputy Director, Education Bureau of Hexi District, Tianjin, China

Mr. ZHENG Haibo
Director, Education Bureau of Xintian County, Hunan, China

Mr. CHANG Sheng
Head, Education Management Division, Social Undertakings Bureau, Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area, China

Mr. ZHANG Tianyang
Deputy Director, Digital and Intelligent Education Research and Training Center, Heilongjiang Institute of Teacher Development, China

Mr. ZHU Ning
Lead, Chengdu AI + Teacher Digital Literacy Enhancement Workshop, Sichuan, China

Ms. LIANG Yan
Principal, Branch School of Beijing No. 2 Middle School, China

Ms. SU Jinxiu
Principal, Xiamen Haicang Hua-Fu Experimental Middle School, Fujian, China

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MODERATORS

Prof. LU Yu
Deputy Dean, School of Educational Technology, Beijing Normal University, China

Prof. SHEN Yang
Associate Professor, Beijing Normal University, China

Opening Remarks: Envisioning a New Landscape of Human–AI Collaborative Education



Prof. Fabrizio Hochschild, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General, noted in a video address that education is a vital force for safeguarding human dignity, advancing the realization of human rights, and driving social progress. In the face of the opportunities and challenges brought by the rapid development of AI, he emphasized the need to reflect deeply on the synergy between artificial intelligence and human wisdom, prudently guard against the risks of technological dependence, fully leverage education's role in guiding values, promote the development of AI for good, and better serve human development and world peace.



Prof. ZHANG Jingjing, Deputy Dean and Professor of the Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, stated that AI entering the classroom is not a simple replacement of teachers; rather, it should bring into play the respective strengths of teachers, students, and AI to build a new relationship of complementary advantages and collaborative progress. She pointed out that the development of future learning centres should focus on the transformation of learning modes, coordinating learning spaces, high-quality resources, learning activities, data support, and educational services, promoting the integration of online and offline learning and the articulation of formal and informal learning, so as to provide learners with flexible, personalised, and high-quality learning support.

Thematic Speeches: Diverse Perspectives on Human–AI Collaboration and Future Learning

Mr. HU Weifeng, First-Class Inspector of the Department of Education of Sichuan Province, delivered a report entitled "Digital-Empowerment and Networked Sharing: Sichuan's Exploratory Practice of Digitally Empowering High-Quality and Equitable Development of Basic Education." Centered on the three main threads of resource sharing, technology empowerment, and ecosystem development, he introduced Sichuan's implementation of the "Networked Sharing Plan" and the development of the "Sichuan AI Teaching Assistant," practical explorations that promote the sharing and flow of high-quality educational resources across regions, between urban and rural areas, and among schools. The report noted that digital and intelligent technologies should be used to promote the sharing of quality resources and innovation in teaching and research approaches, and that teacher professional development and the enhancement of schools' endogenous capacity should drive basic education from "resource sharing" toward "collaborative symbiosis," exploring a sustainable digital pathway for the high-quality and equitable development of basic education.

As a core application demonstration zone of the national science and technology major project of the new generation of artificial intelligence, "Research on and Application Demonstration of Key Technologies for Intelligent Connected Computing in Learning Environments," Sichuan Province, building on the practical achievements of the "Networked Sharing Plan," successfully submitted a World Digital Education Innovation Case, transforming regional practice into a Chinese solution of value for international dialogue and contributing the experience and wisdom of southwest China to the equitable development of education worldwide.

Prof. Cristina Conati, Professor at the University of British Columbia, Canada, delivered a report entitled "Characterizing Students' LLM Usage Behaviors and Their Association with Learning in Critical Thinking Tasks." Focusing on the relationship between students' large language model (LLM) usage behaviors and learning outcomes, she analyzed the influence of different usage patterns on learning in critical thinking tasks. She pointed out that the key to students' use of LLMs lies not in the frequency but in the manner of use: student-led usage patterns are more conducive to improving learning performance in the early stages of a course, whereas excessive adoption of LLM-led usage patterns may weaken learning outcomes. The report emphasized that the impact of LLMs on learning outcomes is closely related to how students use them.

Mr. LYU Hang, Deputy Director of the Beijing Digital Education Center, delivered a report entitled "Beijing's Strategic Layout & Initiatives for AI+Education." He pointed out that AI is driving systemic change across educational goals, forms, content, evaluation, and ecology, and that Beijing adheres to a problem-oriented and application-driven approach, advancing intelligent agent applications, regional practices, and infrastructure development around educational needs such as resource supply, personalised teaching, and the enhancement of innovation capacity. He emphasized that, while deepening the application of AI in education, efforts should focus on cultivating high-quality talent suited to future development, adhering to the principle of "investing in people," resolving the challenge of equitable AI application across regions and schools, promoting the transformation of the education development model toward new-quality service provision, and strengthening the ethical governance of AI.

Mr. Kom Mun Siong, Lead Specialist of the Learning Partnerships Branch, Educational Technology Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, delivered a report entitled "From Masterplans to Mindsets: Singapore's Journey Towards Human-AI Collaborative Classrooms." Drawing on the Singapore Student Learning Space (SLS) and applications such as the Learning Assistant and the Data Assistant, he introduced pathways through which AI supports personalised learning and teachers' professional practice. He pointed out that the educational application of AI should remain student-centred and pedagogy-first, with AI used appropriately according to students' ages and developmental stages, and that a trusted human–AI collaborative education ecosystem should be built upon the foundations of agency, inclusivity, safety, and equity.

Prof. Dato' Dr. Ahmad Izanee Awang, President/Vice-Chancellor of Open University Malaysia, delivered a report entitled "Future Learning Centres & Human-AI Collaborative Environments." He noted that future education should bring into play the respective strengths of humans and AI to achieve human–AI collaborative enhancement. He proposed that future learning centres should be intelligent, personalised, connected, flexible, and inclusive, enabling students to become active collaborators and facilitating teachers' transformation into learning designers, AI coordinators, and ethical leaders. Future education is not about replacing people with intelligent machines, but about building a learning ecosystem through human–AI collaboration that unleashes human potential and cultivates wisdom.



Release Session: Advancing Smart Learning Environments from Concept to Practice

Prof. LI Yanyan, Professor of the Faculty of Education and Deputy Dean of the Smart Learning Institute, Beijing Normal University, released the interim outcome of the national science and technology major project of the new generation of artificial intelligence, "Research on and Application Demonstration of Key Technologies for Intelligent Connected Computing in Learning Environments"—the "Technical Guideline Framework and Solutions for the Three-Dimensional Integrated Teaching Field"—with the outcome presented through a digital human.

The outcome addresses the needs of learning environment construction and upgrading in the age of AI. Targeting primary and secondary schools, universities, and vocational colleges, it provides references for the evaluation, construction, and renovation involved in the intelligent upgrading of traditional learning environments, promoting a shift from single-device configuration to systematic and intelligent construction and application. During the release, the project team introduced the basic composition of the technical guideline framework and solutions for the three-dimensional integrated teaching field and, drawing on practical cases, demonstrated construction and application pathways across different educational scenarios, providing practical references for schools of all types and at all levels in advancing the intelligent construction, renovation, and upgrading of learning environments.

Ms. MA Nannan, Assistant Director of the China Foundation for Rural Development, released the "Effectiveness Assessment of the Smart Classroom Project." Taking "a five-year answer sheet for the digitalisation of rural education" as the main thread, she introduced the project's practical achievements over the past five years in integrating digital technology into rural education through curriculum development, teacher training, and exchange activities guided by the STEAM education philosophy. A promotional video marking the fifth anniversary of the Smart Classroom Project was screened at the venue, reviewing the project's journey from "delivering equipment" to "cultivating capabilities" and presenting a vivid picture of digital technology supporting the growth of rural teachers and students.





Photo of Release Session: Advancing Smart Learning Environments from Concept to Practice

Thematic Speeches: Multi-Scenario Practices and Regional Explorations of Human–AI Collaborative Classrooms

Focusing on AI-empowered classroom teaching and regional education digitalisation practices, experts from the fields of educational research, regional governance, and teacher development shared practical explorations at different levels and in different scenarios, centering on classroom innovation, the application of intelligent technologies, and the development of future learning ecosystems.

Mr. GAO Tiegang, Director of the Educational Technology Center of Liaoning Province, drawing on classroom cases from multiple regions, introduced the application of generative AI in areas such as teaching assistance, learning evaluation, immersive learning, and interdisciplinary integration, and proposed promoting classroom quality improvement and workload reduction for teachers through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Mr. CHANG Sheng, Head of the Education Management Division of the Social Undertakings Bureau of the Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area, drawing on interdisciplinary classrooms and real industrial projects, demonstrated practices in which AI supports inquiry-based learning and deep thinking, and proposed building a future learning ecosystem through the joint contributions of human–AI collaborative classrooms, authentic urban scenarios, and region-wide AI infrastructure.

Mr. ZHANG Tianyang, Deputy Director of the Digital and Intelligent Education Research and Training Center of the Heilongjiang Institute of Teacher Development, introduced AI education practices guided by the three-dimensional orientation of "science, technology, and people," promoting the movement of AI education from single-point exploration toward continuity across all school stages and systematic implementation through the development of curricula, teaching materials, evaluation, ethics, and teaching research systems.







Application Demonstration: Showcasing the Outcomes of the National Science and Technology Major Project

The forum presented a concentrated showcase of the application demonstration outcomes of the national science and technology major project of the new generation of artificial intelligence, "Research on and Application Demonstration of Key Technologies for Intelligent Connected Computing in Learning Environments." Leaders from the project's demonstration zones (schools) shared progress in the project's implementation across scenarios including regional governance, teacher development, learning environment construction, and classroom teaching.

Mr. MA Jianwei, Deputy Director of the Education Bureau of Hexi District, Tianjin, introduced the "Intelligent Three-Body" human–machine co-education practice, which builds a smart and healthy education ecosystem of coordination among physical education, families and schools, communities and schools, and medical care and education through intelligent monitoring, tiered training, and health profiling.

Mr. ZHENG Haibo, Director of the Education Bureau of Xintian County, Hunan Province, shared county-level smart education practices that promote the sharing of high-quality educational resources between urban and rural areas through a lightweight digital foundation, mechanism innovation, and human–AI collaborative applications.

Mr. ZHU Ning, Lead of the Chengdu AI + Teacher Digital Literacy Enhancement Workshop,

demonstrated practical explorations of AI-empowered teacher professional development centered on AI-native ways of working and the development of teacher workstations.

Ms. LIANG Yan, Principal of the Branch School of Beijing No. 2 Middle School, introduced the school's practice of building a multi-campus intelligent foundation based on "network interconnection and shared computing power," and shared applications in school affairs management, intelligently connected learning spaces, and teaching intelligent agents. Taking the mathematics operations intelligent agent as an example, she noted that the key to advancing teaching transformation lies in the deep integration of teachers' professional wisdom with AI and in building an industry–academia–research collaboration mechanism under the national science and technology major project to promote the translation of outcomes into practice.

Ms. SU Jinxiu, Principal of Xiamen Haicang Hua-Fu Experimental Middle School, shared practices such as AI-assisted essay grading and data-driven tiered teaching, demonstrating the practical results of intelligent technology moving from single-point application to interdisciplinary integration and from classroom innovation to school-wide digital transformation.











The Parallel Session was co-moderated by Prof. LU Yu, Deputy Dean and Professor of the School of Educational Technology, Beijing Normal University, and Prof. SHEN Yang, Associate Professor of Beijing Normal University.





*The Parallel Session: Human–AI Collaborative Classrooms and Future Learning Centres was organised by the Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, the National Engineering Research Center of Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology, and NetDragon Websoft Inc.

Parallel Session:
Open, Lifelong and Borderless Learning

The session brought together experts from universities, international organisations, open universities, and education institutions across multiple countries to explore how artificial intelligence and digital technologies are reshaping open and lifelong learning. Discussions focused on the sharing of open courses and educational resources, AI-supported personalised learning, micro-credentials and the recognition of learning outcomes, as well as new approaches to expanding access to quality learning opportunities across different stages of life. Participants also examined issues of digital equity, multilingual access, responsible AI use, and the need to preserve human judgement and learner agency in increasingly intelligent learning environments. Drawing on diverse international experiences, the session highlighted the importance of building more open, flexible, inclusive, and interoperable learning systems in which learning can take place anytime and anywhere, while ultimately supporting human development and ensuring that every learner can benefit from technological change.



Photo of Parallel Session: Open, Lifelong and Borderless Learning

SPEAKERS

Mr. Mohamed Salifou
Advisor to the Minister for Artificial Intelligence Affairs, Benin

Prof. LI Song
Vice President, The Open University of China, China

Ms. Torunn Gjelsvik
Secretary General, International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)

Prof. Elijah I. Omwenga
Vice Chancellor, Open University of Kenya, Kenya

Prof. Ami Upadhyaya
Vice Chancellor, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, India

Mr. Maxim Jean-Louis
President and Chief Executive Officer, Contact North | Contact Nord, Canada

Prof. Nicolas Maïnetti
Director, Asia-Pacific Region, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)

Prof. Fulufhelo Nemavhola
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Durban University of Technology, South Africa

Mr. Juan Gabriel Jaramillo Giraldo
Leader, Asia-Pacific International Project, Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia (UNAD), Colombia

Mr. CHEN Hong
Senior Vice President, NetDragon Websoft; Chief Technology Officer, Elernity; Chief Engineer, Smart Learning Institute, Beijing Normal University, China

Prof. Carlos Alberto Pereira de Oliveira
Director, Interdisciplinary Institute for Human Development and Technology (IFHT), Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ), Brazil

Prof. Asha S. Kanwar
Chair Professor, Beijing Normal University; Chair, Advisory Committee of the GSENet; Former Chair, UNESCO IITE Governing Board; Former President, COL

Mr. Abdulrahman Alhebshi
Head, Learning and Capacity Development, World Health Organization (WHO)

Prof. Glenda Cox
UNESCO Chair on Open Education and Social Justice; Associate Professor, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Dr. David Atchoarena
Former Executive Director, WHO Academy; Former Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) (Video)

Mr. Daniel Baril
Member and Former Chair, Governing Board, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL); Expert Advisor on Adult Education Policy Development, Government of Quebec, Canada (Video)

Dr. Gaya Gamhewage
Former Head of Learning and Capacity Development, WHO Health Emergencies Programme; Former Lead of OpenWHO, World Health Organization (Video)

MODERATORS

Prof. FENG Xiaoying
Professor, Beijing Normal University, China

Prof. Carlos Alberto Pereira de Oliveira
Director, Interdisciplinary Institute for Human Development and Technology (IFHT), Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ), Brazil

Opening Remarks: Ensuring Learning Reaches Every Learner



Mr. Mohamed Salifou, Advisor to the Minister for Artificial Intelligence Affairs, Be**nin** noted in his remarks that Benin, despite its limited resources, has chosen to act proactively. Relying on open resources, AI-enabled pathways, and mutual recognition with the world, Benin is bringing education to all its people. The country has organised young people to participate in AI Olympiads and launched a nationwide AI roadshow, using creative approaches such as block-based programming to close gaps and continuously advance AI-empowered education.



Prof. LI Song shared three insights in his remarks: first, empowering education with digital intelligence to deliver high-quality resources precisely to every learner; second, driving institutional innovation so that learning experiences are recognised — 25 provincial-level credit banks have been established and more than 25 million lifelong learning records created; third, leveraging systemic strengths to make learning opportunities accessible to all, bringing resources to the grassroots communities that need them most.

Thematic Speech: Borderless Practices and Inclusive Pathways of Open Universities

Ms. Torunn Gjelsvik in her speech “Open, Lifelong and Borderless Learning: Designing Inclusive Pathways for Every Learner,” pointed out that lifelong learning is not only about adults, as different regions face different realities of ageing or youthful populations. For many learners, flexible, affordable, and high-quality open education is not a luxury but a necessity. Inclusive pathways should be designed around learners’ real lives, and there is no one-size-fits-all model.

Prof. Elijah I. Omwenga introduced that, facing a large youth population, unemployment, and insufficient training, Kenya has used its digital university to bring the university “to people’s doorsteps,” removing geographical and admission barriers. The Open University of Kenya offers 32 programmes, including data science and artificial intelligence, and enables learners to apply what they learn through three- to six-month short courses with phased certification, helping tens of thousands of students start businesses or find employment after graduation.

Prof. Ami Upadhyaya in her speech “Smart Education for Inclusive India,” noted that smart education is not about attaching a digital label to education, but about integrating technology into it so as to make education more equitable and accessible. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University has established special learner centres serving prisoners, persons with disabilities, and transgender people, founded a Senior Citizens’ University, and uses a credit bank to ensure that every learning experience is recorded and recognised.







Mr. Maxim Jean-Louis in his speech "Smart Education and the Next Phase of AI: From Generative AI to Agentic AI in Teaching and Learning," proposed that as AI moves from "answering questions" to "taking action," the key question for education is no longer what it can do, but whether it should be allowed to act. Both learners and institutions should have the right to say "no" — teaching people when not to use AI is as important as teaching them how to use it.

Prof. Nicolas Maïnetti in his speech "Learning Without Borders: Open Resources, Virtual Mobility and Lifelong AI Skills Across a 120-Country Multilingual Network," introduced that the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) covers 120 countries and more than 1,000 member institutions, and that open resources can cross national and institutional boundaries only through recognition and mutual recognition. He shared practices in open educational resources and lifelong AI literacy training, noting that AI does not treat all languages equally and that multilingual accessibility is a challenge that must be addressed.

Prof. Fulufhelo Nemavhola in her speech "Beyond AI Adoption: University Generativity for Inclusive, Sustainable and Capability-Driven Higher Education," proposed that a university's success in the intelligent era is not measured by its AI investment or degree of automation, but by whether it empowers students and serves local communities. Automation does not equal intelligence; AI is an amplifier that magnifies reliable data as well as weaknesses. Universities should enhance their "generative" capacity to create knowledge and act quickly without exacerbating inequality.

Mr. Juan Gabriel Jaramillo Giraldo in his speech "Bridging Asia and Latin America through AI-Driven Open Education: The UNAD Experience," introduced that the university's 400,000 active students are spread across 1,103 cities, with technology connecting remote areas through 72 regional centres. He emphasised that borderless education must reach every learner, that lifelong learning requires universities to continuously support learning at every stage of life, and that new technologies should be used to create transferable and interoperable learning credentials.

Mr. CHEN Hong in his speech "Bridging the Cognitive Divide: Reshaping Lifelong Learning with Sovereign AI," pointed out that the digital divide is shifting from device connectivity to cultural and cognitive divides, as the training data of mainstream large models carries value biases. He proposed a three-tier concept of "sovereign AI" — at the national, institutional, and individual levels — which, through local fine-tuning, local knowledge bases, and educator-led alignment, allows AI to take root locally and reshape inclusive lifelong learning.

Prof. Carlos Alberto Pereira de Oliveira in his speech "Smart Education for Sustainable Futures: Building Lifelong Learning in Health through On-Demand Learning," stated that, facing a global shortfall of 11 million health workers, lifelong learning in health is itself a public health issue. He advocated adapting technologies to local conditions to empower health systems, ensuring that learning happens when it is truly needed, while insisting on human judgment so that technology does not replace human decision-making and responsibility.



Panel Discussion: Smart Education, AI, and Lifelong Learning in Health

The panel discussion focused on “Smart Education, AI, and Lifelong Learning in Health: Perspectives from the Global South,” with guests from international organisations, universities, and the Global South engaging in in-depth discussions on global health trends, open educational resources, and the role of AI in lifelong learning.

Prof. Asha S. Kanwar pointed out that population ageing, technological development, and the climate crisis are reshaping the global health landscape, while billions of people still lack basic health services and the shortfall of health workers remains enormous. She emphasised that lifelong learning is not simple training, but a social process facilitated jointly by community health workers and technology — communities should become active partners in lifelong learning.

Prof. Glenda Cox shared the practices of the University of Cape Town: open educational resources are a public good, and the university’s open textbooks in health sciences have been widely used. Through explorations such as student–AI co-creation of teaching materials and an African micro-credential system, high-quality resources can be accessed, taken away, and further developed.

Dr. David Atchoarena introduced the practices of the WHO Academy: modular micro-learning pathways integrate content from the WHO and its partners, supporting offline and mobile learning. More than 200 courses have been designed, reaching over 80,000 learners from 196 countries, 70 per cent of whom are from low- and middle-income countries. Quality assurance, open educational resources, and international cooperation together support the equitable implementation of the system.

Dr. Gaya Gamhewage speaking via video, recalled her experience in large-scale emergency training and emphasised that, in the face of health crises, learning is itself part of the response. She noted that AI can reduce the cognitive burden on health workers but should not replace professional judgment. The future of lifelong learning depends on three aspects — access, adaptation, and agency — and requires a multilingual, open digital infrastructure.

Mr. Daniel Baril speaking online, proposed a model of self-regulated learning empowered by generative AI, in which professionals connect situational needs with knowledge bases, verify responses, check understanding, and produce evidence of learning. He emphasised that AI cannot replace professional judgment and experience, and that systems should be traceable and governable, while supporting multilingual and low-bandwidth access.





Photo of Panel Discussion

The session was moderated by Prof. FENG Xiaoying, Professor at Beijing Normal University, and Prof. Carlos Alberto Pereira de Oliveira, Director of IFHT.





*The Parallel Session: Open, Lifelong and Borderless Learning was co-organised by the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE), the Interdisciplinary Institute for Human Development and Technology (IFHT) of Rio de Janeiro State University, Brazil, Open University Malaysia, the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, Contact North | Contact Nord, and NetDragon Websoft Inc.

Smart Education in Practice: Teachers' Forum

The Teachers' Forum highlighted the leadership and practical contributions of distinguished teachers in advancing digital transformation and innovation in smart education. The session showcased how teachers are using technology to develop new approaches to teaching and learning, integrate digital tools into subject teaching, strengthen collaborative professional learning, and support the co-creation and sharing of high-quality educational resources. Discussions also addressed digitally enabled collaboration among schools, families, and communities, intelligent and personalised support for teachers' professional development, and strategies for cultivating teacher leaders and extending their expertise across schools and professional communities. The forum also featured outstanding cases of smart education practice, providing a platform for sharing effective, adaptable, and scalable approaches and demonstrating how teacher-led innovation can contribute to the broader development of smart education.



Smart Education in Practice: Teachers' Forum

SPEAKERS

Ms. Emilia Stojmenova Duh
Former Minister of Digital Transformation, Slovenia (Video)

Mr. XU Jian
Deputy Director, Educational Informatization Strategy Research Base (Central China), Ministry of Education, China

Prof. Fernando José Rodríguez Mesa
UNESCO Chair on Higher Education in Rural Areas; Associate Professor, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Colombia

Mr. KANG Yongjun
Deputy Director, Teacher Development Center of Binhai New Area, Tianjin, China

Mr. SONG Tao
Principal, Primary School Affiliated to Central China Normal University, Hubei, China

Ms. LIN Na
General Principal, Aolin Primary School Education Group, Wuhan Economic and Technological Development Zone, Hubei, China

Mr. Gaël GBONSOU
Director of Development and Entrepreneurship, Université Senghor, Egypt

Mr. QIAN Yongchang
Deputy Principal, Xiamen Foreign Language School, Fujian, China

Ms. LV Xinmei
Director, Pucheng No. 3 Middle School, Nanping, Fujian, China

Mr. XU Runbo
CCTV Annual Top 10 Innovative Teaching Pioneer; Deputy Dean, Yuanfudao Secondary School Development Institute, China

Dr. Moustafa Ibrahim
Assistant Professor, University of Bahrain, Bahrain

Ms. GAO Ting
Principal, Chongqing Science City Shuren Sixian Primary School, Chongqing, China

Mr. SHI Yuan
Director, Information Center, Experimental Primary School of Haidian District, Beijing, China

Ms. HONG Yan
General Principal, No. 3 Primary School Education Group, Kangbashi District, Ordos, Inner Mongolia, China

Mr. WU Hongwen
Principal, Taishan No. 1 High School, Guangdong, China

Mr. LIN Zhaosheng
Deputy Principal, Wang Yirong High School, Yantai Economic and Technological Development Zone, Shandong, China

MODERATORS

Prof. FENG Tingting
Professor, Hebei University of Media; Council Member, Data Journalism Committee, China Science and Technology Journalism Society, China

Opening Remarks: Ensuring Learning Reaches Every Learner



Ms. Emilia Stojmenova Duh, Former Minister of Digital Transformation, Slovenia, delivered an address via video. Drawing on her personal journey, she noted that education is the infrastructure of human dignity and the most important mechanism for breaking the limitations of one's background. Artificial

intelligence is a powerful tool for promoting educational equity, yet it also carries the risk of weakening students' independent thinking. Technology itself holds no value orientation, which makes the role of teachers ever more critical: machines can generate answers quickly, but teachers shape people who know how to discern and work with those answers. Smart tools, she stressed, should be well used to open the door of growth for every ordinary child.



Mr. XU Jian, Deputy Director, Educational Informatization Strategy Research Base (Central China), Ministry of Education, China, delivered opening remarks. He noted that as China's education digitalisation strategy continues to advance, the national smart education platform keeps upgrading and smart campus construction keeps deepening, giving rise to abundant frontline innovative practices. Distinguished teachers are both pathfinders in applying technology and guardians of the human warmth of education; smart education must deeply integrate the instrumental rationality of technology with the values of nurturing people. This forum, he said, is both a platform for exchanging ideas and a window for showcasing practical achievements, and he looked forward to turning vivid practices into replicable experience that supports educational equity and high-quality development.

Outcome Release: Pooling Practical Samples, Sharing China's Smart Education Experience

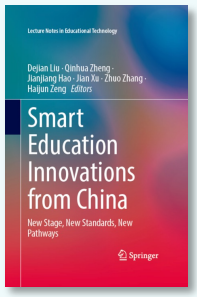
At the outcome release session, **Mr. XU Jian** officially released the 2026 Smart Education Outstanding Cases. Under the guidance of the Department of Science, Technology and Informatization of the Ministry of Education, a total of 1,608 outstanding smart education cases were collected and confirmed through application, selection and public announcement. The outstanding cases from 2022 to 2025 have been published by Springer, and the 2026 cases will also be compiled and published in the form of a review volume.



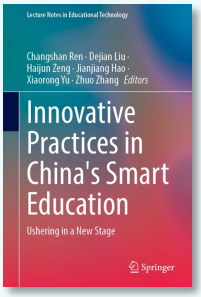


The second outcome of the forum was the launch of the new book Using AI Right: 16 Practical Lessons from a Veteran Teacher, authored by **Mr. TANG Xingchu**, Chief Expert and Principal of Shenzhen Cloud School, China. Grounded in real classroom scenarios rather than serving as a tool manual, the book focuses on teachers' professional judgment and offers hands-on methods around lesson preparation, classroom assessment, teacher growth and school innovation. The book argues that while AI can improve efficiency and broaden thinking, it is always teachers who understand students and accompany their growth; technology helps us move faster, while education answers where we are heading.

Smart Education Innovations from China



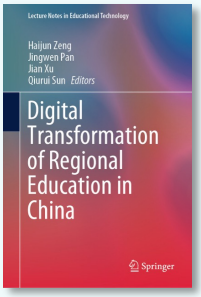
As artificial intelligence reshapes education worldwide, educators are experimenting with new approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment. This volume documents how these innovations are being implemented across China, providing evidence from real-world practice rather than policy alone.
https://link.springer.com/book/9789819258574



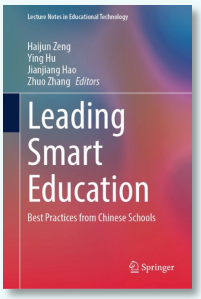
Innovative Practices in China's Smart Education

This book presents 36 case studies selected from over 1,000 cases collected via the "2024 Smart Education Outstanding Cases" solicitation initiative. This initiative was launched by the "Smart Education Demonstration Zone" expert group secretariat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education's Education Informatization Strategic Research Bases (Beijing, Central China, and Northwest regions).
https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-95-2188-3

Digital Transformation of Regional Education in China



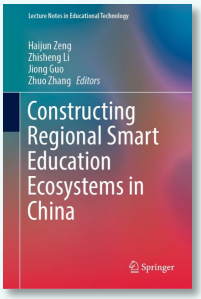
This book presents the best practices of smart education in different regions across China. Each chapter addresses one or more of the following topics: smart learning environments, new education and teaching models, teaching platforms and digital tool applications, teacher professional development, smart education evaluation, education governance, and education digitization.
https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-97-8144-7



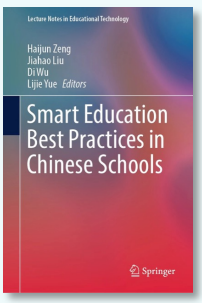
Leading Smart Education

This book focuses on best practices in smart education in Chinese schools. It showcases the achievements of Chinese schools in smart education since the comprehensive implementation of the educational digital transformation in China.
https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-97-8148-5

Constructing Regional Smart Education Ecosystems in China



This book enriches the understanding of regional smart education in China and promotes sharing of smart education case studies in China and abroad. It presents 46 case studies selected from a total of 644 case studies collected nationwide in China.
https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-99-6225-9



Smart Education Best Practices in Chinese Schools

This book presents 28 practical case studies in detail and 49 case studies in brief. The collection of these case studies focuses on one or more aspects of exploration and practice on the following topics: smart campus and smart classroom, resource construction and sharing, new teaching mode, comprehensive quality evaluation of students, teacher professional development, application of teaching platform and tool, innovative application of online learning space, collaborative education, and school management and services.
https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-99-6097-2

Outcome Release: Pooling Practical Samples, Sharing China's Smart Education Experience

Prof. Fernando José Rodríguez Mesa, UNESCO Chair on Higher Education in Rural Areas; Associate Professor, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Colombia, delivered a keynote address titled "Entering Higher Education without Leaving Home", sharing his team's exploration of rural higher education in Colombia. In response to weak network connectivity in remote areas, the team has explored localized, offline AI application models in which AI only supports students' reflection rather than generating questions and evaluation results on their behalf. Drawing on multiple knowledge bases, the team turns real community problems into interdisciplinary projects, enabling rural students to complete higher education learning while solving real local problems.

Mr. Gaël GBONSOU, Director of Development and Entrepreneurship, Université Senghor, Egypt, delivered a keynote address titled "Training African Executives in the Age of AI: the Experience of Senghor University", sharing practices in cultivating management talent for Africa in the AI era. Faced with the continent's vast talent development needs, his team insists that technology must serve people and human relationships rather than relying solely on fully digital solutions. The "Transform Africa" executive training program adopts a blended online-offline model in which participants bring real change projects from their own organizations; the entrepreneurship track introduces questioning-based AI agents paired with human coaches to jointly empower African entrepreneurs, achieving large-scale cultivation while preserving human connection and local context.

Dr. Moustafa Ibrahim, Assistant Professor, University of Bahrain, delivered a keynote address titled "Mersennova: Transforming Mathematics Through Human–AI Co-Discovery", introducing the Mersennova human–AI collaborative mathematics discovery system. The system builds a "mathematics graph" through which AI assists researchers in observing mathematical patterns and formulating research questions, exploring a new path for human–AI collaboration in mathematical discovery. Related achievements have been published in international academic journals.

Mr. KANG Yongjun, Deputy Director, Teacher Development Center of Binhai New Area, Tianjin, China, delivered a keynote address titled "'1+4+N': The 'Binhai Paradigm' for Solving the Challenge of Scaling Regional AI Education", addressing the practical dilemma that AI education is "easy to pilot but hard to universalize, easy to build but hard to implement, and easy at single points but hard to scale region-wide". With a region-wide standardized digital foundation as the "1", the paradigm advances across four dimensions — regional governance, school practice, teacher development and student growth — and builds "N" collaborative ecosystems among schools, families and communities. Relying on rigid institutional guarantees, all 121 primary and secondary schools in the district have incorporated AI general courses into their timetables, and more than 20,000 teachers have completed literacy improvement programs, turning isolated "bonsai" pilots into a region-wide "forest".



Thematic Speech: Digital Transformation of Schools — Diverse Samples from Primary and Secondary Education

Mr. SONG Tao, Principal, Primary School Affiliated to Central China Normal University, Hubei, China, delivered a keynote address titled "Ubiquitous Digital-Intelligent Fields: An Exploration and Practical Sample of Digital Transformation in Primary and Secondary Schools", sharing the school's five-year achievements in building a ubiquitous digital education field. The school has established two foundations — a data hub, and digital infrastructure and organization — implemented five major scenarios including cloud classrooms and cloud-based teaching research, and released China's first domestically developed education large model dedicated to primary schools, enabling digital avatars for teachers and dedicated AI learning companions for students. Covering dozens of campus scenarios such as smart homework, emotion monitoring, five-domain education evaluation and interdisciplinary learning, digital technology now permeates the entire education process like air.

Ms. LIN Na, General Principal, Aolin Primary School Education Group, Wuhan Economic and Technological Development Zone, Hubei, China, delivered a keynote address titled "AI Empowering the Construction of Healthy Primary Schools". The school strengthens the foundation of health education across four dimensions — space upgrading, resource integration, activity deepening and teacher cultivation — and has upgraded its smart environment with AI to achieve closed-loop physical fitness monitoring, psychological risk early warning and smart canteen food safety control, connecting the school-family-community education chain to safeguard the healthy growth of more than 3,000 students.

Mr. QIAN Yongchang, Deputy Principal, Xiamen Foreign Language School, Fujian, China, delivered a keynote address titled "Cultivating Innovation Quality in the AI Era: From Transmitting Knowledge to Inspiring Innovation", proposing a four-dimensional model for cultivating innovation quality in the AI era, comprising knowledge integration, critical thinking, intrinsic motivation and practical ability. As the threshold for acquiring knowledge falls, educational goals should shift from transmitting knowledge to inspiring innovation, driving five paradigm shifts in education: from standard-answer orientation to stimulating high-quality questions, from subject-centeredness to real-problem-driven learning, and from individual learning to human–AI collaborative creation. Taking the "low-cost moisture-proof system for the humid season" project as an example, he noted that teachers provide value guidance and deep questioning while AI undertakes cognitive support, allowing students to develop innovative qualities in the process of solving real problems.

Ms. LV Xinmei, Director, Pucheng No. 3 Middle School, Nanping, Fujian, China, delivered a keynote address titled "The Mountain-Area Practice Path of the 'I-CREATE Teaching Paradigm' from a Symbiosis Perspective: iFLYTEK Spark Empowering Teachers' Professional Growth and Resource Creation", presenting practices from a mountainous county school. To address the dilemma of adequate hardware but insufficient integration in mountain areas, the school built the I-CREATE six-step closed-loop teaching paradigm. Relying on a lightweight zero-code platform, it realizes a closed loop of local-context creation, AI co-created teaching resources, resource evaluation, classroom application and data iteration, transforming mountain-area teachers from resource users into resource creators. Practice has proven that bridging the digital divide is not simply about moving resources, but about empowering rural teachers with the capacity for self-driven growth.

Ms. GAO Ting, Principal, Chongqing Science City Shuren Sixian Primary School, Chongqing, China, delivered a keynote address titled "Using Evaluation Reform as the Engine to Systematically Build a New Five-Tier Growth Ecosystem for Virtuous Teachers". The school has promoted a dual-track transformation from the traditional physical "Sixian Coin" to the "Our School" digital system, feeding students' comprehensive quality evaluation back into teachers' professional growth. Teachers are divided into five tiers — novice, competent, excellent, backbone and expert — with differentiated development pathways designed for each tier. A number of young teachers and veteran teachers have achieved digital transformation, realizing the educational vision of "one tree, a thousand forms of virtue".



Mr. SHI Yuan, Director, Information Center, Experimental Primary School of Haidian District, Beijing, China, delivered a keynote address titled "Digital Fertile Soil · AI-Collaborative Interdisciplinary Inquiry". Focusing on the upper primary grades and integrating science, information technology and labor education, the project carries out project-based learning through the authentic task of class plant care. AI is positioned as a cognitive sparring partner that does not output standard answers; students are guided to use sensor-measured data to verify the reference hypotheses given by AI, thereby training critical thinking. With low hardware costs, the entire curriculum can be replicated and promoted in urban and rural schools as well as in Beijing, Hong Kong and Macao.

Ms. HONG Yan, General Principal, No. 3 Primary School Education Group, Kangbashi District, Ordos, Inner Mongolia, China, delivered a keynote address titled "Developing an AI-Driven Educational Paradigm to Foster Well-Rounded Talents in the New Era", introducing the "1+3" AI-empowered education system. Centered on cultivating well-rounded new talents of the era, the system builds three dimensions — boundless learning spaces, AI-integrated curricula and all-round student development — connecting in-class and extracurricular, online and offline learning, optimizing project-based experiments with sensors, improving diversified student evaluation, and balancing inclusive enlightenment with the cultivation of top innovative talents.

Mr. WU Hongwen, Principal, Taishan No. 1 High School, Guangdong, China, delivered a keynote address titled "Digital-Intelligent Empowerment · Integrated Cultivation — The 'Taishan Answer' to the Revitalization of County High Schools". To address the pain points of outdated equipment, insufficient teacher digital literacy and shallow application in county high schools, the school has built dual platforms of an education alliance and a youth science academy, created a closed loop of digital homework, advanced the integrated reform of teaching, learning and evaluation, and established a three-tier cultivation structure of classroom infusion, activity experience and resource delivery, exploring a high-quality development path for county high schools with a low-cost, replicable model.

Mr. LIN Zhaosheng, Deputy Principal, Wang Yirong High School, Yantai Economic and Technological Development Zone, Shandong, China, delivered a keynote address titled "From 'One Size Fits All' to 'One Policy per Person': The

AI Precision Enrichment Strategy of Wang Yirong High School, Yantai Economic and Technological Development Zone". Facing the limitation of traditional one-size-fits-all enrichment, the school has built a "1+2+N" system centered on personalised "one policy per person" plans, with human thinking coaches and AI digital teaching assistants working in tandem, tracing the root causes of errors based on comprehensive learning profiles and dynamically adjusting students' learning paths. AI takes on standardized work while teachers focus on higher-order thinking guidance and emotional companionship, helping top students achieve high outcomes from modest starting points.

Mr. XU Runbo, CCTV Annual Top 10 Innovative Teaching Pioneer; Deputy Dean, Yuanfudao Secondary School Development Institute, China, delivered a keynote address titled "Built for Generation Alpha: Reconstructing the Learning Model". Addressing the AI-native Generation Alpha, he proposed the idea that "knowing how to learn matters more than what is learned, and being seen matters more than being watched." He introduced a three-teacher collaboration model in which lead teachers build thinking frameworks, class advisors follow up with families, and AI teaching assistants perceive classroom learning states; through panoramic classroom interaction, students' thinking processes are fully recorded rather than only answers collected, and classroom data is used to generate tiered homework and personal knowledge graphs tailored to each student, adapting to the learning characteristics of the AI-native generation.





This forum was moderated by Prof. FENG Tingting, Professor, Hebei University of Media; Council Member, Data Journalism Committee, China Science and Technology Journalism Society, China, moderated the forum.

*The Smart Education in Practice: Teachers' Forum was co-hosted by the Educational Informatization Strategy Research Base, Ministry of Education, P.R.C (Beijing, Central China and Northwest China), and the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University.

Smart Education · Distinguished Experts' Views Showcase

Systemic Transformation towards Equity in Education



Prof. Chris Dede, Senior Research Fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA, describes how generative artificial intelligence and extended reality (XR) are converging into powerful new ways of adding niches to the digital multiverse. He observes that people with no computer science expertise can now build virtual worlds through vibe coding and create life-like virtual human agents as well as other non-human agents. Such agents, he notes, are becoming increasingly sophisticated at mimicking human behaviour and dialogue. That growing sophistication does not mean, however, that they are becoming more like human beings underneath. In terms of artificial intelligence, they remain very alien intelligences, and what they can do is mimic human behaviour and dialogue rather than understand it. The distinction matters for education, since plausibility is not evidence of comprehension, and fluent mimicry may readily be mistaken for insight. Such agents should therefore be treated as tools with distinctive affordances, not as substitutes for human judgement.



Prof. Jozef Colpaert, Emeritus Professor at the University of Antwerp, Belgium, recalls that educational technology has continually changed throughout history, and that every generation has believed its newest innovation would transform education. Some innovations disappeared, while others became part of everyday teaching. Artificial intelligence, he suggests, will follow the same path, since it will evolve and improve, and eventually it too will be replaced by technologies that cannot yet be imagined. Yet one thing should remain remarkably stable. Good education has never started with technology, and it has always started with thoughtful educational design. For that reason, he concludes, the future of education will never be determined by artificial intelligence alone, but by the professional intelligence of teachers who understand their learners, understand learning, and know when to use technology. Investment in tools should therefore not displace investment in the design capacity, professional judgement and autonomy of teachers.



Prof. Carolyn Rosé, Professor of Language Technologies and Human-Computer Interaction at Human-Computer Interaction Institute Language Technologies Institute, Carnegie Mellon University, USA, stresses that collaboration between humans and AI is not simply automation. Her aim is to develop agent capabilities that bring out the best in humans and give people the opportunity to do the work they do best and enjoy most. In large, realistic tasks, she observes, much of the most meaningful human work cannot be completely automated or taken over even by the most powerful models available today. Humans solve problems through abstraction and decomposition, whereas even the strongest agents do not, so there remains genuine room for complementarity rather than replacement. She warns, however, that where collaboration is poorly designed, humans and AI agents working together can perform worse than either would alone. Designing for complementarity therefore requires deliberate attention to the division of labour, since the mere presence of an agent does not improve a collaborative process.



Prof. Pedro Isaias, Editor-in-Chief of Interactive Technology and Smart, reports that the strongest perceived benefits of AI in education relate to efficiency rather than to deeper learning or better judgement. Efficiency is useful, but it cannot be the only criterion for redesigning assessment. The barriers are more revealing still, because the concerns raised are not merely technical but strongly pedagogical. Respondents remain sceptical about the capacity of AI to assess higher-order skills, to understand context and nuance, and to recognise innovative or creative student thinking. They also worry about credibility, limited knowledge of how to use the tools, ethical risk and legal compliance. He concludes that resistance to AI should not automatically be read as a lack of digital competence, since it sometimes reflects legitimate concern for educational quality, the credibility of assessment and accountability. Institutional strategies that treat such reservations as a mere skills deficit therefore risk addressing the wrong problem.



Prof. Elvira Popescu, Professor at the University of Craiova, Romania, frames her work as a shift from assessment of learning to assessment for learning. Rather than using assessment only to produce a final grade, formative assessment gives students continuous information that helps them improve while learning is still underway. Such information is most useful when it shapes subsequent work rather than arriving after it has been graded. The difficulty, she explains, is one of scale, because detailed and personalised feedback demands a great deal of instructor time, particularly when students submit open-ended answers. This creates a feedback bottleneck in which instructors know that rich feedback is valuable but cannot realistically provide it after every activity to every student. The question, therefore, is how generative AI can help deliver immediate and rich assessment at scale without removing the instructor's pedagogical authority or diluting the accountability that accompanies it.

Special Events

Senior Policy Roundtable: AI Governance in Education and the Future of Education

The Senior Policy Roundtable on AI Governance in Education was held on 18 August 2026 during the Global Smart Education Conference 2026. The roundtable brought together senior policymakers, representatives of international organisations, universities, research institutions and industry to discuss how education systems can govern the rapid development and application of artificial intelligence while upholding equity, quality, inclusion and human agency.

The discussion was framed by a shared concern that AI is advancing faster than the institutional, regulatory and pedagogical capacities needed to guide its responsible use in education. Participants recognised the transformative potential of AI to expand learning opportunities, support innovation and strengthen system resilience. At the same time, they emphasised that these benefits will not be realised equitably unless policy frameworks address infrastructure gaps, data protection, teacher readiness, affordability and contextual diversity from the outset.



A central theme of the roundtable was the relationship between resilience and inclusive equity. Speakers noted that resilient education systems must do more than recover from disruption; they must be able to anticipate change, adapt to uncertainty and transform in ways that protect the right to inclusive and quality education. Particular attention was given to learners and communities that are most at risk of being left behind, including rural populations, low-income groups, learners in least developed countries and small island developing states, and communities with limited access to connectivity, devices and localised digital resources.

The roundtable also examined the implications of AI for curriculum reform. Participants stressed that education in the AI era should not be limited to teaching learners how to use AI tools. Rather, curricula should help learners develop judgement, critical thinking, ethical awareness, creativity and the ability to evaluate AI-generated information. The discussion underlined the importance of age-appropriate, discipline-specific and practice-based approaches, ensuring that AI education supports human cognitive development rather than replacing the process of learning.

Teacher capacity was identified as a decisive condition for meaningful AI-enabled transformation. Participants observed that the main barriers are not only technical, but also cultural, professional and psychological. Teachers need confidence, institutional support and practical guidance to understand AI, use it responsibly and help students engage with it critically. Strengthening teacher AI literacy, pedagogical innovation and leadership capacity was therefore seen as an urgent priority.

In discussing governance frameworks, participants highlighted the gap between international principles and national or local implementation. While global guidelines provide valuable direction, countries require policy tools that are flexible, context-sensitive and operational. The roundtable called for modular governance toolkits, stronger local expertise, regional cooperation, credible oversight mechanisms and sustained capacity-building, particularly for systems facing constraints in infrastructure, finance and institutional readiness.

The final discussion focused on multi-stakeholder collaboration. Participants agreed that effective AI governance in education requires clearly defined roles among governments, schools, universities, industry, international organisations and civil society. Governments should set policy direction, ethical boundaries and accountability mechanisms; schools and teachers should identify real educational needs; industry should develop affordable and inclusive solutions aligned with public education goals; and universities and international networks should contribute research, evidence, capacity development and platforms for dialogue.

Overall, the roundtable reaffirmed that AI governance in education is fundamentally a question of educational purpose and public responsibility. It called for a shift from broad principles to practical implementation, from technology-centred adoption to human-centred transformation, and from fragmented initiatives to sustained partnerships. By linking policy vision with implementation challenges, the roundtable contributed to a shared understanding of how AI can be governed and applied to support inclusive, equitable, high-quality and sustainable education for all.



Photo of Senior Policy Roundtable: AI Governance in Education and the Future of Education

2026 GSENet Partners Meeting

The 2026 GSENet Partners Meeting was held on 19 August 2026 at the Changping Campus of Beijing Normal University. Chaired by Professor Asha Singh Kanwar, Chair of the GSENet Advisory Committee, the meeting served as the annual working session of the Global Smart Education Network (GSENet), bringing together network partners to review progress, strengthen collaboration and identify shared priorities for the next stage of development.



The meeting provided an important opportunity to reflect on GSENet's development over the past year and to consolidate its role as a partner-led platform for advancing smart education globally. Participants reviewed the Network's progress from August 2025 to August 2026, including the continued expansion of institutional participation and the growing diversity of regional and professional perspectives within the Network. The admission of new partners marked a further step in strengthening GSENet's international reach and its capacity to support cross-regional dialogue, mutual learning and cooperation in support of SDG 4.

A key focus of the meeting was to enhance practical collaboration among partners. The proposed GSENet Staff Exchange Scheme was discussed as a concrete mechanism for promoting institutional learning, professional exchange and joint capacity development. Partners welcomed the initiative as a means of moving beyond regular dialogue towards more sustained forms of cooperation, enabling participating institutions to share expertise, observe practices and develop collaborative activities in areas of common interest.

The meeting also highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing and joint knowledge production. Partners discussed ways to make better use of the GSENet Annual Report as a basis for wider exchange, including possible webinars and dissemination activities. They also explored opportunities for publications and thematic knowledge outputs that could bring together regional experiences, research findings and institutional practices in smart education. These discussions reflected the Network's commitment to building a shared evidence base and supporting informed dialogue on educational transformation in the digital and AI era.

Looking ahead, partners identified a number of common priorities for future cooperation, including responsible AI in education, educational equity, teacher development, policy and practice linkages, institutional innovation, youth engagement and the sustainable transformation of education systems. These priorities underscored the need for GSENet to continue serving as a space where diverse institutions can exchange perspectives, align efforts and develop collaborative responses to emerging challenges.

Overall, the 2026 GSENet Partners Meeting reaffirmed GSENet's collaborative mission and its growing role as an international platform for smart education cooperation. By reviewing progress, welcoming new partners, advancing mechanisms for exchange and identifying shared priorities, the meeting laid a stronger foundation for future joint action. It also demonstrated the Network's continued commitment to promoting inclusive, equitable, high-quality and sustainable education through global partnership and collective learning.



Photo of 2026 GSENet Partners Meeting

UNESCO IITE Governing Board Meeting



Photo of UNESCO IITE Governing Board Meeting

Symposium: Bridging Industry, Academia and Research for Smart Education

This symposium brings together government, industry, universities, research institutions, and other stakeholders to strengthen collaboration in smart education, with a focus on technological innovation, translating research into practice, and scaling real-world applications. It will present the investment landscape and policy incentives of Changping District, identify opportunities for developing a regional smart education ecosystem, and showcase outcomes from major research initiatives alongside innovative technology solutions from industry. Key areas include the investment environment, university–industry research and development, technology transfer and commercialization, shared resources, the scaling of innovative applications, and opportunities arising from emerging technologies and industries. By connecting innovation, industry, policy, and practice, the symposium aims to foster new partnerships, attract leading companies and investment to Changping, and support the development of a sustainable and innovation-driven smart education ecosystem.



Photo of Special Event: Bridging Industry, Academia and Research for Smart Education

Government Policy Support: Strengthening Policy Foundations for Industrial Development

XIONG Yuchuan, Deputy Head of the Organization Department (Concurrent), Director of the Talent Bureau, and Director of the University-City Integration Division of the Future Science City Management Committee, Changping District, noted that Changping District is accelerating the deep integration of scientific and technological innovation with industrial innovation, and continuously building an ecosystem for industrial development with concentrated resources. In terms of policy, the district has established a “1+1+N” policy system to provide comprehensive support for product development, achievement transformation, and talent development. In science and technology, the district is anchored in self-reliance, strengthening original innovation sources and jointly building the Beijing Future University Science Park with university resources. In education, the district is deepening digital intelligence empowerment, constructing a universally accessible, layered AI curriculum system, and co-building AI education joint laboratories and demonstration bases through university-enterprise collaboration. In industry, the district has cultivated six hundred-billion-level

emerging industries including beauty and health, medical devices, and robotics, and is deploying the “Two Corridors and One Belt” industrial layout—the G6 Sci-Tech Corridor and the G45 Industrial Corridor—gathering top universities, research institutions, and leading enterprises. In addition, supporting sci-tech innovation funds adhere to the principle of “investing early, investing small, and investing in hard technology,” providing full-cycle capital support for innovation and entrepreneurship.

SHENG Boyu, Deputy Director of the Development and Reform Commission of Changping District, introduced that Changping District has continued to build its distinctive business environment service brands of “Changtongban” and “Changkuanggan,” with the “No Unnecessary Disturbance” list covering 42,000 enterprises. The district has coordinated 24 industrial parks and 35 commercial buildings, totaling tens of millions of square meters of industrial space. During the “15th Five-Year Plan” period, the district will iteratively implement 81 business environment reform measures, providing enterprises with whole-lifecycle development support.

SHAO Zhanwei, Section Chief of the High Ground Construction Section of the Talent Bureau of Changping District, briefed on the “1+N” talent policy system. He pointed out that over the past decade since the implementation of the “Changju Project,” a tiered talent support framework has been formed, spanning top-tier, outstanding, leading, and young talent categories, with seven supporting benefits including household registration, children’s education, and housing security. At the same time, the district has introduced universal “Youth Entrepreneurship Policies” for young talent, covering startup subsidies, rent reductions, and transitional housing services, building a sound talent development ecosystem.







Enterprise Engagement: Exploring Pathways for Industry-Academia-Research Integration in Education



Prof. TONG Lili, Professor at the Faculty of Education of Beijing Normal University and Executive Director of the China Smart Education Industry-Academia-Research Collaborative Innovation Platform, introduced the platform’s achievements and its mechanism for continuous ecosystem co-development. In its two years since establishment, leveraging the disciplinary strengths of Beijing Normal University and the national-level engineering research center, the platform has taken the national education digitalisation strategy as its mission. During the “14th Five-Year Plan” period, it led and undertook multiple national key research and development programs, established the Beijing Testing Center in Changping, and simultaneously deployed achievement transformation nodes in the southwest, south China, and overseas. The platform has participated in developing and publishing multiple industry standards, actively applied for science and technology innovation awards, and formed multiple high-quality datasets in areas such as content monitoring and algorithm diagnosis, which are open for university research, enterprise product development, and regional application guidance.

Looking ahead to the “15th Five-Year Plan” period, the platform will continue to leverage its advantages in disciplinary clusters and the integration of education, science, and talent, fully exerting its bridge function to drive efficient, large-scale matching between enterprise products and market demand, while upholding its independent third-party status to safeguard the green and healthy attributes of digital education applications. She sincerely called on the government to open policy channels, universities to broaden research perspectives, enterprises to streamline product processes, and regions to unlock application scenarios, so as to write the cooperation of all stakeholders in the digital education ecosystem into the practical work of joint research, joint talent cultivation, and joint international dissemination.



Prof. CHEN Guangju, Professor at Beijing Normal University and Executive Vice Chairman of the China Smart Education Industry-Academia-Research Collaborative Innovation Platform, noted that Changping District’s industrial and talent policies are remarkably advantageous, and that the core of industry-academia-research cooperation is achieving multi-party win-win outcomes. The platform will continue to provide support for enterprise product upgrading and technology iteration, and hoped that all parties would leverage Changping’s locational and policy advantages, deepen collaboration, and achieve common development rooted in the region.

Enterprise Engagement: Exploring Pathways for Industry-Academia-Research Integration in Education

Guoxin Culture, leveraging its central state-owned enterprise capital advantages, focuses on quality education, vocational education, and university science and technology achievement transformation, with broad scenario deployment and diverse development pathways. The company expressed its desire to connect with Changping’s industrial policies and university resources to identify quality investment targets. **References-AI**, as an education AI-native startup, has built a comprehensive cluster of educational intelligent agents covering all subjects, with deployments in schools across multiple provinces and cities in China, and has begun overseas expansion. **Yuanfudao**, adhering to a student-centered approach, focuses on online education and AI education product development, continuously advancing scenario-based applications of educational AI to address pressing educational challenges. **iFLYTEK** has been deeply engaged in domestic education large model technology, participating actively in the intelligent upgrading of the National Smart Education Platform, and developing the “Jingxiaojian” and “Jingxiaoxiao” intelligent agents to support high-quality education development.

The participating enterprises unanimously agreed that promoting the deep integration of industry, academia, and research is the core pathway for smart education industrial upgrading. They expressed willingness to deepen cooperation in technology research, scenario validation, and talent cultivation, leveraging Changping District’s industrial policy support and university innovation resources, to jointly advance high-quality industrial development in the smart education sector.









Anchoring the Direction of Integration: Advancing the Integration of Education, Science and Technology, and Talent



Mr. LEI Chaozi, Executive Vice Chairman of the China Industry-University-Research Cooperation Promotion Association, delivered the concluding remarks. He pointed out that the fundamental goal of industry-academia-research cooperation is to serve industrial development, and through this process, universities and research institutions also achieve their own development. It is essential to establish mutually beneficial, win-win mechanisms to achieve sustainable development.

He emphasized that industry-academia-research cooperation in the smart education sector must adhere to the core principle of education-first, accurately grasp the boundaries of AI empowering education, focus on protecting students' curiosity and independent thinking ability, continuously improve the quality and standards of teachers' education and teaching, and avoid the negative effects of technology application.

He stressed three priorities for advancing the deep integration of industry, academia, and research in smart education: first, adhere to market orientation and demand orientation, strengthen organised scientific research, and actively address the real needs of education through deep industry-academia-research collaboration; second, improve the standardized and coordinated operation mechanism, and accelerate the development of standards in areas such as smart campus construction and achievement transformation; third, integrate resources from government, industry, academia, research, and application, connecting the innovation chain, industrial chain, capital chain, and talent chain. He expressed hope that all parties would use this meeting as a starting point for deeper collaboration, supporting both Changping's development as a smart education industrial highland and the broader goal of building a strong education nation.

The Seminar successfully brought together government, industry, academia, and research stakeholders to explore collaborative pathways for smart education development. Participants shared policy frameworks, technological innovations, and practical deployment experiences, reaching a consensus on the importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation. Moving forward, all parties committed to coordinating policy, technology, scenarios, and capital for precise matching, accelerating the implementation of smart education achievements, and jointly building a sustainable regional smart education industrial ecosystem.

The Special Event was jointly moderated by XIONG Yuchuan, Deputy Head of the Organization Department (Concurrent), Director of the Talent Bureau, and Director of the University-City Integration Division, Future Science City Management Committee, Changping District; YAO Qi, Deputy Director, University-City Integration Division, Future Science City Management Committee; Prof. FU Qian, Professor, School of Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, China; and Mr. LI Bo, Teacher Collaborator with CCTV News; CCTV Top 10 Innovative Teaching Pioneer of the Year, China.

2026 China-Southeast Asia Capacity Development Programme on STEM and AI

Rural education innovation and teacher professional development are rooted in the broader wave of digital economic and social transformation in rural areas and the flourishing development of smart education. As artificial intelligence redefines the boundaries of machine capability, education must return to its essence—reflecting on what humans should become and how technology can empower rather than replace teachers. The future direction of education depends not on the speed of technological evolution, but on the depth of our understanding of the laws of learning and human growth.

From 17 to 23 August 2026, the China-Southeast Asia Capacity Development Programme for Teachers and Principals was held at Beijing Normal University. Themed “STEM and AI: Empowering Rural Teachers for Digital Transformation,” the programme brought together over 100 education policymakers, principals, teachers, and experts from China, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Timor-Leste. The five-day programme encompassed an opening symposium, thematic forums, interactive workshops, and school and enterprise visits, creating an integrated learning platform combining policy dialogue, practical exchange, and cross-cultural engagement.



Photo of Special Event: 2026 China-Southeast Asia Capacity Development Programme on STEM and AI

Opening Remarks

On the afternoon of 18 August, the opening symposium for the programme and the Workshop on AI-Powered Educational Transformation Through the Lens of the Science of Learning was held at the Changping Campus of Beijing Normal University. Over 100 representatives, including education policymakers, principals, teachers, and experts and scholars from China, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Timor-Leste, gathered together to discuss the new landscape of regional educational cooperation.

During the opening remarks**, Prof. ZHOU Zuoyu**, Director of UNESCO INRULED and Vice Chairman of the University Council of Beijing Normal University, pointed out that although technology provides new tools for teaching, the core role of understanding, approaching, and guiding students’ growth always belongs to teachers. He called for vigilance against the urban-rural digital divide that technology may exacerbate, and expressed the hope that participants would jointly explore the new connotations of teacher professional competence in the AI era, uphold the direction of digital transformation oriented towards

equity and human-centredness, and deepen practical cooperation between China and Southeast Asian countries. **Datuk Dr Habibah Abdul Rahim**, Director of SEAMEO Secretariat, observed that despite the rapid pace of digital transformation across Southeast Asia, the urban-rural digital divide remains significant. She emphasised that technology is an amplifier, while teachers are catalysts; rural teachers should not passively accept change but should become active agents of change. She reaffirmed SEAMEO's commitment to ensuring that the digitalisation process benefits every region and community.

Prof. Shahbaz Khan, Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia, stated in a video address that advancing human-centred, ethical, and inclusive AI in education is highly aligned with UNESCO's mission. He looked forward to the programme to facilitate experience-sharing and long-term cooperation, and pledged that UNESCO would continue to work with all partners to help achieve the more equitable and higher-quality Education 2030 goals.

Ms. LIU Yang, Deputy Director, Teacher Development Division, Department of Teacher Education, Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, noted that the digital transformation and AI-enabled development of the teaching workforce have become global priorities and that China has consistently regarded teachers as the "primary resource" for educational development. She affirmed the organisers' efforts to build a transnational dialogue bridge for education and put forward three expectations: deepening teaching practices, strengthening regional cooperation, and ensuring effective translation of outcomes into long-term empowerment to support high-quality educational development in all participating countries.

Mr. ZHAO Meng, Deputy Director of the Education Bureau of Futian District, Shenzhen, introduced Futian District's experience as a pioneer in basic education reform in China. He observed that artificial intelligence is redefining the boundaries of machine capability, and that education should return to its essence, reflecting on "what humans should become". He emphasised that the future direction of education depends not on the speed of technological evolution, but on the depth of our understanding of the laws of learning and human growth.








Keynote Speeches

During the keynote session, four speakers shared practical experience and forward-looking perspectives on deepening the integration of AI and education, with a focus on teacher empowerment, regional strategies, and smart education ecosystems.

Dr. Azman bin Jusoh, Centre Director of SEAMEO RECSAM, explained that the Centre would place "global competitiveness" and "artificial intelligence" at the heart of its teacher training reforms over the next five years. He proposed integrating local cultural experience into science teaching and applying culturally responsive pedagogy so that rural students can connect knowledge with lived experience and develop more meaningful learning through a stronger sense of cultural identity.

Dr. SUI Lulu, Director of the Office of Qiangshi Project at Beijing Normal University, systematically introduced the university's "Qiangshi Project" (Teacher Strengthening Project). Through six initiatives, including the Excellent Teacher Programme, Beijing Normal University has cultivated and deployed large numbers of outstanding grassroots teachers to formerly impoverished counties in central and western China. The project has established a full-chain closed-loop system from enrolment and cultivation to

post-service support, with its core mission being not only to supply teachers, but also to nurture enduring educational commitment in rural communities across generations.

Ms. Aniza Kamarulzaman, Director of the Educational Resources and Technology Division at the Ministry of Education, Malaysia, explained that Malaysia is systematically bridging the rural digital divide through initiatives such as the "DELIMa" digital platform, educational television, and AI classroom pilots. She emphasized that policy focus has shifted from "providing hardware" to "empowering people", and must be complemented by professional teacher training to ensure that teachers and students in remote areas have access to high-quality digital learning resources and capabilities.

Ms. WANG Junyi, Senior Director of the International Cooperation Center, Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, and Secretary of World Digital Education Alliance Secretariat, introduced the Institute's efforts to promote global smart education cooperation through platforms including the UNESCO Chair on AI in Education, the Global Smart Education Cooperation Alliance, and the World Digital Education Alliance. Through customized training and international competitions, the Institute is committed to empowering educators at all levels and sharing AI education resources with the world.



Policy Frameworks and Regional Initiatives session

During the Policy Frameworks and Regional Initiatives session, six speakers shared diverse pathways for implementing STEM education and AI literacy, drawing on their respective countries' policy designs and practical experiences.

Ms. Halimahtun Saadiah Pehin Dato Sulaiman, Administration & Services Manager at SEAMEO VOCTECH, shared that Brunei, guided by its "Vision 2035," is integrating generative AI guidelines with national realities to explore feasible pathways for small countries to drive educational innovation through teacher empowerment. **Prof. MA Hongliang**, Director of the AI and Science Innovation Education Research Centre and Vice Dean, Faculty of Education, Shaanxi Normal University, argued that attention should centre on AI literacy education rather than the mere teaching of AI applications. He shared experience from China's National Smart Education Platform in supporting rural teachers as well as the institution's "lesson study + expert support" training programmes for Kazakhstan and rural areas of China. **Dr. Prayitno**, Deputy Director for Programme, SEAMEO SEAMOLEC, emphasised that technology is meaningless without basic accessibility, He introduced the Centre's "training of trainers" model and massive open online courses (MOOCs), which have trained over 10,000 educators across Southeast Asia, while calling for bridging the implementation gap between policy and classroom practice. **Dr. Nithiananthini Kumarawel**, Assistant Director of the Ministry of Education, Malaysia, argued that digital transformation must reach the last mile. Drawing on gaps in access, capacity, implementation, and equity, she shared Malaysia's experience in translating digital policy into differentiated interventions for schools on remote islands. **Prof. Sheryl Lyn Monterola**, Director of University of the Philippines-Diliman, presented the Philippines' three-tiered system from the national AI skills roadmap to the basic education AI framework, and shared the outcomes of developing a "contextualized AI literacy curriculum" in

collaboration with MIT, emphasizing the cultivation of students as responsible AI co-creators. **Mr. Olarn Kayankarnnavy**, Educational Supervisor, the Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Thailand, focused on well-being and critical thinking in the AI era. He introduced Thailand's AI literacy framework built on the pillars of "permeating daily life, human-AI co-creation, managing AI, and responsible systems" and stressed that teachers are the engine of change.



Local Innovations and Case Reports session

The Local Innovations and Case Reports session brought the perspective down to schools and classrooms, with frontline educators from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Timor-Leste sharing vivid practical stories.

Mr. Pheakdey Suos, Vice Principal of Preah Ang Duong High School (Ngs), introduced how his rural school has embedded STEM and AI education into daily teaching through systematic measures such as establishing a STEM and AI committee, increasing curriculum hours, and organizing parent visit days, while building a home-school support network. **Mr. LI Yongqiang**, Vice Principal of Chongqing Bashu Primary School, presented the school's "1+3+1" implementation system comprising top-level design, three mechanisms for teacher activation, and one integrated platform, to promote deep integration of school-based STEM curricula with international standards. He put forward the concept that "the more local, the more international", and demonstrated how curricula such as "Play with Maths" have enabled an international upgrade from exchange visits to curriculum co-construction. **Ms. Meidina Rizkita**, Research and Development Officer, SEAMEO QITEP in Science (SEAQIS), explained that Indonesia has introduced coding and AI as junior secondary electives and offers learning-by-doing programmes for rural teachers, enabling them to design projects that address local challenges. **Mr. Nor Azizi Bin Abdullah Sani**, Senior Assistant Administration of SMK Batu Maung, presented the school's transformation as one of 11 Ministry of Education pilot schools for AI-enabled classrooms. With support from programme partners, the school has built an integrated smart learning ecosystem that provides personalised learning pathways for teachers and students. **Ms. Zelia Alves Da Cruz**, Science Teacher of Dom Boa Meta Basic Education Centre, noted that although front-line teachers possess commitment and capability, weak ICT infrastructure, unstable electricity, and equipment shortages continue to impede last-mile delivery. She also introduced the school's student project on AI-powered teaching, demonstrating the agency and creativity of educators working in resource-constrained settings.



The opening symposium brought together regional policymakers and front-line practitioners for in-depth dialogue on educational digital transformation and teacher capacity development. Their exchanges reinforced a broad consensus that educational transformation should be human-centred, teachers should remain at its core, and technology should serve as a means of empowerment, laying a solid conceptual foundation for deepening educational cooperation between China and Southeast Asian countries.

The session was co-moderated by Dr. ZHAO Yuchi, Executive Director of UNESCO INRULED, Ms. WONG Lai Cheng, Senior Communication and Publication Manager, SEAMEO RECSAM and Ms. LIU Tianyi, Programme Coordinator of UNESCO INRULED.



Workshop on AI-Powered Educational Transformation Through the Lens of the Science of Learning

From August 18 to 21, the "Workshop on AI-Powered Educational Transformation Through the Lens of the Science of Learning" was held at the Changping Campus of Beijing Normal University as part of the 2026 Global Smart Education Conference. The event was co-hosted by the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education, the UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED), the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Science and Mathematics Education, and the Futian District Education Bureau of Shenzhen, and was organised by the Asia-Pacific Community of Practice on the Science of Learning under the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education.

On the afternoon of August 18, more than 100 participants — including representatives of education authorities, experts, scholars, principals, and teachers from China, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and other countries — attended the opening ceremony. Opening remarks were delivered by **Prof. ZHOU Zuoyu**, Vice Chairman of the University Council of Beijing Normal University and Director of the UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education; **Dr. Habibah Abdul Rahim**, Director of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat; **Prof. Shahbaz Khan**, Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia; **Ms. LIU Yang**, Deputy Director of the Teacher Development Division of the Department of Teacher Affairs at the Ministry of Education; and **Mr. ZHAO Meng**, Deputy Director of the Futian District Education Bureau of Shenzhen.



Photo of Workshop on AI-Powered Educational Transformation Through the Lens of the Science of Learning

AI Empowerment in Response to the Learning Crisis: Connecting Global Experience with Regional Solutions

The world is currently facing a severe "learning crisis," and existing educational models are increasingly unable to meet learning needs. To help learners acquire the knowledge and skills required to address future challenges, education policymakers and practitioners must place greater emphasis on evidence-based policymaking and teaching practice. The UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report notes that while global investment in educational technology continues to grow, part of that investment is wasted for lack of scientific guidance and a disconnect from educational realities, making the risk of "technology without education" increasingly prominent. The 2024 Global Education Summit called for greater

attention to the application of the science of learning in education. In the same year, UNESCO established the Global Alliance for the Science of Learning, dedicated to bridging the gaps among academic research, policymaking, and educational practice, and to translating interdisciplinary research findings into real-world impact.

Against this backdrop, in August 2025, the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education at Beijing Normal University, together with international partners, launched the Asia-Pacific Community of Practice on the Science of Learning and established the community's first research and practice base in Shenzhen's Futian District. The base focuses on localized pathways for regional educational transformation guided by the science of learning, providing empirical support for education policymaking and teaching practice. The "Workshop on AI-Powered Educational Transformation Through the Lens of the Science of Learning" is a capacity-building program series developed under this community and has now been held for three consecutive sessions. Grounded in the fundamental principles of the science of learning, the program guides teachers in applying evidence-based research methods to clarify the underlying mechanisms of students' efficient and active learning in AI-empowered teaching scenarios, the implementation pathways for classroom instruction, and the appropriate use of digital and intelligent tools — comprehensively enhancing teachers' professional capacity to adapt to digital and AI-driven educational transformation. At the same time, the program builds a platform for exchange and collaboration among education practitioners across the Asia-Pacific region, contributing to an educational cooperation paradigm of "global wisdom empowerment, regional coordination, and local innovation."

Learner Self-Empowerment: Cultivating Students' Social and Emotional Competence in the Intelligent Era

The four-day workshop centered on AI-empowered educational transformation and the cultivation of students' social and emotional competence in the intelligent era. Through keynote lectures, discussion workshops, case development, and consensus building, it guided teachers in jointly exploring science-of-learning-led pathways and strategies for fostering students' social and emotional skills in the intelligent era, and in collaboratively building a digital learning ecosystem that promotes well-being and learning effectiveness.

Assoc. Prof. Ahmed Tlili form Beijing Normal University chaired the workshop. He observed that while AI is rapidly transforming how knowledge is accessed, the question of "how learners relate to themselves, to others, and to society" has become more important than ever; social and emotional competence is no longer a soft skill, but a foundational capacity for learners' self-empowerment and lifelong development in the intelligent era.

Prof. MAO Yaqing of the Faculty of Psychology at Beijing Normal University, in a session titled "Pathways and Practical Strategies for Cultivating Students' Social and Emotional Skills in the Intelligent Era," shared a four-in-one localized cultivation framework — "goals, curriculum, assessment, and home-school-community collaboration" — drawing on the current state of social and emotional development among Chinese students in basic education.

Ms. Anya Chakraborty, UNESCO Deputy National Programme Officer, delivered a session titled "Creating SEL Classrooms — Scientific, Evidence-Based Practices for Teachers," presenting a holistic design framework for SEL classrooms covering physical space, daily routines, teaching practices, and teacher-student relationships, helping teachers integrate social and emotional learning into students' learning lives.

Ms.Angie Zhou, an education and instructional designer at the MIT App Inventor Foundation, presented app development as a practical vehicle for social and emotional learning, helping cultivate skills such as empathy, active listening, self-management, collaboration, and resilience throughout the development process. She also introduced a five-step hands-on workflow: “foundational knowledge — empathy and user exploration — collaborative creation — feedback and iteration — storytelling and presentation.”

Prof. Fred Paas, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands, speaking on “Cognitive Fitness in the Age of AI: Implications for Self-Regulated and Social-Emotional Learning,” distinguished three types of AI support: the “escalator,” where AI does the thinking for the learner; the “coach,” which provides on-demand guidance and gradually withdraws support as competence grows; and the “gym,” which creates opportunities for retrieval, explanation, comparison, and critique. He also proposed four design principles: “try before asking for help, hints before answers, make reasoning visible, and gradually withdraw support.”

Ms. Sonia Guerriero, UNESCO Education Specialist and Head of the Secretariat of the Global Alliance for the Science of Learning, speaking on “Transforming Education — Building the Bridge from the Science of Learning to Education Policy and Practice,” emphasized the importance of coordinated approaches to social and emotional learning and AI policy. She called for researchers and policymakers to jointly strengthen the link between the “science of learning — education policy — classroom practice,” providing teachers and students across different contexts with practical, adaptable, and accountable support.

In the case development session, teacher teams analysed authentic classroom cases to identify relevant social and emotional competencies and, with expert guidance, gradually developed integrated social-emotional and project-based learning plans that could be adapted and applied in their own schools.



At the case presentation and review session, **Prof. Chen Guangju** of Beijing Normal University, Professor Tong Lili of Beijing Normal University, **Prof. Wu Yinghui**, Adjunct Professor at Beijing Normal University, and **Prof. YANG Junfeng** of Hangzhou Normal University provided on-site comments and guidance. **Prof. Huang Ronghuai**, holder of the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education at Beijing Normal University, delivered concluding remarks on the workshop and presented certificates of completion.

AI and the Future of Classroom Writing: Diamond or Ice?

Education has long treated writing as a window into student thinking—an essay, an exam paper, a report—all trusted, graded, or rewarded under the assumption that "text reveals thought". Generative AI is the first technology capable of undermining that assumption at scale, with fluency, low cost, and invisibility. When machines can produce text indistinguishable from human writing, human writing stands at a defining crossroads: can schools continue to rely on a single essay to judge what a student has truly learned?

On 19 August, the workshop "AI and the Future of Classroom Writing: Diamond or Ice?" was held in parallel with the 2026 Global Smart Education Conference. More than 80 education policymakers, researchers, school administrators, and teachers from 11 countries gathered to engage in in-depth discussion on the impact of generative AI on classroom writing and its future trajectory. The workshop was jointly organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Beijing Normal University, and the UNESCO Chair on AI in Education. It represents an ongoing collaboration between these institutions and is a thematic side event of the OECD's "Education 2040" project, which looks at future trends in education.



Photo of Special Event: AI and the Future of Classroom Writing: Diamond or Ice?

Opening Remarks

Mr. Joshua Polchar, Analyst in the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills. Drawing on data from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) and AI capability frameworks, he noted that for a long time, what is tested in examinations has driven what is taught in classrooms, whereas education for the future needs to focus more on the capabilities students truly require. He cited findings from OECD reports What Students Learn Matters: Towards a 21st Century Curriculum (OECD, 2020) and Results from TALIS 2024: The State of Teaching (OECD, 2025), showing that teacher preparedness varies across domains, and stressed that the most rapid changes in classrooms do not come from curriculum documents—real change always begins in the daily practices of teaching and learning.

Mr. Polchar further observed that education has long treated writing as a window into student thinking—

an essay, an exam paper, a report—all trusted, graded, or rewarded under the assumption that "text reveals thought". Generative AI is the first technology capable of undermining that assumption at scale, with fluency, low cost, and invisibility. This is precisely why the workshop proposed the "Diamond" and "Ice" scenarios: when machines can produce text indistinguishable from human writing, can schools continue to rely on a single essay to judge what a student has truly learned?



Two Futures: When "Natural" and "Synthetic" Diverge

The workshop designed two scenarios—"Diamond" and "Ice"—for participants to explore. The metaphor draws on a historical parallel: both diamonds and ice were once precious resources obtainable only from nature—diamonds from mines, ice from frozen lakes; today both can be synthesised, yet society treats the "synthetic" versions very differently. Laboratory grown diamonds are still seen as inferior, with "natural" origin retaining a premium; synthetic ice, however, replaced the natural ice trade within a single generation, and today no one cares where ice comes from. Human writing stands at a similar crossroads.

The "Diamond" scenario envisions that as machine generated text becomes common and indistinguishable, a certification system to prove "human originality" will emerge, making "source" valuable again, and the "naturalness" of writing becomes a new standard of value. The "Ice" scenario envisions that people will no longer care where text originates; human-AI collaborative writing becomes the default, and purely human written text without AI assistance becomes suspect. The two scenarios are not predictions but internally consistent future narratives constructed to stress test current educational assumptions.

Participants were divided into eight groups and discussed the two scenarios from five dimensions—social, technological, economic, environmental, and policy—first imagining what the world beyond education might look like in 2046 under each scenario, and then bringing the perspective back to schools to consider specific changes in curriculum content, teacher training and certification, assessment and examinations, qualifications, learning resources and technology, teacher roles, and students' daily learning experiences.

Looking Back from 2046: Systemic Reconfiguration of the Education Ecosystem

After discussion, group representatives reported back. Their views converged on three directions: first, learning should become more human centred; in a future with high technological penetration, human subjectivity needs to be more explicitly defended. Second, regardless of technological development, students' aesthetic experience and emotional development remain important—these are the educational core that machines cannot replace. Third, the role of teachers is undergoing fundamental change, requiring a rethinking of where teachers should invest their time and energy—from knowledge transmitters to learning designers, emotional supporters, and value guides.



Human-AI Collaborative Design: Crafting a Lesson for the AI Age

Following the theoretical discussion, the workshop moved to a hands on "Human-AI Collaborative Lesson Design" session. Each group used AI writing tools to collaboratively develop a complete lesson plan around six modules: learning context, learning objectives, learning challenges, learning journey, human-AI roles (what roles teachers, students, and AI play), and evidence of learning outcomes. Each group designated a representative to interact with the AI tool, while other members participated in discussion and completed individual reflection cards.

The design of this session addressed a core question: in human-AI collaboration, what exactly is the human contribution, what is the machine's, what roles should each play, and how can we better use AI? In the intelligent age, humans face undeniable facts: "AI already surpasses humans in speed, scale, and writing ability in many respects; human-AI collaboration is not a choice but a direction we are already in; misuse of AI will embed bias and errors into our classrooms." Groups experienced the full process of human-AI collaboration and reflected on whether their lesson designs leaned closer to the "Diamond" or "Ice" scenario.



Back to Essentials: Distinguishing Human and Machine Contributions

In the closing session, **Ms. WANG Junyi**, Senior Project Officer at the International Exchange and Cooperation Centre of the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, summarised that the workshop's purpose was to help participants see through the phenomena brought by AI to the underlying fundamental questions. In the intelligent age, human-AI collaboration has become common, but what exactly are the respective contributions of humans and machines, what roles should they play, and how can we better use AI—these questions remain open and represent the direction for further research. She noted that the feedback, lesson design templates, and AI interaction records collected during the workshop will serve as important data for subsequent academic research on human-AI collaboration and contribution analysis.

Dr. LIU Mengyu,, a researcher from the BNU team, extended an academic research invitation to participants, inviting them to join as research participants or collaborators in follow up studies on collaborative writing with AI, exploring topics such as types of AI contributions, decision mechanisms for accepting or rejecting AI suggestions, and attribution of contributions in human-AI co created works.

Conclusion

Looking ahead, Beijing Normal University, the UNESCO Chair on AI in Education, and the OECD will continue academic exchanges, jointly exploring new pathways for educational transformation in the AI era, aligned with the visions of the OECD's "Future of Education and Skills 2040" and UNESCO's "Reimagining Our Futures Together". The workshop's outputs—including scenario building templates, ecosystem analysis charts, and human-AI collaborative lesson designs—will be incorporated as key materials into forthcoming OECD reports, providing reference for global education policy making. This workshop also serves as a vivid example of the 2026 Global Smart Education Conference's commitment to advancing international cooperation and exploring pathways for educational change in the age of AI.



Global Finals of the 9th Global Competition on Design for Futures (K-12 Track)

In response to the United Nations' International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (2024–2033), Beijing Normal University and the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE) are jointly organizing the 2026 Global Competition on Design for Futures (GCD4F). Since its launch on March 1st, the K-12 Track has attracted widespread attention and active participation from teachers both at home and abroad, yielding a rich collection of exemplary practice-based cases.

Following rigorous review by the Competition Evaluation Committee, a total of 58 award winning cases were selected this year, including 10 First Prizes, 22 Second Prizes, and 26 Third Prizes, demonstrating the high quality and diversity of the submissions.



Group Photo of Global Finals of the 9th Global Competition on Design for Futures (K-12 Track)

Outstanding Cases, Expert Insights

At the Finals, 22 teachers delivered outstanding presentations of their instructional case studies. In accordance with the competition's evaluation criteria—problem awareness, innovation spirit, technology for good, application prospect, and presentation and expression—three expert judges provided commentary on all 22 cases. The judges were: **Mr. SHI Jianguo**, Chief Expert of the Competition and Executive Deputy Director of the China Educational Equipment Research Institute; **Prof. WU Yinghui**, Distinguished Professor at the Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University; and **Prof. WU Fati** of Beijing Normal University. **Ms. MAO Chengjie**, Senior Information Technology Teacher at Beijing Jingshan School, was invited to moderate the event.

Deputy Director **SHI Jianguo,** Executive Deputy Director of the China Educational Equipment Research Institute, noted that the submitted cases fully demonstrated the application of design thinking, progressing from real-world problems to complete case design. AI technologies were deployed in diverse forms, encompassing intelligent interaction, cognitive scaffolding, AI agents, and data-driven assessment. He also highlighted that educational neuroscience provided a solid theoretical foundation for case design. He recommended that participants further strengthen the logical coherence of their case designs, deepen their understanding of the nature of interdisciplinary learning, and attend to personalization and brain plasticity in the application of educational neuroscience, so as to drive continuous improvement in case quality.

Prof. WU Yinghui, Adjunct Professor at the Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University highly commended the application of design thinking and innovative exploration demonstrated in the submitted cases. She noted that each case fully enacted the complete design process from needs analysis to prototype validation, exhibiting distinctive features in areas such as the development of smart classrooms, AI agent research, and future learning centers. Professor Wu recommended that participants standardize their case writing procedures, refine professional terminology, and strengthen product and service awareness to enhance the scalability and replicability of their cases.

Prof. WU Fati, Distinguished Professor at Beijing Normal University, emphasized that the core of generative AI empowering teaching lies in achieving cognitive enhancement for students. The submitted cases were distinctive in character and broad in scope, reflecting teachers' high enthusiasm and strong capability in exploring intelligent technology applications. He expressed his hope that teachers would further strengthen the design philosophy of "human wisdom first, technological intelligence second," and advance AI technology from efficiency enhancement toward cognitive empowerment through the pre-positioning of core concept internalization and sound instructional design.

In the closing session, Deputy Director **SHI Jianguo** expressed high appreciation for the innovative achievements of this year's competition. Since its inception in 2018, the competition has been successfully held for nine editions, attracting more than 25,000 participants from over 40 countries and regions. He noted that participants, guided by design thinking and centered on the theme of "AI Empowering Education," have carried out productive and innovative explorations in areas including technology-driven pedagogical transformation, interdisciplinary integration, and educational equity. He extended heartfelt gratitude to all participants and looked forward to reuniting at the 10th edition of the competition next year to witness an even more remarkable future together.







Conclusion

First launched in 2018 and now in its eighth consecutive year, the GCD4F has become an annual flagship event of the World Digital Education Alliance. For its 2026 edition, the event has been significantly enhanced. The K-12 Track invites primary and secondary school teachers worldwide to draw upon authentic educational settings and explore practical pathways for integrating AI with teaching and learning, thereby contributing insights toward building inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education for the future. An expert jury panel in education and design has evaluated submissions based on five dimensions—problem awareness, innovation spirit, technology for good, application prospect, presentation and expression. Ultimately, 22 outstanding teaching case-studies were selected for the Finals. The Global Finals of the 9th Global Competition on Design for Futures (K-12 Track) will be held offline at the Changping Campus, Beijing Normal University on August 18, 2026.

The Awards Ceremony for the Primary and Secondary School Track was held on the afternoon of August 20 during the closing session, where Prof. Huang Ronghuai, Dean of the Smart Learning Institute at Beijing Normal University, and Prof. Shafika Isaacs, Acting Director of the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE), jointly presented awards to the first prize winning teachers. Grounded in authentic educational settings, participating teachers applied design thinking to explore effective ways of integrating AI into teaching, achieving meaningful innovations in interdisciplinary project based learning and human-AI collaborative instruction.

Plenary Session & Closing Ceremony

Over three days of intensive dialogue and exchange, distinguished scholars, international experts, representatives of international organisations and government agencies, frontline educators, and industry leaders came together under the theme “Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability.” Participants examined emerging policy directions in smart education, advances in artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, and innovative practices from diverse educational contexts around the world. Across plenary sessions, parallel forums, high-level dialogues, and other conference activities, discussions highlighted both the transformative potential of AI and the need to ensure that technological innovation remains aligned with the fundamental purposes of education. As the Conference drew to a close, the final plenary session reflected on key insights and shared priorities emerging from the three-day programme, while looking ahead to continued international cooperation in advancing more equitable, high-quality, human-centred, and sustainable education in the age of AI.



Photo of Closing Ceremony

SPEAKERS

Prof. Asha S. Kanwar
Chair Professor, Beijing Normal University;
Chair, Advisory Committee of the GSENet;
Former Chair, UNESCO IITE Governing Board;
Former President, COL

Hon. Mr. Noureddine Nouri
Minister of Education, Tunisia

Hon. Dr. Madhura Senevirathna
Deputy Minister of Education and Higher Education, Sri Lanka

Hon. Prof. Wilfred Nyongbet Gabsa
Secretary General, Ministry of Higher Education, Cameroon

Hon. Mr. NAVINDSING JUGMOHUNSING
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research, Mauritius

Hon. Ms. Faatamaalii Jenny Lauano
Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Education and Culture, Samoa

Hon. Prof. Amal El Fallah Seghrouchni
Minister Delegate to the Head of Government in charge of Digital Transition and Administrative Reform, Morocco

Hon. Mr. Dejan Vuk Stanković
Minister of Education, Serbia

Prof. Danimir Mandic
Dean of Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Mr. CHEN Emil
Vice President, NetDragon Websoft; Vice Dean, Smart Learning Institute, Beijing Normal University, China

Prof. Shafika Isaacs
Co-Chair, Program Committee; Chief, Section for Technology and AI in Education, UNESCO; Director a.i, UNESCO IITE

Prof. HUANG Ronghuai
Co-Chair, Program Committee; Co-Dean, Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, China; UNESCO Chair on AI in Education

MODERATORS

Prof. ZHAN Tao
Former Director, UNESCO IITE

Prof. TENG Jun
Director, Office of International Exchange and Cooperation; Deputy Dean, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, China

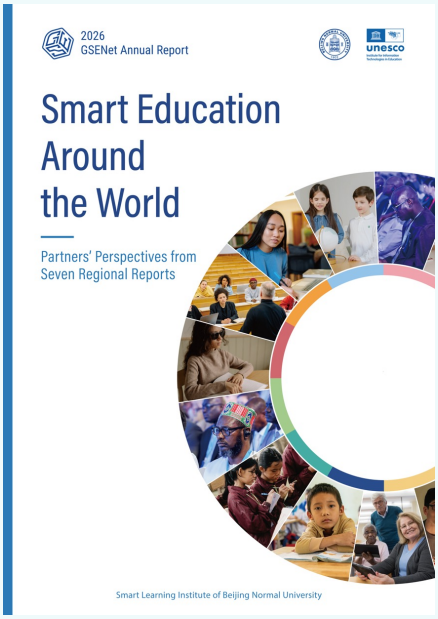
Release Session



Prof. Asha S. Kanwar, Chair Professor, Beijing Normal University; Chair, Advisory Committee of the GSENet; Former Chair, UNESCO IITE Governing Board; Former President, COL, released the report *Smart Education Around the World: Partners' Perspectives from Seven Regional Reports* at the closing ceremony. Grounded in development practices across seven major regions of the world, the report systematically reviews diverse pathways for the development of smart education, builds new consensus on the innovative development of global smart education, and provides an important reference for the digital transformation of global education in the new era.

Why this Report Matters

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping our world at an unprecedented pace. Education systems everywhere are asking the same urgent question: How do we harness AI's potential while safeguarding what matters most? This report answers that question—not from one perspective, but from seven distinct regional viewpoints, brought together through the collaborative efforts of GSENet partners worldwide.
The core message? Technology alone is not the answer. True transformation requires capable teachers, effective governance, and a steadfast commitment to human values.



Key Messages

Four overarching findings emerge across all regions.

- **First, AI should strengthen rather than replace human judgement.** Partners consistently emphasized that technology is most effective when it augments teachers' professional expertise, creativity and decision-making instead of automating core human relationships in education.
- **Second, equity remains the defining challenge of Smart Education.** While AI offers significant opportunities to expand access and personalise learning, many existing technologies do not reflect local languages, cultures and educational contexts, particularly in low-resource settings. Without deliberate policy interventions, AI risks reinforcing existing educational inequalities.
- **Third, teachers' roles are evolving rapidly.** Across all regions, educators are moving beyond content delivery towards learning design, facilitation, mentoring and the ethical use of AI. This transformation requires sustained investment in professional learning and institutional support.
- **Fourth, governance has not kept pace with technological change.** Although AI adoption is accelerating, coherent frameworks for data governance, accountability, transparency and ethical implementation remain underdeveloped in many education systems.

Regional Perspectives

The GSE2026 Report examines the global transition towards Smart Education through evidence gathered from GSENet's international webinar series and regional analyses spanning Africa, the Arab Region, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and the Pacific. Drawing on contributions from education leaders, researchers, teachers and learners representing more than twenty countries, the report provides a global assessment of current progress, emerging challenges and future directions for Smart Education in the age of AI. Across all regions, sustainable transformation depends on coherent alignment between technology, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, professional learning and governance. While regional contexts differ, the evidence consistently shows that investing in teachers, strengthening governance and prioritising equity are the essential foundations for Smart Education that benefits all learners.

Looking Ahead

The report aligns with the Education 2030 Agenda by contributing to ongoing efforts to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. At the same time, it recognises that emerging developments beyond 2030 will require education systems to respond to new challenges and opportunities by looking beyond immediate technological trends, towards long-term thinking about how education can be more equitable, resilient and responsive to the needs of all learners. The GSE2026 Report concludes that the future of Smart Education will be determined not by technological innovation alone but by the capacity of education systems to govern its use in ways that advance educational quality, equity and human development.

Contributing Partners

北京师范大学智慧学习研究院
Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University

OPEN UNIVERSITY OF KENYA

CONTACT NORTH NORD

ALECSO

Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

INSTITUTO MULTIDISCIPLINAR DE FORMAÇÃO HUMANA COM TECNOLOGIAS

IA AO SAMOA
LE UNIVESITE AOAO O SAMOA
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SAMOA

ISTE
International Society for Technology in Education

High-Level Dialogue: Building Global Consensus to Envision a Sustainable Smart Education Future



Hon. Mr. Noureddine Nouri, Minister of Education of Tunisia, pointed out that smart education and AI applications should be grounded in the actual conditions of different countries and regions, with particular attention to the practical needs of areas with weak infrastructure, insufficient network connectivity, and uneven educational resources. He emphasized that advancing smart education requires not only technology platforms and digital resources, but also teacher training, school capacity building, and localized practical support. Facing the new requirements of building education system resilience and digital transformation in the post-pandemic era, all parties should strengthen cooperation to drive technology to truly serve educational equity, quality improvement, and sustainable development.



Hon. Dr. Madhura Senevirathna, Deputy Minister of Education and Higher Education of Sri Lanka, noted that Sri Lanka is strengthening digital infrastructure and network connectivity to enhance digital capacity and education system management. He stated that Sri Lanka will adhere to transparent and proportionate governance principles, respect academic freedom and institutional autonomy, strengthen data management and security, enhance the capacity of the digital ecosystem and institutional readiness, balance environmental sustainability and long-term development, and advance responsible innovation oriented toward national needs, laying the foundation for the integration of AI into the education system.



Hon. Prof. Wilfred Nyongbet Gabsa, Secretary General of the Ministry of Higher Education of Cameroon, noted that Cameroon will actively draw on the outcomes of the conference to explore reform pathways based on adaptive learning, learning analytics, and AI-supported education, so as to better enable AI to serve teaching improvement and student development. He emphasized that Cameroon still needs to overcome practical challenges such as insufficient infrastructure in advancing smart education, and hopes to continue strengthening cooperation with Beijing Normal University, the Ministry of Education of China, UNESCO, and other institutions to gain more support in capacity building, joint research, and education transformation practices.



Hon. Mr. Navindsing Jugmohunsiong, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research of Mauritius, emphasized that the core input of artificial intelligence is data. If data is used improperly, it will lead to biased understanding of knowledge and reality, and affect judgment and decision-making in the judiciary, healthcare, public health, security, and other fields. He stated that the key challenge for Africa lies in how to use authentic, accurate, and representative data to build an AI ecosystem that meets Africa's development needs, so that AI better serves education development, knowledge inheritance, and a sustainable future.



Hon. Ms. Faatamaalii Jenny Lauano, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Samoa, stated that Samoa still faces challenges such as changing teachers' mindsets, capacity training, network connectivity, and electricity supply in advancing smart education, yet will continue to build a modernized education system. She noted that teachers are the key to bringing AI into the classroom; they need to master relevant skills and understand the role and limitations of AI tools, so as to guide students to use AI reasonably.

Signing Ceremony



At the closing ceremony, **Hon. Mr. Dejan Vuk Stanković**, Education of Serbia, delivered a video message expressing his support for the cooperation and marking the signing of Serbia's national AI education pilot project. The video message was followed by the formal signing ceremony, which launched Phase 1 of the Open-Q Tesla project.

Mr. CHEN Emil, Vice President of NetDragon Websoft and Vice Dean of the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, introduced the project as NetDragon's first national-level AI-enabled digital education platform in Europe. Powered by the underlying AI capabilities of Open-Q, the platform will provide intelligent education services to approximately 400 schools and more than 4,000 teachers across Serbia, supporting classroom innovation, reducing teachers' workload, enhancing student learning, and contributing to the high-quality development of education in Serbia. **Prof. Danimir Mandić**, Dean of the Faculty of Teacher Education at the University of Belgrade, noted that the University of Belgrade, together with local research and education institutions, is actively participating in the development of the Open-Q national AI-enabled digital education ecosystem, promoting the integration of AI across key teaching processes, including lesson preparation, classroom instruction, and assessment. Advanced through multi-stakeholder collaboration, the pilot project is expected to generate high-quality AI-enabled education innovations and accumulate locally grounded experience, while providing a replicable reference for the development of national smart education platforms and AI-enabled educational innovation in other contexts.



Signing Ceremony for the Serbia National AI Education Pilot Project (Open-Q Tesla Phase 1 SOW)

Awards Ceremony: Global Finals of the 9th Global Competition on Design for Futures (K-12 Track)

The competition was co-organised by Beijing Normal University and the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE). The competition's evaluation criteria included problem awareness, innovative spirit, integration of science and education, application prospects, and presentation and communication, among others. Based on these criteria and following a rigorous review by the expert judging committee, 58 outstanding cases were selected, including 10 first prizes, 22 second prizes, and 26 third prizes in the K–12 track. The awards were presented by **Prof. Shafika Isaacs**, Co-Chair, Program Committee; Chief, Section for Technology and AI in Education, UNESCO; Director a.i, UNESCO IITE and **Prof. HUANG Ronghuai**, Co-Chair, Program Committee; Co-Dean, Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, China; UNESCO Chair on AI in Education.

Awards Ceremony: Global Smart Education Innovation Prize

In accordance with the Announcement and Implementation Guidelines of the Global Smart Education Innovation Prize, the 2026 Global Smart Education Innovation Prize Evaluation Committee was established to review and assess all submitted entries.

NO.	Name of the Project	Name of Participants	Institution/Organization/Employer
2026R01	MERSENNOVA: The Mersenne Star Paradigm – A Research Framework for Human–AI Co-Discovery in Smart Mathematics Education	Moustafa Ibrahim	University of Bahrain
2026P01	Bridging the Intelligence Divide—AI-Driven Networked Innovation for Inclusive and Equitable Basic Education in a Populous Province	FENG Yonggang[1], ZHOU Bin[1], LI Feng[2], LUO Haifeng[2], WANG Yue[2]	1.Sichuan Provincial Department of Education; 2.Sichuan Provincial Education Informatization and Big Data Center (Sichuan Provincial Audio-Visual Education Center)
2026P02	CoolThink@JC	Daniel Lai, Paul Yau	The Hong Kong Jockey Club
2026P03	The "Four Connectivity" Practice for City-wide Integrated Artificial Intelligence Education — A New Path to Balanced High-quality Education in Yichang	Huang Jiatao	Yichang Municipal Bureau of Education
2026P04	GET IV Centenário – Fábrica de Sonhos (Dream Factory): Emotionally-Centred, Technology-Rich Public Schooling in the Maré Favela Complex, Rio de Janeiro	Alessandra Aguiar and school team	4th CRE (Regional Education Coordination) / SME-Rio
2026P05	Rewiring the Rural Classroom—A Lightweight AI Model for Smart Education	/	Alibaba Cloud for Youth Initiative,Tiantai County Education Bureau,Yangxin County Special Education School,Yanyuan Middle School,Fanshi Middle School,Yangming Primary School
2026P06	AlphaEgg Preschool Smart Education Product	RUAN Kai, YE Juan, ZHANG Quan, ZHU Yadong, TANG Zixuan	Anhui ToyCloud Technology Co., Ltd.
2026T01	Multimodal Critical Reading Agent	YANG Lingyu, GUO Yutong, ZHANG Zeming, ZHANG Ruiran, GUO Runze, LIU Chuan, XIANG Qiurong, LI Xiaoming, CHEN Zifan, ZHANG Lizhen	Yuanfudao
2026T02	4D Metaverse Earthquake Simulation	I. Afsin Kariper, Esra Sahbaz	Faculty of Education, Erciyes University





Acknowledgment for Partners

The success of the Conference would not have been possible without the strong support of our cooperating institutions and partners. At the closing ceremony, commemorative medals and certificates of appreciation were presented to participating enterprises in recognition of their valuable contributions and continued support for the Conference.





Conclusion Remarks



At the conclusion of the Conference, Prof. Shafika Isaacs, Co-Chair, Program Committee; Chief, Section for Technology and AI in Education, UNESCO; Director a.i, UNESCO IITE, delivered closing remarks, reflecting on both the promise of artificial intelligence in education and the governance gaps accompanying its rapid development. Expressing appreciation to Beijing Normal University as an outstanding host and long-standing partner, she noted that while students and teachers are adopting AI at an accelerating pace, institutions are developing policies and governance frameworks more slowly—a widening gap that remains a major challenge for education. Reaffirming that education is a public good that must serve the public interest and remain subject to public accountability, she highlighted the potential demonstrated throughout the Conference, from multilingual translation to new ways of reaching and supporting learners, teachers, and persons with disabilities, while stressing the need for a stronger evidence base. She called for sustained monitoring of AI's impact on educational quality, equity, and competency development; greater attention to the most vulnerable in contexts of multiple inequalities; and a stronger focus not only on whether AI is used, but also on the digital literacy, skills, and human–AI interaction competencies required for its responsible use, as well as oversight of how AI systems are designed and developed. Drawing on the image of bamboo—humble yet flexible and resilient in the storm, deeply rooted yet interconnected, and growing through mutual support—she expressed the hope that the Global Smart Education Conference would continue to serve as such a platform, building on the inspiring dialogue among Beijing Normal University and its partners, and looked forward to continued collaboration through August 2027.



Prof. HUANG Ronghuai, Co-Chair of the GSE Conference Program Committee, Co-Dean of Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, and UNESCO Chair on AI in Education, then delivered the Conference summary, reflecting on its development and future direction. Marking the Conference's eleventh year and the beginning of a new decade—following its inception in Beijing in 2016, its 2019 edition in the United States, the hybrid format adopted from 2020 to 2023, and its return to in-person gatherings in Beijing in 2024 and 2025—he noted

that the Conference now stands at a new starting point amid the rapid development of artificial intelligence and at a critical moment for education to rethink its future. GSE2026 brought together policymakers, experts, scholars, researchers, education practitioners, technologists, and other participants from more than 60 countries and regions. The Vice Minister of Education of China called for jointly charting a blueprint for smart education in response to a defining question of the era: “What should education do in the intelligent age?” Prof. YU Jihong called for upholding a people-centred approach and the principle of “AI for Good” while building a global community for smart education. Dr. TANG Qian stressed the importance of translating the vision of smart education into global action and practice that is shareable, sustainable, and grounded in equity, while the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education called for stronger global cooperation to address critical issues arising from the development of AI and education. Centred on equity, quality, and sustainability in the intelligent age, the Conference connected national vision with regional experience and policy direction with frontline practice. Interdisciplinary and cross-sector experts discussed such issues as technology-enabled ecosystems for smart education, a new social contract for education and learner agency, as well as broader transformations in teaching, learning, and educational governance. The programme was wide-ranging, comprising five plenary sessions, twenty-one parallel sessions, four closed-door meetings, seven thematic events, two workshops, and a large-scale smart education exhibition. The Conference also generated substantial outcomes, with 20 major achievements released, including the Global Smart Education Initiative and the GSENet Annual Report. Prof. HUANG concluded that while the Global Smart Education Conference 2026 had come to an end, the journey towards smart education was only beginning. He invited all participants to carry forward the Conference’s outcomes and shared reflections, strengthen collaboration, and work together towards a better future.



The Plenary Session and Closing Ceremony were moderated by Prof. ZHAN Tao, Former Director of UNESCO IITE and Prof. TENG Jun, Director of the Office of International Exchange and Cooperation; Deputy Dean of Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, China





Partnership

Beijing Normal University (BNU)

Beijing Normal University (BNU) traces its origins to the Education Department of Imperial University of Peking established in 1902, which initiated teacher training in China's higher education landscape. BNU is a comprehensive and research-intensive university distinguished by its strengths in basic disciplines of sciences and humanities, teacher education, and educational science.

UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO IITE)

Established at the 29th session of the UNESCO General Conference (1997), IITE is a UNESCO Category 1 institute with a global mandate for ICT in education.

Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)

A Tunis-based specialized institution established by the League of Arab States in 1970. As stated in Article One of its Constitution, ALECSO was established with the aim of promoting Arab intellectual unity through education, culture and sciences, and enhancing the educational, cultural and scientific level in the Arab World so that it can positively contribute to universal civilization.

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)

A global non-profit professional organization with members worldwide in the field of educational technology, dedicated to improving the quality of education through technology. ISTE helps educators use technology to revolutionize learning, and envisions that all students engage in transformative learning experiences.

Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)

A regional intergovernmental organization established in 1965 among governments of Southeast Asian countries to promote regional cooperation in education, science and culture in the region.

Commonwealth of Learning (COL)

An intergovernmental organization established in 1987 by Commonwealth Heads of Government. COL aims to create and widen access to opportunities for learning, making use of the potential offered by distance education and by the application of information and technologies to education. Its mission is to help Commonwealth member states and their institutions use distance learning and technology to expand access to education and training.

UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (UNESCO IICBA)

Founded in 1999 in Addis Ababa, it is a UNESCO Category 1 institute. It aims to inform education policies, strengthen teacher professional development, and build capacity in education institutions, including Ministries of Education.

UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO IESALC)

A UNESCO Category 1 institute established in 1997 in Caracas, Venezuela. Its mission is to contribute to the improvement of higher education across Member States and to help countries address the challenges associated with the internationalization of higher education.

International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)

An international network of visionary leaders and advocates of accessible education. ICDE fosters a global network of educators, policymakers, and innovators, facilitating collaboration on projects, sharing best practices, and advancing Open, Flexible, and Distance Learning (OFDL) through reports, events, and advocacy.

Moroccan International Center for Artificial Intelligence (MICAI)

A center of excellence in Artificial Intelligence that aims to foster the development of Moroccan expertise in Artificial Intelligence and Data Sciences, and is dedicated to integrating and consolidating various actions related to the field of AI.

Open University of Mauritius (OU)

A public university in Mauritius. It offers programmes leading to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees through open and distance learning. Its mission is to use technology and flexible modes of teaching to serve society, transform lives and make high-quality education, lifelong learning, and training accessible to everyone while promoting excellence in research.

Asia e University (AeU)

A leading Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution in Malaysia, and one of the premier ODL institutions in Asia. AeU aims to remove barriers that can limit access to higher education and make it more accessible, affordable and beneficial for learners.

Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University (HBMSU)

The first ever smart learning institution to be accredited by the UAE Ministry of Education. It aims to enable knowledge creation and application through disruptive innovation and transformation, and provide unique lifelong learning opportunities, intellectually stimulating learning experiences, and a diverse community of faculty, staff, learners, and alumni.

University of Goroka (UOG)

By far the largest teacher education institution. The university focuses on providing quality teacher education to meet the nation's need for teacher education.

Open University of Kenya (OUK)

An institution of higher learning dedicated to providing flexible and high-quality distance education. OUK aims to address the pressing issue of limited capacity in traditional universities by employing innovative teaching and learning methodologies, including online and distance education.

Contact North | Contact Nord

Helps people living in Ontario, especially those in small, rural, northern, and remote areas, access the online education and training they need to get or retain a job, earn a promotion, or advance their career without having to leave their communities.

Multidisciplinary Institute for Human Development with Technologies, Rio de Janeiro State University (IFHT/UERJ)

The institute aims to become a benchmark institution in projects, studies, and research on human development with the support of technologies, bringing together a qualified multidisciplinary team in a constructive and interdisciplinary process.

Rwanda Polytechnic (RP)

Established by the Government of Rwanda in 2017 to implement Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) skills development across the country.

Globethics

An international non-governmental organisation, in consultative status with UN ECOSOC, dedicated to advancing ethical leadership worldwide. Globethics supports civil society, international organisations, and the private and public sectors in developing solutions to ethical dilemmas.

UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (UNESCO MGIEP)

UNESCO's first Category 1 Institute in the Asia-Pacific region. It is dedicated to promoting education for peace and sustainable development in pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 (SDG 4.7). MGIEP focuses on peace education, global citizenship education, and social-emotional learning, driving the transformation of education systems in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond through research, capacity building, and policy advocacy.

National University of Samoa (NUS)

Established by an Act of Parliament in 1984 and is the premier institution of higher education in Samoa. NUS is committed to providing quality higher education and contributing to the socio-economic development and cultural heritage of Samoa and the Pacific region.

National Open and Distance University of Colombia (UNAD)

Colombia's first public mega-university, dedicated to providing educational opportunities for all through open, distance, and virtual learning environments. UNAD promotes autonomous, meaningful, and collaborative learning through the use of information and communication technologies, fostering an entrepreneurial culture and contributing to the sustainable economic, social, and human development of local, regional, and global communities.

National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)

The largest and oldest university in Mexico and the Ibero-America region. Its primary purpose is to serve the nation and humanity, to train professionals useful to society, and it plays a central role in scientific research, cultural heritage, and social service.

OBREAL Global

A European organization dedicated to promoting policy dialogue and interregional cooperation to build shared solutions to common development challenges faced by different Souths and different Norths. The organization advocates a South-South-North cooperation model, emphasizing equal treatment, mutual knowledge transfer, and a commitment to common global challenges.

Investment in the Future Charitable Foundation

A non-profit organization dedicated to educational innovation. The Foundation focuses on creating educational environments that cultivate personal growth, health, and well-being, developing programmes for 21st-century skills, and promoting inclusive education. The Foundation's methodologies have been recognised as promising practices by UNESCO and UNICEF.

The Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education under the Auspices of UNESCO (RCQE)

The first institute in Saudi Arabia and the first in the world under the auspices of UNESCO specializing in quality and excellence in education. As a UNESCO Category 2 Centre, it supports member states in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 through high-quality services, policy research, regional policy forums, and capacity-building activities.

Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)

The world's largest network of French-speaking higher education and research institutions. It serves as the official operator for higher education and research at the Francophonie Summit. AUF is committed to promoting solidarity and cooperation among French-speaking universities and research institutions, supporting quality teaching, research innovation, academic mobility, and capacity building in university governance.

International Association of Smart Learning Environments (IASLE)

A cutting-edge professional forum and community at the forefront of global educational transformation. It is dedicated to fusing pedagogy with technology to advance current educational frameworks into sophisticated "Smart Learning Environments." The association brings together researchers, academics, practitioners, and industry experts worldwide to address the limitations of existing educational models through constructive dialogue.

China Association of Higher Education (CAHE)

Founded in 1983, its primary activities include theoretical research, academic exchanges, professional training, exhibitions, international cooperation, consulting services, publication of books and periodicals, development of industry standards, and industry monitoring.

Institute of Higher Education, Beijing Normal University

An academic institution dedicated to discipline development in higher education, personnel training, scientific research, social service, and international exchange.

International Association of Universities (IAU)

Established in 1950 and founded on the initiative of UNESCO, it is the world's leading association of higher education institutions and organizations.

UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Education

Beijing Normal University in cooperation with UNESCO established a UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence in Feb. 2023. The purpose of the Chair is to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation on artificial intelligence in education.

Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.

A leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) solutions, with business operations spanning carrier networks, enterprise solutions, consumer devices, cloud computing, and smart vehicle components.

Binglin Education Fund, Beijing Normal University

Raises funds through donations, improves educational conditions, recognises outstanding faculty and students, supports scientific research achievements, and provides financial assistance to disadvantaged students and research projects.

Chaoxing Group

Founded in 1993, dedicated to digitizing educational resources including books, videos, and literature. It is currently the world's largest provider of Chinese e-books and Chinese academic video resources.

National Engineering Research Center of Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology

According to Notice from the General Office of NDRC on Developing Cyberlearning Intelligent Technology and Constructing National Engineering Technology ([2017] No.163), National Engineering Research Center for Cyberlearning and Intelligent Technology was organised by Beijing Normal University and jointly constructed by Tsinghua University, China Mobile Communications Corporation (CMCC), Elernity and iFLYTEK Co., Ltd.

Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University

Affiliated to Beijing Normal University (BNU), and serves as an experimental platform comprising scientific research, technology development and education. SLI is also a joint venture between BNU and Elernity. SLI aspires to promote the advantages of BNU in education, psychology, educational technology and other disciplines. It also aims to utilize the capital, knowledge and experiences of Elernity, and its parent firm NetDragon Websoft Inc., in internet technologies, cloud computing, and product development.

ONION ACADEMY

An AI company focused on developing advanced learning algorithms and digital content, offering AI intelligent companions, smart learning devices, and AI-powered future classroom solutions, promoting equitable access to quality education.

Tencent Education

An educational brand under Tencent Corporation, leveraging Tencent's technology capabilities and digital content resources to provide products and services for educational management departments, schools, institutions, and individuals across the full lifecycle of early childhood, K-12, higher education, vocational education, and lifelong learning.

Joint Laboratory on Artificial Intelligence in Special Education (Arab Region & China)

Jointly established by Beijing Normal University and ALECSO, advances AI innovation and applications in special education through international and interdisciplinary collaboration, promoting inclusive education, accessibility, and the well-being of learners with special needs.

Institute of Special Education, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University

Dedicated to cultivating professionals with humanistic values, special education expertise, international perspective, and innovative capacity. It holds a leading position domestically in special education theory, inclusive education, and special education teacher education, and has certain international influence.

School of Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University

Established in 2004, the school responds to national demands for educational digitalisation through talent cultivation and scientific research in educational technology, internet education, AI in education, and digital learning environments. It is an important talent cultivation and academic research base in the field of educational technology in China.

Yuanfudao

Operates multiple online education and digital content products, providing users with diverse intelligent education services including interactive online courses, smart practice systems, and ability development programs, helping students systematically and efficiently develop knowledge and competencies.

Jing Hengyi School of Education, Hangzhou Normal University

Named after Jinghenyi, a renowned modern educator and the school's first principal, the school holds doctoral degree authorization in first-level education and psychology disciplines, as well as a professional doctoral degree in education. It has strong teaching and research capabilities in teacher education, educational sciences, and psychology.

Xuexi.cn | Qiangguo Education

An official education channel of the Study China platform launched with support from the Ministry of Education, aimed at implementing the strategy for educational excellence, promoting the co-construction and sharing of quality digital educational resources, and fostering balanced educational development.

Beijing Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education (AICFE)

One of the first batch of Beijing Advanced Innovation Centers supported by the Beijing Municipal Government. It is a high-level international innovation platform oriented toward major practical educational challenges and centered on educational technology innovation, providing intelligent educational public service platforms and educational expert think tank services nationwide.

Ministry of Education-China Mobile Joint Laboratory on Mobile Learning

A joint initiative by the Ministry of Education, Beijing Normal University, and China Mobile Communications Group, part of the Ministry of Education's key laboratory system. The laboratory leverages China Mobile's 5G and AI technological advantages combined with Beijing Normal University's strengths in educational theory, technology, and practical innovation, facilitating the two-way integration of technology and education through industry-academia-research-application collaboration.

Modern Educational Technology Institute, Beijing Normal University

The birthplace of Beijing Normal University's educational technology discipline, having undergone theoretical development from audiovisual education to educational technology, laying the foundational theoretical framework for the field. Current research focuses on innovative educational theories and methods, and smart educational environments.

Beijing Normal University Publishing Group

Established in July 2007, Beijing Normal University Press Group Co., Ltd. is an integrated publishing enterprise focusing on educational publishing, encompassing books and periodicals, audio-visual and electronic media, and educational services.

Zhejiang Provincial Early Childhood Teacher Training Center

A subsidiary unit of Zhejiang Normal University, established with support from the School of Child Development and Education at Zhejiang Normal University. It is the provincial official professional platform responsible for post-service training of preschool education teachers across the province.

UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (UNESCO INRULED)

Established by UNESCO and the Chinese government in 1994 with a mandate to promote sustainable socio-economic development in rural areas. As a Category II center under the auspices of UNESCO, INRULED's research and training activities concentrate on education for rural transformation. The Center has moved to Beijing Normal University in 2008 for better coordination and connectivity.

Educational Informatization Strategy Research Base, Ministry of Education, P.R.C

Central Base (Huazhong Normal University): Conducts strategic research, policy consultation, and training on educational informatization.
Beijing Base (Beijing Normal University): Focuses on intelligent education development, AI applications in education, and international comparative studies of educational informatization.
Northwest Base (Northwest Normal University): Focuses on online learning platforms and educational technology in ethnic minority regions.

iFLYTEK Co., Ltd.

Founded in 1999, it is a well-known intelligent speech and AI enterprise listed in the Asia-Pacific region, specializing in research on intelligent speech and voice technology, software and chip product development, and voice information services.

17Edtech

Founded in 2011, dedicated to building an advanced K-12 intelligent education platform, providing more efficient and enhanced products and experiences for K-12 schools, families, and social education scenarios through advanced educational technology and quality educational content.

Center of Information and Network Technology, Beijing Normal University

Responsible for IT infrastructure planning, implementation, management, and services at Beijing Normal University.

Wuhan Xingtu Xinke Electronics Co., Ltd.

Founded in 2004, a national high-tech enterprise specializing in intelligent video and network security systems, serving as a supplier of intelligent system products and comprehensive solutions centered on video and network technologies.

Research Institute of K-12 Educational Big Data Application, Beijing Normal University

Founded jointly by Beijing Normal University and iFLYTEK, dedicated to addressing foundational issues in educational big data for K-12 education development, and exploring universal solutions for education using big data and AI.

WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in Education and Health

Based at Clermont-Auvergne University in France, dedicated to promoting cross-sectoral policies and practices in education and health, with a particular focus on improving the lives of children and youth.

UNESCO Chair on Global Health and Education

The Chair encourages a strategy of social change by introducing an innovative way of practicing health promotion, prevention and health education. It combines the knowledge of health determinants with social-cultural practices. This leads to a balanced approach between environmental changes and capacity building.

Faculty of Psychology, Beijing Normal University

Aiming to build a world-class psychology discipline and multidisciplinary world-class brain science, with a focus on psychological and learning issues, guided by international frontiers and national major needs, producing internationally recognised research outcomes and application products responsive to urgent national demands.

School of Continuing Education and Teacher Training, Beijing Normal University

Responsible for national and local talent training and training tasks at all levels, exploring diverse models for educational services to support economic and social development, and building a talent training system centered on teacher training and various specialized training programs.

References-AI Technology (Beijing) Co., Ltd.

Brings together education experts, researchers, professors, AI algorithm and application engineers, and master teacher research teams — top talents from both technology and education fields — to continuously drive the intelligent transformation of education.

Higher Education Press

Founded in May 1954, it is one of the earliest professional educational publishing institutions in New China. Its business covers educational publishing, thematic and academic publishing, integrated development, and research and evaluation, with products spanning books, periodicals, audio-visual products, electronic publications, online publications, and teacher training.

Nanhu District Bureau of Education and Sports, Jiaxing, China

Responsible for district-wide education and sports planning, undertaking research on major issues in education and sports reform and development, formulating and implementing policies, promoting reforms, and coordinating the advancement of education and sports. Also responsible for the collection, analysis, and publication of education and sports information.

Anhui ToyCloud Technology Co., Ltd.

Originated from iFLYTEK's 2009 smart toy division, the company focuses on the "AI + Children" field, building a product system centered on the "Alpha Egg" brand, encompassing children's companion robots, children's AI learning assistants, and preschool education digital solutions.

Beijing Normal University Student Union

A major student organization led by the Party Committee, guided by the school Youth League and higher student federation, serving as an important component of the university's youth and student organization system, dedicated to serving as a bridge connecting the university with students.

Beijing Normal University Graduate Student Union

A major student organization led by the Party Committee, guided by the school Youth League and higher student federation, serving as an important component of the university's youth and student organization system, dedicated to serving as a bridge connecting the university with graduate students.

Center for Robotic and Artificial Intelligence in Education (CRAIE)

Operating within the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Education, CRAIE advances innovative learning through artificial intelligence, robotics, and digital technologies. Its work empowers both teachers and students by equipping them with the skills and tools needed for the future of education.

Institute of Artificial Intelligence in Education, South China Normal University

Officially established on May 25, 2021, focusing on scientific research, talent cultivation, discipline development, industry-academia collaboration, and social services in the field of "Education + AI," striving to build a research and development base for fundamental theories and key technologies of AI in education.

Guangzhou AVA Electronic Technology Co., Ltd.

Leveraging independent R&D experience, it has built full-chain independent R&D capabilities covering FPGA chip-level design, hardware design, audio/video transmission algorithms, real-time communication algorithms, AI algorithms, and educational platforms, effectively ensuring product completeness, compatibility, and stability.

NetDragon Websoft Inc.

Founded in 1999 and headquartered in Fuzhou, China, NetDragon Websoft Holdings Limited is a global leader in online community development. Standing tall among the top performers in its domestic industry, it proudly secures a spot on the prestigious Forbes Global 2000 list as a recognised "Key Software Enterprise" under China's national plan, as well as a "Cultural Industry Demonstration Base at National Level" and "Key Enterprise of National Cultural Export".

School Alliance of Educational digitalisation

China's first education informatization collaborative, initiated by RDFZ, Hefei No. 8 High School, and iFLYTEK, primarily focusing on exchange and sharing around educational hotspots such as informatization-based teaching applications and management efficiency.

Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University

The missions of FOE are to improve the quality of educational innovation nationwide, to educate and prepare professional teachers and future educators, to house the think tank in education, to offer opportunities for International educational exchange and to facilitate the building of the educational and cultural industry in China.

Open University Malaysia (OUM)

Established in August 2000, we are owned by Multimedia Technology Enhancement Operations Sdn Bhd (METEOR), a consortium of the first 11 public universities in Malaysia. Guided by the motto “University for All,” we provide enrolment options through both the traditional route and the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), which recognises the value of real-world expertise.

Acknowledgment

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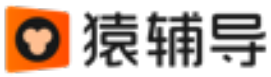
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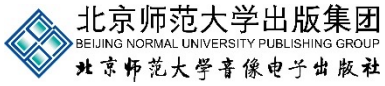

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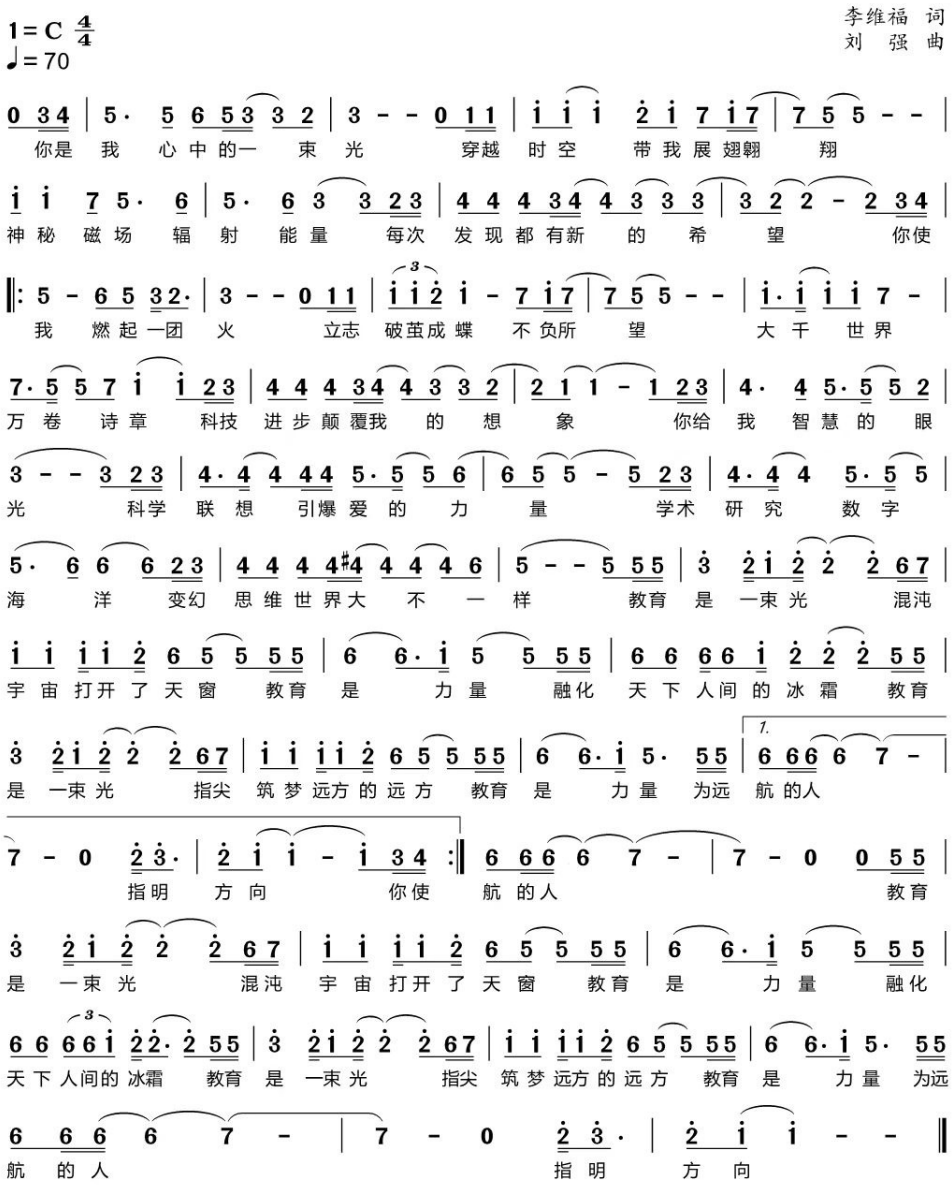


Smart Education Exhibition



Radiance of Education

教育之光



Be in awe of education, for it shapes the soul of human,
Be cautious to technologies, for its adoption has to be effective.
Be entangled with Smart, for the uncertainty tends to be increasing,
Be serious to academies, for the true research needs evidence.

---Ronghuai Huang March 20th, 2017

Contact

Global Smart Education Network:
Network with the Best for Promoting Smart Education for ALL

GSENet aims to (1) Collaborate on promoting smart learning for all within the framework of SDG4: Quality Education; (2) Share forward-thinking policies and practices to shape the future of education and lifelong learning at the local, national, regional and global levels; (3) Conduct joint open access research, share open educational resources and open source tools for the common good; (4) Promote innovation by combining the power of technology with innovative pedagogy and a human-centred approach; and (5) Build the capacity of teachers to play a leading role in the tripartite matrix of teacher learner-technology.

Contact of GSE Organizing Committee

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Synthesis Report

Global Smart Education Conference 2026

Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability

The Global Smart Education Conference 2026, held from 18 to 20 August 2026, explored the theme "Reimagining Education in the Age of AI: Equity, Quality and Sustainability." This publication synthesises the key discussions and outcomes of the Conference, highlighting expert insights, thematic sessions, research findings, and collaborative initiatives. It aims to support the effective development and practice of smart education in diverse global contexts, strengthen international understanding and exchange, and contribute to a shared exploration of future directions and practical pathways for educational transformation in the age of AI.

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