

Background

The global higher education landscape is shifting rapidly in light of the changing economies as well as societal and environmental shifts. The emergence of artificial intelligence, the rise of online and blended teaching and learning, decisions and practices increasingly driven by big data, other trends of the digital revolution have direct impact on global higher education systems. The largest educational crisis in human history caused by the COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the urgency and necessity for higher education systems and institutions to develop the capacity to harness the power of digital technologies to realise the vision of equitable and quality higher education for all.

Consequently, the digital transformation of higher education, especially teaching and learning, has become an increasingly important priority for local, national and international stakeholders. More specifically, higher education institutions (HEIs) in the global south face many challenges in implementing inclusive and quality online and blended teaching and learning (OBTL), ensuring the relevance of existing curriculum and assessment, and building institutional capacity to manage these challenges of equity, quality, and efficiency. Ministries of education and related government agencies need to devise and implement evidence-based policies to provide a conducive environment for programme implementations. Private enterprises are also critical to providing technical support and resources to strengthen the higher education-industry linkage. Last but not least, international organisations are central to coordinating multistakeholder and international partnerships to ensure alignments of goals and actions. The newly released UNESCO report, *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A new social contract for education*, also emphasises the crucial role of universities in the futures of education, from supporting research and the advancement of science to becoming contributing and collaborative partners to other stakeholders around the globe.

As global higher education stakeholders gather at the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC) in Barcelona, Spain in May 2022, the Conference aims to create a roadmap for the future of higher education towards 2030 and beyond, addressing the challenges identified above and more. Among the 10 key themes of the Conference, most have also identified specific sub-topics related the role of digital technologies in higher education. For example, the use of ICTs and AI to enhance learning and collaboration is an increasing common means to ensure quality and relevance of programmes. Machine learning, big data and data analysis in higher education give rise to new forms of data generation and knowledge production. Networks, platforms, and knowledge management systems powered by digital technology can further advance international cooperation to enhance synergies. Digital technology will inevitably play an increasingly important role in almost every aspect of higher education, and digital transformation will become one of the most salient trends for the futures of higher education.

During the Conference, the International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO-ICHEI), along with the current and previous IIOE Rotating Chairs and premium partner universities: University of Nairobi (Kenya), Ain Shams University (Egypt), Universiti Putra Malaysia (Malaysia), and UNESCO, will host a roundtable around the theme of the International Institute of Online Education (IIOE).

For this roundtable meeting, UNESCO-ICHEI invites global partner HEIs, enterprises, policymakers, and international organisations to engage in consultative discussions of the International Institute of Online Education (IIOE). Global participants of this roundtable will evaluate the achievements of IIOE so far, discuss IIOE's future development plan and set agendas on the way forward as IIOE and partners work towards a shared future of higher education digital transformation.

Agenda

Date and Venue

20 May, 2022, 9:30-11:00 (Barcelona time)

Fira de Barcelona, City of Barcelona, Spain

Programme	Content	Speaker
Opening Ceremony	Opening remarks	<p>Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director General for Education of UNESCO</p> <p>High-level delegate of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China</p> <p>Prof. Stephen Kiama Gitahi, Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Kenya (2022 IIOE Rotating Presidency Unit)</p>

IIOE Global Seminar

Multistakeholder Partnerships for Supportive and Inclusive Ecosystem of Higher Education Digital Transformation

During this session, UNESCO-ICHEI will introduce its flagship project -- the International Institute of Online and Education (IIOE) and discuss how IIOE leverages multistakeholder partnerships to build ICT capacity for teachers and higher education institutions. UNESCO-ICHEI will also share IIOE's principles, models and experiences for empowering teachers for higher education digital transformation in developing countries. Partner HEIs, government agencies, enterprises and international organisations will discuss how IIOE can support and serve the ICT strategies of various stakeholders.

Chair: Ms Bi Xiaohan, Assistant Director & Chief of West Asia and Africa Programme Office, UNESCO-ICHEI

Keynote Presentation	Building a supportive and inclusive ecosystem for the digital transformation of higher education: Experiences of IIOE	Prof LI Ming, Director of UNESCO-ICHEI
Thematic Seminar	<p>Practices and future of IIOE: Perspectives of multiple stakeholders</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A global higher education union cherishes the principle of co-construction and shared benefits Alignment of IIOE development with institutional and national strategies and priorities, and UNESCO mission The necessity of multilingualism and localisation 	<p>Ms. Costanza Farina, Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States</p> <p>High-level education delegates of participating countries</p> <p>Prof. Stephen Kiama Gitahi, Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Kenya (2022 IIOE Rotating Presidency Unit)</p> <p>Prof. Mahmoud Shawky Elmeteini, President of Ain Shams University, Egypt (2020 IIOE First Rotating Presidency Unit)</p> <p>Ms. Lesley White, Deputy VP of HR in the Western European Region for Huawei</p>

Q&A Session for Participants

Digital Transformation of Higher Education: Research and Practice

This session will discuss how research can support practices of higher education and how the outcome of research can be shared internationally as open education resources to provide recommendations and guidelines on policies and practices of higher education digital transformation for higher education administrators and practitioners.

Chair: Dr FENG Siyuan, Chief of Knowledge Production and Communications Centre, UNESCO-ICHEI

<p>Keynote Presentation</p>	<p>Digital Transformation of Higher Education: Research and Practice</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research achievements on digital transformation of higher education led by ICHEI • The transition from ideas, theories, to practices in digital transformation of Higher education • Closing the last mile on the digital transformation of higher education through university-industry partnership 	<p>Prof. Han Wei, Executive Deputy Director of UNESCO-ICHEI</p>
<p>Thematic seminar</p>	<p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research-based national policy recommendations for higher education digital transformation • How to strengthen and participate in international partnerships and practices of higher education research • University- industry partnership (credential training) for digitalisation of disciplines 	<p>Dr. Francesc Pedro, Director of UNESCO-IESALC High-level education delegates of participating countries</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Ismi Arif Ismail, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and International) of Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia</p> <p>Prof. Abdel Fattah Mohamed Fathy Saoud, Vice President (Education and Students' Affairs) of Ain Shams University, Egypt(2020 IIOE First Rotating Presidency Unit)</p>

Q&A Session for Participants

The Way Forward for IIOE

During this concluding session of the roundtable, UNESCO-ICHEI will join multiple partner enterprises, HEIs, and UNESCO offices to release IIOE-related programmes and initiatives for global HEIs in developing countries. The launch will include the IIOE online education platforms in six UN official languages, a research series on the digital transformation of higher education, the Smart Classroom project, etc.

Chair: Ms Duan Xiaotong, Senior Programme Officer, Asia-Pacific Programme Office, UNESCO-ICHEI

<p>IIOE for the Future</p>	<p>The launch of IIOE services in six languages</p> <p>The launch of the Smart Classroom Project</p>	<p>Representatives from UNESCO Priority Africa and External Relations Sector, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Beirut, UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO IESALC), and other UNESCO regional offices in Africa</p> <p>Representatives of IIOE Rotating Presidency Units and premium partner universities</p> <p>Representatives of UNESCO-ICHEI's partner enterprises for Industry-University Partnerships (Huawei), Smart Classroom Project (Createview, Seewo), and IIOE Multilingual Support (Wisdom Palace)</p>
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IIOE and the Futures of Higher Education

The International Institute of Online Education (IIOE) is a supportive ecosystem for the digital transformation of higher education, consists of a global network of partner HEIs, enterprises, related government agencies, and international organisations jointly building the capacity of higher education systems, institutions, and individual stakeholders. IIOE is one of UNESCO-ICHEI's flagship projects, jointly initiated by UNESCO-ICHEI and 15 HEIs in Asia, Africa, and the Arabic region, and 9 ICT enterprises in December, 2019 in Shenzhen, China, with the support of UNESCO. IIOE is dedicated to constructing a supportive ecosystem for the digital transformation of global HEIs. Since its establishment, IIOE has served more than 10,000 HEW members from over 135 countries through COVID-19-response education workshops, webinars and advanced training programmes. IIOE has now developed strategic partnerships with HEIs in close to 30 countries in Asia and Africa and is establishing eight national centres with partner HEIs to take roots at local institutions and innovate customised solutions to challenges related to digital transformation.

Looking towards 2030 and beyond, IIOE remains committed to deepening its existing partnerships and expanding upon its network to engage with more related stakeholders. This roundtable will chart the way forward for the future of higher education digital transformation and explore the role of IIOE in facilitating and accelerating this global trend. UNESCO-ICHEI hopes that the discussion and outcome of the meeting will not only inform the future developments of IIOE, but also contribute to the global higher education development roadmap towards 2030 and beyond, as a result of UNESCO WHEC2022.



IIOE Milestones

2018.10

The concept of “International Institute of Online Education (IIOE)” was first proposed.

2019.12

Under the "Belt and Road" Initiative, UNESCO-ICHEI with 15 global partner higher education institutions and 8 ICT enterprises co-initiated the International Institute of Online Education (IIOE), with a donation from the Tencent Charity Foundation.

2020.4

IIOE was officially launched online with mobile and web versions, providing training services for teachers around the world in three languages (Chinese, English, and French).

2021.9

IIOE was selected as Success Story of Jointly Building a Community with a Shared Future in Cyberspace at 2021 World Internet Conference from 200+ cases, as the only educational project selected.

2021.10

The first IIOE National Centre set sail in Pakistan.

2021.11

The launch of IIOE services in Arabic.

2022.1

The launch of IIOE services in Russian.

2022.5

The launch of IIOE services in Spanish.