

International Forum on ICT and Education 2030

Concept Note

Seize digital opportunities, lead education transformation

Qingdao
People's Republic of China
10-11 July 2017

Background:

Many sectors of the world have been undergoing revolution driven partly by new information and communication technologies (ICT). We should ensure that the digital revolution is a revolution for sustainable development that bridges divides, strengthens inclusion, and provides opportunities for all with no one left behind. In this respect, ICT can be both drivers and enablers of progress for Member States in taking forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.'

The 'Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action', developed by UNESCO with an aim to provide guidance for implementing Education 2030, affirms that we must do everything to harness the power of ICT to reinforce education systems, to bolster knowledge dissemination, to widen information access, to advance quality and effective learning, and to ensure more effective service provision. The increasingly powerful capacities and lower price of ICT have enabled a rapid diffusion of digital devices and applications, and made ICT more affordable in low-income countries. ICT can enable countries to close many gaps at a "leapfrog" pace. ICT are also reducing significantly the cost of deploying innovative services across sectors. ICT-enabled cost-saving delivery models of service provision are already changing, if not disrupting, the education sector in high-income countries as well, and making possible innovative digital services essential for education systems in low-income countries.

ICT is widening a new horizon of opportunities to take forward SDG 4, seizing digital opportunities requires political will, effective planning, and concerted resources for strong implementation, as recommended in the 'Qingdao Declaration', released during the International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education from 23-25 May 2015 in Qingdao, the People's Republic of China. As most Member States have started to develop national Education 2030 agendas and with only 13-year window of opportunity left to achieve the SDGs, it's imperative to convene stakeholders again to review the emerging digital innovations and existing best practices that could be leveraged at scale to advance the progress toward SDG 4.

It is under this context that, UNESCO, with the support from the Government of the People's Republic of China, the Municipal Government of Qingdao, and the Wei Dong Group of China, is organizing an International Forum on ICT and Education 2030 from 10 to 11 July 2017 in Qingdao, the People's Republic of China, as a follow-up to the International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education in 2015.

Goals and Objectives:

The Forum seeks to reaffirm the commitments made in the 'Qingdao Declaration' and reinforce the inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platform that was fostered during the Conference in 2015. It will also work to deepen North-South knowledge exchange, facilitate the design of cooperation strategies, and outline action plans to scale up the digital innovations and capitalize on best practices that accelerate progress towards Education 2030. To this effect, concrete proposals on a global action network and pilot test projects for leveraging ICT to achieve Education 2030 will be presented and discussed.

The objectives of the Forum are to:

1. share national policies and programmes that aim to capture digital innovations to accelerate the achievement of SDG 4
2. explore the digital innovations and best practices that could be scaled to enable new school models and transform the education provision
3. formulate partnerships and develop action plans around flagship projects on leveraging ICT to take forward SDG 4

Target Countries and Participants:

1. Governmental ICT in education agencies and education institutions

A significant number of officials of Ministry of Education (MoE) from all regions, particularly the directors of national ICT in education agencies and the heads of selected education institutions, will be invited to share successful national policies and programmes and best practices at institutional level that take holistic approach to integrate ICT into Education 2030 Agenda and make contribution to the high-level debate. The MoE officials are also expected to discuss and join the global action network on harnessing digital innovation to achieve SDG 4 under the framework of the 'Qingdao Declaration'.

2. International development partners

Representatives of other relevant UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs will be invited to share experiences in unleashing potentials to achieve SDGs, discuss the effective implementation strategies with particular focuses on funding mechanisms and international cooperation strategies in the framework of the global action network.

3. Private digital device and service providers

Representatives of private digital device manufacturers and service providers, including digital content providers as well as online/mobile learning providers, will be engaged to take stock of

digital innovations that could possibly generate black-swan effects in driving the education transformation towards SDG 4.

4. Individual experts and practitioners

Individual experts and practitioners who have developed insightful views or innovative ICT solutions for education will be invited to deliver thematic speeches or join the debates.

5. Chinese participants

Ministry officials, researchers, representatives of private ICT companies and public education institutions of China will be invited by the local organizers to share experiences from China.

Theme and Subthemes:

Under the theme of leveraging ICT to accelerate the achievement of SDG 4, forward-looking debates, sharing of cutting-edge knowledge and ICT solutions, deliberation on sector strategies will be organized around the following sub-themes:

1. Digital innovation for SDG 4: What are the possible black-swan digital innovations in education?

Disruptive digital innovations often reshape sector-wide business models in an abrupt way. The existing establishments and policies without forward-looking views either misuse the digital opportunities or are forced to respond to the disruption passively. This session is to convene forward-looking debates on what digital innovations will potentially reshape the key aspects of the education system, and how national and institutional policies should be prepared to embrace the emerging opportunities and respond to the potential risks. Speeches and panel discussion will be organized on the following questions:

- How will artificial intelligence, augmented virtual reality, big data and other digital innovations reshape education?
- What are the possible black-swan digital innovations that could possibly close the SDG 4 gaps at a “leapfrog” pace?
- What will digital learning look like in 2030?
- How can policies capture the digital innovation to enable the Education 2030?

2. Successful national ICT in education policies and large-scale programmes

Successful ICT in education policies and programmes should be able to provide evidence on progresses enabled by the use of ICT towards inclusion, equitability, and quality of education. This session is to decipher the key factors that underpin successful ICT in education policies and programmes, with a view to inform the development and management of ICT in education policies and programmes under the context of Education 2030. Policy makers, experts, and practitioners who have managed national policies or large scale programmes will review examples of:

- National ICT in education policies and programmes that have successfully advanced inclusion and equitability and improve quality of education
- National policies and master plans that aim to leverage ICT to restructure education system and develop new skills
- Large-scale international programmes with an aim to harness ICT to address global challenges (education for international displaced people, digital divide, etc.) in achieving SDG 4

3. Best practices in future e-schools and future learning

In response to digital opportunities, many governments have been rethinking and redesigning the education institutions including the definition of competencies and values in the learning outcomes, curriculum and content development and management, learning space and time, teachers' roles, and daily pedagogical activities. Lessons learned from previous pilot programmes will inform the later adopters on the feasibility and scalability of the new models. Presentations and discussions will be organized around:

- Future e-schools
- ICT transforming TVET institutions
- New forms of higher education
- Flexible non-formal learning settings

4. Education and learning management

Education management systems and learning systems, boosted by big data, have the capacities to inform education managers about students' learning behaviours, track learners' education information across countries, and lead to the improvement in the design and organization of programmes of study. The intelligent tutoring or learning systems, empowered by artificial intelligence and big data analytics, can also automatically diagnose students' learning styles and problems, and provide teachers and students with advices on academic progression and career development. For this to happen, Governments must develop policies and systems to ensure secure, appropriate and ethical use of data, including safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of students' personally identifiable information. Debate will unfold around:

- Issues on optimizing EMIS
- Big data for good
- Intelligent learning management platform

Schedule of Events:

Table 1: Structure of the Proposed Programme

Monday 10 July 2017: Morning	
3h + 30' break	Opening ceremony Plenary Session 1 Digital innovation for SDG 4
1.5h	Lunch
Monday 10 July 2017: Afternoon	
3h + 30' break	Breakout Session 1 Plenary Session 2 National ICT in education policies and programmes
Tuesday 11 July 2017: Morning	
3h + 30' break	Plenary Session 3 Best practices in future e-schools Breakout Session 2
1.5h	Lunch
Tuesday 11 July 2017: Afternoon	
3h + 30' break	Plenary Session 4 Education and learning management Closing Ceremony