



Virtual GB Meeting, 20 May 2021

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REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF UNESCO IITE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTE

1. Implementation of decisions of the last GB Meeting

All decisions adopted at the 19th Session of IITE GB have been implemented. In particular, two issues were highlighted at the 19th Session, namely priority and focus of IITE's programme, sustainability of IITE's projects and collaboration network developed during the pandemic.

Following comments of GB members at the 19th Session and further discussion with the GB Chairperson after the GB meeting, IITE's core professional team have revised programme thematic priorities. The revision together with IITE's programme implementation plan has been shared with all GB members by the end of 2020. IITE's programme priorities are identified as:

Priority 1. Smart education in post-pandemic world and future education;

Priority 2. Human-centered e-learning for inclusion, health and wellbeing.

More detailed description of the two priorities are as follows.

Priority 1. Smart education in post-pandemic world and future education

The "smart education" paradigm suggests a convergence of information and learning technologies and social media combining e-learning, mobile learning (m-learning), ubiquitous learning (u-learning) and social learning, which is the use of smart devices and social services as educational instruments. The evolution to smart learning is expected to improve the educational environment to advanced level regarding device, network, education program, etc. This should contribute to the shaping of education in the post-pandemic period and help identify the future potential scenarios of education development in the face of an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. To promote effective, intelligent tailored-learning, self-regulated, motivating, adaptive, resource-enriched and technology-enhanced smart education focused on humans and content rather than on devices and based on IT infrastructure, IITE will implement the following activities.

Major activities and outcomes:

- Research and events resulting in reports on the use of digital technologies in education and trends in ICT use in education within the Futures of Education Initiative
- Rethinking and redesigning national smart education strategies during and after pandemic
- Research and promotion of innovative digital pedagogical approaches to support digital transformation of education
- Supporting countries in developing open education/OER/MOOCs initiatives and exploring/ disseminating best practices through research and experience sharing events
- Promoting the development of soft skills through media and information literacy education
- EMIS and data

Priority 2. Human-centered e-learning for inclusion, health and wellbeing

Education is, at its heart, about human connections — between students, teachers, parents, caregivers, principals, and broader communities. The COVID-19 crisis has exposed inadequacies and inequalities in access to education outside of school, limiting the quantity and quality of these connections. In order to minimize social inequalities and to support human engagement, education policies and initiatives should embrace an inter-related set of several principles in relation to e-learning. Human-centered e-learning should be guided by a clear purpose and focus on educational objectives; reach all learners; empower teachers; engage an ecosystem of partners; and rigorously and routinely use data to learn what strategies, policies and programs are effective to maximize student learning. The activities under this priority will support UNESCO MS in adopting e-learning to improve quality and access to education, bringing education to all learners anytime and anywhere, contributing to the wellbeing and health of youth.

Major activities and outcomes:

- Supporting human-centred approaches in e-learning by dissemination of good practice, promoting open dialogues and trainings
- Developing and accumulating free e-learning open tools, online courses and other resources as E-library to support teaching and capacity building for teachers
- Establishing global and regional partnerships in selected countries for networking and helping them to localize human-centred e-learning strategies for national teacher capacity building
- Needs assessment and development of recommendations for the selected countries in Africa for open and distance learning solutions of the most vulnerable groups of students
- Ideating, designing and promoting digital resources to empower young people to live healthy life and develop healthy relationships
- Supporting teachers for delivering health and wellbeing education and sustaining safe, inclusive and enabling learning environment
- Addressing emerging critical issues in education, health and wellbeing in the era of COVID-19 and beyond

The issue of sustainability of IITE's projects and collaboration network developed during the COVID-19 pandemic will be covered by the rest part of this report.

2. IITE's programme activities

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented threat to human health and safety, an unprecedented challenge to world education, and a unique opportunity of strengthening collaboration network with multisectoral partners of the world for shared responsibility and goal. In the year 2020, the COVID-19 response was almost the only focus of IITE's programme activities. Over the past 4 years of my experience at IITE, we have never been so active in different areas of education and different regions of the world. The contribution and visibility of IITE have been significantly improved.

Since the 19th Session of GB in November 2020, there have been two changes in IITE's programme activities, first, more focus on school/university reopening and post pandemic, secondly, more focus on projects, especially extrabudgetary projects developed during the pandemic. Geographically, IITE's programme activities are keeping Eastern Europe and Central Asia, African region as priority while touching other regions such as Arabic region and even LAC. Since last GB meeting, the ongoing and accomplished extrabudgetary projects that reflect the thematic priority and regional focus are as follows:

- 1) IFAP project: Media and Information Literacy in the World Affected by COVID-19: How to Teach the Teachers, covering 9 countries of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) — Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, supported by UNESCO Information for All Programme (IFAP).
- 2) Beijing Normal University (BNU) project: Rethinking and Redesigning National Smart Education Strategy, covering at least 5 countries in different regions of the world including China, Russia, US, Egypt and UK, supported by BNU with COL, ISTE and Russian research university HSE as implementation partners.
- 3) Shanghai Open University (SOU) project: Promoting ICT Capacity Building and Open Education in the Era of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technologies, covering different countries of UNESCO UNITWIN Network in Distance and Open Learning hosted by SOU, supported by SOU.
- 4) Huawei project for the Middle East: Promoting ICT in Higher Education in the Middle East and Pakistan, covering 10 countries including Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, supported by Huawei.
- 5) NetDragon project: Teacher Capacity Building with AI and Digital Technologies: E-library for Teachers, covering at least 6 pilot countries including Serbia, Thailand, Tunisia, Egypt, Ghana and Russia, supported by NetDragon.
- 6) ASPnet school project: Connecting Schools Online for Inter-cultural Teaching and Learning: UNESCO Associated Schools Network Pilot Project for Shanghai Cooperation Organization

- (SCO) Countries, covering 8 Member States of SCO including India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia, supported by Huashi Education Cloud (HEDU).
- 7) Nisai project: Transforming Teaching and Learning at Schools for Achieving SGD 4: Turning Theory into Practice with ICT, covering Russia as the targeted country, supported by Nisai Group.
 - 8) Chengdu project, Integrating Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovations to Strengthen Inclusion and Equity of Education in Africa, covering Mauritius and Rwanda, supported by Chinese National Commission for UNESCO and Chengdu Culture and Tourism Development Group.
 - 9) Weidong project for TVET Schools: Building Competence and Innovative Pedagogy for Future Schools with ICT, covering Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria and Rwanda in Africa, and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in Central Asia, and Russia, supported by Weidong Education Cloud.
 - 10) Health and wellbeing education project: UNESCO Regional Programme for HIV and Health Education in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, covering 9 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia including Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, supported by UNESCO global health education programme and UNAIDS UBRAF.
 - 11) HIV prevention and literacy promotion project: Technical Assistance for HIV and Other Infectious Diseases Prevention in Countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, covering 4 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia including Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, supported by UNAIDS regional technical cooperation programme.
 - 12) School Health and COVID-19 Response project, covering Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, supported by UNESCO Special Account.

3. IITE's collaboration network

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, IITE's collaboration with UNESCO HQs, Field Offices and other Category 1 Institutes, as well as with Member States, public and private partners has been further enhanced through collective actions or joint projects, thanks to support of GB members and UNESCO colleagues and partners. With special support of the host country and China National Commission for UNESCO, Russia and China still have the largest number of partners in IITE's collaboration network.

Collaboration with UNESCO HQs

IITE contributed to the organization of UNESCO International Forum on AI and Futures of Education (organized jointly with China) in December 2020, especially to the session on teaching and learning and the consultation on UNESCO Futures of Education Initiative.

Collaboration with the UNESCO CI Sector and the Intergovernmental Information for All Programme within the extrabudgetary project Media and Information Literacy in the World Affected by COVID-19: How to Teach Teachers.

IITE jointly with the Section of education for inclusion and gender equality coordinates development of the policy brief on Ensuring the Right to Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities in the Context of COVID-19: Risks and Potential of Distance Learning.

Upon the official invitation of the International Task Force for Teachers (TTF) Secretariat, IITE will continue coordinating the TTF thematic group on ICT and Distance Education in 2021.

IITE collaborated with the UNESCO Health Education Section for global initiatives such as organization of thematic webinars, research and resource development, translation and dissemination of UNESCO global resources across Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Collaboration with Field Offices and Institutes

IITE worked with the Almaty office and raised funding for HIV prevention activities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan for 2021 and launched new initiatives in this area. In addition, IITE jointly with Almaty office implemented a webinar for three countries of the Central Asia in the framework of the IITE - Weidong Cloud Education Group project focused on ICT in TVET education.

The UNESCO Nairobi office renders continuous support to the IITE-Chengdu project in Mauritius and Rwanda, helping to arrange negotiations with national stakeholders and gain access to meaningful insights. With the support of the UNESCO Nairobi Office, the Second Online Meeting of the project Task Team was organized in January 2021.

In December 2020 – April 2021, IITE jointly with the Regional Office of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean OREALC/UNESCO Santiago, has developed a survey for the teachers of Latin America and the Caribbean with the aim to identify and prioritize the challenges and support training needs for the following educational cycles after the pandemic.

In December 2020, to increase understanding of the range and reach of current disability-inclusive open and distance learning (ODL) solutions and the barriers to their development and in order to inform and facilitate upcoming national education recovery initiatives, IITE and IIEP jointly launched a research project on the assessment of inclusive ODL solutions used for students with disabilities in Rwanda and Mauritius during COVID-19.

IITE joined IBE's new initiative HELA (Hybrid Education, Learning and Assessment) as a collaborating partner.

IITE jointly with INRULED and BNU co-organized the 2021 International Seminar Technological Progress Promotes the Quality of Rural Education. The 2-day event was held online, bringing together experts and scholars from different countries to discuss the challenges in rural areas

under the pandemic and innovative ways to improve the quality of rural education through using ICT.

Collaboration with UN agencies

IITE and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) agreed on collaboration on the development of a joint online teacher training course on Information Security in Educational Cyberspace.

IITE collaborates closely with UNAIDS regional support programme for Eastern Europe and Central Asia to advance HIV/sexuality education, public awareness raising and reduction of HIV-related stigma and discrimination and gender-based violence across the region.

IITE works closely with UN agencies (UNFPA, WFP, UNICEF) in Armenia to support the Ministry of Education in revision of national curriculum for primary, secondary and high schools in health and wellbeing domain.

In Kyrgyzstan, IITE partners with UNAIDS country office for HIV prevention media campaigns and public awareness raising.

Collaboration with Member States

IITE ongoing projects cover a number of Member States. These projects have been supported by National Commissions for UNESCO and Ministries of Education in the targeted countries. As an example, IITE implements several projects in the neighboring countries such as Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In Africa, IITE implements projects in Mauritius and Rwanda. Since 2020 IITE, established close collaboration with Arabic countries and Pakistan.

Collaboration with public and private sectors

IITE's partners include UNESCO Institutes and centers, UNESCO/UNITWIN Chairs, universities and education organizations, social media, private foundations and leading IT companies. Collaboration modalities involve implementation of joint UNESCO projects, organization of joint events or development of publications.

IITE-BNU extrabudgetary project on Rethinking and Redesigning National Smart Education Strategy, the activities within which are supported by COL, ISTE and National Research University HSE as implementation partners.

IITE collaborates with Huawei within the extrabudgetary project Promoting ICT in Higher Education in the Middle East and Pakistan and TheNextMinds.com on training and publication

“Artificial Intelligence: Media and Information Literacy, Human Rights and Freedom of Expression”.

Multiple media partners in Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Russia support IITE public awareness raising and campaigns which aim to promote healthy and safe living free from HIV, stigma and discrimination.

Collaboration with the host country

IITE’s collaboration network with the host country has been further strengthened. Among IITE’s ongoing projects, many include the host country either as implementation partner or as pilot for the projects. Cooperation with IFAP, Nisai, HEDU, Beijing Normal University and NetDragon are examples of such projects. To implement these projects, IITE has received kind support from the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Ministry of Education as well as local governments and partners.

a. Collaboration with UNESCO Chairs

IITE initiated collaboration with the UNESCO Chair of Media and Information Literacy and Media Education of Citizens at Moscow Pedagogical State University, UNESCO Chair on Copyright and Other Intellectual Property Rights of the National Research University – Higher School of Economics.

b. Collaboration with ASPnet schools

Lectures on MIL within the teacher professional development courses organized by the ASPnet National Coordinator in the Russian Federation.

Within a joint IITE-HEDU extrabudgetary project on Connecting Schools Online for Inter-Cultural Teaching and Learning, UNESCO ASPnet schools from Russian Federation and other Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) countries are involved in teacher trainings and collaboration.

c. Collaboration with universities

Moscow City University, Higher School of Economics, Moscow State Pedagogical University, and MGIMO University support IITE in the organization of various events and project implementation.

d. Collaboration with NGOs, social media, private foundations and other institutions

Eurasian Association of Pedagogical Universities, Russian Research Centre for HIV prevention and treatment among women and children (RKIB), Russian Research Institute of Hygiene and Health Protection of Children and Adolescents, Centre for the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children of the Ministry of Education, Focus-Media Public Foundation for Social

Development and Health Promotion, Rybakov Foundation, Mail.ru Group, Odnoklassniki and VKontakte social media networks.

4. Communication and visibility

While improving its communication with Member States and partners, IITE has further enhanced its visibility through collective activities with UNESCO entities and external partners.

a. Enhancing visibility through collaboration with partners.

Global MOOC Conference: Learning Revolution and Higher Education Transformation, co-hosted by Tsinghua University and UNESCO IITE, had about 1 million registered participants and over 20,000 universities/colleges from China and the world.

EdHeros International Forum on education at the time of COVID-19, organized by Rybakov Foundation with IITE as partner has attracted over 33,600 viewers from 167 countries and 1,755 cities around the world.

5 livestreamed talk shows organized by UNESCO IITE and UNAIDS thanks to collaboration with Odnoklassiki (OK.RU) social media network, provided over 11 million people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) with correct and updated information about COVID-19, HIV and shared tips for coping with challenges of distant learning, home confinement, domestic violence and fact-checking to decrease anxiety.

b. IITE website

Since last Governing Board Meeting, IITE has further improved its visibility. Due to integration and upgrade with the support of UNESCO HQs, IITE has significantly enhanced its IT infrastructure. The Institute has also created a separate webpage COVID-19 response “Combat COVID-19: Keep learning. Together we are on the move!”, which is frequently visited by public. From November 1, 2020 to April 8, 2021 the IITE website was visited by 58,528 people. According to IP-addresses, about 24.58% visitors are from Russia, 9.62% from Philippines, 6.67% from India, 5.4% from Ukraine, 4.64% from China, 4.45% from the United States, 3.96% from Kazakhstan, 2.58% from Belarus, 1.82% from Kyrgyzstan and 1.77% from United Kingdom.

5. Financial situation

In 2021, IITE’s received regular allocations from UNESCO and the Russian Federation as well as extrabudgetary funds. In addition to this, IITE’s budget presented in this report includes the core funds brought forward from previous year and the funds authorized or decentralized to IITE by the UNESCO Headquarters and other UNESCO entities:

UNESCO contribution	\$358 800
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Core fund brought forward	\$148 783
	\$470 552
Russian contribution	(35,832,100 RUB)
Extrabudgetary funds	\$448 303
Authorized/decentralized funds	\$359 308
Total	\$1 785 746

6. Challenges and proposals

The major challenge of IITE is how to keep its core professional and administrative team in order to ensure sustainability of IITE’s activities and its contribution to UNESCO programming.

In addition to the Director’s Office with an Assistant to the Director, currently IITE has three Units for programme activities, and one Administrative Office. The core professional and management team consists of five staff members, including the Director and the Administrative Assistant (fixed-term contracts supported by UNESCO regular budget) and three Unit Chiefs holding posts supported by extrabudgetary projects. The Administrative Office of IITE, which oversees all management issues including human resources, financial issues, maintenance of the premise, security and beyond, is led by a Senior Administrative Assistant, whereas it should normally be headed by an Administrative Officer.

During the pandemic, IITE core team has demonstrated strong leadership in programme implementation and management. With increasing extrabudgetary projects and funds, IITE has become able to hire short-term consultants. However, retaining a stable and high-level professional and management team is still the top challenge for the Institute, without mentioning that senior professionals including international staff are definitely needed for IITE with its mandate at global level. Therefore, it is proposed that the posts of IITE’s core professional and management team should be guaranteed by UNESCO regular budget and regular contribution of the host country. otherwise, there is a risk of losing the current momentum and the results achieved thanks to the hard and efficient work of IITE core team and all staff.

7. Detailed information on programme activities

Priority 1. Smart education in post-pandemic world and future education

- a. *Consultations and events resulting in reports on the use of digital technologies in education and trends in ICT use in education within the Futures of Education Initiative:*
 - IITE contributed to the UNESCO Global Initiative “Futures of Education: Learning to Become” aimed to rethink education and shape the future. The Initiative catalyses a global debate on how knowledge, education and learning need to be reimaged in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty, and precarity. IITE is involved in activities of the agile

team of the Initiative and supported the organisation of the Round Table on the Futures of Education in China (December 2020) and revision of the final report of the Consultations (March 2021).

b. Rethinking and redesigning national smart education strategies during and after pandemic:

- IITE and BNU concluded a project cooperation agreement and launched an extrabudgetary project on Rethinking and Redesigning National Smart Education Strategy, aimed to review the educational ecosystems and policies on ICT in education in China, Russia, US, Egypt and UK (January 2021). Jointly with main partners of the project (COL, ISTE, and HSE) IITE is working on the smart strategy in education.
- At the first stage of the extrabudgetary project on Promoting ICT Capacity Building and Open Education in the Era of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technologies, implemented jointly with Shanghai Open University (SOU), IITE in collaboration with SOU conducted an international survey among schools and collected innovative practices on digital transformations related to the use of AI and other advanced ICT in education. Within the project, the findings of the survey are being used for the development of a teacher training programme and public lectures, designing the digital citizenship education literacy-related framework, evaluation system and resources.

c. Research and promotion of innovative digital pedagogical approaches to support digital transformation of education:

- IITE initiated a new series of analytical publications “Digital Transformation of Education”: “AI in Education: Change at the Speed of Learning” (in English and Russian) and “Artificial Intelligence: Media and Information Literacy, Human Rights and Freedom of Expression” (in English).
- In 2020, IITE launched the extrabudgetary project “Promoting ICT in Higher Education in the Middle East and Pakistan” to strengthen ICT potential and to enhance the quality of learning and expand access to relevant career opportunities in Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (with the support of Huawei). The project will contribute to the achievement of SDG 4 and will promote the ICT talent ecosystem to provide youth and adults, in particular in the field of 5G/AI/Cloud technologies, to ensure their employment in the digital world. The findings of the project will be summarised in the ICT Higher Education Insight Report.
- To enhance local partnerships and networking, IITE signed the Memorandum of Understanding with Moscow City University which aims to support cooperation in the field of digital didactics and online technologies in education and human development.

d. Supporting countries in developing open education/OER/MOOCs initiatives and exploring/ disseminating best practices through research and experience sharing events:

- Based on UNESCO ICT CFT, IITE developed the online course for the programme of additional professional education “Digital tools and services in the professional activity of a teacher” in the Russian language. The course is aimed at building the capacity of teachers in the field of innovative technologies and improving the quality of teaching in accordance with the relevant standards of the Russian Federation. Since its launch in September 2020, almost 8,000 students registered for the course, almost half of them were awarded certificates.
- IITE participated in the Global Forum “ICT Education, Education via ICT” hosted by Huawei within the framework of the Global Final of the Huawei ICT Competition 2019–2020, which aimed to explore the future of ICT education through the exchange of ideas and successful practices of ICT education, and discussion of ICT talent development during and after the pandemic. The event brought together the representatives of UNESCO and academic institutions from different countries of the world.
- In 2020, IITE launched the extrabudgetary project “Promoting ICT Capacity Building and Open Education in the Era of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technologies” (with the support of Shanghai Open University). The project will contribute to strengthening the quality in education and lifelong learning, including digital citizenship education. The outcomes of the project will be summarised in a report based on case studies of a selected group of open universities worldwide and a collection of innovative practices on digital transformations related to the use of advanced ICT in education, including AI, and analytical review development.

e. Promoting the development of soft skills through media and information literacy education:

- Within the extrabudgetary project “Media and Information Literacy in the World Affected by COVID-19: How to Teach Teachers” implemented in partnership with UNESCO Information for All Programme, IITE organised a series of online discussions, webinars and round tables for teacher training institutions in 9 CIS countries in order to identify common challenges for the region, exchange best practices and share knowledge. An online conference on integration of MIL into teacher professional development was held (November 2020); based on the outcomes of the conference best practices and pedagogical models for teacher professional training on MIL in CIS countries were collected.
- IITE is developing the mobile e-learning resource on MIL for teachers and educators in the Russian language. The resource is focused on the competencies and skills required in the AI-powered digital world.

f. EMIS and data:

- Within the framework of the Education 2030 Agenda, UNESCO commits to supporting Member States in strengthening and implementation of EMIS. Jointly with UNESCO field offices, regional bureaus, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, Section of Education Policy, UIS, IIEP, IITE contributed to the development of the UNESCO strategy for EMIS. The Institute participated in the working group on EMIS in Emergencies project

initiated by UNESCO HQ to support six Member States.

Priority 2. Human-centered e-learning for inclusion, health and wellbeing

g. Supporting human-centred approaches in e-learning by dissemination of good practice, promoting open dialogues and trainings

- IITE in collaboration with MGIMO University, International Academy of Preschool Education, Rybakov Foundation and Preschool Education Quality Development Association contributed to the development of early childhood education and co-organized 2 conferences on the innovative practices for ECCE and the present educational transformation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, more than 37,000 specialists from 70 countries took part in these events.

h. Developing and accumulating free e-learning open tools, online courses and other resources as E-library to support teaching and capacity building for teachers

- Within a joint extrabudgetary project on Transforming Teaching and Learning at Schools for Achieving SDG 4: Turning Theory into Practice with ICT, IITE and Nisai Group (UK) launched a 10-week SDG course, developed to teach school students how to design a sustainable future city (November 2020).
- In December 2020, IITE updated the Russian version of the online tool for schools - SELFIE (Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Educational Technologies), developed and piloted in Russia in collaboration with European Commission in previous years. The updated Russian version of the tool helps UNESCO ASPnet and other schools in Russian-speaking countries better assess their ICT competency and improve digital capabilities.
- In December 2020, IITE and NetDragon concluded a cooperation agreement on a joint project on teacher capacity building with AI and digital technologies, aimed to support the teacher capacity building in the era of smart learning by the development of E-library for several regions of the world with six target countries (Serbia, Thailand, Tunisia, Egypt, Ghana and Russia). The project contributes to achieving SDG 4 by providing around 100,000 educators at global level with open educational resources, free public tools, and trainings, thereby empowering teachers to deliver quality and equitable education.

i. Establishing global and regional partnerships in selected countries for networking and helping them to localize human-centred e-learning strategies for national teacher capacity building

- As part of the extrabudgetary project on Connecting Schools Online for Inter-cultural Teaching and Learning: IITE – UNESCO Associated Schools Network Pilot Project for Shanghai Cooperation Organization Countries (supported by HEDU), IITE contributed to strengthening the collaboration between the ASPnet schools in SCO countries. The International Online Forum CONNECT organized by IITE and HEDU in December 2020,

gathered in total 30 teachers from 13 ASPnet schools from 7 of the 8 SCO countries, who also participated in the activities, promoting best digital tools and teaching strategies for sustainable learning environment.

- As part of the extrabudgetary project on Building the Future Schools through ICT Competency Development (supported by Weidong Cloud Education Group), IITE contributed to the promotion of digital technologies in teaching/learning and strengthening capacities of national educational systems in Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Russia. IITE completed the in-depth study of the status of ICT in TVET in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, with due regard of the COVID-19 impact on education. In Mauritius and Nigeria, IITE investigated and assessed the readiness of TVET institutions for impactful ICT-based education.
- In December 2020–April 2021, IITE jointly with the UNESCO Santiago Office, has developed a survey for teachers in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the aim to identify and prioritize the challenges and support training needs for the following educational cycles after the pandemic. The survey findings will provide countries with a better guidance for developing appropriate and timely teacher support and training programs. The survey was launched in English, Spanish and Portuguese in April 2021.

j. Needs assessment and development of recommendations for the selected countries in Africa for open and distance learning solutions of the most vulnerable groups of students

- Within the project on Integrating Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovations to Strengthen Inclusion and Equity of Education in Africa, implemented jointly with Chengdu Fund in Mauritius and Rwanda, IITE assessed and analysed the technical and academic readiness of schools in terms of ICT-based teaching and learning for young people, especially the vulnerable, as well as identified the negative impacts, challenges and opportunities that learners and institutions faced amidst COVID-19. IITE developed in-depth reports on the progress, challenges, capacities towards harnessing digital innovations for inclusion and relevant recommendations for students, educators and policy makers.
- To increase understanding of the range and reach of current disability-inclusive ODL solutions and facilitate upcoming national education recovery initiatives, IITE and IIEP jointly launched a new project on the assessment of Inclusive open and distance learning (ODL) solutions used for students with disabilities in Rwanda and Mauritius during COVID-19.

k. Ideating, designing and promoting digital resources to empower young people to live healthy life and develop healthy relationships

- To mark the World AIDS Day-2020, IITE together with UNAIDS, VKontakte social media network supported the initiative of Social and Cultural Initiatives Fund and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation and organized a six-hour marathon of online lectures on HIV from the point of view of various fields of knowledge, from medicine to cultural studies. The marathon was organized as part of the annual All-Russian campaign # STOPVICHSPID and reached out to about 1 million people.

- IITE has been at the forefront of innovative multimedia approaches to HIV and sexuality education in EECA where about 1 million young people improved their knowledge on HIV/SRH issues through various digital platforms, including a new AI-powered chatbot ELI, Dvor, Teenslive and Teens publics in Instagram and Facebook. In 2021, these publics will be revamped and modernized by youth editorial boards.
- Within 6 months since being launched, the chatbot Eli has responded to over 500,000 queries. Its knowledge base and coding architecture have informed the developed of similar AI-powered chatbots in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan which will be launched in summer 2021.
- Over 2 million young people in Kyrgyzstan, Belarus and Russia were reached by UNESCO-supported media campaigns to decrease stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV.
- With UNESCO support, the regional youth network “Teenergizer” rolled out a new online sexuality education programme comprising 5 sessions on core topics such as HIV, STI, Contraception, Violence and Relationships. About 80 peer educators facilitated training of over 700 young people.
- UNESCO and UNAIDS support the transformation of face-to-face youth empowerment programme Journey4Life into blended and online mode to implement it during episodic lockdowns and reach vulnerable and marginalized youth from remote areas in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

l. Supporting teachers for delivering health and wellbeing education and sustaining safe, inclusive and enabling learning environment

- IITE contributed to the development of UNESCO’s global report “The Journey towards Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A Global Review 2020” which aims to help educators and decision makers in education sector better navigate the approaches to the delivery of CSE which plays a vital role in promoting the health and wellbeing of adolescents. IITE also collaborates with UNESCO Health Education Section to develop a communication strategy to build support for comprehensive sexuality education, anticipate and manage opposition to it, and mitigating backlash.
- IITE translated into Russian the UNESCO’s global tool for assessing school-based health education programmes (SERAT, version 3.0) to strengthen the components on sexuality education. It is now available at UNESCO HIV and health education clearinghouse.
- IITE joined the global advisory group and contributed to the development of Global Standards for Health Promoting Schools which will serve as a common framework for the two sectors in both health and education based on a common understanding, shared values and tools to implement health promoting policies and scaling practices in schools.
- IITE joined the WHO-led Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Schooling during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The TAG regularly reviews emerging evidence and develops recommendations to Member States related to schooling in times of COVID-19, including school reopening, safety measures and vaccination of school personnel and learners.
- In November 2020, together with WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, IAAH, Ministries of Education and Health of the Republic of Moldova and Neovita youth friendly resource centre, IITE co-organized a regional conference on protection of adolescent health and development in

times of COVID-19. The conference allowed over 500 participants from European and Central Asian countries learn from each other's experience how to better support adolescents and ensure their access to essential services, education and development.

- In Armenia, IITE together with UNFPA, WFP and UNICEF supports the development of a new curriculum for Healthy Lifestyle education in secondary school.
- In Kyrgyzstan, IITE upon the request of the Ministry of Education produces a series of 50 video lessons to ensure uninterrupted delivery of health education in secondary school and its quality. The video lessons are uploaded at the national educational portal.
- In Russian Federation, IITE supported the production of the third revised edition of a guide for teacher on violence prevention and response in schools.
- In April 2021, IITE in partnership with several leading national teacher training institutes and adolescent counselling and support centre Perekrestok co-organized the 14th international conference “Adolescents at Home” to share research data and best practice on providing psycho-social support to adolescents during and after COVID-19 caused lockdown and disruption of education. IITE organized two sessions with participation of experts from EECA region who shared ICT-powered awareness raising, training and counselling tools for adolescents.

m. Addressing emerging critical issues in education, health and wellbeing in the era of COVID-19 and beyond

- Over 1,5 million people in EECA received accurate information and tips about safety, living and studying during pandemic through 64 information cards developed by IITE and UNAIDS. Translated into Thai, Lao, English, Spanish and French, the cards informed the development of similar resources in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- 5 livestreamed talk shows organized by IITE and UNAIDS (April-July 2020) reached over 11 million people in EECA with correct information about COVID-19 and tips for coping with distance learning, home confinement, and factchecking to decrease anxiety.
- To make reliable information about the coronavirus and proper preventive measures more accessible for young people, UNESCO IITE together with popular science Youtube channel “Nowchpok” released two animated videos which raised awareness of over half a million people in the EECA.

ABBREVIATIONS:

AI – Artificial Intelligence

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ASPnet schools – UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network

BNU – Beijing Normal University

COL – Commonwealth of Learning

CSE – Comprehensive Sexuality Education

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HSE – Higher School of Economics

IAAH – The International Association of Adolescent Health

ICT – Information and Communication Technologies

IICBA – International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

IIEP – International Institute for Education Planning

IITE – Institute for Information Technologies in Education

INRULED – International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education

ISTE – International Society for Technology in Education

ITU – International Telecommunication Union

ODL – Open and Distance Learning

SCO – Shanghai Cooperation Organization

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

SOU – Shanghai Open University

TVET – Technical and Vocational Education Training

UIL – UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning

UNAIDS – Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF – United Nations Childrens’ Fund

WFP – World Food Programme

WHO – World Health Organization