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Director’s Report on IITE activities

This report covers IITE’s management and programme activities following the 24th Session of the IITE Governing Board (GB), held in August 2024 in Beijing. Guided by the decisions adopted at that Session and aligned with IITE’s Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2025), the Institute has focused over the past year on advancing the ethical, inclusive, and safe use of AI in education and on strengthening its global partnership network, which includes international and regional organizations, educational institutions, charitable foundations, and technology partners.

Despite ongoing challenges, IITE has successfully maintained the stability of its core team. Thanks to the guidance and support of the Governing Board, the strong leadership of UNESCO Assistant Director-General (ADG) for Education, and the continued support of the Host Country, IITE remains proactive in supporting Member States, particularly in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, in harnessing digital technologies and AI to transform teaching, learning, and wellbeing education.

Priority areas such as Africa, gender equality and inclusion in education, and empowering youth have been further strengthened through global and regional conferences, learning platforms and resources, webinars and workshops, as well as research and analysis of best practices, in collaboration with partners from UNESCO and from across the public and private sectors externally.

Part 1. Staff and Budget

- **Staff Structure and Capacity Development**

In 2025 IITE’s structure remains unchanged, with two offices and three programme units: the Director’s Office, Administrative Office, Unit of Digital Pedagogy and Learning Materials, Unit of Teacher Professional Development and Networking, and Unit of ICT in Health Education. The total number of IITE staff is 20, employed under various types of contracts, including UNESCO Fixed-

Term, Project Appointment, Service Contract, Consultant Contract, and local contract funded by the Host Country's contribution. In 2025, IITE managed to maintain a highly qualified and stable team across both programme and administrative functions.

In line with the Governing Board's decision and its guidance on strengthening team capacity building, several concrete actions have been implemented. Online professional training courses provided by UNESCO have been made a mandatory component of the annual objectives for all staff members. A Staff meeting was held to facilitate the exchange of information and experiences related to management and programme activities across different Units and Offices. Unit Chiefs and the Head of the Administrative Office have provided each team member with clear goals and objectives, fostering active engagement, creativity, and a strong spirit of teamwork. The professional capacity of the IITE team has been significantly enhanced through proactive involvement in AI in education research, partnership building, and active participation in various conferences and workshops. Special attention and opportunities were given to junior staff members to take part in both online and onsite events, either as participants or as designated focal points responsible for event organization.

- **Budget Overview**

IITE's annual income consists of:

1. the UNESCO regular budget
2. the Russian annual contribution
3. UNESCO decentralized funds, primarily for the project on health and well-being education, and
4. the extrabudgetary funds from joint projects supported by public and private donors.

In 2024, IITE received its regular UNESCO budget allocation and the Russian annual contribution—USD 414, 000 and RUB 35, 854, 600 (USD 391, 860), respectively. In addition to savings carried over from 2023 (USD 86, 473), IITE also received an additional USD 836, 880 from UNESCO HQs for health and well-being education, and USD 675, 208 from IITE donors in 2024.

In the first 7 months of 2025, IITE received USD 240, 858 of extrabudgetary funds and USD 986, 645 from decentralized funds. UNESCO regular contribution is USD 414, 000 and the Russian Federation provided RUB 36, 856, 200 (USD 423, 163). In addition, IITE's budget 2025 includes USD 139, 699 brought forward from the previous year and allotted revenue of interest of \$40, 000.

Detailed information can be found in the separate Report on the Financial Situation. We deeply appreciate the continued support of the Host Country and UNESCO HQs for IITE's mission and operations.

Part 2. Programme Priorities and Focus Areas

- **Contribution to UNESCO Major Programme I: Education**

In line with its Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2025), IITE aims to serve Member States and contribute to UNESCO's strategies and priorities by promoting a human-centered and inclusive digital transformation of education.

As outlined in UNESCO's approved Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (document 41 C/5), adopted at the 41st session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2023, IITE contributes to the implementation of Major Programme I: Education, with a particular focus on the following outputs:

Output ED8: Technologies and digital innovations leveraged to ensure more inclusive, effective, and relevant learning.

Output ED9: Education and learning reimagined through interdisciplinary research, foresight, and public policy debate.

In addition, as an integral part of the UNESCO team for health education coordinated by the Education Sector, IITE also contributes to:

Output ED3: Learners are empowered through transformative education to lead healthy lives, promote sustainable development, and engage with the world as creative and responsible global citizens.

To fulfill its mandate, IITE continued in 2025 to prioritize the ethical, inclusive, and safe use of AI in education across all its programmes. These include policy advocacy, research and analysis of best practices, building AI competencies among teachers and students, and promoting socio-emotional learning and healthy lifestyles.

- **Priority Africa**

In alignment with UNESCO's Priority Africa, IITE strengthened its collaboration with UNESCO PAX and Field Offices to support the Africa-Asia Youth Coding Initiative. This initiative included online training and an annual study tour to China for teachers and students from Kenya, Congo, Namibia, and Côte d'Ivoire. Under the Chengdu Project, IITE organized teacher training activities for Rwanda and Mauritius. In collaboration with UNESCO HQs, IITE also assisted Mauritius in advancing the second phase of its national Education Management Information System (EMIS), by organizing webinars and offering technical consultations. The IITE E-library for Teachers expanded to include Egypt and Mauritius as partner countries in Africa. In addition, IITE launched a new project in partnership with the EdTech company JP. ik in Portugal to advance inclusive and sustainable STEM education in Kenya through digital innovation and AI integration, with a particular focus on strengthening teacher capacity in TVET.

- **Gender Equality**

Gender equality remained a cross-cutting priority throughout IITE's work, including in teacher training, AI competency development, and health and wellbeing education. Notably, IITE joined UNESCO-ICHEI as a collaboration partner on the initiative "Women Leading Change in Africa: Future Higher Education Professionals and Leadership in the Intelligence Era." The project aims to train 3,000 university educators from Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and Zambia over two years, primarily through webinars and online workshops. In 2025, IITE also published the "Guide for Educators to Support Gender-Transformative Integration of ICT and AI into Secondary and TVET Classrooms in the Global South," supported by partner HEDU and the E-library for Teachers project. In addition, five micro-credential online courses on Gender Equality in Use of AI and ICT in Education are under development in partnership with NetDragon.

- **Inclusion**

In 2025, IITE further strengthened its commitment to inclusive education by publishing two guidance reports, one of them under the title "Digital Technologies for Inclusive Education: Recommendations for Promoting an ICT-Based Learning Environment for Resource Centers and Schools." At the invitation of Rehabilitation International (RI), IITE became a collaboration partner in the global initiative "A Global Symbol" for inclusive education and contributed to the development of the accompanying Handbook. In partnership with Central China Normal University (CCNU), IITE also launched a new project to explore the use of AI and ICT in supporting education for learners with autism, ADHD, and learning disabilities, aiming to promote early intervention and inclusive teaching practices. Beyond disability inclusion, IITE also promoted multilingualism (in collaboration with UNESCO HQ and the Education University of Hong Kong) and supported lifelong learning for older adults (in partnership with Shanghai Open University).

- **Empowering Youth**

Empowering youth with digital skills, AI competencies, and a healthy lifestyle remained another key programme area for IITE. In the projects of health education, IITE worked closely with educational institutions, NGOs, social media platforms, and private charitable foundations to launch joint initiatives. We joined Beijing Normal University (BNU) as a co-organizer in the Global Competition on Design for Future Education, which engaged students and teachers from around the world. Additionally, IITE collaborated with Huawei's Regional Office for the Middle East and Central Asia to support the Huawei ICT Regional Competition for university students from 19 countries in the region. In 2024 IITE joined the International Centre for UNESCO ASPnet (ICUA) for organizing the Youth Innovation: Collaborating to Improve and Protect Our Planet (CIPP) campaign dedicated to Education for Sustainable Development.

Part 3. Main Programme Actions

- **Global Conference and Regional Forums**

Over the past year, IITE has significantly strengthened its activities at both global and regional levels by organizing and participating in major conferences and forums, primarily in

collaboration with its global partners. IITE GB members have played a crucial role in these events, by delivering keynote presentations and engaging partners from around the world.

1. To promote global dialogue and experience sharing on critical issues related to AI in education transformation, IITE, together with its partners, co-organized several annual flagship events: the Global Smart Education Conference (held in Beijing with Beijing Normal University), the Global MOOC and Online Education Conference (2024 in London and 2025 in planning with the Global MOOC and Online Education Alliance), the Digital Transformation and Lifelong Learning International Conference (2024 and 2025 in Shanghai with Shanghai Open University), and the Global Creativity in Education Summit (2024 and 2025 in Paris with the Global Institute of Creative Thinking GloCT). These events engaged Member States, education policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and technology partners in discussions on issues such as the ethics of AI in education and human-AI collaboration in teaching and learning. They also resulted in the release of key research reports, including *Global Understanding of Smart Education in the Context of Digital Transformation (2024)* and *Infinite Possibilities: Digital Development Report of Global Higher Education (2024)*.
2. IITE actively contributed to global events organized by UNESCO as well as the United Nations. Examples include the 2025 UNESCO Digital Learning Week, where IITE participated through its team, GB members, and collaboration partners in both plenary and parallel sessions. In 2024, IITE organized a plenary roundtable on the topic “Private Teacher Tutoring vs. AI Tutoring: New Opportunities and Challenges” as part of the “Policy Forum on Private Supplementary Tutoring,” organized by the UNESCO Education Sector at Headquarters in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Education and the International Centre for UNESCO ASPnet (UNESCO-ICUA). IITE also contributed to the Silver Jubilee of International Mother Language Day, a global event held at UNESCO HQs, and to the international symposium “Research and Evidence on Comprehensive Health Education” organized by the UNESCO Education Sector in Paris. In 2025, representatives of IITE GB and the IITE team participated in the High-level Expert Group Meeting on the new Online University in STEM Education for LDCs organized by UN-OHRLLS, contributing IITE’s perspective and proposals to the high-level consultation.
3. IITE played an active role in several regional events in the Middle East and Central Asia, as a co-organizer or key contributor, through its GB members and team, particularly within programmes on healthy lifestyle and well-being education and the IITE-Huawei project. These conferences and forums were held in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Belarus, Uzbekistan, and Riyadh (Saudi Arabia). In 2025, IITE supported the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan as a collaboration partner in organizing the international conference on AI in Education, aimed at enhancing the implementation of Turkmenistan’s national digital education system and promoting experience sharing across Central Asia and beyond.

4. IITE actively contributed to regional and international conferences hosted in the Russian Federation, either as a co-organizer or through keynote presentations. These conferences and forums covered a wide range of topics related to AI in education, including Media and Information Literacy (MIL), digital and AI competencies for teachers, AI-driven pedagogy and education system transformation, as well as fostering healthy lifestyles and relationships. For example, IITE, through its GB members and team, continues to play an active role in the annual International Conference “Tangible and Intangible Impact of Information and Communication in the Digital Age.” In 2025, IITE organized the strategic planning conference “Empowering through Education for Health and Well-Being in a Learning Environment” in Moscow, in collaboration with Moscow City University and the Charitable Foundation Investment in the Future.

- **Research Reports and Practices Analysis**

The past year has been highly productive for IITE in terms of research and publications. Since the last GB meeting, IITE has launched 19 publications, including a wide range of analytical reports, policy briefs, and practical guidelines designed to support Member States in harnessing digital technologies and AI to transform education policy, teaching, learning, and health education.

1. Teacher’s manuals for healthy lifestyle classes for grades 5-11 in Armenian schools.
2. Teacher’s manuals for social and emotional skills development for grades 6-11 in Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.
3. Policy Brief “How the Educational Environment and Curricula Support Learners’ Personality Development, Health, and Well-being”
4. Policy Brief “The Teacher’s Personality as a Key Factor in Learners’ Personality Development, Health, and Well-being”
5. Report: “Adolescent and Youth Health in Kazakhstan: Behaviors, Knowledge Levels, and Access to Information and Services” (prepared jointly with UNESCO Almaty and UNFPA office in Kazakhstan)
6. Policy Brief “Integrating AI in Education: Guidance for Teacher AI Competency Framework”
7. Analytical Report “Community-Based Learning in Higher Education”
8. Policy Brief “Harnessing Digital Technologies to Facilitate Community-Based Learning”
9. Report “Higher Education Assessment in the Era of AI and Digital Technologies”
10. Report: “Open Data in Higher Education”.
11. Operational Guidelines “Constructing UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Cities” (Russian version).
12. Digital Technologies for Inclusive Education: Recommendations for Promoting an ICT-Based Learning Environment for Resource Centers and Schools
13. Innovative Technologies for Inclusive Education: A Review of Best Practices from Global Resource Centers
14. Collection of Advanced Cases of Digital Inclusion and e-learning for the older adults

15. Advanced Digital Education for the Older Population: Comparative Analysis and Strategic Recommendations
16. Guide for Educators to Support Gender Equitable Integration of ICT and AI into Secondary and TVET Classrooms in the Global South
17. Global Understanding of Smart Education in the Context of Digital Transformation
18. Analytical Report “State of the Use of ICT and AI Tools in Education in SCO Countries”
19. AI Policy and Practices Report: Analysis of Global Insight on AI Literacies Development and the Impact on Academic Culture.

- **Learning Platforms and Digital Resources**

In 2024-2025, IITE made new progress in developing and expanding inclusive online learning platforms in partnership with leading institutions and technology partners:

1. **E-library for Teachers**, developed jointly by IITE and NetDragon, continues to serve as a multilingual online platform offering professional development resources in English, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese. It supports teachers across Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. An integral part of the platform, the E-Teach Forum, serves as a networking and experience exchange tool for teachers from various regions and constitutes an important part of the annual “Teaching in the 21st Century” international competition. During the reporting period, 10 online courses in the Serbian language were accumulated and are currently being translated into English; 10 Russian-language online courses were added to the platform in December 2024; two courses - “ICT in Greening TVET” and “Introduction to Inclusive Education with ICT” were translated into Russian and uploaded to the platform. In parallel, new Memoranda of Understanding and collaboration agreements were signed or are in preparation with Serbia, Mauritius, and Egypt, further expanding the platform’s global reach.
2. **The International Institute of Online Education (IIOE)**, an initiative of UNESCO-ICHEI, operates in all six UN official languages. In 2025, IITE joined the IIOE initiative, focusing on developing the Russian-language version of the platform to support educators in Central Asia and other Russian-speaking regions. Four Russian-language micro-learning courses (with UNESCO-ICHEI) were developed: “Generative Artificial Intelligence as a Teaching Tool in Higher Education”, “Prompt Engineering for Higher Education Teachers”, “Generative AI and Learning Progress Assessments”, and “How to Teach Students to Use Generative AI for Learning”. Two English-language online courses were developed jointly with SOU: “Integrating AI assistants and chatbots in higher education” and “AI and creative thinking development in higher education”.
3. **EduHub for Health Education**, an international online learning platform developed with the support of IITE provides free self-study and expert-facilitated courses and other multiple training opportunities in Russian language to educators, school psychologists, administrators as well as to parents across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In 2024-2025, the courses have been updated to deliver the most current and relevant information

through a highly engaging and interactive format that fosters reflection, knowledge acquisition, and skill development. The courses, webinars, and workshops enhance participants' ability to deliver comprehensive health education and socio-emotional learning in secondary and high schools, prevent and effectively respond to violence, bullying, and cyberbullying, and empower parents to build positive relationships with their children while supporting them through the transition to adulthood.

4. **More Online courses** were developed and disseminated through the website of IITE and its partners as well as social media, within joint projects such as IITE-SOU project, IITE-Chengdu project, IITE-HEDU project, and project on health education.

- **Webinars and Workshops for Capacity Building**

In 2024-2025, IITE continued to advance professional development for educators and education policymakers through its flagship Webinar Series Harnessing Technologies to Transform Education, as well as online and onsite workshops. Over the past year, webinars were organized by IITE independently or in collaboration with partners. These sessions focused primarily on AI in teaching and learning, healthy lifestyles, and were closely aligned with IITE's online courses, published research reports and practical guidance.

Individual Webinars:

1. "Academic Writing and Artificial Intelligence Technologies: Effects and Risks" (December 2024, 53 participants),
2. "Community-Based Learning in Universities: Current State and Trends in the Use of Digital Technologies" (April 2025, 169 participants),
3. "Generative AI in Education" (jointly with UNESCO-ICHEI) (April 2025, 1082 participants),
4. "How to Motivate Parents to Engage in Effective Dialogue with Their Teenage Children" (August 2024, 181 participants),
5. "Helping Teenagers Embrace Themselves and Respect Differences in Others — Insights from Educators and Parents" (November 2024, 817 participants),
6. "The Role of Teachers in Creating a Supportive and Inclusive School Environment" (October 2024, 836 participants),
7. "Positive Masculinity and Gender-Based Violence Prevention: Global Context and Findings from Armenia" (January 2025, 89 participants),
8. "Innovating for a Sustainable Future: The Role of ICT and AI in Greening TVET" (November 2024, 116 participants).

Webinar/Workshop Series:

9. A series of 48 online training workshops and webinars were held in autumn 2024 and spring/summer 2025, reaching over 1, 000 educators from the EECA region. These sessions aimed to build their capacity to deliver effective health education in secondary schools.

10. A series of onsite workshops on health education conducted in Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, with a focus on socio-emotional learning, prevention of school violence, and health education in school settings.
11. In close collaboration with national ministries of education, education academies, national education development centers, and universities, IITE organized a series of onsite training activities to strengthen the capacity of educators in Armenia, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan to deliver health education. These included: the International Training Seminar “Creating an Educational Environment for Personality Development and Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle” (September 2024, Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan); the National Teacher Training Seminar “Building Life Skills for Safety and Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle Among Learners” (November 2024, Minsk, Belarus); and a Training Workshop for Mentor-Trainers on Healthy Lifestyles (August 2024, Yerevan, Armenia).
12. A webinar series for high-school teachers and professors teaching first and second year at universities from CIS countries took place in April 2025. The three webinars in the Russian language dedicated to developing initiative, critical thinking in using AI, digital etiquette, academic literacy gathered over 160 participating teachers and other educators from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Russia, Belarus, Moldova and Kyrgyzstan.
13. In 2025, UNESCO IITE, in partnership with ED Sector at HQs organized three webinars to support the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to launch the national EMIS 2.0 of Mauritius. The webinars were aimed to share experiences and lessons learned from OpenEMIS deployments in UNESCO Member States such as the Maldives and South Africa with representatives of the Ministry and 4 different education Zones in Mauritius.
14. From December 2024 to July 2025, five forums were conducted jointly with the Education University of Hong Kong and its UNESCO Chair. These forums attracted over 1, 500 participants from 65 countries and regions, highlighting the global interest and commitment to advancing education equity, quality and efficiency through innovative technologies.

Onsite training. Despite budgetary constraints, IITE remained active in supporting in-person capacity building activities. We organized or supported a number of onsite workshops and training sessions, including in Russia, Central Asia and Africa. Examples are: Interregional Scientific and Practical Seminar “Promoting Reading and Media and Information Literacy in Russia: Goals, Objectives, Achievements, Problems and Prospects” in Russia; Onsite workshops for teachers on disability inclusion organized by IITE in Rwanda and Mauritius, workshops on health and wellbeing education organized by IITE in countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

- **Competitions, Awards, and study tours**

In 2024-2025, IITE actively co-organized a number of international competitions and awards to promote innovation, creativity, and professional excellence in education. These initiatives

provided platforms for educators and students to showcase their talents, share best practices, and explore future-oriented approaches to teaching and learning. Key activities included:

1. The 8th Global Competition on Design for the Future Education in 2025, organized by Beijing Normal University (BNU) and IITE, 4 tracks at regional and global level, attracted over 200 teams of 1000 students from 35 countries.
2. Huawei ICT Competition Regional Final 2024-2025 for the Middle East and Central Asia, organized by Huawei regional office in collaboration with IITE covers the two regions of 19 countries.
3. The International Creativity in Schools Awards 2024 and 2025, organized by the Global Institute of Creativity Thinking (GloCT) and IITE in Paris.
4. The Teaching in the 21st Century Teacher Competition 3. 0, organized by IITE and NetDragon, attracted over 100 applications in 2025.
5. 2024 Youth Innovation: Collaborating to Improve and Protect Our Planet (CIPP) campaign, organized by International Centre for UNESCO ASPnet (ICUA) and IITE, attracted 30, 000 participants globally.

In addition, IITE organized or supported international study tours to foster cross-cultural exchange and practical learning experiences. These included the UNESCO Africa-Asia Youth Coding Initiative Study Tour to China 2024 and 2025, and the IITE-NetDragon Study Tour to Beijing for winners of the Teaching in the 21st Century competition 3. 0.

- **IITE Ongoing Projects and New Project Agreements**

1. Beijing Normal University (BNU) project (2024-2025): Utilizing Intelligent Technology to Transform Teaching and Learning Toward Smart Education. This is the second Project Agreement with BNU.
2. Shanghai Open University (SOU) project (2021-2026): Promoting ICT Capacity Building and Open Education in the Era of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technologies. The Project agreement (2021-2023) was extended to 2026 for another 3-year period with additional financial contribution.
3. UNESCO International Centre for Higher Education Innovation (ICHEI) project (2021-2025): Digital Transformation of Higher Education in Central Asia. The Project Agreement (2021-2023) was extended to 2025 with additional financial contribution. Target countries include Central Asia and other Russian speaking countries.
4. Huawei project (2022-2026): AI-Driven digital transformation in Higher Education and TVET in Central Asia and Middle East. The Project Agreement (2022-2023) was extended till 2026 with additional financial contribution. The target region now covers both Middle East and Central Asia. The collaboration partner is Huawei Regional Office for Middle East and Central Asia.

5. NetDragon project (2021-2025): Teacher Capacity Building with AI and Digital Technologies: E-library for Teachers. The Project Agreement was extended in 2023 to 2025 with additional financial contribution. The target countries encompass Africa, Europe, and Asia. The E-Library is available in English, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese languages.
6. Tsinghua Project (2023-2025): Innovation Leading Digital Transformation of Higher Education for Better Quality and Equality. On-going Project supporting annual conference and activities of Global MOOC and Online Education Alliance (GMA).
7. UNESCO CODEMAO Project (2021-2029): Africa-Asia Youth Coding Initiative. On-going project coordinated by UNESCO PAX. IITE is responsible for technical support of this project, working with the partner CODEMAO, UNESCO PAX and 4 UNESCO Field Offices.
8. Chengdu project (2020-2025): Integrating Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovations to Strengthen Inclusion and Equity of Education in Africa. Extended to 2025. Target countries cover Mauritius and Rwanda. This is a project supported by the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO and Chengdu Culture and Tourism Development Group.
9. Weidong Cloud project (2018-2025) with non-cost extension: Building Future Schools with ICT Competence and Innovative Pedagogy. The target countries are from Central Asia and Africa.
10. Projects implemented by the Unit of ICT in Health Education in 2024-2025. Total budget (including allocations provided after the GB meeting in 2024): \$885, 654. 00 These projects received funding from the UNESCO Special Account for Health Education and for the UNAIDS UBRAF (Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework) funding mechanism to support activities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Additionally, UNESCO IITE works closely with UNESCO Office in Almaty to support the implementation of projects supported by UNAIDS UBRAF earmarked for Kazakhstan

New Projects signed after GB meeting in 2024.

1. Project with Global Institute of Creative Thinking (GloCT) based in UK on promoting digital skills and creativity for teachers
2. Project with Central China Normal University (CCNU) on disability inclusion (autism).
3. Project with Central China Normal University (CCNU) on AI competency of schools.
4. Project with JPiK based in Portugal on digital skills and AI competencies for teachers in Africa.
5. Joint Project with UNAIDS Regional Support Team for Eastern Europe and Central Asia on gender-based violence prevention in Armenia.

Part 4. Partnership, Resource Mobilization and Visibility

- **Partnership and Network**

Over the past year, IITE's partnerships and networks have been further strengthened.

At the global level, IITE has collaborated closely with UNESCO Education Sector at HQs across several key areas. These include technology and AI in education, with active contributions to initiatives such as the 2025 Digital Learning Week; health education, where IITE serves as an integral part of the UNESCO Health Education Team with a focus on Eastern Europe and Central Asia; gender equality and inclusion in education, through ongoing collaboration in joint activities and reports; and national education management information systems (EMIS), such as the joint support provided to Mauritius; supporting building the Community of Practice (CoP) in the area of Private Supplementary Tutoring (currently in the form of bi-monthly online meetings). IITE also works in close cooperation with UNESCO's Priority Africa and External Relations Sector (PAX) on the Africa-Asia Youth Coding Initiative, which is coordinated by PAX.

In collaboration with other Category 1 Institutes, IITE and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) are active members of the Global Network for Digital Lifelong Learning and co-organize the annual International Digital Transformation and Lifelong Learning Conference with Shanghai Open University. Together with UIL and the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC), IITE is also part of the Global Smart Education Network, supporting Beijing Normal University in organizing the annual Global Smart Education Conference and related regional workshops. Among UNESCO Field Offices, IITE works regularly with the Almaty Office (on health education and more) and maintains active partnerships with four Field Offices in Africa, including the Nairobi Regional Office, as well as the Bangkok Office, particularly in the implementation of the Youth Coding Initiative.

IITE plays an active role as a key member of three global networks: the Global Smart Education Network, the Global Network for Digital Lifelong Learning, and the Global Creativity in Schools Network. It also collaborates closely with two other major platforms: the Global MOOC and Online Education Network and the Huawei ICT Academy, with a focus on the Middle East and Central Asia.

With strong support and engagement from its Governing Board members, IITE continues to strengthen its cooperation with international and regional organizations such as UNAIDS, ITU, ALECSO, and Rehabilitation International (RI). In addition, the Institute maintains close working relationships with UNESCO Chairs and UNESCO Category 2 Centers.

- **Resource Mobilization**

The core team and key activities of IITE rely significantly on extrabudgetary projects and resources provided through donor support.

IITE's donor partners include both those who have signed formal project agreements with financial contributions and those who provide in-kind support for the co-organization of conferences and joint activities. Over the past year, the number and diversity of IITE's donor partners have further increased. The list of ongoing IITE projects reflects a broad range of financial contributors, including leading public universities such as Beijing Normal University (BNU), Tsinghua University, Shanghai Open University (SOU), and Central China Normal

University (CCNU); UNESCO Category 2 Centre ICHEI; technology partners such as NetDragon, Huawei, JPIK, and Codemao; as well as the Global Institute of Creative Thinking (GloCT) supported by a charitable foundation.

In addition to financial support, several universities and private partners have contributed to IITE's research and programme activities through in-kind contributions. A notable example is the Charitable Foundation "Investment in the Future" in Russia, which works closely with IITE on healthy lifestyle and well-being education and continues to support IITE's initiatives through in-kind assistance.

- **Communication and Visibility**

Following IITE's Communication Workplan, the Institute's visibility has further improved over the past year by engaging a growing number of beneficiaries through its website and showcasing IITE's activities at various global and regional events. Conferences and forums co-organized by IITE and its key partners have played a significant role in highlighting the Institute's work on digital technologies, particularly AI in education. For example, the annual Global Smart Education Conference (GSE) attracted approximately 2,000 onsite participants this year, including experts, high-level education policymakers, representatives of international and regional organizations, educators, practitioners, and students from around the world. The conference's livestream online draws over one million viewers annually.

In addition to events organized in collaboration with its partners, IITE team from all three Units actively participated in a wide range of activities at the global, regional, and national levels. One notable example is the High-level Expert Group Meeting on the establishment of a new Online University for STEM Education in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), organized by UN-OHRLS. Upon the recommendation of the Chair of the IITE GB, the Institute contributed its perspective and proposal to this important consultation. The engagement of IITE GB members, whether representing IITE directly or acting as individual experts, also helped to enhance the Institute's visibility and presence on the global stage significantly.

IITE's webinars and online resources, such as video lessons and micro-credential courses available through its website and social media channels, also saw increased engagement this year. As an example, more than 1,000 participants joined live for the webinar launching two free online training courses in Russian: "AI as a Teaching Tool in Higher Education" and "Prompt Engineering for Higher Education Teachers."

Learning materials on generative AI for educators developed within the UNESCO IITE-UNESCO-ICHEI joint project has been requested by the National Centre for Professional Development "Orleu" under the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan for integration into the national teacher development programmes. "Orleu" is also planning to integrate teaching and learning materials on health education developed with IITE's support into their teacher advance training course in 2025-2026 academic year.

In 2025, IITE continues to publish its Quarterly Newsletters, which are disseminated widely to partners and relevant UNESCO Member States. From 1 august 2024 till 15 august 2025 IITE website has been viewed by 91365 visitors. According to their IP addresses: 17.73% from Russia, 9.73% from Kazakhstan, 8.09% from China, 7.34% from the United States, 5.83% from Philippines, 5.67% from India, 3.37% from Kyrgyzstan, 3.25% from Belarus, 2.28% from Uzbekistan, 1.95% from Indonesia.

In April 2025, UNESCO IITE launched a Telegram channel (in Russian), targeting Russian-speaking audiences across CIS countries and beyond, complementing its existing YouTube and Facebook accounts.

IITE maintains regular communication with UNESCO HQs, the UN Country Team in Russia, and the Host Country through the Russian National Commission for UNESCO and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education who continue to support IITE's collaboration with universities and private partners in Russia. In 2025, IITE participated in the All-Russian UNESCO Chairs Conference, alongside a representative from the UNESCO Education Sector.

Part 5. Challenges and Risk Management

Over the past year since the 24th Session of IITE GB, IITE's work has been very productive. The visibility of the Institute also has been improved. It has formed the systematic structure of programme activities. However, the challenges and weakness still exist. The key risks remain as updated in the UNESCO Risk Register.

- **Programme: The role of IITE within UNESCO's strategy needs to be further strengthened.**

While the Institute is proactive and its work productive, as a key player in promoting digital technologies, particularly AI in education transformation, its direct involvement in the design and implementation of UNESCO's relevant global strategies and initiatives remains limited. This situation poses a risk of weakening IITE's substantial contribution to UNESCO's Major Programme I for Education and to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

- **Sustainability: Funding to secure the core team and programmes remains unstable.**

The current level of guaranteed funding from the regular budget and extrabudgetary projects does not fully cover programme activities and core staff costs. This shortfall may lead to unsustainable programme delivery and instability among core staff. Although new donors from various regions and sectors have been secured, and the regional balance has improved, it remains challenging to maintain long-term donor partnerships, further diversify donors across regions and sectors, and balance donor interests with IITE's programme priorities and UNESCO's values.

- **Management: The regular Russian financial contribution to IITE continues to be managed through a bank account not under UNESCO's control.**

Since its establishment, IITE's regular financial contribution from Russia has been managed through a local bank account that is not under UNESCO's control. This unique arrangement is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. To minimize potential risks, IITE strictly adheres to UNESCO's regulations, recommendations from the UNESCO Internal Audit, and local laws in managing this local bank account.

In 2025, in response to requests from UNESCO HQs, IITE developed its Business Continuation Plan in emergent situations. This plan outlines operational procedures and risk mitigation strategies to ensure the Institute's ability to sustain core functions and deliver on its mandate during emergencies or unforeseen disruptions.

Part 6. New Medium-Term Strategy 2026-2029

Some considerations for Drafting IITE's New Medium-Term Strategy 2026-2029

- **Strategic Role and Mandate Defined by UNESCO**

IITE's new Medium-Term Strategy 2026-2029 should be in line with its role and function defined by UNESCO. IITE has the unique mandate as a global center of excellence for technologies in education, and fundamental role in the implementation of UNESCO Major Programme I, particularly with regard to capacity development, policy advice, research and knowledge-sharing in the area of technologies in education, through:

1. Evidence-based policy research, analytical studies and the collection and dissemination of best practices on the use of technologies in education for teachers and learners
2. Provision of technical assistance, knowledge and information sharing with Member States on the application of technologies in education, with particular emphasis on teachers and learners and the digital content of curricula
3. Harnessing digital technologies to raise awareness and promote health and well-being education for youth with a focus on technology-enhanced learning for healthy lifestyles.

- **Programme Actions**

How can IITE's activities be organized to create coherent, high-impact programming? Strengthening five pillars of action:

1. Dialogue and advocacy at global and regional levels
2. Research and practice analysis
3. Learning platforms and online resources
4. Webinars and training workshops
5. Competitions and study tours

- **Partnership and Resource Mobilization**

How can IITE ensure sustainable partnerships and diversified funding?

1. Strengthen coordination role in global and regional collaboration networks
 2. Improve the balance of partnerships across regions and sectors
 3. Focus on maintaining existing donors as long-term partners while opening up new streams of support.
 4. Balance donor interests and IITE programme priorities, while protecting UNESCO's core values.
- **Staff Structure and Capacity development**

What internal capacity is needed to implement the strategy effectively?

1. Secure a stable and well-supported core team.
 2. Restructure staff positions impacted by recent local legislation.
 3. Improve the professional level of technical staff through sustained fundraising and staff development
- **Priorities and Regional Focus.**

How should IITE align with UNESCO's global priorities while maintaining regional balance?

1. Continue contributing to UNESCO priorities, including Priority Africa and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Gender equality and inclusion in education, Empowering youth through innovation and skills development.
 2. Maintain regional focus on Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.
 3. Prioritize Ministry of Education of Member States as **strategic partners**, teachers as a **key target group** across all thematic areas, while also ensuring dedicated attention to **policymakers and youth**.
- **Thematic Focus in AI for Education**

Where Should IITE Lead in harnessing AI to transform Education? IITE's thematic scope is currently broad, shaped by traditional strengths and current donor priorities. While flexibility is constrained by available resources, there is room for IITE to strategically align donor interests and available resources with IITE's intent and establish a clear thematic focus.

The key question: Among the possible directions, what should be IITE's primary thematic focus in harnessing AI to transform education?

Possible Strategic Directions:

1. **Thought Leadership:** Lead global debate and research on Ethics of AI in education, addressing equity, inclusion, bias, and data security, in collaboration with strategic partners.
 2. **Advocacy Facilitator:** Co-lead with UNESCO Education Sector at HQs global consultations on AI and the Future Learning, contributing to Post-2030 Education Agenda.
 3. **Application Flagships:** Showcase innovative AI applications in promoting green education, disability inclusion in learning, and socio-emotional and health education, including relationship skills, healthy lifestyles, and the prevention of school violence and cyberbullying.
 4. **Capacity-Building Pioneer:** Demonstrate how to develop AI competencies for teachers and youth, creating networks and scalable implementation models.
- **Mission Statement**

What should be the mission of IITE in 2026-2029?

Mission Statement 2022-2025:

The mission of IITE as the UNESCO Category 1 Institute for ICT in Education is to promote the innovative and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence and digital technologies in education, supporting Member States and the global education community as a facilitator and enabler for achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). IITE is committed to human-centered, inclusive and equitable digital transformation of education.

Mission Statement 2026-2029:

UNESCO IITE, as a global center of excellence with a unique mandate on technologies in education, is committed to advancing the innovative and ethical integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital technologies in teaching and learning. Leveraging its expertise and global network, the Institute acts as a thought leader and facilitator to assist Member States and the global education community in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and in shaping the post-2030 Education Agenda. IITE is dedicated to promoting a human-centered, inclusive, and equitable digital transformation of education.