

# International Conference on Promoting Lifelong Learning in Higher Education: From institutional strategies to practical implementation

Date: 19 to 21 October 2023

Venue: Guoshun Campus, Shanghai Open University

Organizers: **Shanghai Open University** and **UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning**

Partners: **UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia (UNESCO Beijing), National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO, International Association of Universities, Chinese Society of Educational Development Strategy, China Association of Higher Education, and China Adult Education Association**

## Background

In the context of fast-paced technological developments, the climate crisis, persistent social inequalities and demographic shifts, the increasingly unpredictable labour markets, and other local and global sustainable development issues, there is a need to consider the right to education and learning for people of all ages and to transform education systems to meet the needs of all learners including the need for reskilling and upskilling throughout life which is an essential part of people's professional career.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have a vital role to play in developing the knowledge, competencies and skills that are needed to ensure healthy, prosperous and inclusive sustainable societies and economies.

To best respond to the world's challenges, HEIs are required to evolve into lifelong learning institutions, reflecting a strong commitment to flexibility and responsiveness to meet the needs of diverse cohorts of learners. To address this diversity, HEIs are called on to reimagine the future of higher education altogether; this includes offering more flexible learning provision, assessment and certification, cultivating innovative technology-enhanced pedagogies and modalities, establishing flexible learning pathways, focussing on equity and inclusion and building partnerships with the private sector and community organizations.

To enhance the knowledge base on the above-described developments and support HEI to develop appropriate approaches, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and Shanghai Open University (SOU) conducted a research project from 2020 to 2022 on the contribution of higher education institutions to lifelong learning. The International Association of Universities (IAU) was tasked with the coordination of a global survey on HEIs' contribution to lifelong learning.



Within the context of this research project, UIL and SOU, in partnership with UNESCO Beijing, the National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO, the IAU and the Chinese Society of Educational Development Strategy, will host an international, three-day conference.

## Objectives and scope

The conference aims to:

- further advance policy and practice on the role of universities in advancing lifelong learning opportunities for all and in addressing current and future sustainable development challenges.
- provide an opportunity to exchange views on the strategic directions of higher education institutions in developing, implementing and monitoring the commitment to lifelong learning.
- discuss new international projects in this field, to get expert feedback on selected ideas and to assess the involvement of potential partners for future research.

The conference will gather international perspectives on pressing themes, such as future skills demand and development including transitions to green and digital economies, widening access to lifelong learning opportunities, technology-enhanced learning, the importance of developing flexible learning pathways, assessment and certification, lifelong learning for older adults, community and private sector engagement of higher education.

## Preliminary Agenda (as of 1.9. 2023)

Day 1, Thursday, 19 October 2023	
13:30 – 14:00 CST	<p><b>Opening ceremony</b></p> <p>Ms Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education (video) Mr Borhene Chakroun, Director a.i., UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning Mr Qin Changwei, Secretary-General, National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO Deputy-Director/Director, Shanghai Municipal Education Commission (tbc) Mr LOU Junjiang, Vice Chairman of Shanghai Open University Council, People's Republic of China Mr Shahbaz Khan, Director, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia in Beijing (video)</p>
14:00 – 14:30	<p><b>Session 1: Keynote speech on the role of universities in light of current and emerging sustainable development challenges</b></p> <p>Keynote speaker: Mr Soonghee Han, Professor of Lifelong Learning, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea Moderator: Mr Borhene Chakroun, Director a.i., UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning</p>
14:30 – 15:00	<p><b>Session 2: Keynote speech on Chinese perspectives on lifelong learning in higher education</b></p> <p>Keynote speaker: Mr Wei Jia, President, Shanghai Open University, People's Republic of China Moderator: Ms Paz Portales, Programme Specialist, Section of Higher Education, UNESCO</p>
15:00 – 15:15	<p><b>Coffee break</b></p>
15:15 – 15:45	<p><b>Launch event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Chinese translation of <i>Making Lifelong Learning a Reality: A Handbook</i></b></p> <p>Mr Qin Changwei, Secretary-General, National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO Mr Borhene Chakroun, Director a.i., UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Chinese translation of the report "International trends of lifelong learning in higher education" with a presentation of the main research outcomes</b></p> <p>Mr Raúl Valdés-Cotera, Chief Programme Coordinator a.i., UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) Ms Jin Zhang, Vice President, Shanghai Open University</p> </li> </ul>
15:45 – 17:00	<p><b>Session 3: Adapting universities to include reskilling and upskilling opportunities to address future skills requirements and target more diverse learners</b></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr Michael Fung, Executive Director, Institute for the Future of Education,</li> </ul>

	<p>Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms Therese Zhang, Deputy Director, Higher Education Policy Unit, European University Association (EUA) (online)</li> <li>Mr Mohammed Elmeski, Senior Education Advisor, Rabat, the Kingdom of Morocco</li> <li>Mr Youmin Xi, Executive President, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, People's Republic of China</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Ms Beate Hörr, Vice-President, European University Continuing Education Network (EUCEN)</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
<b>17:00 – 17:15</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>17:15 – 18:30</b>	<p><b>Session 4: Inclusive and flexible lifelong learning: Promoting recognition of prior learning and micro-credentials in higher education</b></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms Renee Tan, Director Research Division, Institute for Adult Learning (IAL), Singapore</li> <li>Ms Susanna Karakhanyan, Higher Education Policy and Regulation Director, Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge, United Arab Emirates</li> <li>Ms Michaela Martin, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) (online)</li> <li>Ms Torunn Gjelsvik, Secretary General, International Council for Open and Distance Education</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Mr Raúl Valdés-Cotera, Chief Programme Coordinator a.i., UIL</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
<b>18:30 – 21:00</b>	<b>Conference dinner and cultural programme</b>

## Day 2, Friday, 20 October 2023

<b>9:00 – 10:00 CST</b>	<p><b>Session 5: Keynote speech on widening access to higher education through AI and other digital learning tools</b></p> <p>Keynote speaker: Mr Cher Ping Lim, Chair Professor of Learning Technologies and Innovation, The Education University of Hong Kong, People's Republic of China</p> <p>Respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms Goski Alabi, President of the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE), Ghana (tbc)</li> <li>Mr Francesc Pedró, Director, UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC)</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Mr Ming Li, Director, International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO, People's Republic of China</p>
<b>10:00 – 10:10</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>

<p><b>10:10 – 11:25</b></p>	<p><b>Session 6: The role of universities in addressing local challenges, engaging communities and promoting learning cities</b></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Edith Hammer, Programme Specialist, Skills throughout life, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning</li> <li>• Mr Collin Pillay, Chief Policy Analyst in the Learning City Durban, South Africa</li> <li>• Ms Amalia Creus, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Information and Communication Sciences, Open University of Catalonia, Spain (online)</li> <li>• Ms Roberta Piazza, Professor of Theories and Science of Education and Social Education, University of Catania, Italy</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Ms Lindsey Beagley, Sr. Director, Lifelong University Engagement, Mirabella at Arizona State University</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
<p><b>11:25 – 11:35</b></p>	<p><b>Coffee break</b></p>
<p><b>11:35 – 12:50</b></p>	<p><b>Session 7: Universities' contribution to sustainable development and climate action, from greening institutions to green-skills development and raising public awareness of green issues</b></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Mirian Vilela, Executive Director, Earth Charter International Secretariat and Earth Charter Center on Education for Sustainable Development, Peace University San José, Costa Rica</li> <li>• Mr Xuhong Qian, President, East China Normal University, People's Republic of China</li> <li>• Ms Sylvia Schmelkes, Former Vice-Rector, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico (online)</li> <li>• Ms Wen Yuan, President, Shanghai Normal University, People's Republic of China (tbc)</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Mr Robert Parua, Education Programme Specialist, UNESCO Beijing Cluster Office</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
<p><b>Parallel session</b> (closed session)</p>	<p><b>Presidents' Forum: Measuring progress and impact of lifelong learning in higher education</b></p> <p>Thematic inputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International survey on the contribution of higher education institutions to lifelong learning and potential for follow-up Mr Raúl Valdés-Cotera, Chief Programme Coordinator a.i., UIL</li> <li>• Developing lifelong learning indicators for higher education Mr Michael Fung, Executive Director, Institute for the Future of Education, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico</li> </ul> <p>Round table discussion Moderator: Mr Raúl Valdés-Cotera, Chief Programme Coordinator a.i., UIL</p>

<b>12:50 – 14:15</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>14:15- 15:30</b>	<p><b>Session 8: Addressing the needs of older learners in higher education with a focus on learning modalities, intergenerational approaches, employability and life skills</b></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Mo Wang, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning</li> <li>• Ms Maureen Tam, Adjunct Professor, Department of International Education and Head of EdUHK Elder Academy, The Education University of Hong Kong, People’s Republic of China</li> <li>• Ms Qiang Li, Professor, Fudan Institute on Ageing, Fudan University, People’s Republic of China</li> <li>• Mr Hany Hachem, Research Assistant, School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Örebro University, Sweden</li> </ul> <p>Moderators: Mr Brian Findsen, Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
<b>Parallel session</b> (closed session)	<p><b>Presidents’ forum: Enhancing the social responsibility of universities in light of the climate crisis</b></p> <p>Thematic input:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IAU HESD Survey Report ‘Accelerating Action for the SDGs in Higher Education’ Ms Hilligje van’t Land, Secretary General, International Association of Universities (IAU)</li> <li>• Fostering climate action and resilience in communities: The role of higher education in providing lifelong learning for climate action Ms Edith Hammer, Programme Specialist, UIL</li> </ul> <p>Round table discussion Moderator: Ms Hilligje van’t Land, Secretary General, IAU</p>
<b>15:30 – 15:45</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>15:45 – 16.15</b>	<p><b>Closing ceremony</b></p> <p>Mr Wei Jia, President, Shanghai Open University, People’s Republic of China Mr Raúl Valdés-Cotera, Chief Programme Coordinator a.i., UIL</p>

### Side event on Day 2, 20 October 2023

<b>9:00 – 11:25</b>	<p><b>Roundtable: Higher education institutions for lifelong learning – Experiences from China</b></p> <p>Organized by Shanghai Lifelong Learning Research Association and Chinese Society of Educational Development Strategy</p>
---------------------	--

### Day 3, Saturday, 21 October 2023

<b>9:30 – 13:30 CST</b>	<b>Field visit of lifelong learning sites in Shanghai, followed by lunch</b>
-------------------------	--

## Scope

The conference is expected to be attended by 200–250 participants, including policy-makers, university presidents and top-level executives, experts, scholars, researchers and managers in the field of open and distance learning from the People’s Republic of China and around the world. The event will take place in-person in Shanghai, People’s Republic of China.

## Languages

The working languages of the conference are English and Chinese. Simultaneous translation will be available.

## Registration fees

Registration is free for all invited speakers and contributors.

## Contact

### Shanghai Open University

#### UNESCO UNITWIN Network in Distance and Open Learning at SOU

Ms HAN Yu

[hanyu@sou.edu.cn](mailto:hanyu@sou.edu.cn)

### UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

Ms Edith Hammer and Ms Mo Wang

[e.hammer@unesco.org](mailto:e.hammer@unesco.org) / [mw.wang@unesco.org](mailto:mw.wang@unesco.org)

## List of speakers, moderators and forum participants

Participant	Role(s)
Ms <b>Goski Alabi</b> , President of the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE), Ghana (tbc)	Respondent – Session 5 Presidents forum
Ms <b>Lindsey Beagley</b> , Sr. Director, Lifelong University Engagement, Mirabella at Arizona State University	Moderator – Session 6
Mr <b>Sergio Cárdenas-Denham</b> , Professor at the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE), Mexico	General rapporteur
Mr <b>Borhene Chakroun</b> , Director a.i., UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning	Opening, Moderator – Session 1, Launch event
Mr <b>Qin Changwei</b> , Secretary-General, National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO	Opening, Launch event
Ms <b>Sunungurai Dominica Chingarande</b> , Vice-Chancellor, Womens’ University in Africa, Zimbabwe	Presidents forum
Ms <b>Amalia Creus</b> , Vice Dean of the Faculty of Information and Communication Sciences, Open University of Catalonia, Spain	Speaker – Session 6 (online)
Mr <b>Andrew Deeks</b> , Vice-Chancellor of Murdoch University and IAU-President, Australia	Presidents forum
Mr <b>Mohammed Elmeski</b> , Senior Education Advisor, Rabat, the Kingdom of Morocco	Speaker – Session 3
Mr <b>Brian Findsen</b> , Emeritus Professor of Education, University of	Moderator – Session 8

Waikato, New Zealand	
Mr <b>Michael Fung</b> , Executive Director, Institute for the Future of Education, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico	Speaker – Session 3 Presidents forum
Ms <b>Jouhaina Gherib</b> , President of University of Manouba and IAU-Vice-President, Tunisia	Presidents forum
Ms <b>Torunn Gjelsvik</b> , Secretary General, International Council for Open and Distance Education	Speaker – Session 4 Presidents forum
Mr <b>Hany Hachem</b> , Research Assistant, School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Örebro University, Sweden	Speaker – Session 8
Ms <b>Edith Hammer</b> , Programme Specialist, Skills throughout life, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning	Speaker – Session 6 Presidents forum
Mr <b>Soonghee Han</b> , Professor of Lifelong Learning, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea	Keynote speaker – Session 1
Ms <b>Beate Hörr</b> , Vice-President, European University Continuing Education Network (EUCEN)	Moderator – Session 3 Presidents forum
Mr <b>Wei Jia</b> , President, Shanghai Open University, People’s Republic of China	Keynote speaker – Session 2 Presidents forum Closing
Mr <b>Ming Li</b> , Director, International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO, People’s Republic of China	Moderator – Session 5
Ms <b>Qiang Li</b> , Professor, Fudan Institute on Ageing, Fudan University, People’s Republic of China	Speaker – Session 8
Mr <b>Cher Ping Lim</b> , Chair Professor of Learning Technologies and Innovation, The Education University of Hong Kong, People’s Republic of China	Keynote speaker – Session 5
Mr <b>LOU Junjiang</b> , Vice Chairman of Shanghai Open University Council, People’s Republic of China	Opening
Ms <b>Michaela Martin</b> , Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)	Speaker – Session 4 (online)
Ms <b>Susanna Karakhanyan</b> , Higher Education Policy and Regulation Director, Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge, United Arab Emirates	Speaker – Session 4 Presidents forum
Mr <b>Biruk Kedir</b> , Director General, Technical and Vocational Training Institute, Ethiopia	Presidents forum
Mr <b>Robert Parua</b> , Education Programme Specialist, UNESCO Beijing Cluster Office	Moderator – Session 7
Mr <b>Collin Pillay</b> , Chief Policy Analyst in the Learning City Durban, South Africa	Speaker – Session 6
Mr <b>Francesc Pedró</b> , Director, UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC)	Respondant – Session 5 Presidents forum
Ms <b>Roberta Piazza</b> , Professor of Theories and Science of Education and Social Education, University of Catania, Italy	Speaker – Session 6
Ms <b>Paz Portales</b> , Programme Specialist, Section of Higher Education, UNESCO	Moderator – Session 2 Presidents forum
Mr <b>Xuhong Qian</b> , President, East China Normal University, People’s Republic of China	Speaker – Session 7



Ms <b>Suraya Hani Saleh</b> , Deputy Undersecretary, Human Capital Section/Policy and Research Division, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia	Presidents forum
Ms <b>Sylvia Schmelkes</b> , Former Vice-Rector, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico	Speaker – Session 7 (online)
Ms <b>Maureen Tam</b> , Adjunct Professor, Department of International Education and Head of EdUHK Elder Academy, The Education University of Hong Kong, People’s Republic of China	Speaker – Session 8
Ms <b>Renee Tan</b> , Director Research Division, Institute for Adult Learning (IAL), Singapore	Speaker – Session 4 Presidents forum
Mr <b>Pattinikutti Mudiayanselage Chandralal Thilakarathne</b> , Vice-Chancellor, Open University of Sri Lanka	Presidents forum
Mr <b>Raúl Valdés-Cotera</b> , Chief Programme Coordinator a.i., UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)	Launch event Moderator – Session 4 Presidents forum
Ms <b>Hilligje van’t Land</b> , Secretary General, International Association of Universities (IAU)	Presidents forum
Ms <b>Mirian Vilela</b> , Executive Director, Earth Charter International Secretariat and Earth Charter Center on Education for Sustainable Development, Peace University San José, Costa Rica	Speaker – Session 7 Presidents forum
Ms <b>Mo Wang</b> , Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning	Speaker – Session 8 Presidents forum
Mr <b>Youmin Xi</b> , Executive President, Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, People’s Republic of China	Speaker – Session 3
Ms <b>Wen Yuan</b> , President, Shanghai Normal University, People’s Republic of China (tbc)	Speaker – Session 7 Presidents forum
Ms <b>Jin Zhang</b> , Vice President, Shanghai Open University	Launch event Presidents forum
Ms <b>Therese Zhang</b> , Deputy Director, Higher Education Policy Unit, European University Association (EUA)	Speaker – Session 3 (online)
Representative of the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission	Opening