

Session Outcome Document

WSIS The Future of Education and Research in the AI Era: Equipping Young People for Tomorrow

ITU, Geneva

7.07.2026

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/en/Agenda/Session/541>

Key issues discussed: The session "The Future of Education and Research in the AI Era" examined how emerging technologies are reshaping learning and research, and which competencies will best prepare young people for the future. Panelists highlighted the value of applied, real-world learning experiences and interdisciplinary approaches bridging technology with other fields. Drawing on practical experience, speakers shared what works, what doesn't, and how institutions can adapt to an AI-driven world. The discussion brought together professors, students, and other stakeholders invested in the future of education and research.

- How students should prepare for evolving job markets amid rapid AI growth, and how universities can support graduates already in the workforce
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- Balancing AI use with critical thinking; ensuring AI supports rather than replaces intellectual rigor and independent thought. AI is not a substitute and more as an enabler.
- Some highlighted the fragmented nature of AI technology and the growing responsibility on AI deployment and use
- Some also emphasized that AI could widen inequality; between developed/developing countries, urban/rural communities, and different income levels
- The state of technical education in the developing world, including the estimated 1 in 10 primary school aged children globally who are not in school¹
- Some noted that environmental and energy costs of AI infrastructure, including data center impact and carbon emissions
- The risk of over-reliance on AI in research, including hallucination risks and knowing when human judgment should not be delegated

¹ UNESCO. (2023, September 19). 250 million children out-of-school: What you need to know about UNESCO's latest education data. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/250-million-children-out-school-what-you-need-know-about-unescos-latest-education-data>

Key outcomes of the session:

Insights and Findings

- Universities need to serve two audiences: current students and alumni already navigating an AI-altered job market
- Equity, not just economic growth, should be the guiding principle for AI-driven development strategies
- Use AI in research and studies but responsibly
- Maintaining critical oversight and knowing when not to use AI emerged as a core research competency, per the Sciences Po Capstone findings
- Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology's three-pillar model (student selection, common STEM curriculum, professor assisted research) and its work on LLM guardrails, explainability, and robotics
- Huazhong University's “one person one company” project, using AI tools to build entrepreneurial and AI literacy skills among students
- University of Pennsylvania Capstone Project on environmental standards for AI data centers, developed in connection with ITU

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions Towards 2035

- Embed critical thinking and independent research skills alongside AI training, so AI remains an assistant rather than a substitute for intellectual rigor
- Prioritize equity in AI and digital development strategies to prevent widening gaps between regions and income groups
- Strengthen technical education infrastructure in developing countries and prioritize re-engaging out-of-school children and youth
- Expand experiential, real-world learning models (e.g., capstone projects, entrepreneurial incubators) that pair AI literacy with hands-on application