

International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education under the auspices of UNESCO

MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY







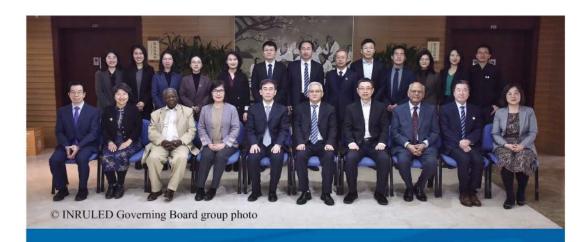
Partner with us, Taking actions in

Education for Sustainable Rural Development

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Rural development is fundamental to achieving the SDGs. Some 67 per cent of the populations of low-income countries and 60 per cent of lower-middle-income countries are rural. Rural areas contain most of the planet's natural capital, which is currently being depleted and degraded. Furthermore, about 80 per cent of those below the poverty line live in rural areas, and about one-fifth of rural people live in extreme poverty-rate that is four times higher than for the urban population.

António Guterres Secretary-General of the United Nations

Education and training play a pivotal role in sustainable rural development. Without inclusive, equitable, and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for the rural people, Education 2030 will again be an unfinished business.

INRULED



The changing world and UNESCO

As we reach the midpoint towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the world has undergone profound changes.

Despite progress achieved, it is a woeful truth that we are seriously off track towards the realisation of the 2030 Agenda, compounded by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Climate change, exacerbating inequalities, demographic shift, the changing world of work and drastic technological advancements pose multi-dimensional challenges to the very existence of humankind, and as UNESCO's Futures of Education report has appealed for, education is not yet fulfilling its promise to help us shape peaceful, just, and sustainable future, therefore education itself must be transformed.



esponding to the new challenges, UNESCO has stepped up its efforts in leading the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda, and has led the global efforts in translating the momentum generated at the Transforming Education Summit into local, national and regional responses, to accelerate progress toward 2030. In its C4 strategy, UNFSCO has identified four strategic objectives, responding to the educational, environmental, social and technological challenges of the world today, namely,

Ensure quality, equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;

Work towards sustainable societies and protect the environment through the promotion of science, technology innovation and the natural heritage;

Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage;

Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards

These interconnected objectives underscore UNESCO's commitment and contribution toward the realization of the 2030 Agenda within its fields of competence, and offers a roadmap towards the future. In its C5 document, these objectives are further translated into concrete outcomes and outputs, guiding UNESCO's work towards results-based implementation.

The imperative and promise of Education for Sustainable Rural Development

Rural development is central to the realisation of sustainable development.

Nearly half of the world's population, including four out of five people living below the poverty line, live in rural areas. Without the realization of sustainable rural development for them, the central promise of the 2030 Agenda of "leaving no one behind" cannot be fulfilled.

Education is key component and a central pathway for realising sustainable rural development.

However, rural communities, standing in the intersection of many forms of inequalities, disadvantages and marginalization, from factors including poverty, social stereotypes, social exclusion from ethnicity, languages and cultures, gender bias, ecological deprivation, generally have less access to quality education, which reproduces and reinforces such inequalities. This calls for urgent actions to ensure inclusive and quality education for the rural population, so as to empower them for individual and social development that contribute to poverty reduction, betterment of livelihoods, social cohesion and justice, as well as adaptation and resilience to the changing world.

In the meantime, rural development hosts great potential for realising sustainable development.

Rural areas are the main source for agricultural production, contain rich natural endowment, preserve local knowledge and indigenous cultures, and nurture lifestyles close to the nature and the land, etc. Instead of being a passive recipient of attention, rural development can become an innovative driver for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), if appropriate strategies being taken, of which education can play a transformative role. It is imperative that we re-imagine rural education, to make learning more inclusive, effective and relevant for the rural population, so as to foster their full potential and generate renewed momentum and innovation to contribute to the course of sustainable rural development. With the rural population being disadvantaged and marginalised, and the same time a vital and valued group for sustainable development, the advocate of education for sustainable rural development resonates strongly with UNESCO's four strategic objectives, holding educational, environmental, social and technological implications for a resilient recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 and towards the realisation of the 2030 Agenda.

INRULED, renewed vision and comparative advantages

The International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED) under the auspices of UNESCO, is a UNESCO category 2 centre jointly established by UNESCO and Chinese government.



Founded in 1994

when the "Education for All" initiative ignited global commitments and actions for realising the right to education for all, INRULED demonstrated UNESCO, China and the rest of the international society's aspirations and expectations for universal coverage of education, especially for the rural population. Now entering the midpoint of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with COVID-19 offsetting the already fragile trajectory towards reaching SDG4, INRULED's role and work is more pertinent than ever.

Education for Sustainable Rural Development

Under a global call of re-imaging the futures of education and adhering to the consistent pursuit for realising inclusive and quality education for all, the renewed vision of INRULED to advance "Education for Sustainable Rural Development" underscores the strong imperative and huge promise for transforming education so that it will become a central force for driving sustainable rural development.

INRULED has distinct comparative advantages for advancing its mission and mandate.

Since its establishment, INRULED has actively responded to UNESCO's priorities and its global agenda, and seeks to serve the UNESCO member states, especially developing member states. By prioritising and responding to the education needs of the rural population, who make up the majority of the population in developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, INRULED inherently dedicates its attention on the most disadvantaged and marginalised people and groups, working to implement UNESCO's priorities and humanistic value.

Meanwhile, INRULED identifies its thematic areas closely with that of UNESCO, streamlines its actions with reference to UNESCO's strategy on category 2 centres and proactively strengthens cooperation within the UNESCO family and across the wider UN system, making its work relevant and in close alignment with that of UNESCO.

Under such context, INRULED has achieved notable progress across its thematic areas in research and knowledge production, policy dialogue and exchanges, capacity development and information sharing and networking, becoming one the solid change makers for the member states and towards the realisation of the 2030 Agenda.



INRULED also benefits extensively from its host country, China.

With guidance and close communication with the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO and strong support from Beijing Normal University, INRULED is able to develop competencies and expertise and mobilise resources across Ministries, governments, academia, social organisations and the private sector, to advance educational research and training for education and rural development. In addition, China's pioneering practices in promoting rural education within the context of poverty reduction and rural revitalization also provides rich evidences and practices for INRULED to advance research and knowledge production and facilitate cooperation and partnerships in this field, thus encouraging solidarity and collective commitment for this common endeavour.







Mission statement

With the mandate of "Education for Sustainable Rural Development", INRULED's mission is as follows: Under the framework of Goal 4 of SDGs. to achieve sustainable social, economic and environmental development in the rural areas through education and training for the rural people, who make up of the big proportion of the world's population and the majority of the population in developing countries, and to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Functions

According to the agreement between UNESCO and the Chinese government, INRULED's functions are defined as follows:



Promoting international research and development of methods and techniques of rural education;



Promoting consultation and cooperation among member states by devising policies and strategies in the areas of human resource development for rural areas;



Creating a wide network for exchange of academic and technical information in the field of rural education among experts in various countries;



Coordinating cooperative research activities and provide expertise, advice, and facilities for laboratory research and fieldwork to international experts;



Organising international training workshops and seminars on special subjects and provide fellowships for international research;



Producing and disseminating publications and materials for the various projects undertaken by UNESCO INRULED.

These functions, as defined in the Agreement and combined with the requirements specified in UNESCO Strategy for category 2 centres and institutions, are further reflected and streamlined into INRULED's main lines of action, which will be explained further in the following text.

Framework of Action

Ith close alignment with UNESCO's global development agenda and priorities, especially referring to the C/4 and C/5 document, extensive consultation within the UNESCO family institutions, the Chinese National Commission and BNU, INRULED elaborates its priorities and work logic in the Framework of Action, which will guide INRULED's strategic development and programme implementation, in support of the realisation of UNESCO's strategic objectives and programmes, so as to contribute to the realisation of the SDG4 and the 2030 Agenda.



Overarching Goal/Theme: Education for Sustainable Rural Development

GLOBAL PRIORITIES





PRIORITY GROUPS





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Human resources strengthened Social entrepreneurship and innovation developed

Technology-enhanced rural education and rural development

Thematic Priority 1

Quality teachers for rural schools

Cross-cutting Theme 1

Empowering girls and women through education for rural development

Cross-cutting Theme 2

Leveraging technology for education and rural development

Thematic Priority 2

Skills development for rural transformation

MAIN LINES OF ACTIONS

- 1. Research and Knowledge Production
- 3. Capacity Development

- 2. Policy Dialogue and Advocacy
- 4. Information Sharing and Networking



Strategic objectives and priorities





OBJECTIVE 1

Contribute to inclusive and quality education to develop human resources for rural development

ducation is central to deliver the promise of rural development, however, the access to and quality of education in rural areas are often lagging behind. Poverty and inequality denies many rural learners equal educational opportunities, and the rapid urbanisation results in a declining rural population to whom rural education is less attractive and relevant. Issues of teacher shortage and quality, skills inadequate for the changing world, technological advancement that brings both promises and deeper divides, and comprehensive disadvantages facing rural women, girls and the youth, etc, all make it imperative to ensure the right to education in rural areas, to develop human resources for sustainable rural development.

INRULED will work in its **five** thematic areas, through its main lines of actions, to support education systems that advance inclusive and quality education that recognises and addresses learning needs of the rural people; empower rural education stakeholders including policy-makers, rural teachers, learners, and the rural community, especially for girls and women, so as to promote individual and social development; promote research and knowledge production for innovation and foresight in education and rural development; and expand information sharing and networking to mobilise public participation and engagement for rural education, so that inclusive and quality education in rural areas can be ensured for strengthened human resources for rural development.



OBJECTIVE 2

Promote education and training to foster social entrepreneurship and innovation in rural areas

Development challenges are accurate in rural areas, among which poverty, social inequalities, discrimination, ecological degradation and cultural loss. However, rural areas also host enormous potential, with rich natural endowment, distinct culture and tradition, lifestyle close to the land, to become a potential driver for the realisation of the SDGs. As urged by the World Social Report, rural development needs not be a side show or an appendix of urban development. If appropriate strategy taken, it can become a driving force for the realisation of the SDGs. To achieve this, education and learning need to be transformed, to promote education and learning that promotes social entrepreneurship and innovation in rural areas, so as to bring vitality and innovation to address social issues, while generating new momentum for rural development.

INRULED will work to strengthen education systems that advocate for and promote education and learning for social innovation, skills development and public engagement for rural development, empower rural communities, including youth, adults and other rural development stakeholders to better participate in process of rural development, especially for the world of work. This will include the cultivation of entrepreneurial and relevant work skills that can contribute to diversification of economic activities and promotion of creative and cultural industries that help to address the social and environmental issues in rural areas, while generating innovation and vitality for sustainable rural development. Meanwhile, diverse stakeholder's participation in rural education and development will be promoted, to bring in innovative solutions and resources for collective rural development.



OBJECTIVE 3

Leverage technologies and digital innovations to enhance rural education and rural development

Development in digital technologies and innovation brings about enormous potential to the transformation of the society. Technological application in education and learning in rural areas has the potential to increase access to quality educational resources, empower the provision and distribution of education resources, innovate the way teaching and learning is conducted, and better prepare teachers, learners and other education stakeholders for the digital age, thus contributing to the provision of inclusive and equitable quality education that helps to address issues including poverty, inequalities and social exclusion. However, as the 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report has pointed out, the impact of technology to translate into actual learning outcomes is to be debated, and such technology often comes at a high cost. In rural areas, such challenges are extremely acute.

INRULED will take a human-centred approach to digital innovations in rural education, so as to prepare the system and the learners to better adapt to and benefit from the challenges and opportunities brought by digital transformation. This will include promoting digital competency development for teachers, learners, and the rural community, especially for girls and women, to steer technology application toward fostering innovations in teaching and learning and in rural development; identifying and studying best practices and innovative models of technology application in education that are scale-able, effective and sustainable, and advocating for the building of "learning villages" in the digital age, so as to promote technology-enhanced lifelong learning for all, and promote wide public participation and multi-stakeholder's engagement in technology in education for rural development.

Global priorities and priority groups

Aligning with UNESCO's priorities, INRULED mainstreams these priorities in its programme design, implementation and management process and in the process of partnership building, to contribute to the benefits of these identified priority groups.

Global priorities

Priority groups













Gender Equality

INRULED has dedicated a cross-cutting theme as "empowering girls and women through education for rural development" to advance UNESCO's priority of gender equality. Under this education and mainstream gender perspective in other programmes, for example by utilising sex-disaggregated data in its researches to better identify girls' and women's needs and challenges. It will also advance capacity building programmes designed for girls and women, including digital skills for girls, to enhance girls' and women's right and capacity. Meanwhile. It will organise policy dialogue and advocacy activities to promote girls' and women's right to education and encourage consensus-building for girls' and women's education.





Africa

For the global priority of Africa, INRULED will prioritise cooperation with African member states. Especially under its thematic priority of "qualified teacher for rural schools", INRULED will prioritise addressing the severe shortage of qualified teachers in Africa by strengthening cooperation with African teacher education dialogue, joint research programmes, capacity building programmes, and information sharing and networking activities targeting teachers in Africa. These activities will be conducted with continued and deepened cooperation, especially with UNESCO IICBA, to mobilise resources and generate momentum



Meanwhile, INRULED will strengthen cooperation with SIDS in co-hosting conferences and joint research programmes, and organise training activities targeting SIDS to enhance their capacity building.



For youth, INRULED will embark on communication campaign to engage youth in the promotion of rural education and development and the SDGs, organise youth session in its conferences to make youth's voice and actions more visible and impactful, and organise capacity building prorgrammes targeting youth.



rince rural education captures a broad range of issues in education and development, with an encompassing rural perspective, INRULED has identified five inter-connected thematic areas aligning with UNESCO's objectives and priorities, to keep its work relevant and focused. The overarching theme, education and training for sustainable rural development, leads innovation, foresight and synergy across other thematic areas and beyond, aiming to form larger commitment, impact and social mobilisation for INRULED's work.



The two thematic priorities of "quality teachers for rural schools" and "skills development for rural transformation", capture education and training across formal, non-formal and informal settings with teachers and learners at the centre.



The cross-cutting theme of "empowering girls and women through education for rural development" advances prioritised actions for girls' and women across INRULED's thematic areas, and the other cross-cutting theme of "leveraging technology for rural education and development" implies technology awareness and application across the thematic areas to deliver enhanced education and rural development.



In this way, INRULED is able to stay responsive towards the major issues in rural education and development, and form its own niche expertise and impact. The five thematic areas identified are as follows.

Education and training for sustainable rural development

■his overarching theme contributes mainly to the following outputs identified by the UNESCO Major Programme (41 C/5):

- Output 1.ED1 Education systems equipped to promote inclusion, address marginalisation and advance rights, including in crisis-affected and post-disaster contexts;
- Output 2.ED9 Education and learning reimagined through interdisciplinary research, foresight and public policy debate

As embodied in INRULED's mission and vision, education and training is central to deliver sustainable rural development. It empowers individuals, promotes community development, and encourages economic development and social innovation in rural areas.

The identification of this thematic area therefore features INRULED's distinct approach and contribution to the realisation of the SDG4 and the 2030 Agenda, leveraging the transformative power of education. To articulate a strong voice of INRULED's work and accelerate the fulfilment of its mission and goals, this thematic area will prioritise innovation and foresight, to lead the re-imaging of rural education and rural development for the realisation of the SDG4, promote synergy and integration of work done in the other four thematic areas for larger impact, and encourage wide social mobilisation and public engagement for education for sustainable rural development, with targeted outreach especially to the youth.

To achieve this, pioneering research and knowledge production, strengthened policy dialogue and advocacy, comprehensive capacity development programmes, and large-scale information sharing and networking will be advanced, to expedite commitments and actions for the common course of "education for sustainable rural development".





INRULED's key actions under this thematic area include:

- Promote innovation and foresight on education and rural development, especially through the publication of a biennial flagship report on International Rural Education Development, to reflect on and respond to emerging issues in rural education and development;
- Promote policy and dialogue to engage governments, development partners, civil society and other stakeholders for policies and investments that advance education and training for sustainable rural development, especially through the organisation of the Conference on Education and Rural Development;
- Promote capacity development for policy makers, academia and other development practitioners to form common commitments to support education systems that promotes inclusive education and address marginalisation for the rural population;
- Strive to become an information, expertise and resource highland for education and rural development, especially by developing a rural education and development clearing house and by strengthened partnerships and collaborations;
- Advance social mobilisation and public engagement for the common course of "education for sustainable rural development", especially targeting the youth, young scholars, local community leaders, social organisations and the private sector.

Quality teachers for rural schools



This thematic priority contributes mainly to the following outputs identified by the UNESCO Major Programme (41 C/5):

- Output 1.ED5 Teachers trained and supported to improve learning outcomes and address the changes brought forth by the digital and artificial intelligence (AI) transformation and the COVID-19 crisis;
- Output 2.ED9 Education and learning reimagined through interdisciplinary research, foresight and public policy debate;

Teachers are the key change-maker for ensuring inclusive and quality education for all, especially in rural areas. With rural children generally having a weaker support system, especially as their parents migrate to cities for better economic prospects, teachers are a key factor that influences students' learning motivations and outcomes. However, severe teacher shortage is seen especially in rural and remote areas, with many of them having lower qualifications. Furthermore, barriers including heavy workload, lack of professional development opportunities, un-guaranteed working conditions and uncertain career prospects have fuelled the teacher shortage in rural areas, making the recruitment, retention and quality of teachers major issues that constrain the provision of quality and relevant education to rural children.

Responding to the global challenge in shortage of quality teachers, INRULED identifies the thematic area of "quality teachers for rural schools", focusing primarily on the provision of quality teachers in primary and secondary schools in rural areas. Relying on INRULED's close connection with the host institution, the Beijing Normal University, and the long-standing alliances and partnership formed with teacher education institutions, the UNESCO IICBA, with African states, and the SIDS, INRULED will prioritise research and knowledge production, policy dialogue and exchanges, capacity building and information sharing and networking that contribute to the empowerment of teachers, teacher education institutions and other teacher development stakeholders, so as to strengthen the system that develops appropriate rural teacher policies, promote the cultivation and development of quality teachers in rural areas, especially enhanced by technologies and with a focus on female teachers.

Key actions under this thematic area include:

- Promote joint research and knowledge production on emerging issues in rural teachers, especially teacher professional development in remote, rural and small-size schools;
- Promote joint research, dialogue and exchanges with teacher education institutions, especially in Africa and SIDS, on issues including rural teacher cultivation and development;
- Promote innovations in teaching and learning in rural areas, especially through the application of digital technologies in education and professional development;
- Contribute to capacity development of rural teachers and teacher education institutions and policy makers, including digital skills and professional development, and by strengthened research and targeted training especially focusing on female teachers;
- Mobilise political commitment and wide social mobilisation for quality teachers for rural schools, including through the organisation of the China-Africa Deans of Education Forum and building the network.



Skills development for rural transformation

This thematic priority contributes mainly to the following outputs identified in the UNESCO Major Programme (41 C/5):

- Output 1.ED4 Learners equipped with relevant skills to meet individual, labour market and societal demands through literacy, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and higher education
- Output 2.ED9 Education and learning reimagined through interdisciplinary research, foresight and public policy debate;
- Output 7.ED3 Learners empowered to lead healthy lives, promote sustainable development and engage with the world as creative and responsible global citizens.



Addressing global challenges such as climate change, technical transition, demographic shifts and income inequality demands a multifaceted approach. While formal schooling is crucial, nonformal and informal education and learning, serve as an alternative and supplementary channel for advancing learning for people of all ages and backgrounds. The necessity to extend beyond formal settings is especially critical in rural areas, where the population could suffer from multiple forms of disadvantages that limit their access to education and learning opportunities.







kills development in rural communities has played a significant role in equipping learners with income-generating skills, benefiting them through improved livelihoods and enhanced quality of life. In response to the CONFINTEA VII Framework for Action, INRULED aims to highlight the potential of skills development activities in fostering more equitable and sustainable societies. Building on the knowledge, expertise and partnership accumulated, especially in contributing to the implementation of the Community Learning Centres (CLCs) programme, INRULED will further advance this thematic area through research, advocacy, and capacity building efforts to promote not only the skills that lead to better economic outcomes, but also on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare rural communities for transition into digital and green economies and become key drivers of sustainable development. Therefore, a lifelong learning perspective and an inclusive, needsbased, community-oriented and contextspecific approach will be taken throughout INRULED's work in this grea.



Key actions under this thematic area include:

- Strengthen the capacities of educators in delivering functional literacy, production skills and labour market skills training programmes in rural communities for improved livelihoods and decent work;
- Dedicate intensive efforts in promoting entrepreneurship and innovations to foster equitable and sustainable rural development and to empower rural youth, adult, women, and older citizens to become change agents at local levels in "the learning village";
- Promote the incorporation of indigenous culture and knowledge in skills development programming to ensure inclusiveness in programme delivery, to empower rural learners as creative citizens, and to diversify local economic activities;
- Accumulate evidence to showcase the transformative power of rural skills development to inform policymaking;
- Establish regional and international partnerships and networks to enhance knowledge sharing and collaboration.



Empowering girls and women through education for rural development





This cross-cutting thematic area contributes mainly to the following outputs identified in the UNESCO Major Programme (41 C/5):

- OUTPUT 1.ED2 Gender transformative education systems empower learners, ensure safe learning environments and address the educational barriers, particularly for girls and women, exacerbated by the learning crisis
- OUTPUT 8.ED8 Technologies and digital innovations leveraged to ensure more inclusive, effective and relevant learning
- OUTPUT 2.ED9 Education and learning reimagined through interdisciplinary research, foresight and public policy debate

Despite progress achieved in girls' and women's access to education and improved educational outcomes, gender gaps in educational opportunities and quality still remain a severe issue. The COVID-19 has exacerbated existing exclusion, discrimination and violence, especially against girls and women, and such social inequalities have been replicated and perpetuated with the transition to the digital age. Alongside the huge development in technologies and digital innovations, new gender gaps are seen and inequalities deepened, in girls' and women's access to technology facilities, media and information literacy, digital skills, etc., leaving millions of girls and women behind on seizing the critical opportunity presented by technology for individual empowerment and societal development.

A renewed focus on girls' and women's education and targeted intervention towards girls and women are needed. Responding to the UNESCO Strategy for Gender Equality in and through Education 2019-2025, INRULED aims to promote girls' and women's education in rural areas, advance skills development to unlock girls' and women's potential, especially the digital skills, and prepare them for future life and work, so as to achieving gender equality in and through education, contributing to achieving the Education 2030 Agenda.

INRULED's key actions in this field include:

- Strengthen research and identification of best practices in advancing girls' and women's education for reflection and foresight that contribute to achieving gender equality through education;
- Promote enhanced commitment to girls' and women's education by advancing cooperation and joint initiatives, including through hosting international symposiums and develop platforms for international exchanges, knowledge sharing, and strategic alliance;
- 🖻 Undertake study on digital literacy for girls to benchmark the existing best practices, develop a repository of resources, analyse the prospect of digital literacy education for girls, and formulate recommendations for closing the digital gender divide;
- Create a replicable model for promoting digital literacy for girls that leads to sustained positive changes on the policy level through measures including developing gender-responsive pedagogy, supporting the capacity building of educators, and advocating for female role models in the digital realm;
- Promote the well-being and professional development of female rural teachers, through research and knowledge production to inform policy and enhance capacity development;
- Enhance the empowerment of rural women for better economic participation in the world of work, for example in creative and cultural industries, and for social participation in the rural community, especially by identifying and advocating for women role models in "the learning village".

Leveraging technology for rural education and development



This cross-cutting thematic area contributes mainly to the following outputs identified by the UNESCO Major Programme (41 C/5):

- Output 1.ED4 Learners equipped with relevant skills to meet individual, labour market and societal demands through literacy, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and higher education;
- Output 8.ED8 Technologies and digital innovations leveraged to ensure more inclusive, effective and relevant learning
- Output 2.ED9 Education and learning reimagined through interdisciplinary research, foresight and public policy debate









echnological application in rural areas brings both great promises and deeper divides. It has the potential to enhance the access to and quality of education for the rural population, enable and empower personal and professional development and promote lifelong learning and social innovations in rural communities and beyond. However, it also has the risk to deepen existing inequalities, as it generally incurs high cost and requires relatively high competencies for both the system and the stakeholders to adapt to and make good use of technology, which put further strains on the existing fragile education and learning system in rural areas. INRULED advocates for a human-centred approach toward technology in education for rural development. Responding to UNESCO's Strategy on Technological Innovation in Education (2022-2025), which prioritises technological innovation to expand educational opportunities and the quality of teaching and learning for the most marginalised, INRULED will work to make sure that technology applications serve the interests of the disadvantaged rural people. This will include prioritising technology in education that addresses the learning needs and challenges faced by the rural people, promoting the empowerment of the education system, teachers and learners across the formal, informal and nonformal settings by strengthened investment in digital leadership and competency, and steering technology application towards improved teaching innovations and learning outcomes, so as to contributes to enhanced teaching and learning in rural areas that accelerates rural development.

Key actions in this thematic area include:

- Strengthening digital leadership and competency development for rural teachers and the teaching personnel, teacher education institutions, TVET school leaders, policy makers, academia and other development practitioners;
- Promoting identification of best practices and models of technology in education for rural development, especially the ones that are affordable, effective and sustainable;
- Promoting comparative study on ICT-enhanced small-size schools in rural areas to identify potentials, promises and challenges of technology application in rural education to lead innovation and foresight;
- Incorporating the technological perspective into the initiative for building "the learning village" that advocates for lifelong learning opportunities for the rural community;
- Promoting policy dialogue and exchanges in technology in rural education, especially through the organisation of the annual Forum on Smart Village and Rural Education Transformation;
- Strengthening cooperation and partnership within UNESCO family and across the academia, development partners, and social organisations, especially with UNESCO IITE, UNESCO Bangkok, UNESCO Multi-Sectoral Office in East Asia, Smart Learning Institute and the UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence and Education at Beijing Normal University.









Reseach and knowledge production



Capacity development



Policy dialogue and advocacy



Information Sharing and networking



Research and knowledge production

🧻 esearch and knowledge production are essential for INRULED to fulfill its functions and mission. It promotes evidence accumulation, reflection and foresight that informs policy, provides knowledge base for capacity development, and builds common ground for information sharing and networking. Despite attention and importance on issues of education and rural development, data, evidence and knowledge concerning rural education and development remain inadequate. Within the UNESCO family partners, INRULED is the only category 2 centre mandated with a mission to work in the field of "education for sustainable rural development" to promote educational research and training for the rural population. Building on the expertise of the hosting University and mobilising intelligence and resources across the world, INRULED will advance joint research and collective knowledge production concerning rural education and development, especially in its five thematic areas, to advance theoretical exploration, development of techniques and methods, and reflection on diverse practices in rural education and development, to inform policy, identify innovative solutions, and guide practices in rural education and development.

Previously with the production of a series of knowledge products, including books, pamphlets, training manuals, references, edited volumes and research reports, such as the Practices of Poverty Alleviation through Education in China, Reference for Education Response to Public Health Crisis, Guide to Develop a Support System for Rural Teachers, INRULED has responded to challenges and emerging needs in rural education and development and accumulated knowledge, evidence and expertise to better inform policies and practices. Going forward, INRULED will strengthen its work on research and knowledge to better inform its work in the thematic areas, and tailor its knowledge products to be more user-friendly to its major audience, including the policy-makers, teachers and learners, and the general public, so that larger impact can be generated for its work.

Policy dialogue and advocacy

nolicy dialogue and advocacy promotes international exchanges and mutual learning, strengthens political commitment, and facilitates consensus building and international cooperation. INRULED will promote policy dialogue and advocacy through the organisation of conferences, forums, seminars, consultations and education talks, and engage multi-stakeholders in promoting rural education and development. Building on INRULED's connections with the member states, the academia, international organisations, social organisations and the private sector, INRULED will organise diverse forms of policy dialogue and advocacy activities, to build platforms, establish networks and expand its partnership.

Previously with the organisation of diverse conferences and events, including the International Symposium on the Roles of Poverty Alleviation Through Education Under the Framework of 2030 Agenda, China-Africa Deans of Education Forum, China-Southeast Asian Symposium on "Towards Ecological Civilisation: Education for Sustainable Rural Development", INRULED has expanded its cooperation and partnership especially with Africa and the South-East Asia. Going forward, INRULED will continue to host these thematic conferences and symposiums, to expand and deepen partnerships, and move further to establish alliances and networks, to sustain the political commitment and generate renewed momentum for long-term impact and influence.

Capacity development

 apacity development programmes directly empower rural education stakeholders, including policy-makers, teachers and learners. Based on the needs identified through research and knowledge, and policy dialogue and exchanges, INRULED designs and implements relevant and effective capacity development programmes that caters to the demands of the member states. Relying on INRULED's close connection to the governments, higher education institutions, and development partners, and considering its institutional capacity, INRULED's capacity development programmes are more directed to policy-makers, academia, and development practitioners, in forms of workshops, training and study visits, to offer guidance and support that strengthens leadership and collective commitment for rural education and development.

Building on its capacity development programmes previously organised, including the International Workshop on Developing Support System for Rural Teachers for ASEAN Countries, Capacity-building Workshop for Teachers and TTI Tutors from South Sudan, Workshop on Education and Training for Rural Transformation for Mekong Countries, INRULED has strengthened the capacity of the participants in promoting education and rural development, formed wide networks and expanded its impact and visibility. Going forward, INRULED will strengthen its capacity development programmes, especially under the thematic areas of "quality teachers" and "skills development", to promote strengthened commitment, leadership and capacity for the provision of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for the rural population.

Information sharing and networking

nformation sharing and networking forms an Important pillar of INRULED's work. Through information sharing and networking, INRULED keeps its relevance and visibility both within its thematic areas and in the larger picture of the field of rural education and development, becoming a knowledge, information and resources highland for international exchanges and cooperation in this field, also contributing to expanded public attention, awareness and engagement towards promoting rural education and development.

By developing a digital platform that promotes the aggregation and dissemination of valuable information and resources related to rural education, strengthening INRULED's knowledge production, presence and outreach in the thematic fields of INRULED's mandate, building networks and alliances, and appealing to potential partners and the general public through multiple channels, including through INRULED's work on communication and branding, INRULED will strengthen information sharing and networking across its thematic focuses, so as to contribute to wide resource mobilisation and public engagement for its work.















Communication: strengthening outreach and enhancing international visibility

ommunication is important for INRULED to expand its visibility and impact. It helps to form a strong narrative of INRULED's contribution to the 2030 Agenda, and appeal to its development partners and potential donors, thus enhancing cooperation opportunities and resource mobilisation. Communication also helps INRULED to reach out to its audience with relatively low-cost, especially the youth and learners. To enhance communication to better reach out to its audience, INRULED will upgrade its website to ensure timely presentation of its work and progress, better visualise its work and products so as to promote user-friendly information delivery, better manage and maintain its social media channels, including Wechat public account, Bilibili, Linkedin, and Twitter to reach out to the general public, so as to enhance international visibility and encourage public attention and engagement for INRULED's work.

INRULED will also launch communication campaigns to engage the niche group not primarily reached by its main lines of actions, including the youth, the young scholars and the front-line practitioners by organising tailored programmes that cater to their needs, for example by organising youth session in its conferences and open talks with the front-line practitioners. The content for communication will also be upgraded to help better shape INRULED's professional identity and enhancing its relevance. Instead of communication for a plain description of its work, INRULED will strengthen knowledge synthesis and production so as to better serve its audience and encourage knowledge accumulation.



Governance: building a responsive, high-performing, and learning institution

A strong institution requires robust and efficient management mechanisms and sustained investment in staff and workforce. Governed and guided by the Governing Board, with UNESCO, member states, China and BNU representation, and led by a professional management team, INRULED establishes the administrative office, the project sector, and the communication and outreach sector, to implement and support its work on the ground. Going forward, INRULED will strengthen its management mechanism, strengthen staff recruitment, professional development and performance management, to build a responsive, high-performing and learning institution that helps INRULED to effectively deliver its functions and objectives.

To achieve this, INRULED will improve its management mechanism and human resource development in better alignment with that of UNESCO and strengthen staff exchanges and learning within the UNESCO family.

Partnerships: working as a network

artnerships are vital for INRULED to strengthen its work and maximise its impact. Throughout the implementation of its main actions of research and knowledge production, policy dialogue and advocacy, capacity development and information sharing and networking, partnership building is emphasised to encourage collective commitments and actions. Applying the method of working as a network, INRULED also works to identify expertise and mobilise resources for the needed, so as to facilitate cooperation and exchanges that helps to expand its reach and influence. So far INRULED has established extensive partnerships within the UNESCO family, including with UNESCO IICBA, UIL, UNESCO Bangkok, APCEIU, across the Ministries and local governments in China, including with the city of Dujiangyan, Ningbo and Qufu, with academia, including with AIT and Stockholm University, as well as with other international and social organisations, and with media. Going forward, INRULED will further expand its partnerships to generate larger synergy and impact for its work.





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