Introduction

The 1st and 2nd Industrial Revolutions had increased productivity and raised the living standards around the world during the 18th and 19th centuries. However, the technological innovations witnessed during the 3rd Industrial Revolution – the Digital Revolution (e.g., social media apps, cashless transactions, gig economy, that have made a significant impact on our lives), have moved rapidly into the sphere of the Internet of Things, nanotechnology, quantum computing and more, marking the advent of the 4th Industrial Revolution. Artificial intelligence (AI), self-driving cars, robotic surgery and so on during this phase of development has captured the attention of governments, businesses and the public alike. Blurring the boundaries between physical, digital and human interactions, the outcomes of the 4th Industrial Revolution are both exciting and worrisome. Perhaps the eventuality of robots taking over the world is far-fetched, but the use of AI in the workplace is already a fact in many industries, raising much discussions and debates about the future of work and employment.

A recent OECD report noted that about 14% of jobs in OECD countries can be automated, while another 32% of jobs will face substantial changes in how they are conducted. Additionally, young people will find it difficult to enter the labour market as entry-level positions have a higher risk of automation than jobs held by older workers.1 This observation is reinforced by a YouGov Omnibus study in Malaysia which revealed that young Malaysians aged 18 and 24 are most concerned about losing their jobs to robots, while only 18% of older Malaysians above 45 years had the same concern.2

To address the challenges presented by the 4th Industrial Revolution and related job uncertainties, we need people who are visionary, creative, committed, resourceful, flexible, risk takers, motivated, tenacious – all traits of an entrepreneur who, according to Joseph Schumpeter, is a dynamic agent of change who drives economic progress through his/her “creative destruction”. Almost a century later, “disruption” and “digital transformation” are now the new buzzwords among entrepreneurs and the corporate world. In this light, entrepreneurship has to be an integral part of the responses for meeting the challenges of human and machine interface during the 4th Industrial Revolution when the “speed, sophistication and profound impact of digital technologies are integrated into various conventional industries at a massive scale that has never been seen before in the history of humanity”.3

Remembering that entrepreneurship, as defined by Schumpeter, is more than just starting a new business, but rather the introduction of revolutionary transformations in thinking and practices, entrepreneurship education has to equip the youth of today with the attributes and skills needed for the 4th Industrial Revolution. To do so, the education system itself has to adapt to the technological changes to ensure that the curriculum, pedagogy and learning outcomes match the demands of a new era of human-machine collaboration.

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The 8th UNESCO-APEID Meeting on Entrepreneurship Education

The UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok, Thailand, established the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net) in 2012 to enhance entrepreneurship education in the Asia-Pacific region. With an interest in a broad range of issues to support entrepreneurship education, the EE-Net aims to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal 4-Education 2030 Agenda to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all in a vibrant and prosperous region. Special attention is given to Sustainable Development Goal 4.4, which targets to substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

For the past seven years, the annual EE-Net meetings organized with the support of EE-Net members had provided an avenue for sharing information and experiences on topical issues related to entrepreneurship education. This year, in collaboration with the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO and Zhejiang University, supported by UNESCO Chair in Entrepreneurial Education at Zhejiang University and UNESCO EE-Net National Chapter in China, UNESCO Bangkok is convening the 8th UNESCO-APEID Meeting on Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurship Education for the 4th Industrial Revolution, on 9-11 October 2019 in Hangzhou, China. Bringing together policymakers, academics and practitioners, the meeting aims to discuss how entrepreneurship education can equip students with relevant knowledge, skills and aptitudes in preparation for the 4th Industrial Revolution, and explore partnerships to facilitate the digital transformation of entrepreneurship education in the region.

Objectives of the meeting

The specific objectives of the meeting are to:

• Identify potential impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution on education;
• Discuss entrepreneurship education responses to meet the demands of the 4th Industrial Revolution;
• Share good practices of entrepreneurship education in preparing youth for the 4th Industrial Revolution; and
• Explore partnerships and collaborations among EE-Net members in meeting these demands.

The discussions and recommendations from the meeting will help participants review and update their entrepreneurship education in accordance to their countries’ priorities for the 4th Industrial Revolution, and forge partnerships for future collaboration to enhance entrepreneurship education to meet the SDG 4 and SDG 4.4 targets.

Participants

About 80 international participants are expected to attend the meeting. They include representatives from government agencies, educational institutions, private sector, civil society and international organizations. The Chinese hosts will cover local costs including accommodation (4 nights, checking in on 8 October 2019 and checking out on 12 October 2019), field trip and meals during the meeting. Participants will have to cover their own travel costs to Hangzhou and other expenses.

Since space is limited, those interested in attending the meeting must submit an application form (available on the meeting website) by Friday, 2 August 2019. Participants will be selected based on their potential contribution to the objectives of the 8th UNESCO-APEID meeting as well as their commitment to the common vision and long-term goals. Those selected to participate in the meeting will be notified by Friday, 23 August 2019.

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