

CATEC NEWSLETTER

ADVANCING CHINA-AFRICA COLLABORATION FOR HIGH-QUALITY TEACHER EDUCATION



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CATEC: A Shared China-Africa Vision for Teacher Education

Recalling the UN SDG4 “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, echoing the mission of IICBA “empowering teachers for all learners to thrive”, and building on the 2023 consensus of the Network of China-Africa Institutes of Education, Beijing Normal University officially established the **China-Africa Teacher Education Center (CATEC)** in **September 2024** to empower teachers and learners across China and Africa.

CATEC serves as a dedicated platform to strengthen cooperation in teacher education between China and Africa through dialogue, capacity building, and knowledge exchange.

CATEC motto: Together, for better teacher, for better education, for a shared Ubuntu future



CATEC Key Actions in 2025

In 2025, CATEC launched flagship initiatives to strengthen teacher capacity building, promote best-practice exchange, and provide evidence-based support for education policy across China and Africa



CATEC Unveiling Ceremony – September 2024

CATEC Strategic Pillars

Policy Dialogue

Advance China-Africa dialogue on Teacher Education policy

Capacity Building

Strengthen pre-service and in-service teacher training through on-site and virtual programs

Knowledge Exchange

Share best practices & evidence-based research

China–Africa Education Cooperation: Historical Roots and Major Initiatives



Historical Roots (1950–1960)

China-Africa education cooperation dates back to the **1950s**, with the **1955** first large-scale Asian–African Conference (Bandung Conference) marking its historical starting point. During the conference, representatives from African countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt engaged in-depth discussions with delegates from China and other Asian countries on shared concerns including peace, and cooperation.

A major milestone followed in **1963–1964**, when **Zhou Enlai**, the first Premier of the People’s Republic of China, paid a historic visit to 10 newly independent African countries and formally articulated the *“Eight Principles of China’s Foreign Aid.”*

Cooperation Expansion and Major Initiatives (1960-2025)

Nowadays, since the launch of **FOCAC** in 2000 and the **Belt and Road Initiative** in 2013, China–Africa education cooperation has expanded from language training through over **60 Confucius Institutes** in Africa to a broader focus on capacity building across basic, vocational, and higher education, with a growing emphasis on **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** and a shift from an aid-oriented model to a more mutual partnership.

Major initiatives include the **20+20 Universities Cooperation Program**, now expanded to **100 partner universities**, and **Luban Workshops**, alongside STEM teacher training, digital skills development, and integrated Chinese language and vocational skills programs, notably supported by Confucius Institutes. Digital literacy initiatives are further strengthened through UNESCO-ICHEI and IIOE. Scholarships remain central, as early as 2018 China was already hosting **81,562** African students, according to China’s Ministry of Education. Under the FOCAC framework (2025–2027), cooperation will emphasize digital education, vocational training, and teacher capacity building.

Teachers at the Heart of Africa’s Education Reform: Insights from the Pan-African Conference on Teacher Education (PACTED 2025)

From 1 to 3 October 2025, the Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI) of the African Union Commission, with support from the European Union through the Regional Teachers Initiative for Africa (RTIA), hosted the Pan-African Conference on Teacher Education (PACTED 2025) at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa. Held under the theme “*Advancing Strategies for Teacher Training, Recognition, and Professional Development*”, the conference brought together policymakers, education leaders, practitioners, and partners to exchange experiences, share best practices, and strengthen collective efforts to advance teacher education across the continent.



Conference Group Photo

During the conference, panel discussions focused on the growing importance of digital innovation, data-informed policymaking, strengthening teacher education systems and inter-regional collaboration in revitalizing teaching as a profession. Participants stressed the need for greater investment in teacher well-being, fair pay, leadership opportunities, and low-resource pedagogies, while acknowledging ongoing challenges like teacher shortages, limited training, low morale, and lack of recognition.



High-Level African Education Leaders at PACTED 2025

The conference also launched a **multilingual digital platform for African teachers** under the Africa Teachers Forum, available in English, French, Arabic, and Swahili, with plans for African language expansion. The platform offers shared resources, peer exchange, and professional development.

The 2025 edition of PACTED is distinctive as it is held in conjunction with the 2025 African Union Continental Teachers’ Awards, the launch of the Continental Community of Practice platform for teachers, and the commemoration of World Teachers’ Day. Furthermore, PACTED 2025 marks the commencement of the African Union’s Decade of Accelerated Action for the Transformation of Education and Skills Development (2025–2034), in alignment with the Continental TVET Strategy (CTVET-34) and the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA).

CATEC Highlights: Key Activities Carried Out in 2025



CATEC Established the East Africa Branch Center In Tanzania



The 4th China-Africa Deans' Forum Held on the African Continent for the First Time



CATEC organized an advanced leadership training program for African School Principals



CATEC Successfully hosted a Summer School Program focused on Education

Theoretical Framework and Practical Case Studies of STEM Curriculum

Prof. Jingying Wang, Doctoral Supervisor
Research Institute of Science Education-BNU
Deputy Director Committee Member, Science Education Committee of Beijing Society for the Science of Learning
Secretary-General, Science Teaching Committee of the Teaching Steering Committee for Basic Education, Ministry of Education

CATEC successfully developed an online STEM training platform for African Teachers

A New Chapter in China-Africa Cooperation: CATEC Launches East Africa Branch Center in Tanzania

From October 30 to November 2, 2025, Beijing Normal University (BNU) paid an official visit to the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) in Tanzania to establish CATEC branch center in East Africa. The visit brought together key representatives from BNU's Faculty of Education and the International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education, including Professor Zhu Xudong, Dean of the Faculty of Education, Professor Teng Jun, Vice Dean, as well as other faculty members and staff. This visit marks a significant step in strengthening educational ties between China and Africa.



Agreement Signature

As a key milestone in China-Africa cooperation under FOCAC, this project emphasizes the significance of mutual respect, long-term commitment, and shared development goals. This collaboration, in fact, ushers in a new era of educational exchange and development between China and Africa.

The visit concluded successfully, with both parties agreeing to strengthen teacher workforce development in China and Africa, followed by an unveiling ceremony to finalize the agreement.



Unveiling ceremony

During the visit, the two institutions signed a cooperation agreement and officially inaugurated CATEC's branch center in East Africa, opening a new chapter in China-Africa educational collaboration. This milestone initiative aims to strengthen teacher capacity building, promote academic exchange, advance policy dialogue, and serve as a regional hub for disseminating CATEC's educational resources across East Africa.



Signed Agreement

A Historic Milestone: The 4th China–Africa Deans’ Forum Held on the African Continent for the First Time



Forum group photo

From November 3 to 6, 2025, the 4th China–Africa Deans of Education Forum was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, marking its first occurrence on the African continent and a major milestone in China–Africa educational cooperation. More than 30 delegates, including 11 deans from African schools of education and 14 from Chinese universities, participated in this historic event.



Prof TENG Jun delivers a presentation at the plenary session

Forum Highlights

Theme: “*Research and Development of Teacher Education in the Digital Era.*”

Keynote: Professor TENG Jun, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Education at Beijing Normal University, delivered a keynote address and participated in a panel discussion, exploring global trends in teacher education and future research needs.

Sub-forums: This year’s forum included **four sub-forums**. Deans at Sub-forum 1 and 2 discussed digital education, AI in China–Africa teacher education, online course and learning resource development. Sub-forums 3 and 4 highlighted challenges in teachers’ digital skills and explored multi-stakeholder collaboration in AI-supported teacher development and strategies to reduce teacher shortages.



Sub-forums

A Historic Milestone: The 4th China–Africa Deans’ Forum Held on the African Continent for the First Time

The Forum also featured a roundtable session, during which representatives exchanged views on the future development of the China–Africa Deans of Education Forum and reaffirmed their commitment to leveraging the existing platform to strengthen regular exchanges and deepen substantive, project-based cooperation, with the aim of building the Forum into a high-level platform for innovation in China–Africa teacher education.

Moreover, the Forum has been held for four consecutive years, bringing together nearly 70 deans and representatives from schools of education across China and Africa, and its international influence has continued to grow. The 2025 Forum was particularly significant, as it marked the first time that Chinese normal universities participated in the event as a delegation, as well as the first occasion on which they conducted in-depth visits to African universities and primary and secondary schools, enabling participants to gain first-hand insights into local educational contexts and practices.



The Chinese delegation visits the AU Headquarters



China-Africa Representatives visit Addis Ababa University

In addition, Following the forum, the Chinese delegation paid an official visit to the African Union headquarters and held discussions with officials from the AU. Both sides reached a consensus on strengthening cooperation in principal training, pre-service teacher education and online course development.

Participants also visited the College of Education at Addis Ababa University and Menelik II School to gain deeper insights into educational practices in Ethiopia.

Looking ahead, the forum will continue to develop into a flagship platform for international exchange, advance the implementation of China-Africa education cooperation initiatives, and work jointly toward building a China-Africa education community that contributes to sustainable development.

Strengthening School Leadership Capacity in Africa: CATEC Hosts Advanced Training for Principals and Teacher-Education Researchers



Group photo of some Participants with the CATEC team

In the principals' exchange session, distinguished principals from Zhuhai, including LI Caifang (participant of the National Advanced Training Program for Outstanding Primary School Principals), LIU Ling (member of the first cohort of the National Leading Principals Program), SUN Fei (member of the second cohort of the National Leading Principals Program), and YAN Wengui (participant of the National Training Program for Key Primary School Principals), shared best practices and institutional challenges from their respective schools and engaged in in-depth discussions with African school principals.



Barbara Mulelemba, Secondary School Principal with Chinese students

The Advanced Leadership Training Program for African Primary and Secondary School Principals officially commenced on 15 November 2025 at the Zhuhai Campus of BNU. It featured a rich array of activities, including thematic lectures, attendance at the China Education Innovation Expo forums, exchange session with Chinese primary and secondary school principals, and field visits to local schools in Zhuhai.



China-Africa principals' exchange session group photo

During the lecture session, Professor Li Jiayong walked participants through Chinese history, culture, and the structure of China's education system.

Throughout the school visit, Principal SUN Fei and the Experimental School of Xiangzhou District, Zhuhai, made thorough preparations, engaging both teachers and students in the activities. The lively settings and rich content of each session left a strong impression on the visiting group.

Strengthening School Leadership Capacity in Africa: CATEC Hosts Advanced Training for Principals and Teacher-Education Researchers



Mobile Phone-Based Science Experiment Workshop

At the China Education Innovation Expo, participants attended several forums, including “Digital Intelligence and Evidence-Based Approaches: AI-Driven Paradigms for Teaching, Evaluation, Research, and Professional Development,” “BNU Project-Based Learning Forum: Normalizing Project-Based Learning,” and “Sub-Forum of the First National Conference on Science Education for Primary and Secondary Schools: Science Education in Action.” They also joined the workshop on “Mobile Phone-Based Science Experiments”. During the Expo, participants were also interviewed jointly by China Daily, China.com news, and Xinhua News Agency.



Participants attending the AI forum

Participants gained a comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of the development trajectory and remarkable achievements of the Chinese education, particularly basic education. They experienced the role of reform and opening-up in advancing China’s economic development and educational and cultural progress, observed the strong commitment and support the Chinese government provides to the education sector, and developed an appreciation for the country’s digital transformation in education. They also witnessed the high-quality facilities, resources, and the teacher-student relationships in Chinese primary and secondary schools.

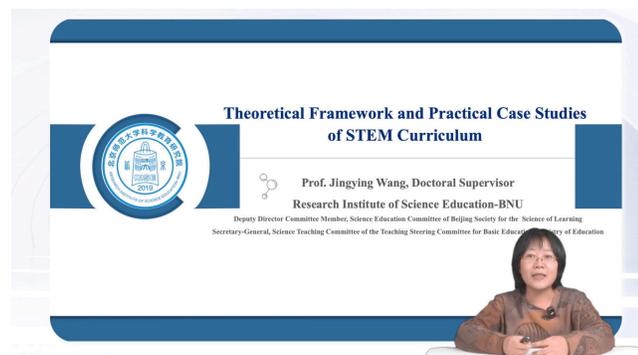


Training completion group photo

The training concluded successfully, and all participants received certificates of completion. Post-training feedback indicated a high level of satisfaction among the participants, who expressed strong interest in continuing collaboration with Beijing Normal University in the future.

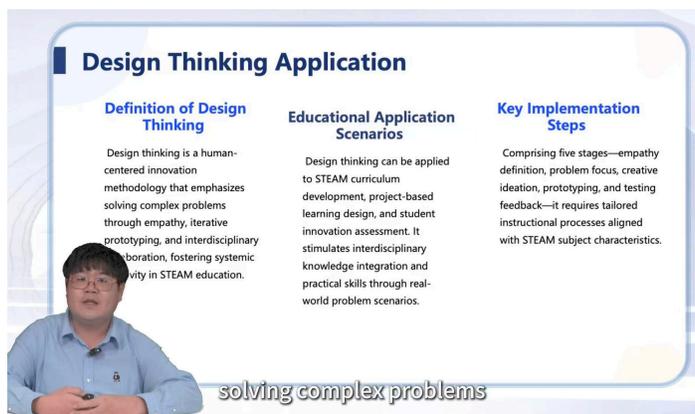
CATEC successfully developed an online STEM training platform offering courses for African teachers

As one of CATEC's key initiatives in 2025, an online platform offering STEM courses for African teachers was officially launched this year. To support the development of the platform, CATEC established a dedicated expert team responsible for designing the overall training framework and developing initial bilingual learning resources for a series of online STEM teacher training courses. To date, approximately ten STEM training courses have been completed.



Prof. Jingying Wang delivering an online course on STEM curriculum

A major strength of this initiative lies in its close alignment with the actual needs of STEM education in African countries. By positioning STEM teachers as the core beneficiaries, the program responds directly to regional demands for modernized and practice-oriented teacher education. The teaching cases developed through the project emphasize foundational instructional skills, the effective use of digital tools, as well as assessment and reflective practices, helping to address persistent shortages in high-quality teacher training resources.



Prof. JianHong Ye delivering an online course on STEAM Education

The courses place strong emphasis on digital instructional approaches in STEM education, integrating both theoretical and practical components. Key areas of focus include robotics programming, 3D printing, low-cost experiment-based teaching, and interdisciplinary curriculum integration. Through these targeted training modules, the program aims to strengthen STEM teaching capacity and improve classroom practice across diverse educational contexts in Africa.

All courses are recorded and uploaded to the **Shidao Cloud platform**, where participating teachers can log in to access the training materials at their convenience. The program is expected to benefit approximately 500 STEM teachers across Africa. At present, the online courses are in their final preparation stage and will be released soon, enabling broader access to professional development opportunities in STEM education.

Building Bridges Through Education: CATEC Summer School Successfully Concluded

From 1 to 7 July, CATEC successfully hosted its Summer School at Beijing Normal University, bringing together participants from nine African countries. Based on the core framework of the Center and hosted by the Faculty of Education with support from the Institute of Education History and Culture, the program adopted the theme “Education Past and Present: A Dialogue Between China and the World.” A total of 15 participants were recruited, including 9 African students from Tanzania, Ghana, Liberia, and Rwanda, along with Chinese students. More than 10 distinguished scholars from China and abroad delivered thematic academic lectures. The program also included primary and secondary school visits, cultural excursions, and hands-on experiences related to traditional Chinese culture. Participants actively engaged in academic exchanges, campus museum visits, and cultural activities.



Summer School group photo

To be specific, during this week-long program, participants attended high-level lectures on child development, teacher education, and Chinese culture. They visited the BNU University History Museum, Sanfan Middle School, and BNU Experimental Primary School to explore China’s basic education practices, alongside cultural visits to the Temple of Heaven and the Confucius Temple & Imperial College. A workshop on The Beauty of Chinese Characters further enhanced their understanding of Chinese writing and culture.

On 7 July, participants presented summaries of their learning and observations and received certificates of completion during the closing ceremony. Feedback indicated strong appreciation for the program’s rich content and effective organization, as well as its contribution to participants’ understanding of China’s education system, culture, and China-Africa educational exchange.



Participants actively joined academic and cultural activities

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