

CHINA

China ranks 2nd in STEM education

Position aligns with nation’s drive for innovation and high-quality growth

By ZOU SHUO
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China ranks second globally in STEM education development, trailing only the United States, according to a new index released on Sunday by the Tongji University STEM Education think tank in Shanghai.

The Global STEM Education Development Index 2025, billed as the world’s first comprehensive evaluation tool for national and regional science, technology, engineering and mathematics education development, placed the US in the top position with 86.50 points. China followed closely with 85.46 points. Switzerland, Singapore and Denmark rounded out the top five countries.

The index, developed with academic guidance from the Chinese Society of Educational Development Strategy and data from Elsevier, systematically assessed the STEM education development levels of 40 major countries and regions worldwide. It established 22 indicators across three dimensions: policy and resources, educational processes, and outcomes and impacts, aiming to provide a scientific benchmark for optimizing national STEM education strategies.

A representative from Tongji University highlighted the increasing global technological competition, stating that STEM education has become a core pillar supporting national innovation capacity and high-quality development.

The release of the index is a direct response to a guideline jointly published in January by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council, which called for deepening international STEM education cooperation and creating internationally influential indexes and reports.

Further underscoring international recognition of China’s STEM practices is the establishment of UNESCO’s first Category 1 Center outside Europe and North America — the International Institute for STEM Education — in Shanghai.

The US’ top ranking was attributed to its strong institutional and resource advantages, particularly in education funding as a percentage of GDP, its per-student expenditure and abundant education resources.

Frosty fingers



Visitors cool off by touching ice cubes at the Lion Grove Garden, an ancient garden in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on Tuesday. As the city is experiencing high temperatures, the garden provides chilly respite to beat the heat. WANG JIANKANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Sharpshooters showcase skills



Snipers test the performance of their weapons before a competition event of the Sharp Blade-2025 International Sniper Competition on Tuesday at a training base of the People’s Armed Police Force in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. Over 50 sniper teams from 20-plus countries participated in the competition. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Shanghai to support content creators

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
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Shanghai will encourage internet platforms and multichannel networks to sign contracts with high-quality internet content creators from overseas and will streamline visa processing for them, according to a document the city unveiled on Tuesday.

The city will also encourage creators from China and abroad to help promote Shanghai’s international image, providing support to showcase Chinese cultural intellectual property globally, the document said. The policy package, comprising nine measures, aims to bolster high-quality internet content creation and foster a healthy industry environment.

The document, jointly released by the publicity department of the Shanghai municipal Party committee and the committee’s cyberspace administration, said creators with significant overseas influence would receive support in content production resources, distribution channels and service guarantees.

Authorities expect high-quality online content to play a key role in telling China’s stories and showcasing Shanghai to the world. The measures aim to cultivate new cultural productivity and enhance the city’s soft power.

“Recognizing the rapid growth of the internet content creation industry, Shanghai remains committed to supporting relevant enterprises and talent, particularly young individuals, in realizing their aspirations within the city,” the authorities said in a statement.

“We hope that through stronger policy guidance and support, we’ll further the creation of high-quality content on the internet, better promoting mainstream values and cultures,” the statement said.

The measures include funding incentives, talent strategies, scene creation and overseas support, targeting a diverse group of creators such as bloggers, signed authors, entrepreneurial teams and influencers with multichannel network contracts.

The city plans to support the establishment of clusters for globally influential internet content in its Huangpu and Yangpu districts.

Authorities cited Huangpu’s urban-focused scientific and technological service system, which welcomed 480 new private science and technology enterprises last year. Huangpu is also home to the headquarters of social media platform Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, attracting creators in finance, technology and fashion.

Meanwhile, Yangpu has seen growth in the digital economy, with more than 8,000 digital economy enterprises. Chinese video platform Bilibili’s headquarters are located in Yangpu, attracting multichannel networks and other content platforms.

Shanghai’s plan also includes providing creators with greater access to public resources and creative spaces and facilitating collaborations with cultural venues, landmark scenic spots, unique neighborhoods, fashion spaces and major exhibitions. The city will support partnerships between State-owned enterprises, mainstream media and

content creators.

Content creators expressed optimism about Shanghai’s potential as fertile ground for internet content production. A team operating a science popularization short video account with around 2 million followers on Bilibili attributed its rapid growth to Shanghai’s policy support, platform resources and enriched surrounding ecosystem.

In an interview with Shanghai-based news portal ThePaper.cn, team leader Ren Mimi said being a creator in Shanghai is like “sowing seeds in luminous soil”, where one receives both nourishment and recognition, affirming the meaningfulness of their work.

Tobias Le Compte, a Belgian musician known as Tobias or Gao Yue who shares daily experiences in fluent Shanghai dialect via short videos, said he is interested in promoting Shanghai’s image globally and sharing authoritative information through his posts.

“Actually I made some videos about policy promotion previously, including visa-free and transit visa policies. I did this out of love for Shanghai, and I think it’s meaningful,” said Le Compte, 35, a multi-instrumentalist and chief operating officer of Montreux Jazz Festival China.

“I hope internet content creators from overseas like us will be provided with opportunities to walk in historical buildings in Shanghai to learn more about their stories and make videos for audiences in China and globally,” he said. “Also, I hope the authorities can use their resources to forward our posts and videos to make our products more visible.”

German family’s donated photos show Japan’s 1930s bombing of Guangzhou

By ZHENG CAIXIONG and LI WENFANG in Guangzhou

Newly discovered photographs collected by German photojournalist Robert Lebeck in the 1930s, documenting Japan’s invasion of China, will be displayed at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province, at the end of August. The photos, recently donated by Lebeck’s son, Oscar Lebeck, offer new evidence of Japan’s bombing of the southern metropolis and the devastation it caused.

The collection, which includes images of Japanese military vehicles, displaced children and ravaged streets, had been hidden in a basement for 87 years until Oscar Lebeck accidentally found them while sorting his father’s belongings after his death a decade ago. A pink note on the album’s cover, written in German, read: “Japan’s bombing of Guangzhou”.

Oscar Lebeck believes his father collected the photos from another source.

“The photographs show civilian victims without exception,” said Oscar Lebeck, a German artist. “Many of the victims were children. Their faces, their bodies, frozen in moments of suffering, make the



Oscar Lebeck holds up his father’s photo album with Wu Chongqing of Sun Yat-sen University on July 4. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

inhuman dimensions of the war visible.”

He noted that the photos underscore the brutality unleashed against civilians during Japan’s invasion of China, particularly recalling events such as the Nanjing Massacre.

The exhibition at Sun Yat-sen University will commemorate the 80th anniversary of victory in the Chinese People’s War of Resistance

Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War.

Oscar Lebeck traveled to Guangzhou in July at the university’s invitation to formally donate the collection of photographs to the Sun Yat-sen University museum.

Zhang Wei, director of the Office of Humanities and Social Sciences at Sun Yat-sen University, described the photos as crucial historical reminders and symbols of the desire for peace. Wu Chongqing, deputy dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, emphasized that the photos highlight Chinese people’s resilience and sacrifice during a period of significant national disparity.

Wu Jiahao, a postdoctoral scholar at Sun Yat-sen University, said the authenticity of the photos had been confirmed with an appraisal certificate from the German auction house Galerie Bassege, following nearly a year of research and cross-time zone communication.

The university plans to use the exhibition as an opportunity to delve deeper into the photos’ contents, share the stories they depict and encourage reflection on history and the importance of peace.

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Dialogue key to inclusive human rights

By QIN FENG in Xi’an and LIU BOQIAN

The 2025 China-Central Asia Human Rights Development Forum convened on Tuesday in Xi’an, Shaanxi province, as part of efforts to deepen regional cooperation on human rights.

More than 60 participants, including government officials, scholars and leaders of human rights institutions and social organizations from China and Central Asian countries, attended the event. The forum builds on momentum from the China-Central Asia Summit held in Astana, Kazakhstan, in mid-June.

The gathering focused on cultural diversity, Asian values, global human rights governance and the concept of a community with a shared future for humanity.

During the opening ceremony, Xie Fuzhan, chairman of the China Foundation for Human Rights Development, said human rights are a hallmark of human civilization. He called the full realization of human rights a shared aspiration and an essential part of building a closer China-Central Asia community.

Emphasizing the value of cultural diversity, Xie said “civilizations differ by region, not by merit”, adding that China and Central Asian nations, each with rich, ancient traditions, should learn from one another and work together to advance human rights protection.

Sheradil Baktygulov, director of the Institute for World Policy Study in Kyrgyzstan, told China Daily there should not be a one-size-fits-all model for human rights development worldwide. He praised China’s achievements in eradicating poverty and combating disease, calling the forum an invaluable opportunity for mutual learning.

Mirzatillo Tillabaev, first deputy director of Uzbekistan’s National Human Rights Center, said Uzbekistan has completed a detailed study of Chinese human rights documents and will publish Uzbek-language translations and educational materials in August.

Echoing Xie’s view that “development is the greatest human right”, Tillabaev called for joint investment in transport, energy and digital infrastructure to strengthen regional connectivity and for active China-Central Asia cooperation in upholding United Nations human rights principles.

In breakout sessions, delegates reviewed national progress in governance reform, quality-of-life improvements and the establishment of State supervisory bodies, with a focus on the rights of women and children.

Yuldasheva Govkherjan, a professor at the Tashkent State University of Law, shared Uzbekistan’s annual summer school programs and courses offered across 330 vocational institutions that are focused on human rights, women’s rights and children’s rights.

“Without human rights education, respect for human rights is impossible,” she said.

Delegates from China and Central Asia underscored the importance of regional dialogue in shaping inclusive, culturally sensitive human rights frameworks. Officials from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan echoed calls for digital fairness, civil society engagement and stronger cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

This was the third edition of the China-Central Asia Human Rights Development Forum, following meetings in Beijing in September last year and in Astana in May.

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