eit Community

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Ed Tech CONFERENCE 2025

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Contents

1. Executive Summary

The EIT EdTech Conference 2025, held on **30 October 2025**, in Brussels, served as a pan-European platform to advance the digital transformation of education and strengthen the EdTech ecosystem in alignment with Europe's priorities. Organised by the **EIT Community** and coordinated by **EIT Urban Mobility**, the event convened key stakeholders—industry leaders, startups, policymakers, educators and researchers—to foster collaboration, innovation and policy dialogue.

Building on insights from its inaugural edition in 2024, the 2025 conference addressed Europe's fragmented yet rapidly growing EdTech landscape, aiming to understand what is needed to accelerate innovation, investment and adoption of digital education solutions across the continent. The agenda featured **keynotes, interactive panels and lightning talks**. The conference also hosted a demo zone showcasing EdTech solutions and projects, **networking** opportunities facilitated by a dedicated digital tool, and co-creation labs, collaborative spaces for participants to share insights, identify common challenges and propose forward-looking strategies to strengthen Europe's EdTech ecosystem.

The conference highlighted **EIT's pivotal role in connecting EdTech stakeholders**. As EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities are designed to foster collaboration among academia, industry and research, EIT can leverage its extensive network to strategically link these stakeholders and create an ideal environment to test, scale and expand EdTech solutions into new markets.

Overall, the EIT EdTech Conference 2025 resulted in the identification of three key takeaways:

- Inclusive **governance** and policy frameworks, supported by sustainable funding mechanisms, are essential to accelerating digital transformation and fostering a fair and innovative learning ecosystem.
- **Stakeholder collaboration** and **evidence sharing** are critical to overcoming market fragmentation and achieving scale.
- A **human-centred approach** to digital education is vital to ensuring relevance and usability, while embedding equity and accessibility as sector standards.

According to panel insights and participant discussions, stakeholders must act collaboratively to accelerate EdTech adoption across Europe:

- **EU policy makers** should position the European Skills Agenda as a strategic priority for the EdTech sector. Key actions include publishing AI-in-education frameworks, developing innovation-policy alignment guidelines, streamlining procurement processes, providing clear funding information, supporting data collection and sharing, and building digital infrastructure to support informed decision-making between stakeholders.
- **National governments** should foster alliances between ministries and engage educators in policymaking. Key actions include establishing scalable joint-investment models, guiding value-driven EdTech adoption and enforcing safety, accessibility and GDPR standards. Governments should also fund innovation hubs to connect startups and schools, invest in educators upskilling, ensure digital infrastructure and embed 21st-century skills into curricula.
- **Funding bodies** should launch dedicated accelerators for public-private partnerships, enable micro-funding for targeted collaborations and support mobility for cross-border knowledge exchange.
- **Intermediaries** (EIT/KICs, accelerators, research institutes, NGOs, alliances) should connect stakeholders through networking and "connectathons." Key actions include strengthening knowledge dissemination, fostering communities of practice and providing pedagogical training for EdTech entrepreneurs.
- **Education institutions** should prioritise digital-skills training for educators and adopt AI to reduce administrative burdens and free up teaching time.
- **Companies and startups** should involve teachers and students to co-create solutions in the design process, speed up market adoption through school-based pilot testing, collect impact evidence to build institutional trust and demonstrate educational efficacy.

By defining these actions, the EIT EdTech Conference 2025 fulfilled its mission to drive collaboration and innovation, forging a clear path toward a robust, unified European EdTech ecosystem aligned with Europe's digital education priorities.

2. Introduction

The EIT EdTech Conference is a pan-European event dedicated to strengthening and advancing the educational technology ecosystem in line with the European Union's priority of driving **education's digital transformation**. It serves as a strategic platform for connection, collaboration and innovation. The conference brings together key stakeholders from the education and innovation sectors—including industry leaders, startups, public sector representatives and education institutions—to build a robust European EdTech ecosystem and position EdTech as the next major European success story.

The EIT EdTech Conference 2025 took place on 30 October 2025, in Brussels, and was organised by the EIT Community and coordinated by EIT Urban Mobility, an initiative of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). The conference programme was shaped by insights and priorities identified during its inaugural edition in 2024, ensuring continuity and progress in advancing EdTech across Europe.

The aim was to address Europe's fragmented yet rapidly growing EdTech landscape by unifying efforts and accelerating innovation for inclusive, effective and future-ready digital education. The event explored the state of EdTech in Europe, identified challenges and opportunities, and positioned the sector as a key driver of educational transformation. Through collective engagement, the conference fostered the exchange of best practices, synergies and policy discussions essential to advancing impactful digital education innovation. By convening the EIT Community alongside public and private stakeholders, it connected the EIT community to the broader EdTech ecosystem. Leveraging its strong education portfolios and extensive network of partners—including higher education institutions and industry leaders—the EIT and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) provided an ideal platform for these discussions.

The event linked the conversation to broader European policy frameworks—such as the Digital Agenda for Europe, the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027, the Union of Skills and the upcoming 2030 Roadmap for the future of Digital Education—emphasising EdTech's pivotal role in driving educational innovation and supporting Europe's wider societal transformation and competitiveness.

The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive overview of the EIT EdTech Conference 2025, capturing its structure, key discussions, collaborative outcomes and insights to inform future policies and actions and support the development of the European EdTech ecosystem

Priorities identified from the EIT EdTech Conference 2024:

- Improve communication and dissemination of available tools: many existing tools struggle to reach their target audience (learners and teaching staff) due to the diversity of the European market and a lack of recognised platforms.
- Convince teaching staff and management to adopt EdTech: teaching staff and their hierarchy are sometimes resistant to adopting EdTech, citing lack of time, budget, or knowledge.
- Create EdTech-specific accelerator programmes: these are needed to secure Europe's leadership, support consolidation and allow top players to scale and compete globally.
- Support specific research topics to inform policymakers: more evidence-based research is needed on the impact and efficiency of new EdTech methodologies and tools to inform strategic decisions.

3. Event

3.1 Aim

The EIT EdTech Conference 2025 was guided by a central question: How can EIT support the EdTech ecosystem in Europe? This question underpins the overarching aim of the event: to **strengthen the European EdTech ecosystem** and ensure its alignment with the Europe's digital education ambitions.

The conference sought to showcase Europe's most notable EdTech success stories, accelerate innovation and investment in the sector and enhance the connection between the EdTech industry and educators. In addition, it addressed Europe's skills and workforce needs, **positioning EdTech within the broader EU policy priorities**, including the Union of Skills and the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027.

The conference aimed to foster collaboration and deliver tangible outcomes by facilitating targeted networking, providing insights into funding and investment opportunities, showcasing cutting-edge EdTech solutions and success stories, and serving as a platform to advocate for European EdTech and **shape future EU digital education policies**.

The 2025 event built on the strategic priorities for advancing EdTech in Europe established during its inaugural edition in 2024.

- The need to improve communication and dissemination of tools led to a stronger emphasis on highlighting **success stories**, expanding **demo zones** and fostering synergies within the EIT community.
- Addressing resistance among teaching staff and management informed the inclusion of collaborative spaces and discussions focused on **supporting educators** in the **digital transition** and integrating emerging technologies like **AI**.
- The call for EdTech-specific accelerator programmes resulted in dedicated activities exploring **investment models**, **scaling strategies** and **public-private partnerships** to drive innovation.
- The recommendation to support research for policymaking translated into sessions providing **evidence-based insights** and **market outlooks** to guide strategic decisions**.**

3.2 Agenda

The EIT EdTech Conference 2025 offered a rich and multifaceted agenda that brought together stakeholders from across the European education and technology sectors and aimed at advancing dialogue and innovation in educational technology across Europe.

The day began with a series of keynotes that framed the strategic importance of **EdTech within EU policy** and **global digital education trends.** This was followed by a **participatory check-in** session designed to engage attendees in exploring the EdTech ecosystem. Two interactive panel discussions provided in-depth dialogue **on public-private partnerships** and **digital skills development**, highlighting practical experiences and policy alignment. Midday sessions included lightning talks showcasing **initiatives from the EIT Community** and a curated presentation of **successful European EdTech projects**, emphasising resilience and innovation.

In the afternoon, participants took part in **co-creation labs**, group hands-on activities designed to spark meaningful conversations and generate forward-looking ideas. Each lab gathered insights, recommendations and innovative **proposals from participants**. The event concluded with a plenary session that summarised the **key insights and forward-looking** recommendations for each theme developed during the co-creation workshop. Throughout the day, a visual facilitator captured and illustrated key moments and ideas in real time, culminating in a **graphic harvest** presented during the closing plenary.

In addition to the main programme, participants had the opportunity to explore a dedicated **demo**

zone showcasing innovative EdTech solutions and projects currently contributing to the European EdTech scene. Throughout the day, selected attendees were interviewed for the event's official **podcast**, capturing diverse perspectives and insights. One-to-one **networking sessions** were also facilitated in a dedicated space, supported by a dedicated app, which enabled participants to connect efficiently based on shared interests and collaboration goals.

Conversation Starter App

Figure 1 - Statistics from the targeted networking app.

To enhance networking opportunities, the EIT EdTech Conference 2025 integrated the Conversation Starter app, a smart **matchmaking tool** designed to facilitate meaningful one-to-one meetings. Prior to the event, participants registered on the platform and created personalised profiles detailing their expertise, interests, collaboration goals and what they could offer to others. This allowed attendees to browse profiles, identify relevant connections and schedule meetings in advance. These meetings took place in a **dedicated networking** room during the conference, providing a structured yet flexible environment for targeted exchanges. The app's intuitive interface and recommendation engine helped streamline the process, making it easier for participants to connect with peers, potential partners and collaborators in a purposeful and efficient way

Participatory check-in

During the participatory check-in activity, participants highlighted several key contributions and success factors for strengthening the ecosystem. They emphasised the importance of sharing best practices and EdTech tools, providing concrete and actionable examples and fostering new connections. **Funding** emerged as a major theme: with calls for clearer guidelines for public funding, access to assessment rubrics and strategies to ensure long-term stability through **public-private partnerships**. Participants also stressed the need to **bridge gaps** between schools and technology, **break cross-institutional barriers** and overcome the public sector's reluctance to engage with EdTech companies. Suggestions included developing innovative assessment approaches, pilots on EU and national agendas, and methodologies for collaboration between technology providers and education institutions. Ultimately, success was defined as creating an environment that promotes collaboration, innovation and actionable steps to remove barriers, ensuring that the EdTech ecosystem can thrive.

3.3 Attendees and contributors

Participants

Figure 2 - Statistics of participants

With 202 registrations and 127 attendees, EIT EdTech Conference 2025 participants represented a **rich and varied cross-section of the education and innovation landscape**. The event was predominantly attended by professionals from academia and higher education—including researchers, professors and university leaders—reflecting the sector's central role in shaping educational transformation. A strong presence of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups highlighted the dynamic entrepreneurial energy driving EdTech innovation. Public sector engagement was evident through representatives from national governments and EU institutions. The conference also welcomed voices from ecosystem organisations, corporate entities, NGOs and the press, fostering a **collaborative environment that bridged research, policy, industry and civil society**. This diverse mix of participants underscored the conference's role as a hub for interdisciplinary dialogue and forward-thinking collaboration in education technology. Two journalists, representing Science|Business and News Tank Academic, were present onsite to cover the event.

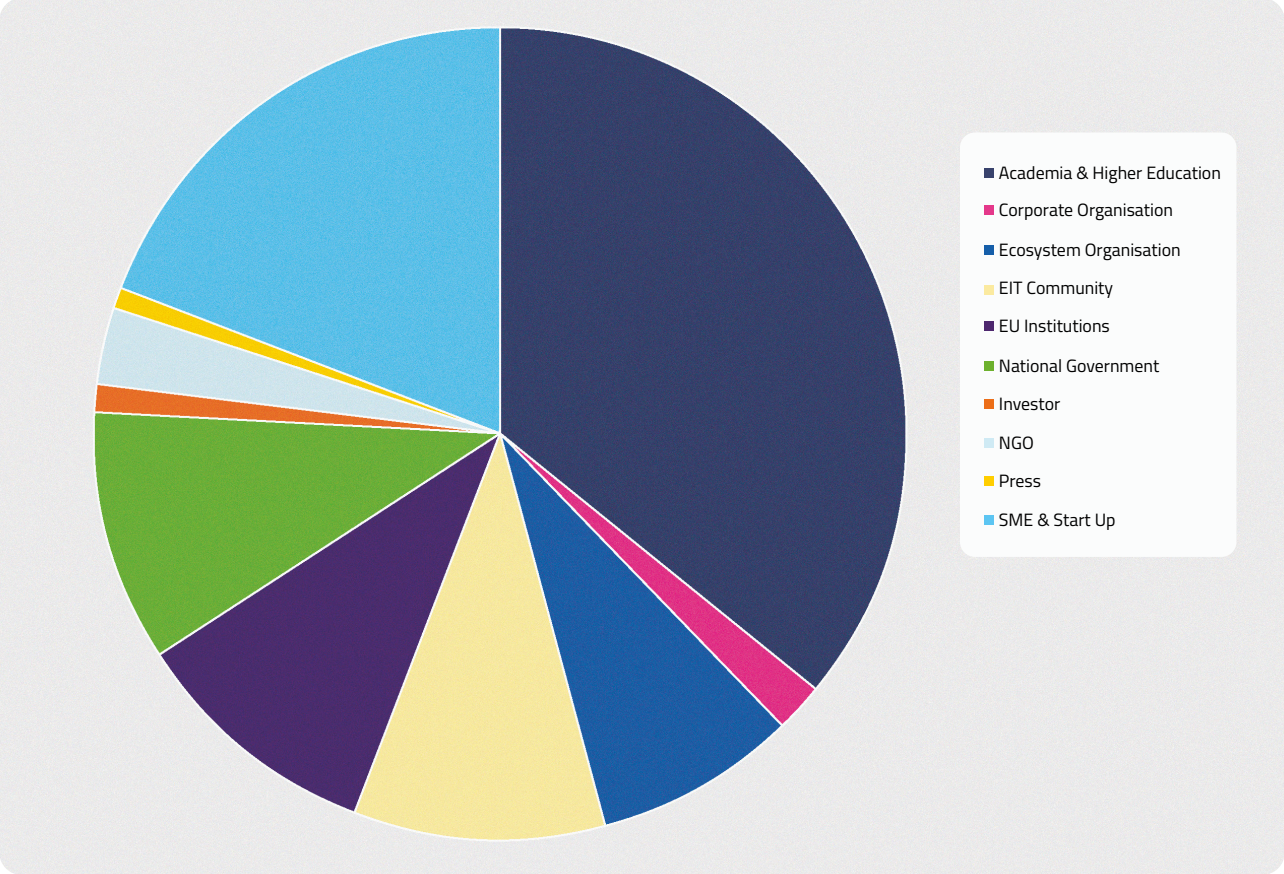


Figure 3 - Sector breakdown of participants

Speakers and moderators

The conference convened a multidisciplinary and pan-European lineup of speakers and moderators. The roster represented a wide spectrum of organisations, including international and European institutions—such as the **European Commission**, the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** and **European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)**. Expertise was further provided by EIT Community members from various **KICs**, alongside leading professors and researchers from **academia**. The conference also featured voices from ecosystem builders like the **European EdTech Alliance** and **European Schoolnet**, as well as **SMEs** and **startups** driving innovation in educational technology. Investors and **NGOs** contributed additional perspectives, ensuring a holistic dialogue around the future of EdTech in Europe.

The broad representation enabled **strategic alignment** between innovation, policy and practice; ensuring that discussions lead to **actionable insights** that reflected the realities and priorities of both policy makers and practitioners.

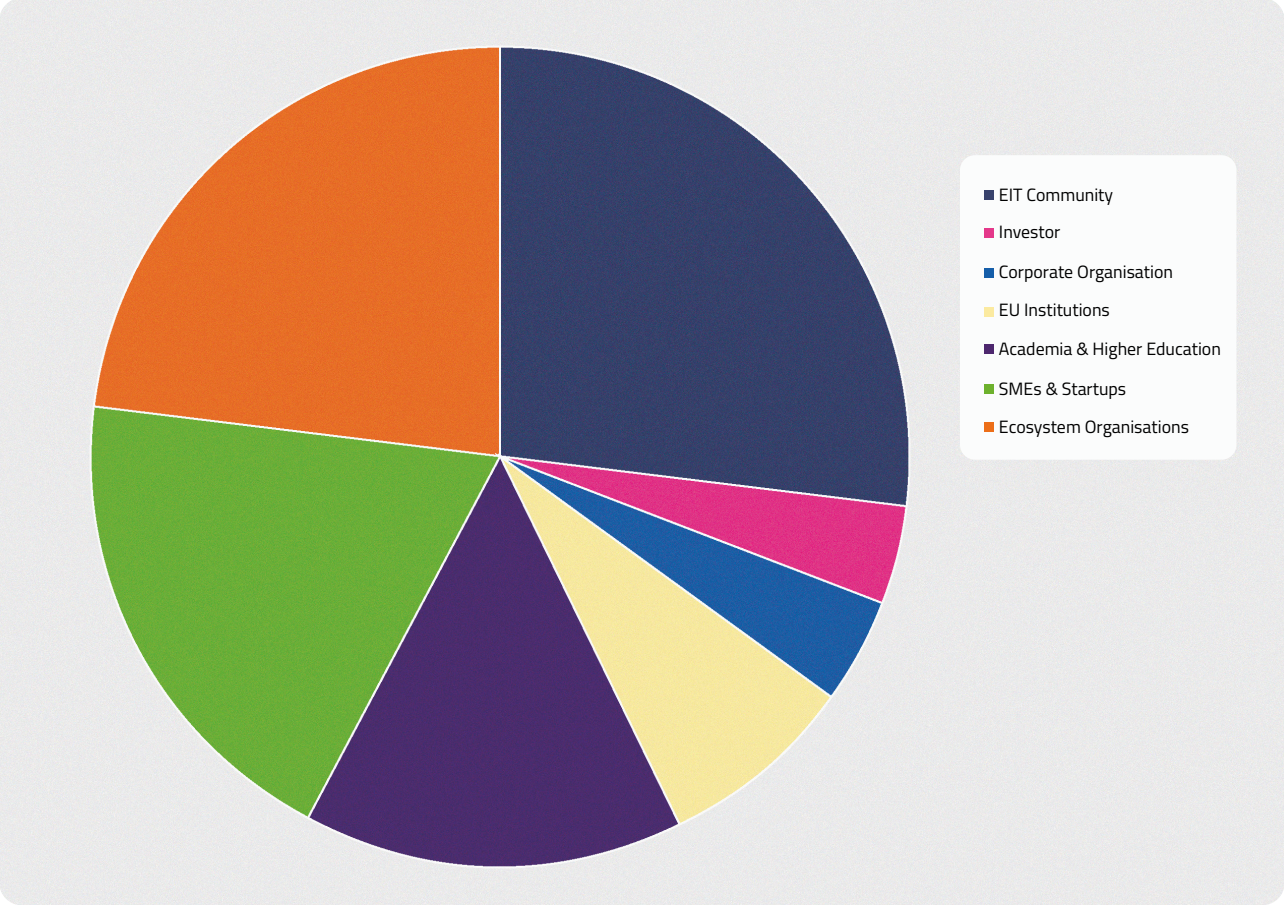


Figure 4 - Sector breakdown of panelists

26 speakers contributed to the programme representing the EIT Community, European institutions, national governments, academia and universities, and EdTech companies.

9 dedicated facilitators supported the event and guided sessions.

The programme achieved a strong gender split of **65% female speakers (23) and 35% male speakers (12).**

Sponsors and the demo zone

The demo zone at the conference served as a showcase of innovation and collaboration across the European education and digital transformation landscape. The exhibitors **EDU4standards project, Edu Smart Technologies, Canvas | Eduframe, EEA+EmpowerED, EIT Community, Interoperable Europe Academy** and **EUIPO** shared their initiatives with attendees, offering a unique opportunity to explore a diverse range of solutions and projects currently shaping the future of education in Europe. Notably, **EDU4standards, Edu Smart Technologies** and **Canvas | Eduframe** also supported the event as sponsors, reinforcing their commitment to fostering visibility and dialogue around emerging educational technologies and standards. The demo zone embodied the spirit of the conference: connecting people, ideas and tools to accelerate the digital transformation of education in Europe.

- **EDU4standards project:** EDU4Standards is an EU-funded initiative aiming to embed standardisation education across European higher education institutions by developing innovative teaching concepts and building a strong community of educators and learners.
- **Edu Smart Technologies:** Edu Smart Technologies provides advanced digital solutions for school operations and academic planning, empowering educators and institutions with real-time tools for scheduling, communication and performance tracking.
- **Canvas | Eduframe:** Eduframe, developed by Driem, is a student information system and storefront tailored for continuing education, seamlessly integrated with Canvas LMS to streamline course management, enrolment and learner experience.
- **EEA + EmpowerED:** EmpowerED, led by the European EdTech Alliance (EEA), is a European Commission-funded project that fosters a cohesive EdTech ecosystem by identifying innovation barriers and proposing strategic solutions for digital education across Europe.
- **EIT Community:** The EIT Community brings together innovation-driven partnerships across Europe to deliver education initiatives that equip learners with entrepreneurial and digital skills, supporting systemic change and sustainable growth.
- **Interoperable Europe Academy:** The Interoperable Europe Academy is a European Commission initiative offering online courses to enhance digital and interoperability skills among public sector professionals, supporting digital transformation and cross-border service delivery.

- **EUIPO:** The EUIPO promotes intellectual property education through its IP in Education Network and the IdeasPowered@School platform, fostering creativity, innovation and responsible digital engagement among young Europeans.

Organisers, partners and facilitators

The EIT EdTech Conference 2025 was the result of a collaborative effort involving the organisers team from EIT Urban Mobility, the EdTech Committee, the Knowledge Partners, the event management company Forum Europe and the facilitators team. Their combined effort designed and delivered an event that blended strategic insight, expert content and interactive engagement.

Organisers

The EIT EdTech Conference 2025 was an EIT Community event organised by EIT Urban Mobility. EIT Urban Mobility is an initiative of the EIT, working to encourage positive changes in cities to make them more liveable places and sustainable mobility.

The event was organised in collaboration with: EIT Food, EIT Digital, EIT RawMaterials, EIT Manufacturing, EIT Climate-KIC, EIT InnoEnergy, EIT Health and EIT Culture and Creativity.

EdTech Committee

The EdTech Committee is a specialised group of EdTech experts assembled to provide strategic guidance for the EIT EdTech Conference 2025. Their primary role was to ensure comprehensive coverage of all essential sector topics. Specifically, the committee helped identify core discussion topics, shape content for sessions and co-creation labs, define the event format and advise on key stakeholders and speakers. More broadly, the committee served as an advisory body to ensure the conference reflected current trends, fostered robust collaboration and delivered maximum value to the EdTech ecosystem

The EdTech Committee members are:

- **Svenia Busson,** EdTech Ecosystem Builder;
- **Peter Fagerström,** Accelerator Lead for the European Digital Education Hub, Educraftor;
- **Sean O'Reilly,** Manager, Academic Affairs and Data, Technological Universities Association (TUA);
- **Simona Petkova,** Policy Officer, 'Digital Education' Unit, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), European Commission;
- and **Ilaria Tagliavini,** Head of Operations, EIT;

Facilitators

The facilitators team for the EIT EdTech Conference 2025 is a group of seasoned professionals with deep expertise in process design, participatory leadership and co-creation methodologies. Their overall contribution was to design and deliver an engaging, inclusive and outcome-oriented event, ensuring that complex discussions translated into actionable insights and a clear roadmap for the future of EdTech in Europe. The team included **Laura Grassi** and **Mira Bangel** as senior facilitators, responsible for leading the design and facilitation of multi-stakeholder sessions; **Stephany Macedo**, a junior facilitator supporting education and innovation-focused activities; and **Carlotta Cataldi**, a graphic harvester who visually captured key messages and outcomes to enhance clarity and impact. Facilitators brought extensive experience from similar high-profile EU events where they successfully applied participatory methods to foster collaboration and deliver tangible results.

Knowledge partners

Supported by

4. EdTech as a strategic enabler for education

> *" Probably the ultimate goal would be not to have this conference anymore because EdTech will be so embedded in all our programmes and education systems that we will not need it."*
>
> **Ilaria Tagliavini**
> Head of Operations, EIT

Educational technology was framed by the European Commission as essential for equipping learners with future-ready skills, driving Europe's digital transformation and enabling its competitiveness. Nowadays, EdTech is a vital component of education systems, supporting innovative teaching methods and lifelong learning. EdTech was also framed as a **bridge between research and industry,** a tool to foster inclusiveness and a driver of modernisation aligned with European values of trust, privacy and equity. Key transformative applications can improve assessment, aid students with special needs and enhance accreditation systems. According to OECD's insights, technology can transform **teaching and learning at every level, from early education to higher education and reskilling**.

Positioned by **EIT** as a crucial enabler for education and skills development, EdTech underpins the ambition to foster **entrepreneurial mindsets and competencies** across Europe. EdTech is **a core enabler for scaling EIT initiatives** such as Girls Go STEM, the Higher Education Initiative (HEI), the Skills Academies and the Deep Tech Talent Initiative (DTTI). Educational technologies must be integrated across all EIT projects and leveraged within its KICs, which provides an ideal environment **for testing, scaling and expanding solutions to new markets**. By embedding EdTech into its ecosystem, EIT seeks to accelerate systemic upskilling and reskilling efforts, ensuring Europe's education systems are innovative, inclusive and future-ready.

Within this frame, the EIT EdTech Conference 2025 featured a series of presentations and debates on key EdTech topics, identified in collaboration with the EdTech Committee and based on insights from the previous edition. Diverse backgrounds and interests of speakers brought forward complementary perspectives essential for outlining the current state of the European **EdTech ecosyste**m, detailing its **challenges** and defining the **priorities** needed to overcome them.

The conversation was enriched by the contributions of the participants, who participated actively throughout the event, especially during the co-creation labs. These sessions facilitated discussion groups organised into 11 thematic key areas of EdTech:

- Public-private partnerships
- EdTech innovation
- Supporting teachers and educators in the digital transition
- Scaling up successful EdTech regional models/alliances across Europe
- Learning ecosystems and innovation infrastructure for EdTech
- Accessibility and inclusion in EdTech
- AI in education: a balanced approach
- Forging stronger links between the EdTech sector and the EIT Community
- Intellectual property in the age of digital and AI
- Digital sovereignty
- EdTech investments

Participants formed working groups covering all the above thematic key areas, except intellectual property and digital sovereignty. As a concrete output, each group produced a list of key recommended actions emerged from the discussions. For a detailed description of the co-creation Lab session, refer to the Annex 2.

Summarising the variety of insights is no easy task: this section highlights **7 recurring themes** that emerged across multiple conversations and from different voices. Analysing these themes helps capture both **converging priorities** and the diversity of opinions and perspectives.

4.1 Policies: the backbone of European EdTech

> *"We must remember that just as we can move quickly with technology, we must also move wisely. The future of education really is about better learning, learning designed with purpose, informed by evidence and grounded in shared trust. Let's ensure technology serves learning and equity guides innovation, every step of the way."*
>
> **Emma Linsenmayer**
> Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD

Panellists agreed that technology alone cannot transform education without strong policy frameworks and strategic initiatives to guide its implementation. Policies must ensure **ethics by design, transparency** and **robust data protection** to maintain trust and fairness.

The European Commission outlined several key initiatives: the Union of Skills to strengthen human capital, the STEM Education Strategic Plan to boost science and technology competencies and the EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy to help innovators grow. Additional measures include The Innovation Act to improve Europe's innovation ecosystem and The 28th Regime to simplify cross-border company operations. These programmes, alongside Erasmus+, Digital Europe and Horizon Europe, aim to accelerate digital transition, **create favourable conditions for scaling EdTech**, simplify cross-border operations and strengthen Europe's competitiveness.

OECD insights reinforced the need for coherent governance, interoperability and open-source solutions. Panellists emphasised the role of policymakers in **creating fair markets and clear frameworks for public-private partnerships** and procurement to overcome fragmentation and risk aversion. It was mentioned that companies can also directly inform policies. For example, the European EdTech Alliance (EEA), an umbrella organisation formed by national EdTech associations, acts as a unified voice for the industry and a neutral independent partner to inform policy at both European and national levels. By connecting local organisations with international bodies, the EEA gathers ground-level insights to inform policy. According to some speakers, this approach promotes cross-ministerial cooperation and integrates EdTech into broader digital strategies and infrastructure investment.

Participants provided clear guidance on how policies should be structured to support effective innovation in education. They suggested that policy frameworks should be long-term— spanning 10 years—and include both qualitative measures and well-defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Additionally, regulations should be translated into **actionable guidelines**, **co-designed with educators** to ensure they are practical and inclusive.

Throughout the day, several concrete suggestions emerged regarding policy priorities. These included publishing a **guide for edtech developers** to align innovation with policy, creating **role-specific AI guidelines** and establishing a European framework standard to ensure responsible and scalable AI integration in education. Policies were also seen as tools to guarantee the safety of digital tools and build trust within the ecosystem. Potential policies could **restrict unsafe software**, promote inclusivity (by **embedding inclusion requirements** into EU project funding and procurement) and mandate accessibility training or certifications.

Key recommended actions:

- Embed knowledge exchange, cross-border collaboration and community building in mandates.
- Provide clear EU guidelines and transparent funding information, using broad communication channels.
- Increase policymaker engagement with educators and ensure policy advisor continuity.
- Create a European AI framework for responsible use in education.
- Establish a digital backbone that supports and informs all stakeholders, enabling effective decision-making and the adoption of best-fit solutions for schools.
- Set ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation) standards for EdTech to ensure quality and interoperability.
- Support EU-funded data gathering as a shared resource.
- Certify EdTech solutions for safety and GDPR compliance.
- Collect impact evidence systematically to guide policy and practice.

4.2 Europe's EdTech market: big potential, big barriers

> *" If we want to meet local needs and preserve our values in every classroom, in every workplace, we must build EdTech ourselves and buy our own EdTech. In Sweden, I often ask policymakers: do you want Swwedish EdTech or third-party EdTech? They always say Swedish. So, policymakers have a responsibility to make sure that we have a market that works."*
>
> **Jannie Jeppesen**
> CEO of Swedish EdTech Industry and Chair of European EdTech Alliance

Speakers described Europe's EdTech market as vibrant yet fragmented. According to the European EdTech Startup Innovation Ecosystem report, the EdTech market is valued at approximately €54 billion, it comprises over 7,800 companies, employs 400,000 people and serves 93.3 million pupils and students alongside 5.24 million teachers. Despite this scale, Europe attracts only **5% of global EdTech investment**.

Speakers identified that this **fragmentation** is driven by regulatory complexity, linguistic diversity and uneven procurement systems, all of which make cross-border scaling difficult. Moreover, they highlighted structural weaknesses in Europe's innovation ecosystem, including **the absence of a unified marketplace** for educational solutions, which stifles local innovation and creates economic inefficiencies

According to their analysis, while unicorns exist, the sector is dominated by diverse, localised companies. More than half of European EdTech startups operate with less than a year of financial runway, while procurement cycles often take 9-24 months to close, creating a critical mismatch between funding timelines and revenue generation.

Despite the challenges to scalability, some speakers highlighted how this diversity also encourages EdTech companies to design tools tailored to **specific cultural and educational contexts**. By creating products that resonate deeply with local users, EdTech fosters innovation while preserving the richness of **Europe's cultural variety**.

Another major barrier identified by the panellists is the **lack of trust in EdTech impact**, due to limited evidence, fragmented standards and insufficient transparency in measuring effectiveness. As a result, schools and governments hesitate to invest, prolonging procurement cycles and reinforcing high entry barriers for startups.

To address these challenges, experts called for stronger collaboration between EdTech companies and research institutions, to produce **data-driven evidence** demonstrating solutions' proven pedagogical value. Moreover, many participants recommended creating co-creation opportunities between schools, companies and product developers and **fostering collaboration between innovators**, institutions and investors as key actions to encourage trust in the edtech market and overcome conservative adoption.

Policymakers were also identified as key actors in **shaping the market**, with a responsibility to create fair and functional conditions, encourage co-creation and embed quality assurance mechanisms in partnership with private companies. It was also suggested to include practitioner budgets in startup grants.

Participants emphasised the need to increase both **public and private investment**, as well as provide clearer EU funding and scaling support. Specifically, they recommended introducing

dedicated EdTech funding calls, adopting flexible and sustainable funding models, offering micro-funding for smaller networks and establishing unified and predictable financing to stabilise the EdTech market.

Finally, participants proposed specific interventions to help the market thrive, such as leveraging existing consortia as testbeds, empowering local organisations to validate markets and mitigate

Key recommended actions:

- Address market fragmentation by supporting initiatives, like EU INC (a proposal for a pan-European standardised legal entity), that unify tenders and procedures across different countries.
- Engage EU-funded innovators in sandboxing with beta testers to increase schools' willingness to act as early adopters and provide startups with a point of contact to validate their approach.
- Provide clear EU guidelines and transparency on available funding for EdTech startups, and use general communication channels (e.g., newsletters) to keep EdTech stakeholders informed.
- Foster alliances between ministries, especially economics and education, and stimulate informal networking among stakeholders.
- Explore a cross-KIC (xKIC) venture approach for joint investment in transversal EdTech Initiatives
- Establish dedicated leadership roles within the ecosystem, such as:
  - appointing a Head of Innovation for schools and universities (country-specific)
  - and designating an Investment Coordinator to validate EdTech initiatives
- Look to other sectors that have scaled rapidly, such as deep tech and pharmaceuticals, for inspiration and best practices. for inspiration and best practices. Set ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation) standards for EdTech to ensure quality and interoperability.
- Support EU-funded data gathering as a shared resource.

4.3 From pilots to scale: overcoming barriers

> *"True innovation in EdTech happens when science, schools and startup or scaleup companies collaborate closely to build solutions together. It is this triangle—where research, practice and entrepreneurship meet—that creates real and lasting impact."*
>
> **Jitske van Os**
> Managing Director, Dutch EdTech

Public-private collaboration has emerged as a critical driver for advancing digital education and innovation across Europe. According to different speakers, both private companies and institutional leaders share a clear ambition to transform education. However, despite this common purpose, partnerships often struggle to deliver meaningful results.

Speakers emphasised that achieving high-quality, scalable solutions requires **shared responsibility** among governments, educational institutions and industry. Yet structural barriers persist: **trust issues**, scepticism from public institutions toward commercial partners and **risk aversion** remain significant challenges. For instance, it was reported that while some early partnerships start strong, trust frequently erodes when startups are acquired by larger firms, prioritising shareholder profits.

Private sector panellists mentioned that public agencies often lack experience in collaborating with commercial partners, leading to **uncertainty, hesitation**, and failure to recognise the value of private sector involvement. This gap is further compounded by a perceived lack of urgency for change. Private sector panellists also reported that current procurement processes further complicate matters, imposing high entry thresholds that exclude smaller players and discourage innovation-friendly approaches.

Another obstacle identified is the absence of a **shared vocabulary between sectors**, which hampers effective communication and co-creation. To overcome these barriers, experts called for cohesive frameworks that connect startups, schools, research and policy. Such frameworks should promote collaboration, transparent governance and procurement models that reduce risk while enabling innovation. The Framework for Ethical Learning Technology (FELT) was presented as a safeguard to build trust and ensure responsible practices.

Speakers from both the public and private sector stressed the **need for deeper cooperation** between ministries, educators and EdTech firms. Such collaboration should be supported by public-private funding mechanisms and policy alignment to ensure tangible impact. The European Commission identified creating environments that encourage collaboration as a key priority, highlighting initiatives such as the Digital Europe Programme, the Startup and Scaleup Strategy and the upcoming 2030 Roadmap for Digital Education and Skills as mechanisms to foster partnerships between governments, academia and industry.

Participants suggested practical tools to promote public-private partnerships, such as policy–industry working groups, networking opportunities to connect stakeholders for scaling initiatives and leveraging the EIT ecosystem. They also recommended that these partnerships be mission-driven, long-term and grounded in clear KPIs.

Key recommended actions:

- Establish an accelerator programme for public institutions and EdTech companies to support the development and implementation of public-private
- Create an innovation hub and platform that connects EdTech startups with public educational institutions. This hub should facilitate stakeholders in designing experiments, identifying synergies and developing solutions
- Promote collaboration across the entire ecosystem—including educators, schools, policymakers, industry and researchers.
- Implement multiple funding models to achieve meaningful collaboration, such as: :
  - network nodes that operate sustainably and connect stakeholders;
  - micro-funding incentives for targeted collaborations;
  - and mobility funding to support cross-border knowledge exchange, expertise sharing and continous engagement.
- Build an allianace beyond EdTech, embracing a triple helix model: governments, policy and education
- Showcase EIT-enabled collaborations as a success model for scaling EdTech impact through public-private partnerships
- Symplify entry and access by reducing complexity, avoiding jargon, creating one-stop-shop for opportunities, unifying branding, shortening timelines and streamlining the customer journey.

4.4 Putting people first in digital education

A human-centred approach

> *"We cannot foresee all the ways that digital technologies and AI will transform and impact education. But we get to be those people who experiment and innovate with it. We get to be those who decide why we use it and who we become using it"*
>
> **Cristina Pozzi**
> Futures, AI and Education Expert

The concept of a human-centred approach for EdTech emerged as a foundational principle shaping discussions on innovation, policy and practice. Defined as **ensuring technology serves people** rather than platforms or algorithms, this approach emphasises co-creation, inclusion and trust. It was also framed as a policy priority, aligning with European strategies that call for pedagogically sound, value-based digital education.

Teachers and students were repeatedly highlighted as essential co-creators in the design and implementation of digital solutions. Speakers repeated that active participation from teachers and students in **decision-making and feedback loops** must be maintained to ensure relevance and usability.

The EmpowerEd project was reported as a good example of a collaborative framework for EdTech. By fostering dialogue and **knowledge exchange among all key stakeholders** in the EdTech ecosystem (including policy makers, ministries of education, educators, EdTech companies, support organisations and researchers), EmpowerEd creates tools, like EdTech European EdTech Ecosystem Roadmap, that guide the EdTech development while reflecting the needs of policy, practice and innovation

Some panellists reinforced that EdTech entrepreneurs' responsibility goes beyond selling products. Entrepreneurs must actively collaborate with teachers and learners to **ensure tools create real value** and focus on fostering uniquely human competencies like resilience, collaboration and metacognition.

As for the role of AI in EdTech, speakers stressed the importance of human-centred approach based on teacher-AI complementarity, **advocating hybrid models that keep educators in control and reinforce human agency while** leveraging AI to reduce routine tasks and enrich teaching.

Finally, participants recommended establishing providing clear guidance to **help families and students make informed choices**, ensuring that technology remains understandable and supportive.

Key recommended actions:

- Engage the student voice in co-creation efforts, involving learners in course design and quality assurance to ensure relevance and learner-centred innovation.
- Automate administrative tasks to free up time and resources for educators.
- Focus on real learning needs at all levels: technology should serve pedagogy, not replace it.
- Promote communities of practice with real ownership to drive long-term impact.

Digital sovereignty and data protection

> *"Europe must champion education technology that is not only innovative and secure, but also reflects the EU principles: openness, inclusion, privacy and trust."*
>
> **Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva**
> Director of Innovation, Digital Edu and International Cooperation,
> DG EAC, European Commission

Digital sovereignty and data protection were framed as critical priorities for Europe's education systems. A major concern identified is the uncontrolled flow of learners' data to non-European platforms, which undermines privacy and autonomy. Upcoming EU initiatives, such as Europe's Independence Moment, were described as aiming to ensure that EdTech solutions reflect European values of openness, inclusion, trust and privacy. **Safeguarding data** is not only a technical issue but a strategic imperative for maintaining Europe's independence in digital education. To remain competitive globally, Europe must prioritize secure, value-driven platforms that protect learners and uphold ethical standards, thereby fostering long-term confidence in digital education.

The UNICEF Innocenti Report on Data Governance in EdTech stresses the urgent need to protect children's data through stronger legal and regulatory frameworks. It advocates for **multi-stakeholder governance**, where governments, data protection authorities, civil society and EdTech companies collaborate to ensure privacy and child rights are embedded in technology design. The report also calls for **rights-based business models**, discourages the monetisation of children's data and recommends anticipatory governance to keep pace with rapid technological change.

Key recommended actions:

- Apply and map existing ethical learning technology frameworks to guide responsible and transparent EdTech use.
- Create a support system to certify EdTech solutions as safe and GDPR-compliant, ensuring trust and reliability across the ecosystem.

Inclusivity and diversity

> *"Although EdTech startups with at least one female founder account for over a third of the market, they receive just under 20% of the total funding. I want to let that sink in, especially when about 50% of founders trying to go into the market are women."*
>
> **Beth Havinga**
> Managing Director, European EdTech Alliance

Inclusive and diverse ecosystems are essential for creating meaningful, culturally relevant education systems that reflect Europe's defining values of openness and diversity. Speakers stressed that technology must remain human-centric, prioritising inclusiveness and addressing systemic gaps such as **gender imbalance** and unequal access to digital learning.

Experts reported that women-led startups in EdTech face a significant funding gap. Although they represent over one-third of the market, women receive less than 20% of total funding. Historically, the situation was even worse, only 1.7% of all startup funding went to women and while this figure has improved to around 10% in Europe overall, EdTech still lags behind.

The European Commission's keynote positioned inclusivity as a core European value,

calling for equitable access and culturally relevant solutions. Initiatives like Girls Go STEM and Female EdTech Fellowships were mentioned as concrete steps toward reducing the gender gap in innovation and empowering women entrepreneurs.

The topic of diversity and inclusion included a call for solutions and educational systems that **accommodate diverse learning needs**, particularly for neurodiverse students, by avoiding on-size-fits-all approaches.

Locally developed EdTech solutions were seen as key to ensuring inclusion for all learners while empowering innovators. **Europe's diverse ecosystem** of companies should be preserved as a **strategic advantage**.

To advance **inclusivity**, participants recommended leveraging EU influence promote digital accessibility and inclusive lifelong learning. Participants also identified persistent barriers, such as ambiguous definitions of "inclusion," data gaps in education science and insufficient training for developers and EdTech teams (such as training in Universal Design for Learning principles). Consequently, inclusion remains a low priority in EdTech development. Speakers emphasised the importance of **open-source and interoperable** technologies to guarantee accessibility and adaptability across varied contexts.

Finally, inclusion was also linked to governance. Speakers urged **active participation of students from varied backgrounds in policymaking**, moving beyond token representation to genuine co-creation.

Key recommended actions:

- Mandate inclusion and accessibility training or certification for organisations seeking to procure or be awarded public funding.
- Facilitate a shift in societal and cultural mindsets toward inclusion and accessibility, establishing these values as a priority in EdTech.
- Integrate inclusion education and awareness programmes into EU initiatives, like Erasmus mobility, to include learners of all ages.

4.5 Building capacity for effective EdTech adoption

> *"We need support mechanisms for stakeholders in the ecosystem to work together. This is almost a catch-all category. It means creating testing environments where educators, researchers and EdTech developers can come together; it means professional development for teachers, so they are able to use EdTech in a meaningful way; and it means funding support organisations or regional ecosystems."*
>
> **Christina Makarona**
> Project Coordinator, European Schoolnet

Professional development and capacity building are essential for effective EdTech integration and systemic educational transformation. OECD reported that although access to technology has improved, many **educators still lack the confidence to use digital tools effectively** (PISA 2022). At the same time, speakers agreed that technology alone cannot drive change; **educators and institutions need the skills**, resources and support to implement it successfully (TALIS 2024). Capacity building has been highlighted as essential not only for educators but also for founders and developers, enabling them to leverage technology effectively in support of pedagogy. Participants noted that stakeholders have a **limited understanding of learning science** and recommended specific measures, such as providing a guide for EdTech policymakers and developers to support educational innovation, disseminating best practices and expertise, and building a shared language and knowledge base.

A recurring concern was the **limited time and specialised training available** for teachers, prompting calls for comprehensive programmes in digital pedagogy and AI literacy. The EdTech Learning Labs were highlighted as high-impact initiatives designed to equip not only educators, but also startup founders and corporate leaders with skills in AI integration, ethical product design, procurement readiness and digital pedagogy.

At the same time, insights from Teacher-AI Complementarity (TAICo) noted that while AI literacy is increasingly important, it should complement—not replace—foundational teaching skills. Professional development should prioritise pedagogical and didactic competence first, layering AI knowledge on top to ensure technology enhances rather than dominates the learning process. EmpowerEd was presented as a platform supporting teacher training and capacity building through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) designed for educators and decision-makers,

helping them develop digital strategies and effectively integrate EdTech into their practice. In addition, the project provides guidelines and a comprehensive toolbox tailored to different stakeholders, enabling teachers to access resources that fit their specific needs and contexts. These initiatives are brought as features to strengthen professional development and ensure educators are equipped to navigate the evolving digital education landscape.

Nonetheless, speakers also reported that focusing solely on staff development is insufficient; improving teacher skills does not automatically translate into student competence without broader institutional strategies. **Investment in professional support roles,** such as learning technologists and education developers, were identified as essential, while also easing the burden on individual teachers.

Finally, participants stressed the need for policy scaffolding and research investments to create frameworks that guide EdTech implementation.

Key recommended actions:

- Prioritise teacher training, organise "connectathons" and improve communication tools.
- Create collaboration spaces to foster innovation and shared learning.
- Develop a Developer's Guide for EdTech companies, including:
  - development guidelines
  - co-creation guidelines
  - and teacher/school scaleup partnerships for sustainability
- Support training for teachers by:
  - beginning with voluntary training programmes, funded at European or national levels;
  - progressing toward formalised, long-term training;
  - and publishing AI guidelines to ensure clarity and consistency.
- Create a funding framework focused on upskilling educators and promoting the

4.6 Driving educational innovation through evidence

> *"What gets measured gets trasured, so if we want to bring what we value to the forefront, we need to also measure it, we need to have data about it, we need to have evidence about it."*
>
> **Michaela Horvathova**
> Co-founder and Chief Education Officer, Beyond Education

A recurring theme throughout the conference was the need for innovation in education technology to be **grounded in evidence**. Speakers stressed that EdTech must be **pedagogically sound** and value-driven, with clear proof of its ability to improve learning outcomes. However, the lack of robust data on EdTech impact fuels scepticism, particularly among public institutions, slows adoption and prolongs procurement cycles.

Experts called for stronger research collaboration, access to diverse datasets and transparent reporting mechanisms to validate solutions in real-world settings. They emphasised incentivising **partnerships between EdTech companies and academia** to generate credible evidence and build trust.

This message was echoed in policy discussions. The OECD highlighted the need for dedicated funding for research and data collection to **assess the impact and scalability** of digital tools across diverse contexts. Calls for quality assurance frameworks and data-driven evidence were reinforced by the European EdTech Alliance and EmpowerED, which stressed that funding research and collecting data is essential not only to measure impact but also to establish a common vocabulary within the European EdTech ecosystem and strengthen stakeholder trust.

The importance of impact measurement was linked to a broader recognition: reforms fail without proper assessments that **connect innovation success to measurable outcomes**. For example, speakers noted that attempts to implement competency-based education often falter due to partial execution. If curricula and teaching methods are updated, but student assessments remained traditional and knowledge-based, student competency is not accurately measured. This fundamental misalignment between instruction and evaluation results in low student scores, creating a disconnect that ultimately undermines the reform. Panellists highlighted how **assessments that provide data** at the student, teacher, school and government levels **enable informed decision-making**, ultimately driving systemic transformation.

Participants suggested **connecting data silos** to enable better analysis and informed decision-making. They identified key areas where data collection and dissemination would be most beneficial: sharing best practices to support educators, establishing clear KPIs to measure knowledge exchange among EdTech models and alliances for replication and scaling, and developing EU-level beta testing frameworks to accelerate evidence-based adoption.

Key recommended actions:

- Support European-funded data gathering as a common good that can be accessed and used by all.
- Collate evidence of impact to inform future decisions and improve policy and practice.
- Showcase the potential of AI in education through pilot projects and existing initiatives, involving students from early stages.
- Track early impact and KPIs to facilitate scaling to other beta tester schools and accessing further funding based on demonstrated impact.
- Strengthen xKIC knowledge transfer to standardise good practices and accelerate learning technology adoption.

4.7 Future skills for the digital economy and competency-based education

> *"Over 70% of university teachers in Ireland agreed that digital skills are vital for university graduates and for their future careers, yet fewer than 40% saw it as their responsibility to teach them. This gap demands attention."*
>
> **Sharon Flynn**
> Manager, Institute of Creativity at the University of Galway

The conference underscored that future skills and competency-based education are central to Europe's ability to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving digital economy. Speakers emphasised that education must equip learners with **technical knowledge** as well as with an **entrepreneurial**

mindset. This dual focus aligns with initiatives like the Union of Skills and the STEM Education Strategic Plan, which both aim to strengthen human capital and support the digital transition. The upcoming 2030 Roadmap for Digital Education and Skills was presented to set a long-term vision for embedding these priorities across all levels of education.

Speakers showed how demand for digital skills is rising sharply, making lifelong learning essential (PIAAC 2023). Therefore, digital literacy, numeracy and advanced Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competencies must start early and continue through **reskilling** and **upskilling** programmes. The OECD highlighted that the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is shifting its emphasis toward skills essential for thriving in a digital world, including problem-solving, self-regulated learning and ethical engagement with AI. Frameworks like Competencies of the Future—covering knowledge, skills, character and meta-learning—were presented as guides for systemic reform, while speakers stressed that understanding and experimenting with AI firsthand is essential for both educators and students. Participants suggested promoting interdisciplinary approaches to better prepare educators for future learning needs, along with developing a universal curriculum framework focused on digital skills.

The conference explored the ongoing tension between knowledge-based and **competency-based curricula**, a key challenge in preparing education systems for a digital future. While some countries lean back toward traditional, knowledge-heavy models, speakers warned this could leave learners without the adaptive skills that modern societies demand. A central idea among panellists was that "what gets measured gets treasured." If creativity, collaboration and problem-solving are not assessed, they risk being sidelined. To tackle this, the OECD introduced the Platform for Innovative Learning Assessments (PILA), an EdTech solution that integrates assessment into engaging activities and emphasises skills like systems thinking, computational reasoning and self-regulated learning. This marks a shift toward evidence-based evaluation of future skills, ensuring they are taught, valued and tracked.

Key recommended actions:

- Introduce 21st-century skills and competencies into the curriculum, with a strong focus on ethical considerations when formulating policy.
- Prioritise digital skills and provide tailored digital skills training for educators, adapted to their specific needs and contexts.

4.8 How can EIT support the EdTech ecosystem in Europe?

1

Act as a strategic connector

- Bridge gaps between stakeholders; EIT can link startups, schools, universities, policymakers and investors through its KICs.
- Facilitate cross-sector collaboration by leveraging its "Knowledge Triangle" (business, research, education) and its extensive partners' network.
- Promote collaboration between EdTech companies and academia for research-driven development.

2

Provide growth and investment opportunities

- Launch EdTech-specific programmes and venture initiatives across KICs.
- Offer sandbox environments for testing and validating solutions, reducing risk for early adopters.
- Support public-private partnerships with predictable financing and mission-driven funding.

3

Enable policy influence and advocacy

- Use its position to inform EU policy frameworks with evidence-based insights from pilots and projects.
- Advocate for harmonised procurement processes and interoperability standards to reduce fragmentation.

4

Support professional development

- Scale initiatives like EIT Campus and Deep Tech Talent Initiative to include EdTech-focused training.
- Provide MOOCs and learning labs for educators, policymakers and innovators to build digital and AI literacy.

5

Foster inclusivity and diversity

- Integrate EdTech into programmes like Girls Go STEM to close gender gaps in STEM and entrepreneurship.
- Ensure accessibility and inclusion are embedded in EIT-supported projects.

6

Create visibility and networking opportunities

- Organise flagship events like the EIT EdTech Conference to showcase success stories and foster partnerships..
- Use platforms like EIT Campus as a marketplace for EdTech solutions and collaboration.

5. Key outcomes and perspectives

5.1 Strategic takeaways and recommended actions

1. Build strong, inclusive policy and governance frameworks, supported by sustainable funding mechanisms.

Policies must ensure ethics by design, transparency, data protection and interoperability while fostering public-private partnerships and guiding responsible AI integration. Clear standards and EU-level initiatives are critical to accelerate digital transformation and create a fair, innovative and inclusive learning ecosystem. Policies must be backed by targeted, sustainable funding to translate strategic priorities into action and ensure long-term impact.

2. Overcome fragmentation and scale through collaboration and evidence.

Europe's EdTech market needs unified standards, streamlined procurement and trust-building measures. Stronger collaboration between policymakers, educators and innovators—combined with evidence collection and sharing of best practices—will unlock investment, reduce barriers and enable sustainable growth across borders.

3. Put people and capacity at the core of digital education.

EdTech must adopt a human-centred approach that prioritises inclusion, accessibility and teacher-student co-creation while investing in comprehensive professional development for educators, founders and institutions. Beyond being provided access to technology, stakeholders must be equipped with skills in digital pedagogy and AI literacy. Stakeholders must embed digital literacy, AI fluency and adaptive competencies—such as creativity and problem-solving—into curricula and lifelong learning programmes and align incentive systems with these priorities to prepare learners for success in the digital economy.

The following **concrete actions** were proposed to advance European EdTech as a driver of innovation in inclusive and forward-looking digital education.

EU policymakers (EC, EU agencies, parliament)

- Position the European Skills Agenda as a strategic priority for the EdTech sector.
- Create a European AI framework for responsible use in education.
- Embed knowledge exchange and cross-border collaboration in mandates and ensure policy advisor continuity.
- Develop a comprehensive developer's guide for EdTech teams, including accessibility guidelines.
- Establish EdTech policies and guidelines to streamline procurement (with national governments).
- Publish AI guidelines for educators and students (with national governments).
- Build a digital backbone that supports data standards, analytics, and interoperability (with national governments).
- Support initiatives like EU INC (a proposal for a pan-European standardised legal entity), to unify tenders and procedures across different countries.
- Provide clear EU EdTech funding information (with funding bodies).
- Empower EU-funded data gathering (with funding bodies).

National governments (ministries, procurement bodies, regulators)

- Foster alliances between ministries.
- Embed 21st-century skills and ethical considerations into curricula.
- Ensure basic digital infrastructure in learning contexts with a clear roadmap.
- Increase educators' engagement in policymaking.
- Facilitate a funding framework for educators upskilling and effective AI use.
- Mandate accessibility training and certifications for vendors.
- Certify EdTech solutions for safety and GDPR compliance.
- Apply existing frameworks to guide responsible, transparent and value-driven EdTech adoption.
- Establish joint investment models and scalable funding mechanisms (with funding bodies).

- Create innovation hubs to connect startups and schools for co-design (with intermediaries).

Funding bodies (EU programmes, national funds, philanthropy)

- Provide micro-funding for targeted collaborations.
- Fund mobility for cross-border knowledge exchange.
- Launch dedicated EdTech funding calls.

Intermediaries (EIT/KICs, accelerators, research institutes, NGOs, alliances)

- Establish network nodes that operate sustainably and connect stakeholders.
- Encourage informal stakeholder networking.
- Organise "connectathons" to strengthen partnerships between schools and EdTech companies for sustainable scaleup.
- Strengthen exchange between KICs to standardise good practices.
- Create communities of practice with shared ownership to drive innovation and long-term impact.
- Promote pedagogic knowledge among EdTech entrepreneurs.
- Set ISO standards for EdTech to ensure quality and interoperability.
- Launch an accelerator for public institutions and EdTech firms.

Education institutions (schools, VET, universities)

- Provide tailored digital skills training for educators.
- Use AI to automate administrative tasks to free educators' time.

Companies and startups

- Co-design solutions with teachers and students from the design phase.
- Work with schools to test new solutions in real settings and speed up adoption.
- Collect impact evidence systematically (with Education institutions).

5.2 Attendees' feedback

Participants expressed strong overall satisfaction with the conference, with most ratings between four and five out of five. They highlighted the high quality of speakers, well-structured panels and the effective balance between presentations and interactive sessions. Networking was consistently identified as one of the event's greatest strengths, with attendees valuing the connections made for future collaborations and praising the matchmaking tools for their efficiency. Several participants indicated plans to initiate partnerships or consortia as a direct outcome of these interactions.

While feedback was largely positive, suggestions focused on boosting efficiency and engagement. Participants recommended streamlining pre-event organisation to reduce unnecessary meetings, diversifying content formats with recorded sessions or podcasts, and increasing hands-on learning through workshops and experiential exercises. Greater diversity among stakeholders—particularly to include more students, educators, NGOs and policymakers—was also recommended to foster richer, future dialogues. Responses regarding investment and scaleup opportunities were mixed, with some participants reporting new prospects while others were less certain.

Many participants discovered innovative EdTech solutions and tools, reinforcing the event's role as a platform for showcasing emerging technologies and facilitating knowledge exchange. The conference also helped attendees better understand how EdTech integrates into EIT community initiatives and EU digital education policy. Although its perceived influence on future policy decisions was moderate, participants recognised significant value in closer engagement with the EIT ecosystem, citing benefits such as cross-sector connections, visibility and access to funding opportunities. Looking ahead, participants suggested clarifying the event's overarching vision—whether focused on policy, startups, or advancing EIT initiatives—and shifting toward more collaborative formats, like roundtable discussions and interactive sessions, to enhance engagement and impact.

6. Annexes

6.1 Lightning talks: discovering the EIT Community Initiatives

The session was designed to introduce participants to key EIT Community initiatives and highlight their potential for integrating EdTech solutions. The primary goal was to raise awareness about EIT and showcase some of its most promising initiatives in the EdTech space. By providing information and setting the stage for future collaboration, the session aimed to spark interest and encourage participants to explore further opportunities through the dedicated EIT Community booth and thve follow-up session scheduled for the afternoon.

Moderator: **Pamela Pokorny**
Programme Manager for Digital Learning, EIT Food

Girls Go STEM

Marta Lorusso
Digital Education Specialist, EIT Raw Materials

Girls Go STEM is an EIT Community initiative, formerly known as Girls Go Circular, launched in 2020 to bridge the gender gap in STEM. It targets youth, especially girls aged 14-19, through an online platform offering over 25 hands-on courses focused on technology and sustainability, complemented by hackathons, student challenges and in-person activities. The programme has trained 70,000 girls across 35+ countries and now serves 140,000 users, with content translated into all European languages. Participants report high satisfaction and increased confidence in digital and entrepreneurial skills. Looking ahead to 2026-2028, the initiative aims to train an additional 100,000 girls, expand into vocational schools and strengthen industry partnerships to align content with market needs.

Collaboration opportunities with EdTech include:

- Enhancing online learning experiences by co-developing courses, adding gamification and creating immersive learning environments.
- Improving teacher support by developing better dashboards, analytics and multilingual chatbots or tutors.
- Innovating assessment tools by moving beyond quizzes to more advanced methods for evaluating skills and knowledge.
- Implementing solutions for monitoring progress and reporting across a growing user base, such as user tracking and analytics.

Partners benefit from increased social impact, visibility at flagship events like *Women and Girls in STEM* and access to a large network of teachers and students for testing solutions.

EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative

Dana Redford
Member of the Board of Advisors, EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative

The EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative is Europe's flagship programme to close the deep tech skills gap and stay at the forefront of innovation. Originally aiming to train one million people by 2025, the initiative has exceeded expectations by reaching 1.3 million learners through over 620 pledging organisations and offering 235+ quality-assured courses in areas such as AI, cybersecurity and quantum computing. It fosters a strong community of universities, industry partners and NGOs, enabling collaboration, co-creation and networking. In 2024, the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative awarded more than €1 million in grants to fund 15 innovative training programmes. Future plans include expanding into STEM education with an initial forecast of €3 million for collaborative projects. This expansion aligns with the STEM Education Strategic Plan under the Union of Skills, emphasising practical application and industry partnerships. The initiative provides visibility, funding and strategic partnerships for those driving Europe's skills transformation.

Collaboration opportunities with EdTech include:

- Joining the Deep Tech Talent community to network with 620+ pledgers and participate in co-creation and connection events to develop joint projects.
- Co-developing or offering quality-assured courses in deep tech and STEM.
- Accessing funding opportunities by applying for STEM-focused training proposal calls.
- Leveraging the Deep Tech Talent platform for visibility to a European-wide audience, competitive analysis and partnerships.
- Engaging in strategic STEM expansion aligned with the STEM Education Strategic Plan and Union of Skills priorities, building partnerships with industry and institutions.

EIT Campus

Gerard Dominguez
Head of Capacity Building, EIT Campus

The EIT Campus is a virtual one-stop-shop for all EIT education offerings, breaking down industry silos and providing a unified marketplace for learning. The EIT Campus is designed to provide skills-based training that cuts across multiple industries, focusing on innovation, entrepreneurship and career development. Rather than competing with original course providers, it aggregates offerings and organises them into skill-based learning pathways, helping learners progress toward career goals. The platform emphasises continuous engagement through personalised accounts, notifications and community spaces, complemented by periodic events featuring industry leaders and linked to relevant courses. Since its launch in 2023, the platform has attracted over 300,000 unique users, addressing key challenges like the green and digital transitions, bridging the education-industry divide and scaling specialised training. With most courses free or affordable, EIT Campus continues to grow by addressing critical upskilling and reskilling needs, especially for startups and corporates lacking internal training capacity.

Collaboration opportunities with EdTech include:

- Personalising the EIT Campus experience through advanced technologies and AI-driven recommendations.
- Automating processes and improving analytics for faster, more effective resource allocation.
- Co-creating skill-based learning pathways and content and partnering to deliver affordable, career-focused scalable training solution.
- Using EIT Campus as a testbed for EdTech innovations during its scaleup phase.
- Engaging in community-building initiatives and skill-focused events with industry leaders.analysis and partnerships.
- Engaging in strategic STEM expansion aligned with the STEM Education Strategic Plan and Union of Skills priorities, building partnerships with industry and institutions.

6.2 Co-creation labs: making EdTech the next European success story

Co-creation labs were collaborative sessions where participants actively contributed to analysing the European EdTech landscape and defining priorities and recommendations on pre-identified key topics. Notably, there was a strong overlap between the themes discussed in panels and those addressed in the labs, confirming their central role in the European EdTech debate. This dual perspective—first from speakers, then from participants—provides a comprehensive and deep view of the current state and the direction to take moving forward.

Format, objectives and expected outcomes

During the afternoon session, participants engaged in dynamic co-creation labs organised into 11 thematic key areas of EdTech, including:

- Public-private partnerships
- EdTech innovation
- Supporting teachers and educators in the digital transition
- Scaling up successful EdTech regional models/alliances across Europe
- Learning ecosystems and innovation infrastructure for EdTech
- Accessibility and inclusion in EdTech
- AI in education: a balanced approach
- Forging stronger links between the EdTech sector and the EIT Community
- Intellectual property in the age of digital and AI
- Digital sovereignty
- EdTech investments

Participants formed working groups covering all the above thematic key areas, except intellectual property and digital sovereignty.

The co-creation labs were designed to foster in-depth dialogue on critical EdTech topics, encouraging meaningful exchanges and gathering insights from a diverse group of participants. Their main objectives were to:

- generate actionable recommendations for EIT, policymakers and ecosystem stakeholders;
- identify best practices and scalable innovation models within Europe's EdTech landscape;
- and map opportunities for cross-sector collaboration to support the growth of EdTech across the continent.

The expected outcomes included a set of concrete policy and operational recommendations prioritised by impact and feasibility; thematic maps outlining key actors, initiatives and

collaboration pathways; a blueprint for supporting the EdTech ecosystem and a foundation for future cross-sector partnerships initiated during the session.

In each lab, participants worked in small groups on their preferred topic using a provided template. Each group was supported by a theme holder—an expert who framed the theme and shared its current state in Europe—and a facilitator, who managed time and ensured smooth group dynamics. Together, they fostered lively discussions about both the present landscape and future directions.

Participants worked with a canvas divided into two main sections; one side explored the current situation and included three parts:

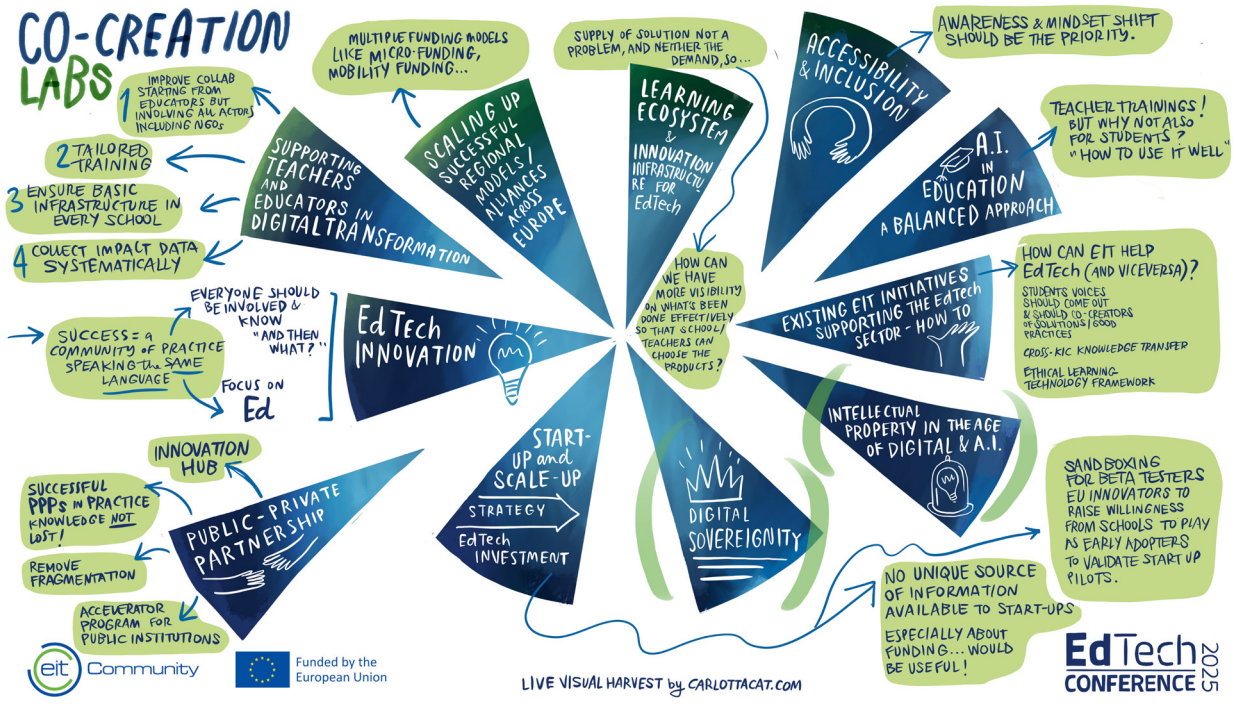
- success stories, key actors and projects to support;
- roadblocks preventing full EdTech adoption;
- and possible synergies to overcome barriers and scale initiatives.

While the other section of the canvas focused on future actions and included two parts:

- concrete steps to move forward
- and recommendations on how policy can support the industry.

Each group concluded by presenting a set of key recommendations aimed at guiding policy to better support the growth and impact of the EdTech sector across Europe.

Groups: framing, discussion and key recommendations



1- Public-private partnerships

Theme holder: Jitske van Os
Managing Director, Dutch EdTech

Facilitator: Marta Lorusso
Digital Education Specialist,
EIT RawMaterials

Guiding question: What does a successful public-private partnership in EdTech look like? What actionable frameworks, collaborative models and best practises enable successful public-private partnerships in EdTech?

Framing: Public-private partnerships in EdTech are crucial because they connect the public sector's mission for inclusive and future-ready education with the private sector's capacity for innovation. Currently, Europe's landscape—dominated by testbeds, labs and pilot programmes—serves as an experimental space for collaboration. However, these efforts face significant challenges; including misaligned goals between public needs and market-driven solutions, fragmented procurement processes and a lack of trust and transparency, all of which hinder scaling beyond initial pilots. Existing frameworks like TrustFramework.eu and the 3E Framework (Evidence, Ethics, Equity) provide shared principles for design, procurement and collaboration, ensuring partnerships are research-informed, ethical and inclusive.

Discussion: The discussion on public-private partnerships emphasised existing success stories and initiatives such as training programmes, pedagogical expertise, EdTech enthusiasts, problem-focused projects, the Collaborative Trust Framework and Startup in Residence programmes. However, significant roadblocks remain and include temporary fixes for structural issues, technology-driven approaches without clear purpose, misaligned incentives, fragmentation, lack of urgency, change fatigue, knowledge gaps, procurement challenges and insufficient investment. Moving forward requires fostering digital autonomy, adopting a long-term perspective, creating urgency for change and encouraging bottom-up approaches. Key actions include increasing public and private investment, establishing mission-driven unified funding, predictable financing, a 10-year policy framework, qualitative measures, Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) for public-private partnership success and restricting unsafe software to build trust and sustainability.

Key recommendations on how policy can support the industry:

- Foster greater interaction between policymakers, teachers and students, while ensuring policy advisors maintain low turnover to retain institutional knowledge.
- Address market fragmentation by supporting initiatives, like EU INC (a proposal for a pan-European standardised legal entity), that unify tenders and procedures across different countries.
- Establish an accelerator programme for public institutions and EdTech companies to support the development and implementation of public-private partnership programmes.
- Create an innovation hub and platform that connects EdTech startups with public educational institutions. This hub should facilitate stakeholders in designing experiments, identifying synergies and developing solutions.

2- EdTech innovation

Theme holder: Beth Havinga
Managing Director, European EdTech Alliance

Facilitator: Anne-Wil Kramer
Postdoctoral Researcher, Radboud University

Guiding question: What would it take to create a thriving EdTech innovation landscape in Europe?

Framing: The theme holder presented the European EdTech landscape, focusing on market models, challenges and opportunities. The current landscape shows that business-to-business (B2B) dominates in workforce and mixed clusters, while business-to-student (B2S) and business-to-consumer (B2C) are strong in school-focused segments. Despite growth, many platforms fail because they do not meet schools' real needs and there is a lack of independent evidence on effectiveness and safety. Testing practices were highlighted as a critical gap as EdTech companies often enter the market without robust trials or validation. Gender representation is another concern, with data from the European EdTech Map revealing imbalances in leadership, participation and funding across the sector.

Discussion: The discussion focused on building a stronger EdTech ecosystem in Europe by leveraging success stories and initiatives such as the European EdTech Map, DigiEduHack and programmes like Magma Math and Poland's Eco Innovator, as well as Funded spaces for co-creation and ideation. Participants highlighted major roadblocks, including lack of business knowledge, language diversity in schools, absence of unified standards, unclear responsibilities and insufficient understanding of educational needs. Suggestions on how to overcome these barriers included fostering synergies through a guide for EdTech policymakers and developers, increased funding, and occasions for co-creation and design between schools, companies and

product developers. Turning regulations into actionable guidelines and engaging universities for impact were emphasised. Looking ahead, proposed actions included organising an EdTech "Connectathon," enhancing teacher training (both pre-service and ongoing) and creating developer guides to support innovation.

Key recommendations on how policy can support the industry:

- Focus on real learning needs at all levels: technology should serve pedagogy, not replace it.
- Prioritise teacher training, organise "connectathons" and improve communication tools.
- Support European-funded data gathering as a common good that can be accessed and used by all.
- Create collaboration spaces to foster innovation and shared learning.
- Develop a Developer's Guide for EdTech companies, including:
  - development guidelines
  - co-creation guidelines
  - and teacher/school scaleup partnerships for sustainability
- Establish an International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standard for EdTech to ensure quality and interoperability.
- Promote communities of practice with real ownership to drive long-term impact.

3- Supporting teachers and educators in the digital transition

Theme holder: Sean O'Reilly
Manager, Academic Affairs and Data, Technological Universities Association

Facilitator: Giulia Sparisci
Business Process Officer, EIT Urban Mobility

Guiding question: How can we ensure educators are equipped, supported and empowered in the digital transition?

Framing: The presentation emphasised the critical role of educators in driving the digital transition in education. It highlighted a shift from traditional content delivery to fostering digital literacy, curating resources, designing blended learning experiences and ensuring equitable access. Effective integration of technology depends on teachers' confidence and competence, which must be supported by continuous professional development. European initiatives like the Digital Education Action Plan, the European Digital Education Hub and DigCompEdu can also support teachers. Survey data from TALIS 2024 shows growing adoption of digital tools and AI training, as well as an unmet demand for training and persistent challenges. The discussion called for a collaborative approach to equip, support and empower educators within a dynamic digital ecosystem shaped by learners, institutions and societal change.

Discussion: Participants highlighted success stories such as open-source skill tech tools, the Digital Education Hub and initiatives like DigiEduHack—noting that EdTech is increasingly integrated into university pedagogy courses. Key barriers identified included lack of time, multilingual challenges in the EU, risk-averse attitudes, conservative mindsets and insufficient digital infrastructure. To overcome these, participants stressed the need for teacher training that goes beyond technical skills to include how to teach with technology, continuous professional development, dissemination of best practices and fostering partnerships by design. Looking ahead, suggestions included building capacity with enabling tools, keeping teachers at the centre, increasing funding for external expertise, promoting co-design of policy guidelines with educators, prioritising digital skills in curricula and encouraging interdisciplinary approaches. Ideas such as challenge-based learning, citizen science, hackathon-style methods and stronger industry-education-policy connections were proposed to ensure adoption at all levels—national, regional and local.

Key recommendations on how policy can support the industry:

- Promote collaboration across the entire ecosystem—including educators, schools, policymakers, industry and researchers.
- Prioritise digital skills and provide tailored digital skills training for educators, adapted to their specific needs and contexts.
- Ensure basic infrastructure in schools, guided by a shared understanding and a clear roadmap.
- Collate evidence of impact to inform future decisions and improve policy and practice.

4- Scaling up successful EdTech regional models/alliances across Europe

Theme holder: Michelle DuQuette
Events and Ecosystem Strategist, European EdTech Alliance | Community Strategist, EmpowerED

Facilitator: Christina Makarona
Project Coordinator, European Schoolnet

Guiding question: What are the most practical steps we can take and who needs to work together, to grow successful regional EdTech models/alliances so they replicate and scale?

Framing: The presentation emphasised the critical role of educators in driving the digital transition in education. It highlighted a shift from traditional content delivery to fostering digital literacy, curating resources, designing blended learning experiences and ensuring equitable access. Effective integration of technology depends on teachers' confidence and competence, which must be supported by continuous professional development. European initiatives like the Digital Education Action Plan, the European Digital Education Hub and DigCompEdu can also support teachers. Survey data from TALIS 2024 shows growing adoption of digital tools and AI training, as well as an unmet demand for training and persistent challenges. The discussion called for a collaborative approach to equip, support and empower educators within a dynamic digital ecosystem shaped by learners, institutions and societal change.

Discussion: The discussion emphasised the current strengths and gaps in the EdTech landscape. Participants noted that local organisations play a key role in connecting stakeholders, validating markets and reducing risk, but challenges persist due to fragmented expertise, limited understanding of learning science and unclear definitions of success. To address these issues and scale initiatives, ideas included fostering synergies through policy-industry working groups, building a shared language and knowledge base, leveraging networking opportunities and disseminating expertise. Looking ahead, the group called for flexible and sustainable funding

models, micro-funding for smaller networks, stronger policy implementation and clear KPIs for measuring knowledge exchange, while prioritising mapping existing actors rather than creating new structures.

Key recommendations on how policy can support the industry:

- Include knowledge exchange, collaboration and community building explicitly in mandates, along with incentives for cross-border collaboration.
- Implement multiple funding models to achieve meaningful collaboration, such as:
  - Network nodes that operate sustainably and connect stakeholders
  - Micro-funding incentives for targeted collaborations
  - Mobility funding to support cross-border knowledge exchange, expertise sharing and continuous engagement
- Build an alliance beyond EdTech, embracing a triple helix model: governments, policy and education.
- Position the European Skills Agenda as a strategic priority for the EdTech sector.
- Foster alliances between ministries, especially economics and education, and stimulate informal networking among stakeholders.
- Look to other sectors that have scaled rapidly, such as deep tech and pharmaceuticals, for inspiration and best practices.

5. Learning ecosystems and innovation infrastructure for EdTech

Theme holder: Peter Fagerström
Founder and Executive Chair, Educraftor

Facilitator: Marie Nõgisto
Partner and Manager, Educraftor

Guiding question: How do we build and maintain the digital backbone for truly equitable and effective digital education?

Framing: While digital infrastructure is the foundation of EdTech, its full potential is hindered by persistent disparities across Europe. These obstacles include unequal connectivity, insufficient access to devices and reliable platforms, as well as different interoperability standards, all of which impede EdTech deployment.

Discussion: The discussion highlighted key roadblocks in EdTech adoption, including a fragmented technology landscape and a lack of clarity for families and students, who often perceive learning technologies as a "black box." To move forward, stakeholders need a common language and transparent systems that provide a complete picture, ensure General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance and connect data silos for better analysis. A universal curriculum framework, support mechanisms for technology selection and skill-based training for teachers and school leaders are essential to enable informed choices and foster innovation in education.

Key recommendations on how policy can support the industry:

- Establish a digital backbone that supports and informs all stakeholders, enabling effective decision-making and the adoption of best-fit solutions for schools.
- Create a support system to certify EdTech solutions as safe and GDPR-compliant, ensuring trust and reliability across the ecosystem.

6. Accessibility and inclusion in EdTech

Theme holder: Pamela Pokorny
Education Programme Manager, Digital Learning Unit, EIT Food

Facilitator: Pier Luigi Delgiudice
Local Head, ReDi School

Guiding question: How do we make EdTech a powerful tool for every learner's success, ensuring no one is left behind?

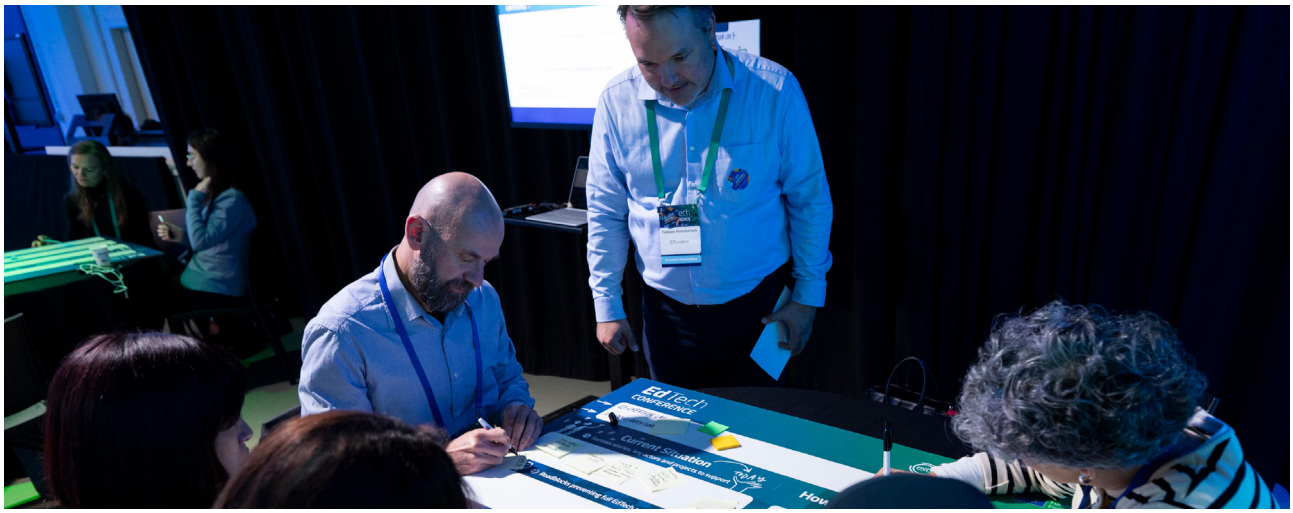
Framing: The theme holder presented the urgent need to design educational technology that serves all learners, not just the average user. Despite rapid post-pandemic adoption, EdTech often excludes individuals with disabilities, migrants, linguistic minorities and low-income communities. This exclusion stems from barriers including language differences, poor connectivity and inaccessible user experience. Compliance with accessibility standards alone is insufficient; inclusion must be embedded as a default design principle from the start. Leveraging frameworks, such as Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 and Universal Design for Learning, and innovations, like AI-driven personalisation and multilingual access, can transform EdTech into a truly equitable tool. Success means every learner can access and understand content regardless of ability, language, or device, ensuring technology becomes a driver of opportunity rather than exclusion.

Discussion: Participants shared examples of successful initiatives like France's Ulis classes, which integrate pupils with disabilities into mainstream schools and Roger Voice, an app that translates phone calls into subtitles for accessibility. Participants identified major roadblocks, such as limited societal awareness, the perception of inclusion as a constraint rather than an opportunity, lack of clear definitions and insufficient training for developers and EdTech teams. Data gaps in education science and low prioritisation of inclusion were also highlighted. To overcome these barriers, participants suggested scaling training in Universal Design for Learning principles, promoting awareness across the learner's life span and leveraging EU influence to drive cultural and societal mindset shifts. Moving forward, participants emphasised embedding inclusion requirements into EU project funding and procurement, mandating accessibility certifications for EdTech and fostering an inclusive mindset as a core European value supported by mandatory training.

Key recommendations on how policy can support the industry:

- Mandate inclusion and accessibility training or certification for organisations seeking to procure or be awarded public funding.
- Facilitate a shift in societal and cultural mindsets toward inclusion and accessibility, establishing these values as a priority in EdTech.
- Integrate inclusion education and awareness programmes into EU initiatives, like Erasmus mobility, to include learners of all ages.

7. AI in education: a balanced approach



Theme holder: Tobias Himmerich
CEO and Founder, EDuvation

Facilitator: Blanca Fondevila
Senior Digital Learning Manager, EIT Urban Mobility

Guiding question: How can we leverage AI in education to create a responsible, effective and human-centred learning future?

Framing: The theme holder highlighted the rapid growth and significance of the European EdTech ecosystem, emphasising its scale, economic impact and investment potential. AI is reshaping the competitive landscape by improving user experience, driving differentiation and accelerating innovation, while also introducing global competition and regulatory challenges. Although most organisations have yet to adopt AI, many are beginning to integrate proprietary or off-the-shelf solutions. AI is seen as a powerful tool for enhancing learning through personalisation, instant feedback and engagement, but its implementation is hindered by fragmented regulations across European schools. AI offers transformative opportunities for education, but success depends on collaboration, balanced adoption and harmonised policies.

Discussion: Participants focused on the rapid rise of AI tools in education and noted several success stories. These included hackathons like DigiEduHack, dedicated university networks sharing knowledge, and policy recommendations at institutional levels. Specific AI-driven solutions like automatic translations are already helping overcome language barriers. Participants also highlighted innovative startups leveraging AI for automation. Despite these breakthroughs, the integration of AI faces significant challenges. Key obstacles include socio-economic divides, AI's non-native role in education, misinformation, cultural resistance, lack of responsible AI use knowledge, slow decision-making and fears of job loss among educators. Professors face time

and training constraints, while students lack guidance on effective AI use. To address these issues, participants proposed continuous training, stronger collaboration between educators, employers and technologists and cross-border sharing of use cases. Moving forward, participants suggested EU and national-funded pilots, publishing role-specific AI guidelines, formalising and mandating teacher training and creating a European framework standard to ensure responsible and scalable AI integration in education.

Key recommendations on how policy can support the industry:

- Introduce 21st-century skills and competencies into the curriculum, with a strong focus on ethical considerations when formulating policy.
- Automate administrative tasks to free up time and resources for educators.
- Showcase the potential of AI in education through pilot projects and existing initiatives, involving students from early stages.
- Support training for teachers by:
  - Beginning with voluntary training programmes, funded at EU or national levels
  - Progressing toward formalised, long-term training;
  - Publishing AI guidelines to ensure clarity and consistency.
- Develop a European standard and framework for the use of AI in education, ensuring responsible and effective integration.
- Create a funding framework focused on upskilling educators and promoting the effective use of AI in schools.

8. Forging stronger links between the EdTech sector and the EIT community

Theme holder: Dana Redford
President and Founder, PEEP-Policy Experimentation and Evaluation Platform | Senior Fellow, Institute of European Studies, UC Berkeley

Facilitator: Gerard Domínguez
Head of Capacity Building, EIT Campus

Guiding question: How could existing EIT Community initiatives, tools and partnerships be leveraged to support strengthening the EdTech ecosystem?

Framing: The theme holder emphasised the need to strengthen collaboration between the EdTech sector and the EIT Community to ensure Europe's innovation and skills policies reinforce one another. This highlighted a two-way value exchange: EIT offers EdTech access to networks, funding, validation and scalability, while EdTech provides tools for personalisation, engagement and data-driven learning. The EIT Community operates through its "Knowledge Triangle;" bridging business, research and education. The European Commission is pushing for closer interlinkages between EIT and other Directorate-Generals (DGs). Although initiatives like the EIT AI Community, EIT STEM Tech Talent Induction, EIT Higher Education Initiative, Girls Go STEM and EIT Skills Academies show progress; gaps remain in visibility, procurement processes and accessibility for smaller EdTech firms. Proposed solutions include creating a unified procurement portal, fostering agile partnerships through sandbox pilots and improving data interoperability across EIT programmes. The presentation also identified immediate opportunities for EdTech in digital delivery, adaptive learning and credentialing, while addressing challenges such as fragmented procedures and limited awareness.

Discussion: Participants highlighted that the current EdTech landscape within the EIT community includes notable success stories, key actors and impactful projects. These initiatives focus on teacher capacity building, open-source solutions, interoperability and short courses for students. All success stories are supported by public-private partnerships and EIT monitoring aligned with teachers' needs. However, participants also identified significant roadblocks such as fragmentation, diverse legal frameworks across Europe, lack of interoperability, trust issues and limited awareness of benefits. To overcome these barriers and scale initiatives, synergies between EIT, HEIs and other EIT projects were emphasised, alongside collaboration and public-private partnerships. Moving forward, concrete steps include developing partnerships with clear KPIs, involving public stakeholders for quality assurance, learning from other sectors, creating a common language for interoperability and leveraging EIT support for scaling and awareness campaigns. Policy recommendations focused on funding for scaling (Technology Readiness Level 7-9), interoperability standards, incentives for partnerships and targeted awareness campaigns for teachers and students.

Key recommendations on how policy can support the industry:

- Showcase EIT-enabled collaborations as a success model for scaling EdTech impact through public-private partnerships.
- Engage the student voice in co-creation efforts, involving learners in course design and quality assurance to ensure relevance and learner-centred innovation.
- Strengthen cross-KIC (xKIC) knowledge transfer to standardise good practices and accelerate learning technology adoption.
- Apply and map existing ethical learning technology frameworks to guide responsible and transparent EdTech use.
- Simplify entry and access by reducing complexity, avoiding jargon, creating a one-stop-shop for opportunities, unifying branding, shortening timelines and streamlining the customer journey.
- Explore a xKIC venture approach for joint investment in transversal EdTech initiatives.

9. Investment in EdTech startups

Theme holder: Rhys Spence
Head of Platform and Research, Brighteye Ventures

Facilitator: Giacomo Lozzi
EU Affairs Advisor, EIT Urban Mobility

Guiding question: What steps can we take to smartly fund and grow the EdTech innovations that will shape the future of education?

Framing: The theme holder presented how Europe can unlock the potential of EdTech innovation by addressing funding models, market dynamics and structural challenges. The presentation highlighted Brighteye Ventures as a leading early-stage investor focused on learning, work and productivity, emphasising the transformative role of AI in education and labour markets. Despite a large and stable education market and growing demand for skills, Europe's EdTech ecosystem faces barriers such as fragmented markets, slow institutional adoption and limited growth capital. The discussion outlined diverse funding options from venture capital and impact investment to public grants, the need for coordinated support, as well as procurement reform and late-stage financing to enable scale. The presentation called for strategic collaboration between public and private stakeholders to position Europe as a global leader in ethical, human-centred EdTech. for smaller EdTech firms. Proposed solutions include creating a unified procurement portal, fostering agile partnerships through sandbox pilots and improving data interoperability across EIT programmes. The presentation also identified immediate opportunities for EdTech in digital delivery, adaptive learning and credentialing, while addressing challenges such as fragmented procedures and limited awareness.

Discussion: Participants highlighted promising initiatives such as Educate Ventures, NOLAI, empowerED testbed networks and the use of platforms for rapid minimum viable product (MVP) development, alongside customer programmes and talent reskilling efforts. However, participants also identified significant barriers including the absence of KPIs for data-driven decisions on AI integration, lack of dedicated EdTech funding calls, market fragmentation, resistance to change, long procurement cycles and the complexity of addressing 27 different education systems across Europe. Additional challenges include regulatory hurdles, limited school budgets and a conservative market with few early adopters. To overcome these, participants proposed clearer EU funding and scaling support, inclusion of practitioner budgets in startup grants, leveraging existing consortia as testbeds and fostering collaboration between innovators, institutions and investors. Moving forward, participants suggested creating sandbox networks, simplifying regulations for AI in education, streamlining procurement processes, gathering robust KPIs and establishing EU-level beta testing and innovation frameworks to accelerate adoption.

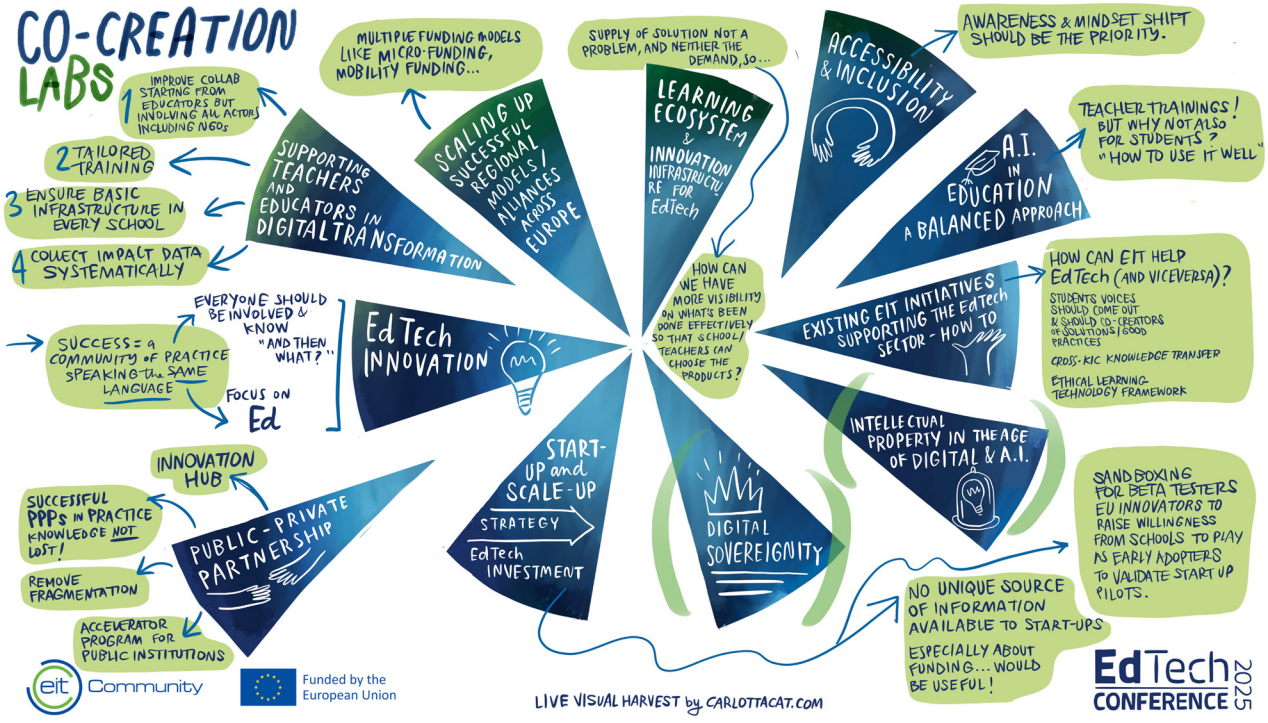
Key recommendations on how policy can support the industry:

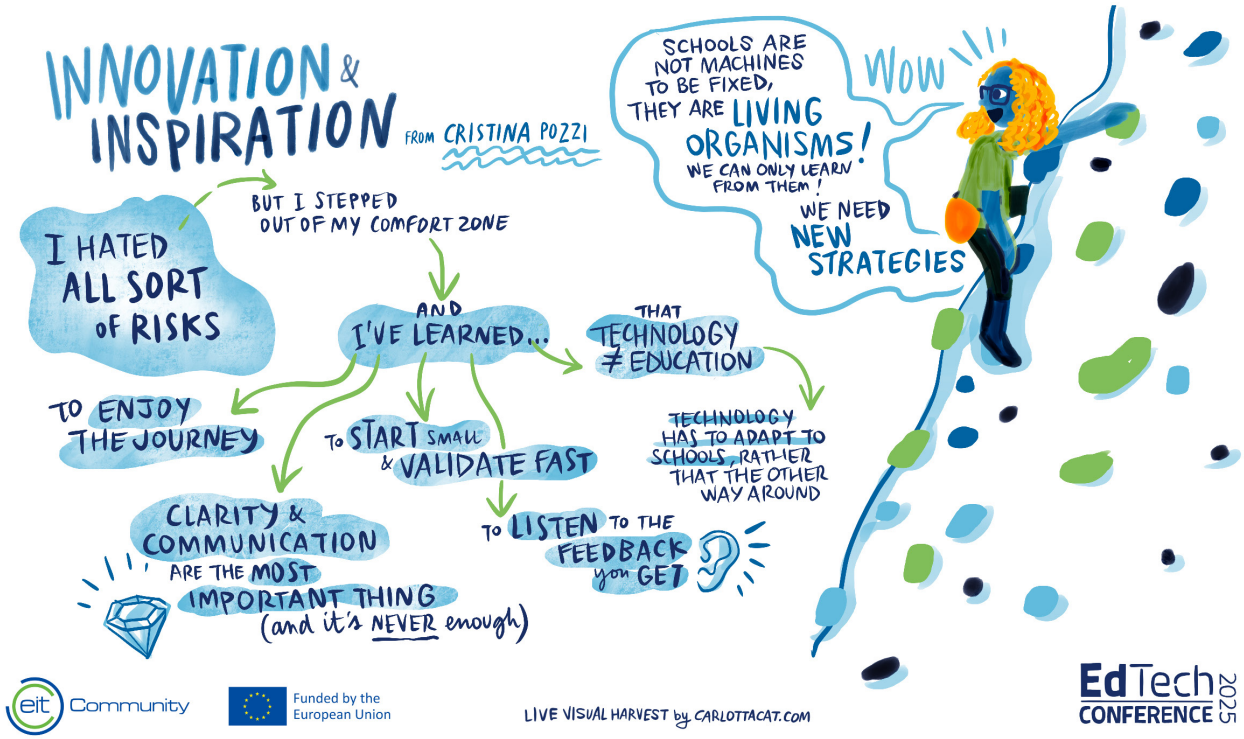
- Provide clear EU guidelines and transparency on available funds for EdTech startups, and use general communication channels (e.g., newsletters) to keep EdTech stakeholders informed.
- Engage EU-funded innovators in sandboxing with beta testers to increase schools' willingness to act as early adopters and provide startups with a point of contact to validate their approach.
- Track early impact and KPIs to facilitate scaling to other beta tester schools and accessing further funding based on demonstrated impact.
- Establish dedicated leadership roles within the ecosystem, such as:

  -Appointing a Head of Innovation for schools and universities (country-specific)

  - Designating an Investment Coordinator to validate EdTech investments at an EU-level

6.3 Harvest designs




INNOVATION & INSPIRATION
FROM CRISTINA POZZI
I HATED ALL SORT OF RISKS
BUT I STEPPED OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE
AND I'VE LEARNED...
TO ENJOY THE JOURNEY
TO START SMALL & VALIDATE FAST
CLARITY & COMMUNICATION ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING (and it's NEVER enough)
TO LISTEN TO THE FEEDBACK you GET
THAT TECHNOLOGY ≠ EDUCATION
TECHNOLOGY HAS TO ADAPT TO SCHOOLS, RATHER THAT THE OTHER WAY AROUND
SCHOOLS ARE NOT MACHINES TO BE FIXED, THEY ARE LIVING ORGANISMS! WE CAN ONLY LEARN FROM THEM!
WE NEED NEW STRATEGIES
Wow
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EdTech INNO- VATION
LEARNING FROM EUROPE's SUCCESS STORIES
WHERE ARE INNOVATIONS ALREADY HAPPENING?
BETH HAVINGA
MICHELLE DUQUETTE
CHRISTINA MAKARONA
TOBIAS HIMMERICH
ANNE-WIL KRAMER
EU the START-UP ECOSYSTEM
7,800 COMPANIES
400,000 PEOPLE
WORTH 54 BILLION €
IMPACTING 93.3 MILLION PUPILS & STUDENTS
IMPACT is HUGE, SO RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD BE SHARED.
BUSINESS MODELS SHOULD BE CO-CREATED
EUROPEAN EdTECH ALLIANCE
SUPPORTING THE ECOSYSTEM AT EU LEVEL & REGIONAL LEVEL
NEUTRAL ORGANIZATION
CENTRAL CONTACT POINT ACROSS ~ 30 COUNTRIES
ED TECH MARKET
THE MAJORITY OF ORGANISATIONS IN THE ECOSYSTEM ARE VERY SMALL
61% ONLY HAVE 1-2 EMPLOYEES!
VERY LITTLE RUNWAY
WE NEED TO SOLVE THIS
HOW CAN WE CREATE a REAL SENSE of COMMUNITY BEYOND TODAY?
HOW CAN A.I. HELP TEACHERS?
"ALWAYS START WITH THE TEACHERS"
THESE PEOPLE ARE THE MOST PASSIONATE
FEMALE EDTECH FELLOWSHIP
3 ENABLERS FOR AN EMPOWERED ECOSYSTEM
TRUST
SKILLS
FUNDING WITH BETTER CRITERIA
AND A COMMON LANGUAGE!
AND A SUPPORTING MECHANISM FOR EDUCATORS AND DECISION-MAKERS
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LIGHTNING TALKS
DISCOVER the EIT COMMUNITY INITIATIVES
EIT
MARTA LORUSSO | GIRLS GO STEM
GOAL
BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP IN STEM
TRAINING & ASSESSING 14-19 YEARS OLD STUDENTS
IN DIGITAL, ENTERPRENEURIAL & GREEN SKILLS
70.000
GIRLS TRAINED SO FAR!
84% MORE CONFIDENT!!!
AND WE WANT TO TRAIN MANY MORE!
DANA REDFORD | DEEP TECH TALENT
+200 COURSES
CONNECTION EVENTS
CASCADE FUNDING € 1M + IN GRANTS
+600 PLEDGERS
ORIGINAL GOAL: TRAIN 1 MILLION IN THE EU (BUT WE EXCEEDED THE GOAL!)
JOIN US!
FOCUS ON STEM
GERARD DOMINGUEZ | EIT CAMPUS
ONE STOP SHOP FOR ALL EIT EDUCATION PRODUCTS
TO BREAK SILOS IN THE INDUSTRY
FOCUS
SKILLS
CAREER
LIFE-LONG LEARNING
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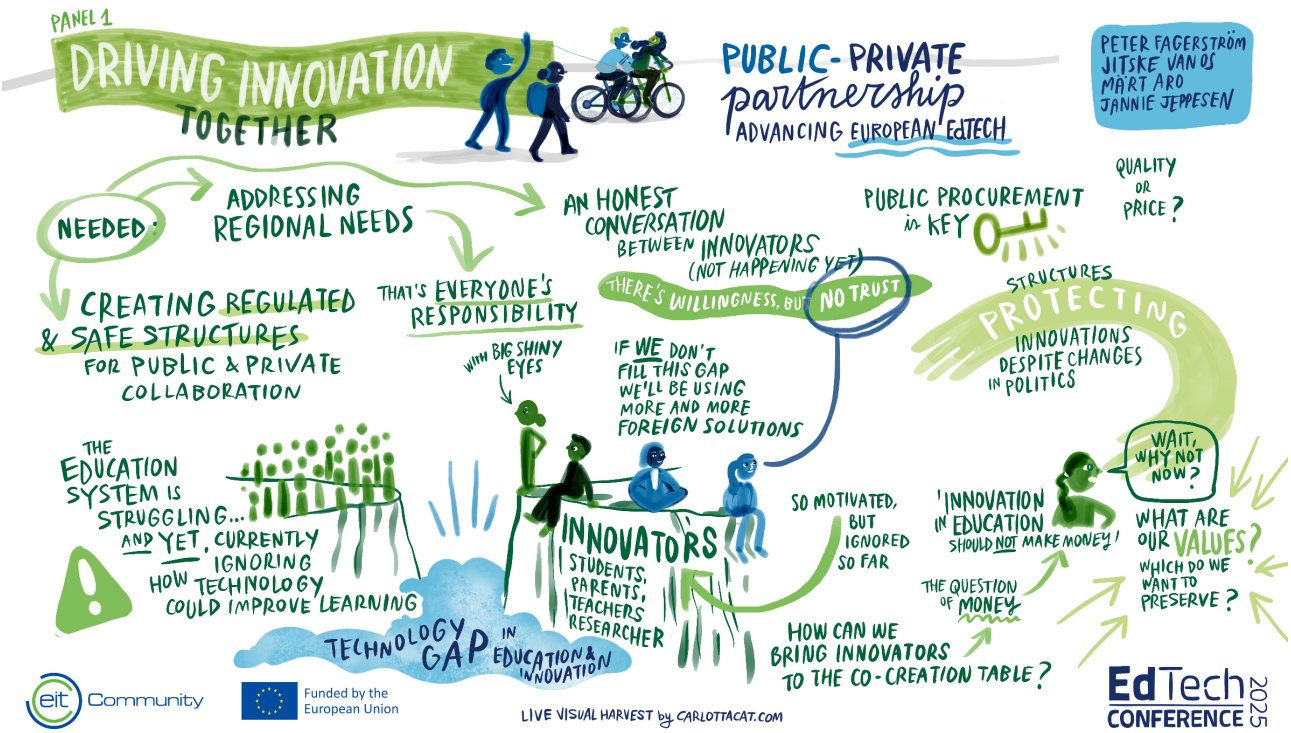
PANEL 1
DRIVING INNOVATION TOGETHER
PUBLIC-PRIVATE partnership ADVANCING EUROPEAN EdTECH
PETER FAGERSTRÖM
JITSKE VAN OS
MART ARO
JANNIE JEPPESEN
NEEDED:
ADDRESSING REGIONAL NEEDS
CREATING REGULATED & SAFE STRUCTURES FOR PUBLIC & PRIVATE COLLABORATION
THAT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY
AN HONEST CONVERSATION BETWEEN INNOVATORS (NOT HAPPENING YET)
THERE'S WILLINGNESS, BUT NO TRUST
PUBLIC PROCUREMENT is KEY
QUALITY OR PRICE?
STRUCTURES PROTECTING INNOVATIONS DESPITE CHANGES IN POLITICS
WITH BIG SHINY EYES
IF WE DON'T FILL THIS GAP WE'LL BE USING MORE AND MORE FOREIGN SOLUTIONS
THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IS STRUGGLING... AND YET, CURRENTLY IGNORING HOW TECHNOLOGY COULD IMPROVE LEARNING
INNOVATORS
STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS RESEARCHER
SO MOTIVATED, BUT IGNORED SO FAR
'INNOVATION IN EDUCATION SHOULD NOT MAKE MONEY!
WAIT, WHY NOT NOW?
WHAT ARE OUR VALUES?
WHICH DO WE WANT TO PRESERVE?
THE QUESTION OF MONEY
HOW CAN WE BRING INNOVATORS TO THE CO-CREATION TABLE?
TECHNOLOGY GAP IN EDUCATION & INNOVATION
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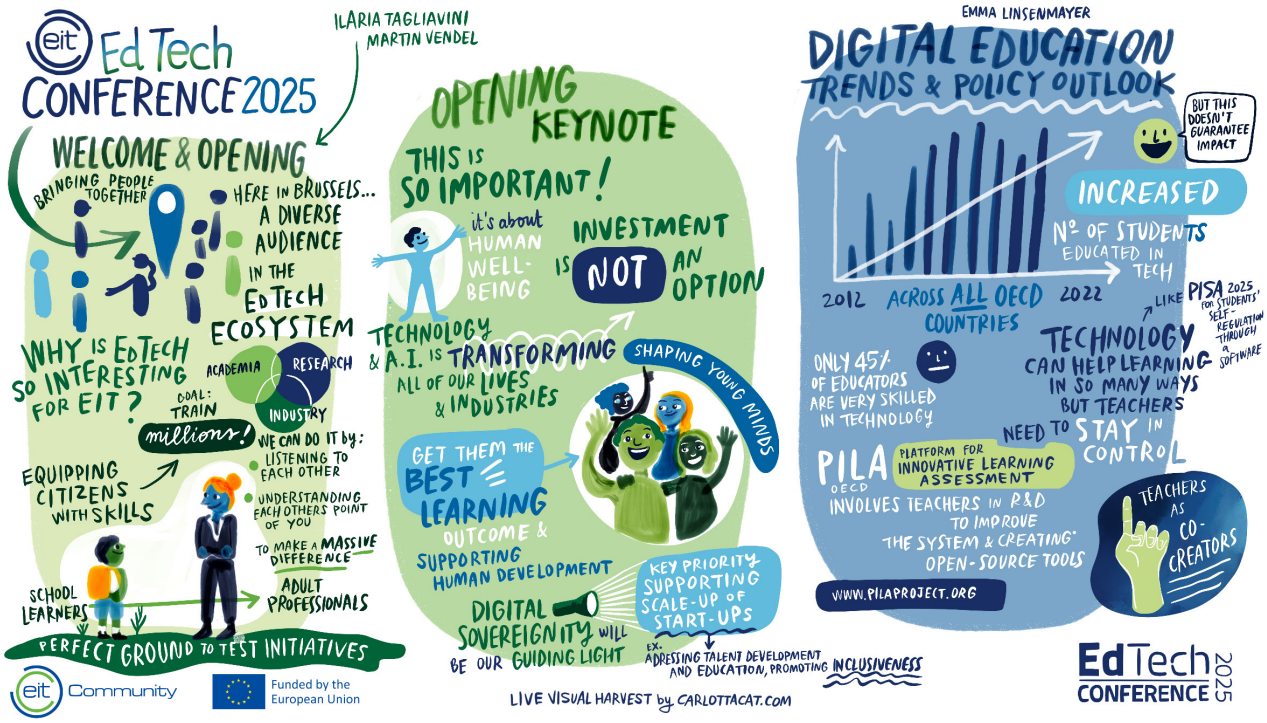
Ed Tech CONFERENCE 2025
ILARIA TAGLIAVINI
MARTIN VENDEL
WELCOME & OPENING
BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
HERE IN BRUSSELS... A DIVERSE AUDIENCE IN THE EDTECH ECOSYSTEM
ACADEMIA
RESEARCH
INDUSTRY
WHY IS EDTECH SO INTERESTING FOR EIT?
GOAL: TRAIN millions!
WE CAN DO IT BY: LISTENING TO EACH OTHER
UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHERS POINT OF YOU
TO MAKE A MASSIVE DIFFERENCE
EQUIPPING CITIZENS WITH SKILLS
SCHOOL LEARNERS
ADULT PROFESSIONALS
PERFECT GROUND TO TEST INITIATIVES
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OPENING KEYNOTE
THIS IS SO IMPORTANT!
it's about HUMAN WELL-BEING
INVESTMENT IS NOT AN OPTION
TECHNOLOGY & A.I. IS TRANSFORMING ALL OF OUR LIVES & INDUSTRIES
SHAPING YOUNG MINDS
GET THEM THE BEST LEARNING OUTCOME & SUPPORTING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
DIGITAL SOVEREIGNITY WILL BE OUR GUIDING LIGHT
KEY PRIORITY SUPPORTING SCALE-UP OF START-UPS
EX. ADRESSING TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION, PROMOTING INCLUSIVENESS
LIVE VISUAL HARVEST by CARLOTTACAT.COM
EMMA LINSENMAYER
DIGITAL EDUCATION TRENDS & POLICY OUTLOOK
BUT THIS DOESN'T GUARANTEE IMPACT
INCREASED Nº OF STUDENTS EDUCATED IN TECH
2012 ACROSS ALL OECD COUNTRIES 2022
LIKE PISA 2025 FOR STUDENTS' SELF-REGULATION THROUGH A SOFTWARE
ONLY 45% OF EDUCATORS ARE VERY SKILLED IN TECHNOLOGY
TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP LEARNING IN SO MANY WAYS BUT TEACHERS NEED TO STAY IN CONTROL
PILA OECD PLATFORM FOR INNOVATIVE LEARNING ASSESSMENT
INVOLVES TEACHERS IN R&D TO IMPROVE THE SYSTEM & CREATING OPEN-SOURCE TOOLS
WWW.PILAPROJECT.ORG
TEACHERS AS CO-CREATORS
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EQUIPPING LEARNERS FOR THE FUTURE: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN A DIGITAL EUROPE
THOMAS VAN CAUWENBERGHE
SHARON FLYNN
MICHAELA HORVATHOVA
LANA PAR (missing)
FOR ALL AGES!
LIFELONG LEARNING
CREATIVITY
SKILLS
CRITICAL THINKING
WITHOUT STARTING FROM SCRATCH...
CHARACTER
RESILIENCE
etc.
WHAT COMPETENCES DO PEOPLE NEED FOR THE FUTURE?
A MORE HOLISTIC APPROACH
META-LEARNING
COVERING MORE AREAS
WHAT SHOULD WE STOP MEASURING IN EDUCATION?
INCLUDING DIGITAL SKILLS
WHICH ARE RARELY TAUGHT AT SCHOOL
GRADES!
THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE
MEMORIZING
EXAMS
FACTS ALONE
A.I. COGNITIVE HABILITIES
TO NAVIGATE THE CONSTANT UNCERTAINTY OF OUR REALITY
WE MUST START MEASURING WHAT WE DO WANT TO MEASURE & IMPLEMENT
TIRED OF CHANGING WITHOUT INCENTIVES
WHAT GET'S MEASURED GET'S TREASURED
THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE: TEACHERS & STUDENTS!
HUGELY IMPORTANT IN OUR CONVERSATIONS
WE NEED THEM IN THE ROOM!
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6.4 Agenda

09:00 – 09:15	**Welcome & Opening**
09:15 – 09:25	**Opening Keynote** Set the tone for the day and uplift the conversation with high level policy driven opening on EU education policy priorities and the positioning of EdTech in those. **Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva,** Director for Innovation, Digital Education and International Cooperation, DG EAC, European Commission
09:25 - 09:35	**Digital Education Trends & Policy Outlook** Outline key trends in digital education across OECD countries and refer to policy options that can support digital transformation. **Emma Linsenmayer,** Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD
09:35 – 10:00	**Participatory Check-In Session: Exploring Our Ecosystem**
10:00 - 10:40	**Interactive Panel Discussion 1: Driving Innovation Together: Public-Private Partnerships Advancing European EdTech** Panellists will exchange thought-provoking insights on how strategic collaboration between public institutions, private companies, and educational entries are shaping innovation and funding in European EdTech. Speakers: **Peter Fagerström**, Founder and Executive Chairman, Educraftor (Moderator) **Märt Aro,** Co-founder, DreamApply | Board Member, EdTech Estonia

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