SUBMISSION OF INPUTS: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION ON THE ISSUE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION AND ITS HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED USE AT THE SERVICE OF THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

**1. Use of AI tools and systems, including generative AI, in education process and related decision making.**

The Government of Mauritius acknowledges the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the education sector, recognising it as a cornerstone for future growth and development. Oxford Insight’s Global AI Index, places African countries among ‘waking up’ and ‘nascent’ nations in terms of AI investment, innovation, and implementation with Mauritius leading the region with AI readiness with a score of 53.27 in 2023.

It is viewed that the integration of AI in education can significantly transform the learning process.

Educational reforms in Mauritius include the introduction of Information and Communication Technology in the school curriculum. These reforms aim to equip students with essential digital skills, preparing them for a tech-driven future. The Technology-Education Pathway, introduced in January 2024, incorporates AI-related subjects for secondary school students, fostering early exposure to advanced technologies.

AI tools are independently used by education professionals to develop materials that enrich the student experience.

**2. Legislation, regulations or policies addressing or covering the use of AI in educational context.**

Government has put in place legislations to protect privacy and data of individual *inter-alia* through:

**Computer Emergency Response Team of Mauritius (CERT-MU):** It plays a pivotal role in protecting young people from online threats. Established under the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021, CERT-MU's mandate includes coordinating cybersecurity response activities, promoting cybersecurity at the national level, monitoring internet threats, and taking appropriate remedial measures. Its mission is to ensure the safety and security of Mauritian cyberspace, strengthen cyber resilience, and educate citizens about cyber threats, which includes measures aimed at protecting young people in the digital environment.

**Mauritius AI Strategy:** This strategy includes provisions for ethical AI use, bias mitigation, and transparency in AI applications within education. It advocates for the establishment of an ethics committee to oversee AI development and deployment.

**Data Protection Act 2017** ensures the privacy and protection of student data used by AI systems, mandating strict compliance with data security standards.

**Academic Integrity Policies**: Schools and universities have policies in place to prevent plagiarism and ensure proper attribution when AI tools are used. Students receive clear guidance on how to cite AI-generated content in their academic work.

**3. Support to management staff, teachers and students in understanding how to use AI and how AI works.**

The Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (MoETEST), in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), conducts regular professional development workshops for teachers and management staff, focusing on AI basics, its applications in education, and ethical considerations. These workshops cover AI techniques, such as machine learning and natural language processing, and their impact on human cognition, privacy, and agency.

Curriculum integration begins at the secondary level, where AI concepts are introduced in subjects like Computer Science and Information Technology. At the tertiary level, universities offer specialised courses in AI and Data Science. For instance, the University of Mauritius offers modules that include AI fundamentals, ethical AI practices, and the societal impact of AI technologies. These courses aim to ensure that students not only learn the technical aspects of AI but also understand its broader implications, preparing them to navigate and leverage AI in various contexts responsibly.

**4. Examples of professional development programme for teachers to use AI technologies, and training and support provided.**

**Examples of Professional Development Programs:**

**AI Integration Workshops:** Conducted to familiarise teachers with AI concepts, tools, and their applications in the classroom. These workshops cover practical aspects of AI, such as using AI-powered learning analytics, adaptive learning platforms, and virtual assistants to enhance teaching efficiency and student engagement.

**Online Courses**: Offered through platforms like the Mauritius Institute of Education e-learning portal, these courses provide in-depth training on AI technologies, including machine learning, natural language processing, and ethical AI use. Teachers can access these courses at their convenience, ensuring continuous professional growth.

**Collaborative Training Sessions:** Partnerships with AI tech companies enable hands-on training sessions where educators learn to implement AI-driven educational software and tools effectively.

**5. Policies addressing gaps and inequalities in access to necessary conditions for the use of AI in teaching and learning.**

**Teacher Training Programs**: Focus on equipping teachers with the skills to use AI tools effectively, ensuring that all students benefit from quality AI-enhanced education regardless of their socio-economic status.

**AI Literacy Programs**: These programs target both students and teachers to build foundational AI skills, with special initiatives aimed at rural and economically disadvantaged schools.

These measures collectively ensure that AI tools and resources are trustworthy, pedagogically appropriate, and accessible to all students, promoting inclusive and equitable education across Mauritius.

**6. Collaboration or partnership between public educational institutions and corporations producing AI tools for education.**

In Mauritius, state-supported collaborations between public educational institutions and corporations producing AI tools are actively promoted to enhance educational outcomes. An example is the partnership between the MoETEST and international tech companies like Microsoft and Google. These collaborations have resulted in the implementation of AI-driven educational platforms and tools in schools, such as Microsoft Teams for Education and Google Classroom.

**Enforcement and Choice**: The education system does not strictly enforce contracts with specific software providers, allowing schools to choose from a range of AI tools based on their specific needs. This choice is informed by feedback from teachers, parents, and students through surveys and consultation meetings, ensuring that the selected tools meet the diverse requirements of the educational community.

**Data Sovereignty and Localization**: Mauritius has implemented strict data protection regulations to address data sovereignty and localisation concerns. These regulations mandate that any data collected through AI tools used in education must be stored locally and comply with the Data Protection Act. Additionally, collaborations often include data security and privacy provisions, ensuring that international partners adhere to local data management standards.

These measures ensure that the integration of AI in education is both flexible and secure, catering to the needs of the educational community while safeguarding data sovereignty.

**7. Main challenges encountered during the implementation of AI in education:**

1. Teachers and administrative staff often require additional training to use and integrate AI technologies into the curriculum proficiently.
2. Ensuring the privacy and security of student data collected by AI tools is a significant concern. Implementing robust data protection measures to prevent unauthorized access and misuse presents challenges.
3. The high cost of acquiring, maintaining, and upgrading AI technologies poses a financial burden on educational institutions.
4. Institutions can find it challenging to navigate the complex regulatory landscape to ensure compliance with data protection and privacy laws, hence comprehensive guidelines and policies specifically addressing the use of AI in education are needed to ensure standardized and ethical practices.

**8. Potential fields for future development within the education sector in the following field:**

1. AI can provide customised learning experiences tailored to individual student needs, strengths, and learning styles. Adaptive learning platforms can adjust the difficulty of content in real time, ensuring that each student progresses at his own pace.
2. AI-driven assessment tools can offer immediate and detailed feedback on student performance. These tools can analyse student work, identify gaps in understanding, and suggest targeted interventions, enhancing the overall learning experience.
3. AI can streamline administrative tasks such as enrolment, scheduling, and resource allocation, freeing educators to focus more on teaching and less on paperwork. AI-powered chatbots can also assist with student inquiries, providing instant support and information.
4. AI technologies can significantly benefit students with special needs by offering tailored educational resources and assistive technologies, such as speech recognition and text-to-speech, to enhance their learning capabilities.
5. AI can support Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education by providing interactive simulations, virtual labs, and coding platforms that make learning science, technology, engineering, and mathematics more engaging and accessible.
6. AI can identify areas where teachers need further training and provide personalised professional development resources, ensuring that educators remain up-to-date with the latest teaching strategies and technologies.

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