

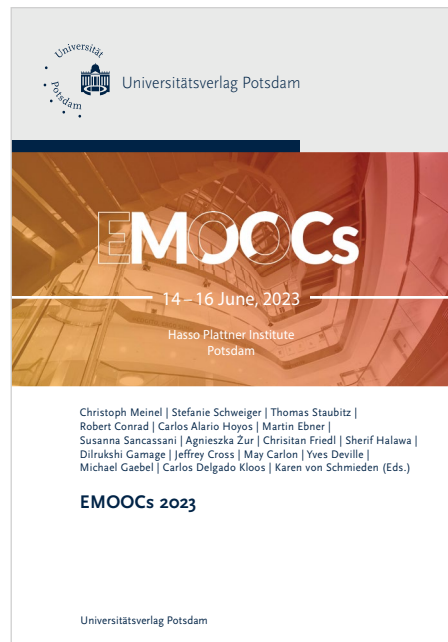
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Promoting Global Higher Education Cooperation Taking Global MOOC and Online Education Alliance as an Example

Wang Xiaoxiao and Guo Shuangshuang

Global MOOC and Online Education Alliance
Floor 9, Kejian Building, Tsinghua Science and Technology Park,
Haidian District, Beijing, China

The massive growth of MOOCs in 2011 laid the groundwork for the achievement of SDG 4. With the various benefits of MOOCs, there is also anticipation that online education should focus on more interactivity and global collaboration. In this context, the Global MOOC and Online Education Alliance (GMA) established a diverse group of 17 world-leading universities and three online education platforms from across 14 countries on all six continents in 2020. Through nearly three years of exploration, GMA has gained experience and achieved progress in fostering global cooperation in higher education. First, in joint teaching, GMA has promoted in-depth cooperation between members inside and outside the alliance. Examples include promoting the exchange of high-quality MOOCs, encouraging the creation of Global Hybrid Classroom, and launching Global Hybrid Classroom Certificate Programs. Second, in capacity building and knowledge sharing, GMA has launched Online Education Dialogues and the Global MOOC and Online Education Conference, inviting global experts to share best practices and attracting more than 10 million viewers around the world. Moreover, GMA is collaborating with international organizations to support teachers' professional growth, create an online learning community, and serve as a resource for further development. Third, in public advocacy, GMA has launched the SDG Hackathon and Global Massive Open Online Challenge (GMOOC) and attracted global learners to acquire knowledge and incubate their innovative ideas within a cross-cultural community to solve real-world problems that all humans face and jointly create a better future. Based on past experiences and challenges, GMA will explore more diverse cooperation models with more partners utilizing advanced technology, provide more support for digital transformation in higher education, and further promote global cooperation towards building a human community with a shared future.

1 Introduction

Since 2011, MOOCs have developed on a global scale [2], opening a new chapter in online education. Because MOOCs can enable learners from all over the world to receive high-quality education without leaving home at a lower cost, it is conducive to the realization of SDG 4 which is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” [4]. Despite the many benefits of MOOCs, people also have higher expectations for online education. For example, it is expected that there will be more sufficient interaction in the online learning process [3], more opportunities to summarize and exchange the experience of large-scale online education around the world since the outbreak of COVID-19 [1], and more opportunities to work with learners from diverse backgrounds to solve problems through cooperative learning [6]. Therefore, in the field of online education, how to strengthen interaction and promote global cooperation is an important issue that needs to be solved.

In response to global educational challenges and opportunities presented by the age of the internet and virtual interconnectivity, world-leading universities and platforms play an extremely important role. The Global MOOC and Online Education Alliance (GMA) was founded in 2020, with the mission of building a diverse community of world-leading universities and platforms, fostering international cooperation on educational technology and innovation, and leading by example and contributing towards the achievement of SDG 4. The GMA was initiated by 17 leading universities and three online education platforms from 14 countries across six continents¹, with its Secretariat located at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China. As a mechanism for exchange and cooperation, the GMA provides leadership in global higher education to address online education challenges and implements practical policies in members’ respective communities and around the world. To achieve its mission, the GMA mainly focuses on four aspects of work, namely joint teaching, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and public advocacy. Through nearly three years of exploration, the GMA has accumulated certain experience in promoting global higher education cooperation and yielded fruitful results.

¹The GMA Founding Members are Cornell University, *edX*, LPI (Learning Planet Institute), Mongolian University of Science and Technology, Nanyang Technological University, Peking University, Politecnico di Milano, Rice University, RWTH Aachen University, Saint Petersburg University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, *Thai MOOC*, Tsinghua University, University of Auckland, University of Chile, University of Manchester, University of Nairobi, University of Toronto, *XuetangX*, and Zhejiang University. (*Italics* are online education platforms)

2 Endeavors of Global MOOC and Online Education Alliance

The GMA's practice in promoting global higher education cooperation can be summarized as follows.

2.1 Seek Innovation in Joint Teaching and Share Quality Educational Resources

In terms of joint teaching, the GMA vigorously promotes deep cooperation among its members, as well as between members and non-members. This includes exchanging quality MOOC resources, establishing the real-time synchronous "Global Hybrid Classroom", launching systematic "Global Hybrid Classroom Certificate Programs", and other cooperative efforts.

The GMA has advanced the exchange of quality MOOC resources to enhance education quality and equity. From 2022 to the present, at the invitation of the Indonesia Cyber Education Institute, facilitated by the Secretariat of the GMA, XuetaangX, along with 36 Chinese universities, has signed an agreement with the Indonesia Cyber Education Institute to provide 108 high-quality MOOCs in English or with English subtitles as a donation for Indonesian university students to study online and receive credits. Wang Libing, Chief of Section for Educational Innovation and Skills Development of UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, and Wesley Teter, Senior Consultant of Section for Educational Innovation and Skills Development of UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, praised the donation as "a significant achievement in promoting the international flow of quality content and pedagogy, which can help to improve the access, quality, and equity of higher education provision in the Asia-Pacific region" [9].

The GMA has established the Global Hybrid Classroom to enhance students' learning and international understanding. Global Hybrid Classroom means that when a university or college holds a class, students from other universities or colleges around the world are invited to join synchronously through online means so they can learn together and interact with teachers and students in the classroom in real time. The course transcript is available to students once they have finished their course work. From 2021 to the present, with the assistance of the GMA Secretariat, universities from different countries and regions have cooperated to offer more than 300 Global Hybrid Classroom courses. More than 2,500 students from universities such as Politecnico di Milano, Nanyang Technological University, and the University of Chile have participated in these classes synchronously online. Through online and offline hybrid learning, university students worldwide are

able to attend the same class, which not only helps the students acquire knowledge and skills, but also enhances international communication and understanding.

The GMA has also launched Global Hybrid Classroom Certificate Programs to promote systemic online learning. Building on the Global Hybrid Classroom initiative, the GMA has launched ten certificate programs covering finance, applied economics, logic, environmental governance, electrical engineering, artificial intelligence and big data, social science, artificial intelligence IoT (Internet of Things), engineering management, and other fields. Students can acquire the program's certificate by successfully completing three to four hybrid courses in the program.

2.2 Promote Openness and Cooperation in Education: Strengthen Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

In terms of capacity building and knowledge sharing, the GMA promotes openness and cooperation in the field of education through global education communication and recognition of quality courses to facilitate experience sharing, setting examples, and providing training.

The GMA has conducted global education communication to facilitate experience sharing. Since its founding, the GMA has organized nearly 20 Online Education Dialogues. For three consecutive years, it has jointly organized the Global MOOC and Online Education Conference with the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education, inviting over 100 online education experts and scholars from nearly 30 countries worldwide and attracting over 10 million viewers globally. Through global education communication, guests shared their concepts and experiences about online education development, demonstrated excellent cases from different countries and regions, and laid the foundation for further cooperation. Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education at UNESCO, stated at the 2022 Global MOOC and Online Education Conference: "The lifelong approach has become essential to cope with the digital transition that actually accelerated the high speed affecting every aspect of our lives. While it harbors immense opportunities, this transition is also disruptive and carries the risk of widening inequalities. That is why the focus of this conference on inclusion, equity and quality in higher education in the digital era is highly relevant." Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills, and Special Advisor on Education Policy to the Secretary-General at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), also stated that if we could harness various kinds of opportunities, technology could create the future for us, and we see a lot of really good examples at the Global MOOC and Online Education Conference.

The GMA launched the GMA Awards in 2023 to acknowledge quality courses and establish models in the field. The GMA Awards 2023 aim to showcase examples

of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) courses that are enhanced by technology, to help individuals improve their STEM literacy [7] and to provide references for GMA members on STEM-related development. In addition, the GMA will cooperate with more international organizations apart from its members to widely publicize excellent practices, improve teachers' digital literacy, support their professional development, and help build a community of online learning.

2.3 Enhance Public Advocacy to Build a Better Future

As for public advocacy, the GMA has hosted various events such as the SDG Hackathon and the Global Massive Open Online Challenge (GMOOC) to attract learners from around the world, create cross-cultural learning communities, boost creativity, promote the resolution of global issues, and jointly create a better future.

The GMA has conducted activities around sustainable development to promote the resolution of global issues. In October 2021, based on SDG 4, the GMA launched the 2021 GMOOC with two tracks, "Education Equity" and "Lifelong Learning". The GMA integrated and built relevant online learning resources, invited global students to carry out learning and cooperative practices, and enhanced young people's understanding of inclusive and equitable quality education. 6,725 learners from around the world joined the online course learning and cooperative practices, and in the end, 12 teams composed of 47 students participated in the SDG Challenge finals. In July 2022, the GMA launched the SDG Hackathon with the theme "Digital Transformation for a More Inclusive University Campus and Learning Environment", and invited experts and scholars from UNESCO, the European Universities of Technology Alliance (EHANCE), the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, Norway, Chile, and Mongolia to serve as mentors. In the seven-day event, more than 30 learners from different countries formed interdisciplinary innovation teams, conducted discussions and developed solutions for the integration of digital technology and higher education through online means.

Furthermore, GMA also employs education and online technology as leverage to reach wider issues such as the pursuit of human well-being and the promotion of a better shared future for the globe. In 2023, with the support of the GMA, the Tsinghua University School of Social Sciences cooperated with the Applied Positive Psychology Program of the University of Pennsylvania to launch a GMOOC on "Positive Psychology". The course was open to 100 learners worldwide, encouraged to form teams and conduct cross-cultural exchanges and collaborations through online learning and mentor guidance. The learners used creative thinking to incubate innovative ideas and solutions to challenging problems, and through this process, they acquired knowledge and skills in positive psychology to help them

achieve a better future. As we believe, online is not only a method for teaching and learning, but also a crucial approach for cooperation, especially global cooperation.

Learning from past work, the GMA has formed a three-level approach in promoting international cooperation: “Core – Field– Beyond” (See Table 1). By utilizing information technology to break spatial and time limitations, the GMA gathers wisdom and strength from both inside and outside, from different countries and regions, from higher education and other industries to promote comprehensive and multi-level international cooperation and development in MOOCs and online education. This effort helps to build a human community with a shared future and promote sustainable development (See Figure 1).

Table 1: Summary of Endeavors of GMA

	Joint Teaching	Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing	Public Advocacy
Level	Core of Higher Education	Field of Higher Education	Beyond Higher Education
Feature	The focus is on classroom and course development in higher education, with a learner-centered approach that promotes the effectiveness, efficiency of learning and learning experience.	Gathering experts and scholars in higher education to promote overall improvement in the quality of higher education through sharing experiences, setting examples, and conducting training.	The cooperation covers a wider range of global public and extends beyond the field of higher education, with the aim of promoting sustainable development for mankind.
Details	MOOC exchange, Global Hybrid Classroom, Global Hybrid Classroom Certificate Programs, etc.	Online Education Dialogue, Global MOOC and Online Education Conference, GMA Awards, etc.	SDG Hackathon, the Global Massive Open Online Challenge (GMOOC), etc.

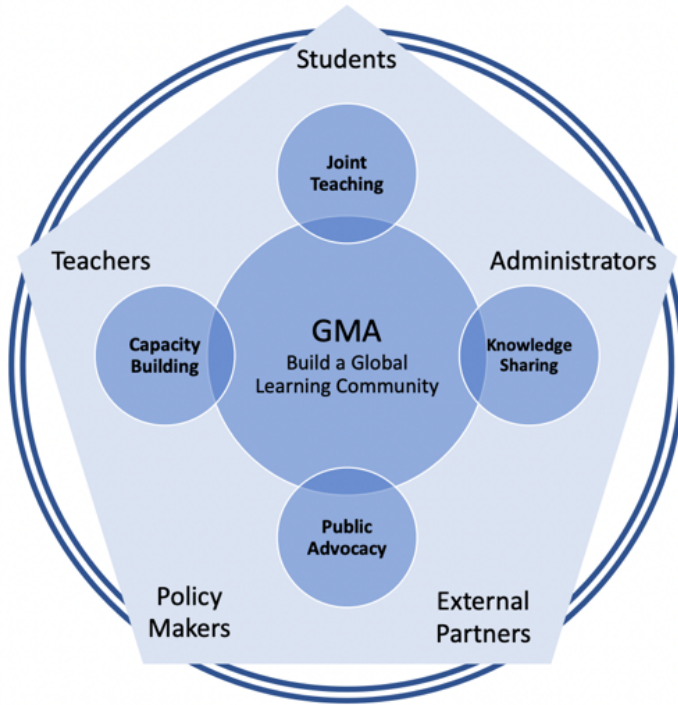


Figure 1: Global Cooperation of GMA

3 Future of Global MOOC and Online Education Alliance

Based on the GMA's practical experience in promoting global cooperation, there are several areas that could be further explored in the future, including:

First, in terms of joint teaching, the GMA will explore more diverse cooperation models with more partners utilizing advanced technology. In the future, the GMA will work closely with more like-minded partners, leveraging MOOCs, blended learning, hybrid learning, metaverse (VR/AR), artificial intelligence, and other updated technology forms to conduct diverse and collaborative teaching practices. The goal is to co-create and share global high-quality educational technologies

and resources, focus on learner-centered education, improve the effectiveness and efficiency of learning and learning experience.

Second, in terms of capacity building and knowledge sharing, the GMA will provide more support for digital transformation in higher education. The GMA will further promote openness and cooperation in the field of higher education, including but not limited to: utilizing information technology to localize high-quality external resources to create a more inclusive and equitable education; promoting the formation and improvement of institutional mechanisms that match new forms of education, such as exploring credit recognition, evaluating online learning effectiveness, improving digital literacy and incentive systems for teachers; exploring the use of information technology to promote research and management work to provide stronger support for comprehensive digital transformation in higher education.

Third, in terms of public advocacy, the GMA will further promote global cooperation through online means towards building a human community with a shared future. The GMA will promote the access to high-quality educational resources for learners from different countries and regions, as well as different industries, through a broader, longer-term, and more diverse range of activities. This will be achieved through online learning and collaboration, cross-cultural communication, and the formation of lifelong learning awareness and abilities. The GMA will help enhance learners' critical thinking, innovative thinking, and international vision, optimize problem-solving abilities and global competency, and build an online learning community, constantly promoting the building of a learning society and pursuing a human community with a shared future.

How to provide more equitable, inclusive, and high-quality education has become an important global issue [5]. Through the exploration of the past three years, GMA has gained some experience in promoting international cooperation in the online field and providing more open and high-quality education through joint teaching, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and public advocacy. In the future, GMA will continue to explore more diverse cooperation models, provide more support, and promote the construction of a global online learning community, so as to empower learners and teachers [8] and help achieve SDG 4.

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