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GEN-AI RESPONSES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

AN ILLUSTRATIVE MAP OF
ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES

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Works through
**194 Member
States & 12
Associate
Members**

**1200 UNESCO
Research Chairs**

**Standard
Setter**

**Clearing
House**

**Human rights
Dignity
Access
Quality
Equity
Inclusion
Ethics
Social Justice
Education as a public good**

**Laboratory
of Ideas**

**Global
Convenor**

**Capacity
builder**

UNESCO RESEARCH CHAIRS SURVEY 2025

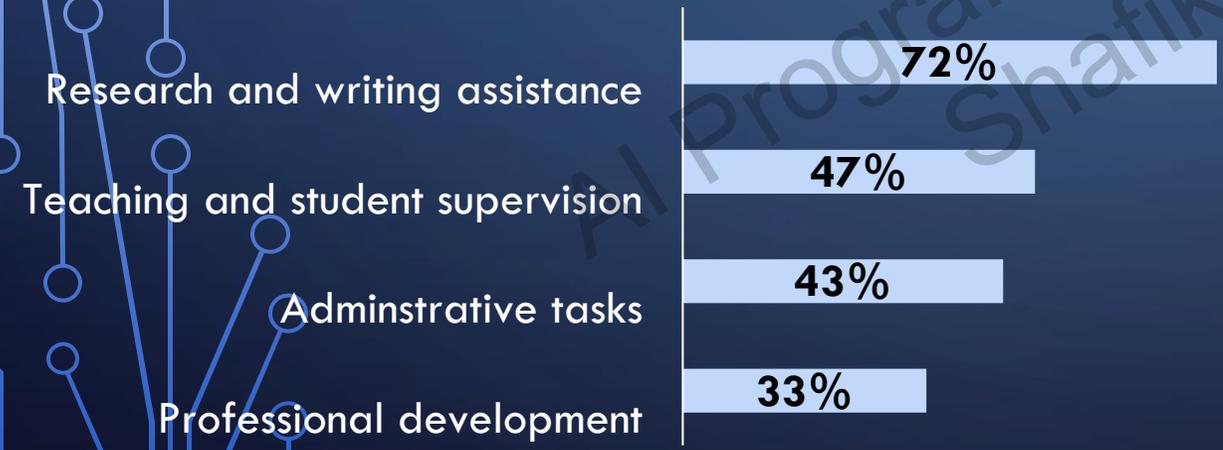
WIDESPREAD USE, UNEVEN CONFIDENCE

90%

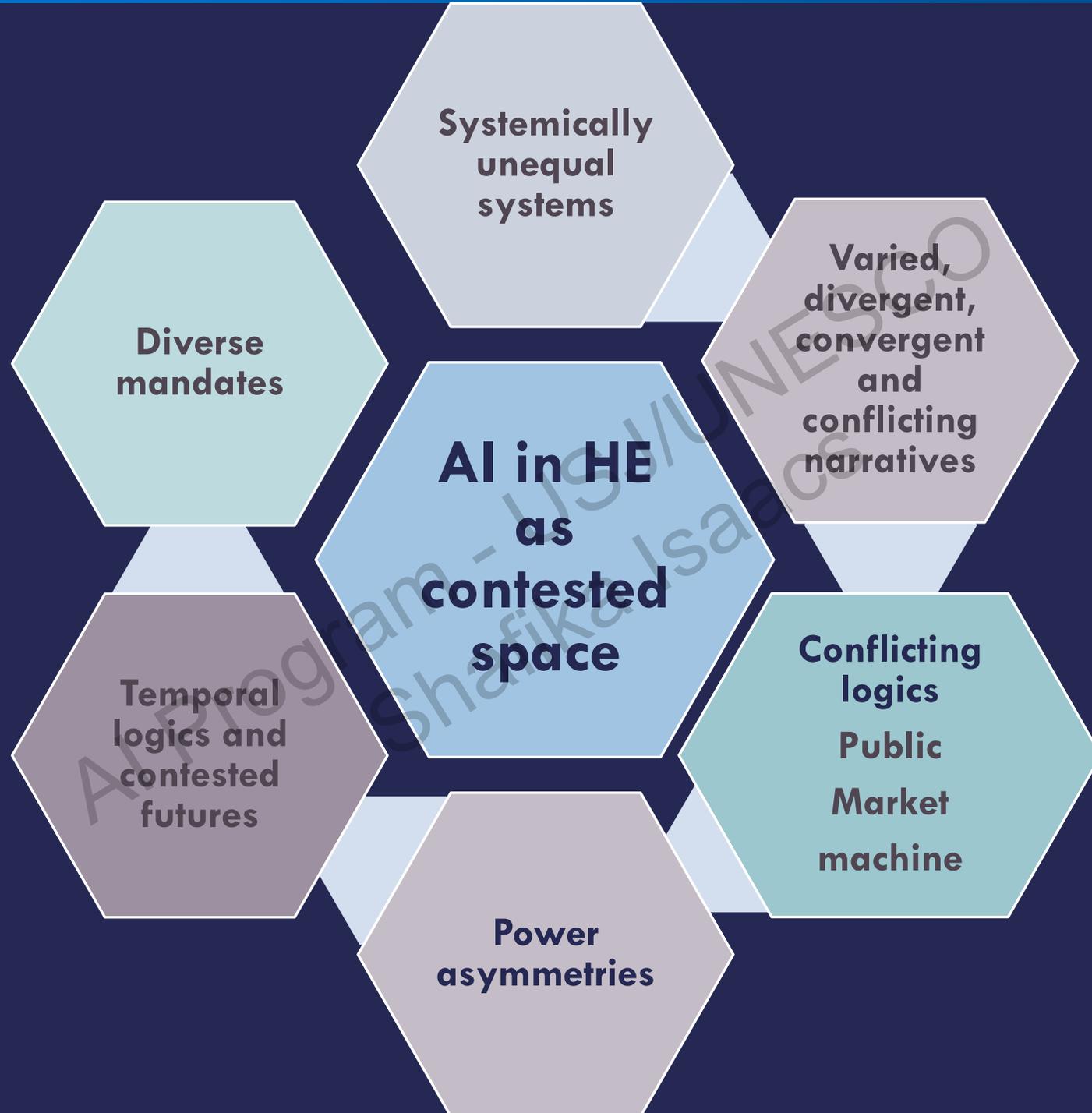
of surveyed academics use AI in their professional role

>50%

feel uncertain or hesitant about AI



- pedagogical use
- research application
- technological aspects
- implications on human rights, democracy and social justice
- ethical and environmental concerns
- disciplinary constraints



**Systemically
unequal
systems**

**Diverse
mandates**

**Varied,
divergent,
convergent
and
conflicting
narratives**

**AI in HE
as
contested
space**

**Temporal
logics and
contested
futures**

**Conflicting
logics
Public
Market
machine**

**Power
asymmetries**

AI in Higher Education

Conflicting Narratives, Conflicting Futures

Reform
Reject
Reclaim
Reimagine



Inevitable
Integration
Individualization
Industry-alignment

Global South/Majority - Global North Discourse

Public – Private Influences

VISIBLE AFFORDANCES

Early warning for
students at risk

Personalized Teaching/ Learning/Research
Assistant

Time-saving and efficiencies

i

NON-VISIBLE DIS/DYS-AFFORDANCES

Excludes marginalized
knowledge systems

Biases &
hallucinations

Privacy leakages

Erosion of rich
human practices

Flattening pedagogical
nuance

Cognitive
offloading

Challenges academic
integrity

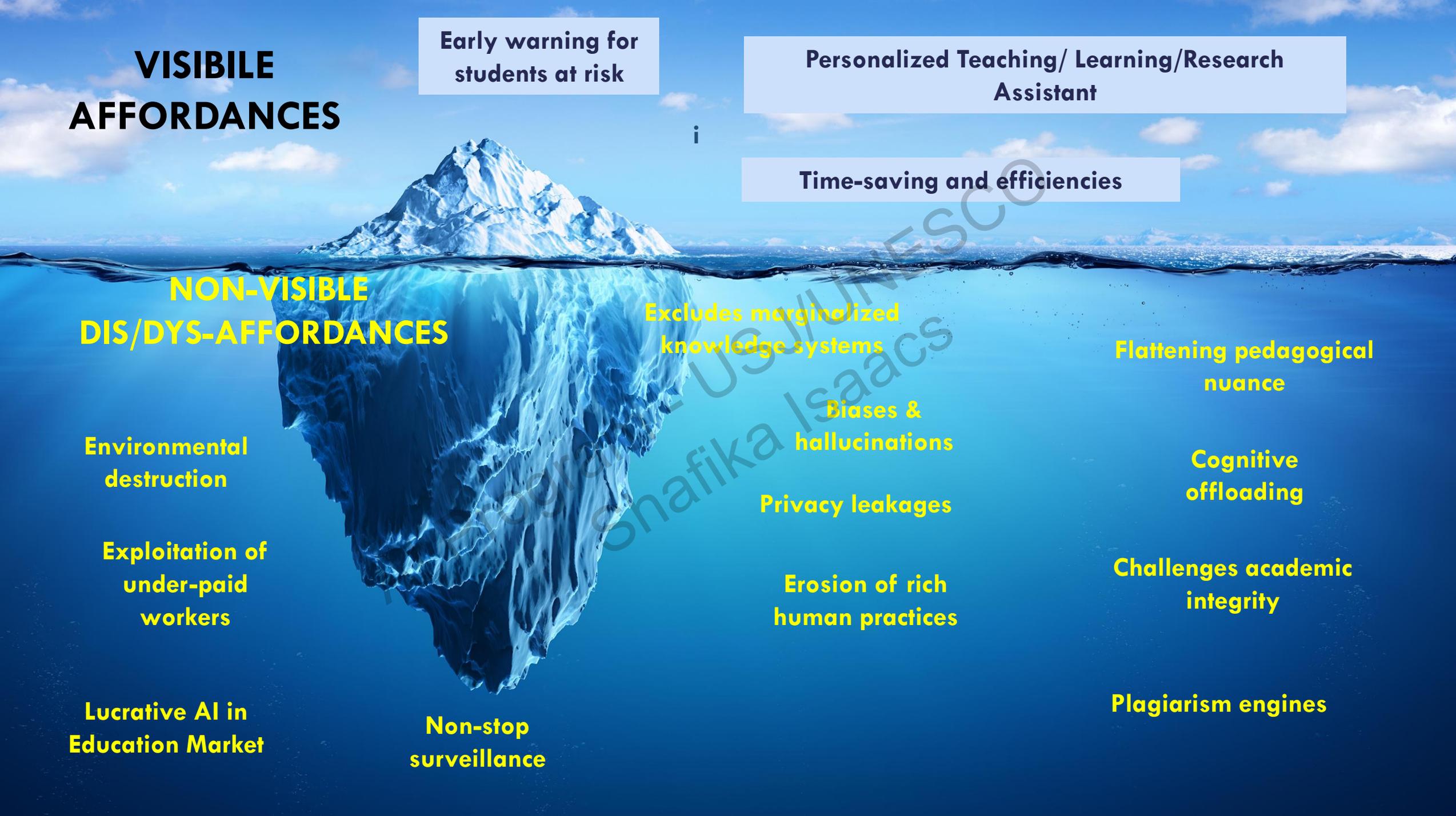
Plagiarism engines

Environmental
destruction

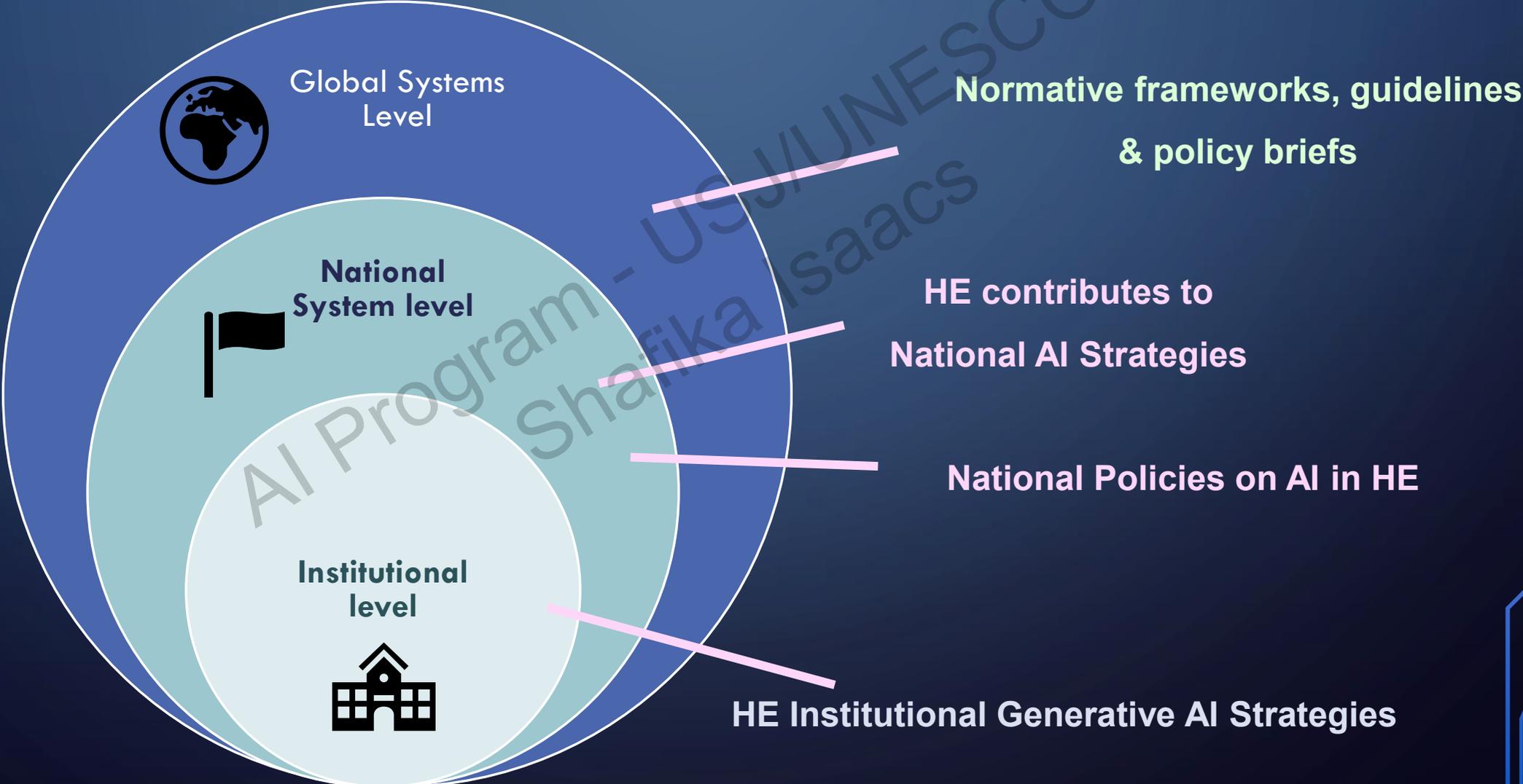
Exploitation of
under-paid
workers

Lucrative AI in
Education Market

Non-stop
surveillance



Gen AI Responses in Higher Education



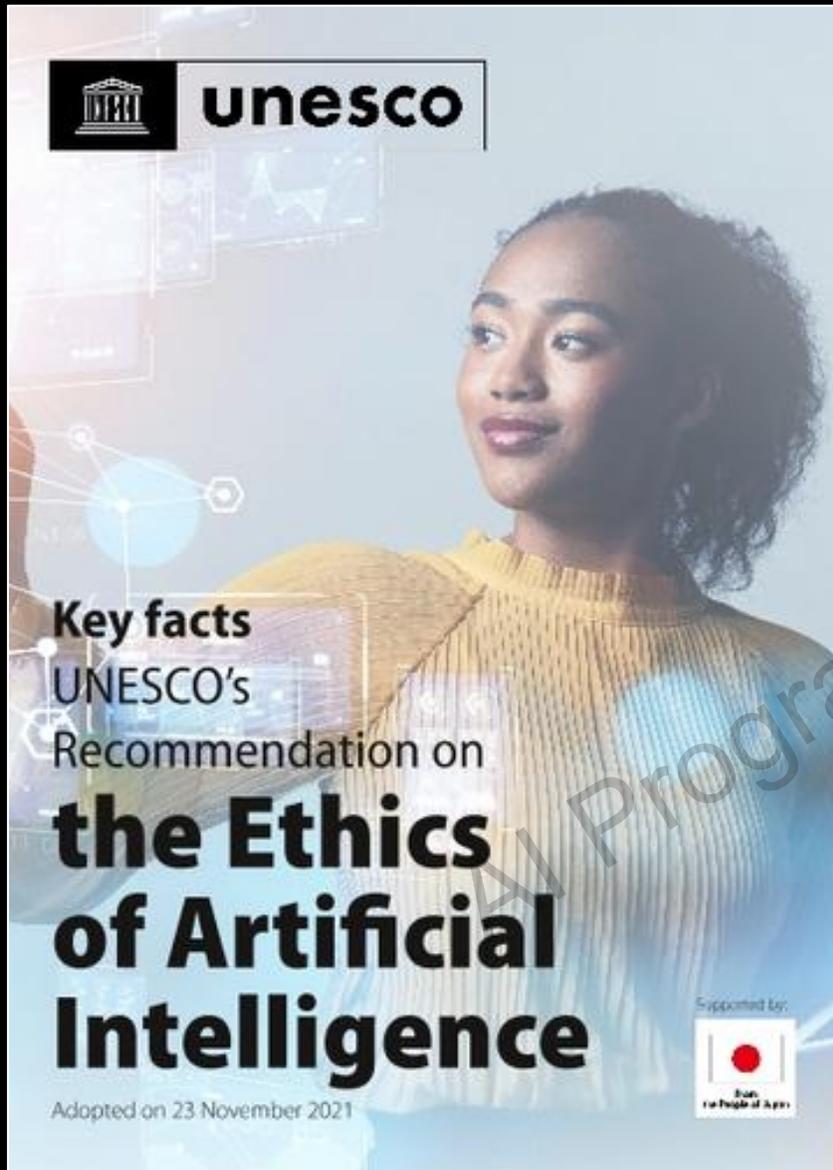
The image features a dark blue background with white circuit-like lines in the corners. These lines consist of straight paths that branch out and terminate in small circles, resembling a network or data flow diagram. The lines are positioned in the top-left, top-right, bottom-left, and bottom-right corners.

Gen-AI Actionable Strategies at Global System-level

AI Program - UNESCO
Shailya Isaac

Region	Entity / Network	Key Policy Product	Primary Strategic Framing	Resource Link
Global	UNESCO	AI and the Future of Education (2025)	New Social Contract: Education as a global common good.	View Publication
Global	UNESCO	Generative AI Guidance (2023)	Normative Guardrails: First global guidance on ethical use.	View Guidance
LAC	UNESCO-IESALC	Harnessing GenAI in HE (2024)	Institutional Adaptation: Reimagining the degree.	View Guide
LAC	IDB	AI Transforming Education (2026)	Implementation Ethics: Real-world solutions for equity.	View Report
N. America	EDUCAUSE	2025/26 Horizon Report	Operational Maturity: Privacy, procurement, and agility.	View Report
N. America	AAU / AAUP	AI and Academic Professions (2025)	Labor & Rights: Faculty IP and academic freedom.	View Report
Europe	EUA	Adopting AI for Univ. Values (2026)	Values-Led Adaptation: Integrating AI into QA.	View Position
Africa	AAU	AI Opportunities & Trends (2025)	Sovereign Flourishing: Context-specific, ethical integration.	View Monograph
Asia-Pacific	ASEAN	AI Governance Guide (2025)	Regional Harmonization: Shared ethical standards.	Download PDF
Middle East	AArU	Arab AI Initiative (2025-2030)	Social Responsibility: Cultural preservation.	View Roadmap

GLOBAL POLICY MATRIX: AI IN HIGHER EDUCATION (2023–2026)



Four Core Values

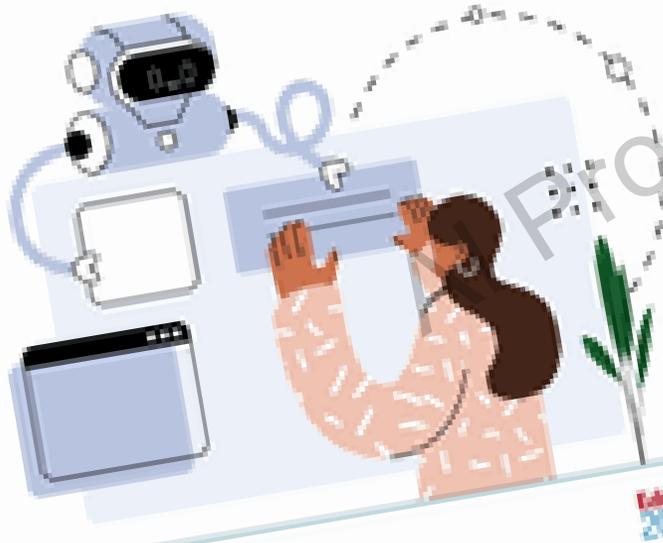
1. Respect for Human Rights, Human Dignity, and Freedom
2. Environmental and Ecosystem Flourishing
3. Ensuring Diversity and Inclusiveness
4. Living in Peaceful, Just, and Interconnected Societies

Ten Key Principles

1. Proportionality and Do No Harm
2. Safety and Security
3. Fairness and Non-Discrimination
4. Sustainability
5. Right to Privacy and Data Protection
6. Transparency and Explainability
7. Responsibility and Accountability
8. Human Oversight and Determination
9. Awareness and Literacy
10. Multi-stakeholder and Adaptive Governance



Guidance for generative AI in education and research



Core Principles

Human-Centered Approach: Uphold human agency, inclusion, equity, and cultural diversity

Ethical Governance: Challenge risks such as bias, copyright infringement, and digital inequalities exacerbated by AI

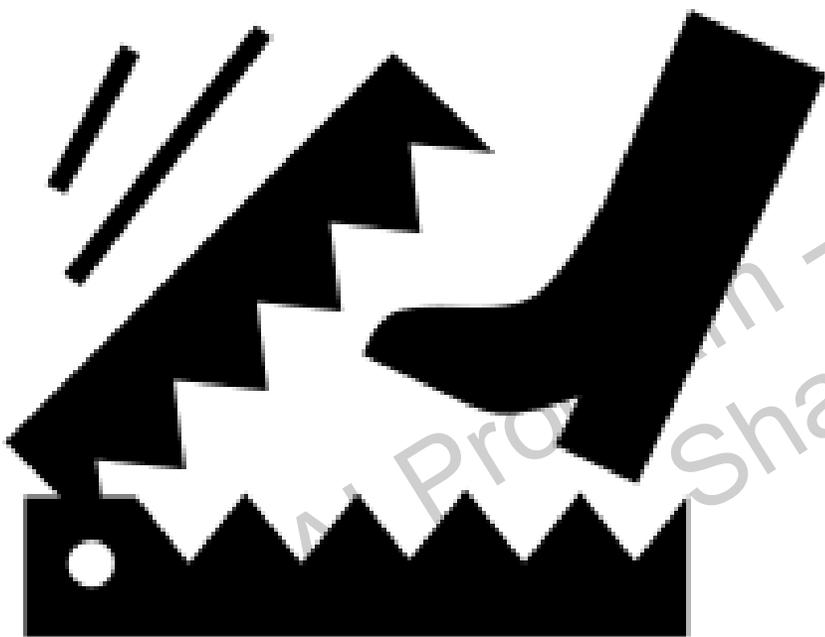
Key Recommendations for Governments & Research Institutions

Regulatory Measures: Mandate data privacy protections, enforce age restrictions (e.g., prohibiting GenAI use for children under 13), and validate AI tools for educational use.

Capacity Building: Develop AI literacy programs for educators and students to foster responsible use and critical evaluation of AI outputs.

Transparency & Accountability: AI providers to disclose data sources, mitigate biases, and ensure explainability in decision-making processes

The pragmatic trap



Sense of urgency & the quest for practical strategies

Practical men (sic!), who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back.

The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (1936), Chapter 24, "Concluding Notes on the Social Philosophy towards which the General Theory might Lead."

**A global commons for
dialogue, action
& critical imagination**

Communities & networks
Open & purposeful
Collective sense-making
Muddle through together
**Shared strategies and
actions**

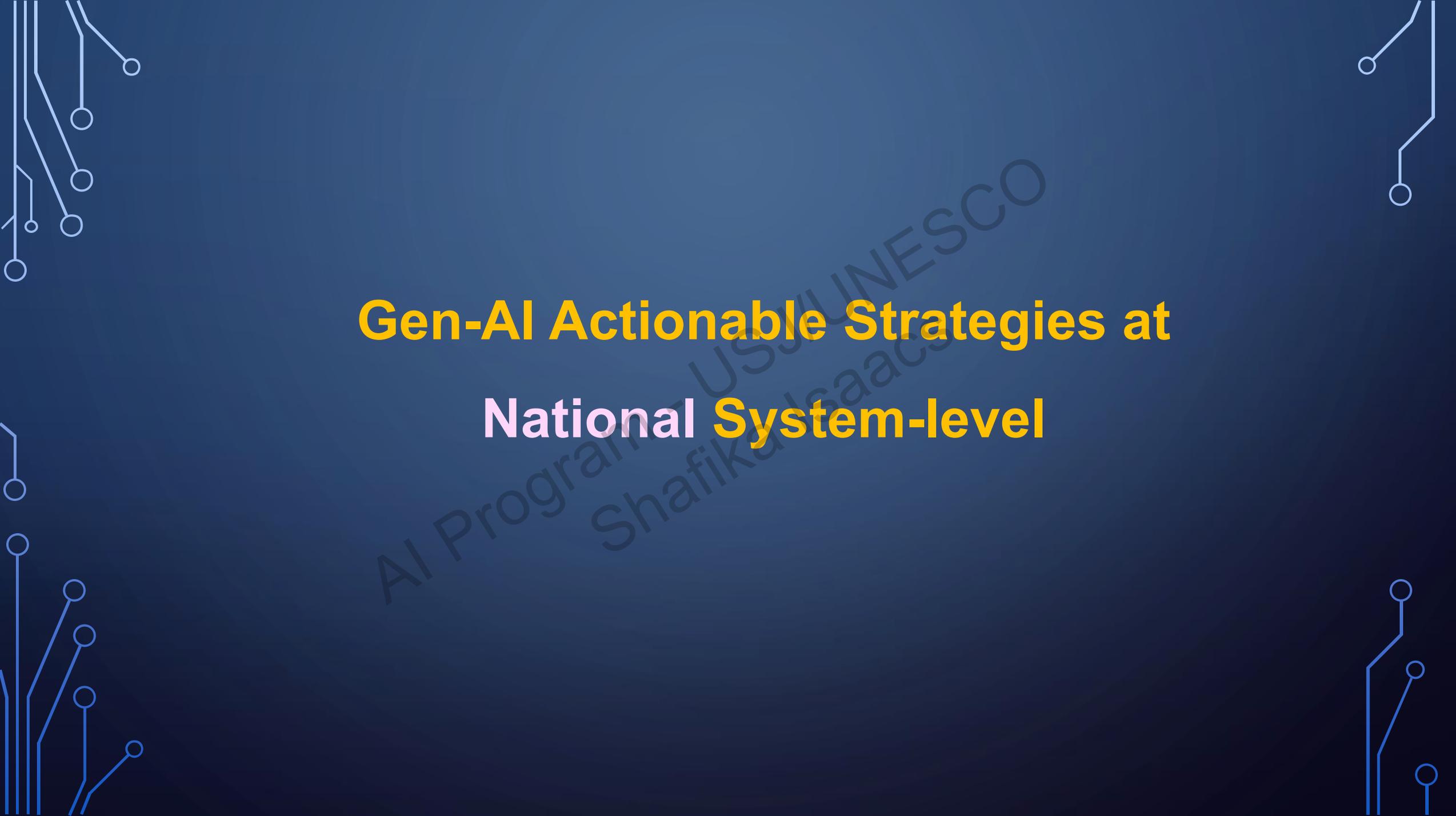
Dialogue

Action

**Critical
imagination**



AI and the future of education.
Disruptions, dilemmas and
directions

The background is a dark blue gradient. In the four corners, there are white and light blue decorative elements resembling circuit traces or neural network connections. These elements consist of thin lines that branch out and terminate in small circles, creating a sense of digital connectivity.

Gen-AI Actionable Strategies at National System-level

AI Program at UNESCO
Shafika Isaacs

AI in Higher Education

System-level Responses

- Workforce development
- AI talent pool creation
- Research & development & National AI Institutes
- Creation of regulations & ethical frameworks.

DIVERSE NATIONAL AI APPROACHES



Talent factory & competitive R&D

Nurture talent and AI research
for Market Competitiveness

- UK AI Action Plan
- Singapore National AI Strategy 2.0
- China Next Gen Action Plan
- Saudi Arabia

Sovereign shield

Digital Sovereignty

France National AI Strategy

Brazil AI Plan

Ethical regulator

EU AI Act

Ireland AI Strategy

AI in Higher Education

System-level Responses

- Workforce development and AI talent pool creation
- Research & development,
- Creation of regulations & ethical frameworks.



Gen-AI Actionable Strategies at Institutional **System-level**

AI Program - UNESCO
Shafika Saacs

UNESCO RESEARCH CHAIRS SURVEY 2025

GROWING INSTITUTIONAL POLICY RESPONSES

62%

of higher education institutions have or are developing policy guidance on AI

INVESTMENTS IN AI TOOLS FOR



STRATEGIC INSTITUTIONAL STANCES ON AI A COMPLEX SPECTRUM

**Defensive
Prohibition**

**Instructor
Discretion**

**Pragmatic
Responsive**

**Bold
Embrace**



Defensive Prohibition

Invest in AI Detection

**Return to Paper-based
Exams**

**University of Texas (USA)
University of Wakaito (NZ)**

**No institutional
Policy**

Most HEIs

**Change Process
Management**

**University of
Cape Town**

**Specialised AI Universities
Mohamed Bin Zayd University**

AI First- Native AI

Open Source Alternatives

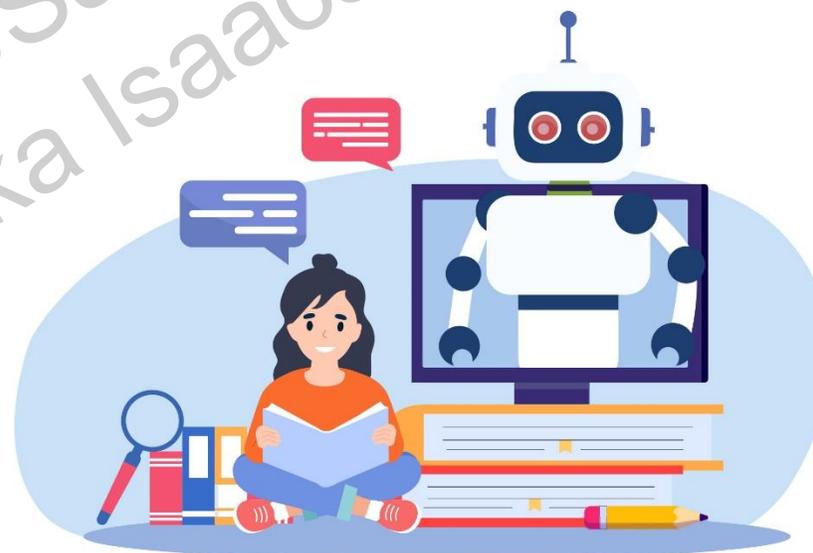
Transatlantic alliance with the **Swiss National AI Institute (ETH Zurich & EPFL)** to build open-source foundation models that prioritize

Area of Action	Key Issues and Tensions	Global Institutional Responses
Pedagogy	Human and. Machine Agency: Tension between AI as an efficiency tool and the need for relational, human-centered "sense-making".	Stanford (USA): Mandatory "Human-Centered AI" modules for all undergraduates to preserve critical agency.
Assessment	Product vs. Process: The "death of the essay" vs. the need to evaluate the thinking journey.	Victoria Univ. (NZ): Return to paper-based exams for law to ensure "authentic" reasoning.
Curriculum	Static vs. Fluid: 5-year accreditation cycles vs. 6-month AI innovation cycles; the need for AI literacy and transdisciplinary literacy.	MIT (USA): "Common Ground" curriculum co-taught by computer scientists and humanities professors.
Research	Sovereignty vs. Enclosure: Tension between using proprietary models and building open-source, "sovereign" research commons.	MBZUAI (UAE): Developed <i>Jais</i> , a sovereign Arabic LLM, to protect cultural and linguistic data.
Academic Teacher Development	Competency vs. Compliance: Moving faculty from "how to catch cheaters" to "how to cultivate critical human agency of teachers	UNESCO-ICHIE- iESALC: Gem Ai Rssponsive Frameworks –EduHong Kong University
Governance	Control vs. Agility: Top-down "Traffic Light" policies vs. "Permanent Platforms for Engagement" and adaptive frameworks.	A range of institutional policies and guidelines emerging

AI competency framework for teachers



AI competency framework for students





AI Competency Framework for Teachers: Guiding Principles



Center
teacher rights,
autonomy &
agency

Human rights
Human agency
Equity &
Inclusion



Guide
transformative
teaching

Ethics and values
of AI & Digital
citizenship



Support
teacher education
policy & practice on
AI

Teacher
development as
lifelong
learning



in context

**AI-capable
Teachers,
Teacher
Educators,
Student
in context**

Grounded in **AI ethics** & exercise ethical agency

Cultivates transformative **human agency**

Co-creates & use AI for **lifelong learning**



Understands & co-creates **AI tools & systems**

Understands critically applies Ai tools in **teaching & learning practice**

TEACHER Competency Aspects	Progression		
	Understand	Apply	Create
Human-centred Mindset	Human agency	Human accountability	AI Society Citizenship
Ethics of AI	Embodied ethics	Safe and responsible uses	Ethics by design
AI Foundations & Applications	Basic AI technique and applications	Application skills	Creating with AI
AI Pedagogy	AI-assisted teaching	AI-pedagogy integration	AI-enhanced Pedagogical Transformation
AI for Professional Development	AI as enabler of lifelong professional learning	AI as enabler of organizational learning	AI enables professional transformation

Critical AI Literacy

AI Program - USW/UNESCO
Shatika Isaac



AI Competency Framework for Students

STUDENT Competency Aspects	Progression		
	Understand	Apply	Create
Human-centred Mindset	Human Agency	Human accountability	AI Society Citizenship
Ethics of AI	Embodied Ethics	Safe and Responsible Use	Ethics by Design
AI Techniques & Applications	AI Foundations	Application skills	Creating AI Tools
AI System Design	Problem Scoping	Architecture Design	Iteration & Feedback Loops



A new social contract... must encompass an ethic of care, reciprocity, and solidarity."



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THANK YOU

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