

AI literacy for educators

IN a landmark move towards future-proofing education in South-East Asia, Sri Bestari Private School Kuala Lumpur recently hosted the AI Literacy Training Programme for Asean Primary and Secondary School Teachers – a pioneering three-day workshop co-organised with Unesco-Istic, the Academy of Engineering and Technology of the Developing World (AETDEW), and the China Society for Education Strategy and Development.

Held from June 17 to 19, the programme united educators from Asean countries, Malaysia's Ministry of Education, Teacher Training Institutes (IPG), and Sri Bestari School, marking a key step towards nurturing AI competencies among educators across the region.

STEM to AI integration

Sri Bestari, which introduced STEM-focused extracurricular programmes eight years ago, has since integrated STEM into its core curriculum at all education levels. This year, the school advanced this commitment by introducing its STEM-AI modules to align with global technological progress.

"The challenge was the lack of a standardised curriculum. We developed our own in consultation with high-tech experts. Now in our fifth year of delivering STEM-Computer Science, we are expanding to include AI foundations," said Dr Steven Baptist.

AI insights shared by global experts

At the workshop, renowned



(Front row, from left) Shi Yan; Han; Lee; Sri Bestari Private School Kuala Lumpur board of governors chairman Datuk Dr Sharifah Maimunah Syed Zin; Goh; Istic governing board chairman Prof Dr Mohd Basyaruddin Abdul Rahman; Choo; AETDEW deputy president Datuk Yong Ah Huat and Baptist (standing, second row, blue batik) posing for a group photo.

Chinese professors – visiting professor, representing Beijing University of Science & Technology, and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications Prof Han Liqun, Zhang Yibao, Zhao Shuying and associate professor, executive director and deputy

secretary-general of the special committee on artificial intelligence and robotics education for the Chinese Society of Educational Development Strategy Dr Shi Yan – presented deep insights into AI's development, moving beyond surface-level app usage to explore

the neurological inspiration behind AI design.

Their sessions highlighted the importance of teaching students not just how to use AI, but to understand its ethical and developmental foundations.

Istic honorary chairman Datuk Dr Lee Yee Cheong emphasised

the critical role of primary school teachers in shaping AI literacy from an early age.

"As with any subject, it begins with passionate educators," he said during his opening remarks.

The workshop's closing ceremony featured Dr Goh Peng Ooi, chairman of AI Malaysia and executive chairman of Silverlake Axis, who traced AI's evolution through pioneers Geoffrey Hinton, Richard Sutton and Yoshua Bengio.

He cautioned against overreliance on AI, particularly in politically and ethically sensitive areas where human judgment remains essential.

Paving the way for AI-literate societies

Drawing from China's model, the workshop underscored that AI education should begin with foundational knowledge and ethics – planted early to prevent future misuse.

AETDEW president Choo Kok Beng announced plans to expand the initiative across the Global South.

"This is just the beginning. Equipping educators with AI understanding is essential to preparing the next generation," he said.

Sri Bestari's bold step exemplifies how schools can lead in building AI-literate societies – one teacher at a time.

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