

Research Report

COMMITTEE : International Labour Organisation

ISSUE : *How to provide affordable and high-quality education in order to promote a more skilled and resilient workforce?*

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How to provide affordable and high-quality education in order to promote a more skilled and resilient workforce?

KEY WORDS

ILO: the International Labour Organization is a United Nations agency whose goal is to advance social and economic justice by setting international labor standards.

Skilled Labor: refers to highly trained, educated, or experienced segments of the workforce that can complete more complex tasks - mentally or physically - on the job.

Socioeconomic status: social standing or class of an individual or group. For example, income, age, marital status, family size, religion, occupation, and education will often be taken into consideration when measuring an individual's socioeconomic status.

Workforce: the total number of individuals who work in a company, industry or country.

Minority status: category of people who experience relative disadvantage in relation to other members of a dominant, more numerous social group.

Affordable and high quality education: an education that focuses on the social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development of each student regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location; an education which enables people to develop all of their attributes and skills to achieve their potential as human beings and members of society. It is the foundation for equity in society and comes at a price that poorest countries, states and families will be able to pay and invest in.

Resilient workforce: designates workers who are able to perform well under pressure, reply quickly to difficulties, respond flexibly and adapt to changing circumstances

OVERVIEW

Despite advances in labor skill levels over time, there is still much progress to be made. Previous educational system improvements, such as those aimed at reducing early school dropout, have increased the education levels among young people. As stated in the UNICEF report: [Empowering the workforce of tomorrow](#): it is estimated that by 2030, “880 million children will not be on track to acquire the most basic skills they need to succeed in the workforce [...]. The percentage of youth that are not in education, employment or training stands at 22.5% of the global youth population.” Furthermore, digital gaps based on gender, socioeconomic status, and urban/rural locations also exist.

The United Nations said in 2015, in their article [Education for all: Rising to the challenge](#), “It is not by chance that some children do not enjoy their right to education. We cannot claim success when girls in the poorest 20 percent of households are over three times more likely to be out of school than boys. Nor when disability, gender, minority status, language, and emergency situations remain causes for exclusion from learning.” The UN is rightfully concerned about children’s education, as education is a pillar to an educated and efficient society.

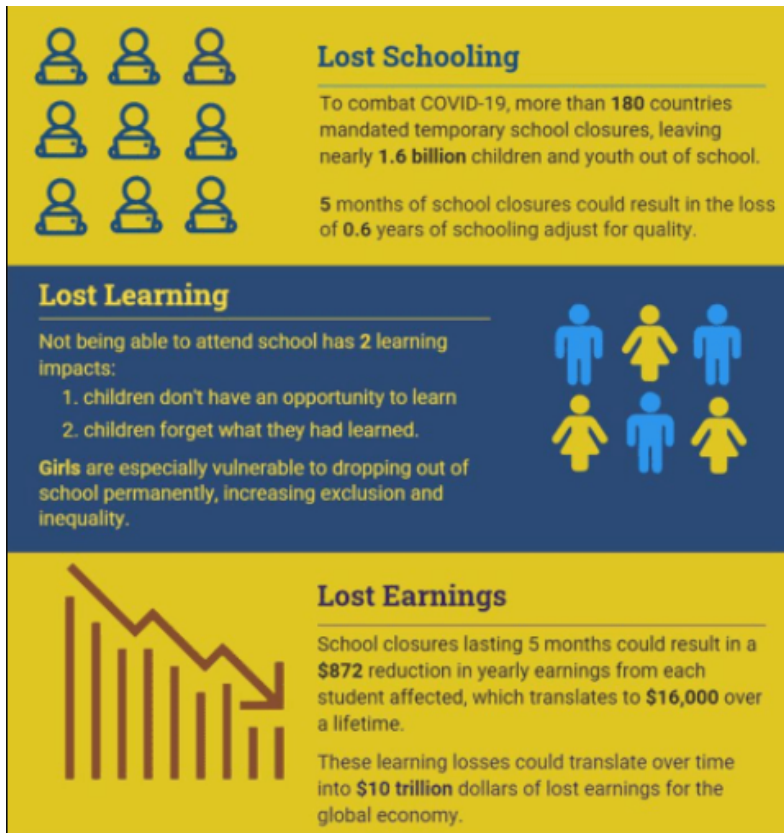
Many factors today impact workforces around the world, an example of which is the rise of Artificial Intelligence. Numerous jobs are replaced by machines for more profitable reasons which is a threat to today's workers. “New technology at least partly explains the rising relative demand for middle-skill workers. Historically, new technologies initially demand relatively educated workers, but as they mature and technical knowledge becomes more standardized, demand shifts to mid-skill technical occupations”. Numerous professionals must deal with automation and AI replacing workers for cheaper and more efficient results, endangering their vocation and causing major unemployment especially in secondary industry.

Another major threat to today’s workforce is climate change. On the one hand, some jobs are put at risk due to changes in ecosystems and environment-related hazards which was highlighted in the ILO’s report [The employment impact of climate change adaptation](#), published the 15 of August 2018: “Climate change may lead to job and work productivity losses because it increases the frequency of extreme weather events and, more generally, threatens the provision of ecosystem services. Disasters take lives away and destroy infrastructure, resulting in job and productivity losses. Higher temperatures are expected to worsen working conditions and reduce labour productivity.” Indeed, climate change not only impacts working conditions and environments, it also destroys buildings designed for educational purposes.

On the other hand, some policies aiming to reduce climate change impact the workforce as well. Indeed, some sectors are likely to disappear due to specific policies; as said in the European parliament report of april 2010, concerning [The impact of climate change on the employment situation](#), “Sectors likely to be most affected include energy supply, agriculture, fisheries, tourism and construction. [...] Some jobs would be lost (e.g. in traditional energy sectors), the net employment creation is estimated to be between 100,000 and 400,000 jobs. Regions will be affected very differently. In particular, energy-intensive and high carbon areas with poor economic diversification could be severely hit during the transition process.” However, “additional jobs will be created in several areas, such as in the manufacturing of

pollution-control devices which are added to existing production equipment.” In addition, “substitution of employment will take place, for example due to shifting from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, from truck manufacturing to rail car manufacturing, or from landfilling and waste incineration to recycling.” It is clear that climate change presents some major challenges to the world of employment, but also numerous opportunities.

Finally, a more recent phenomenon, the Covid-19 pandemic, has permanently altered the way people across the globe work. Covid 19’s impact is highly controversial: as seen in Sc Johnson college of business’ article [Covid-19’s impact on work, workers, and the workplace of the future](#), some professionals believe this pandemic has positively impacted today’s concept of work. Kniffin and his co-authors have questioned what the post-pandemic work world will look like. They have come to this conclusion: covid has challenged and improved “virtual teams [especially] digital communication and teammates communicating skills.” It has also helped to create a greater appreciation for women leaders. According to this article, covid-19’s pandemic has, to a certain extent, modified our vision and patterns of work for the better. On the other hand, OECD claims that covid has triggered one of the worst jobs crises since the Great Depression, and that the pandemic has given rise to poverty and widened inequalities. The 30th June 2020 OECD published a report [The impact of covid-19 on education](#) in which they state “The crisis raises questions about the value offered by a university education which includes networking and social opportunities as well as educational content. To remain relevant, universities will need to reinvent their learning environments so that digitalisation expands and complements student-teacher and other relationships. [...] While the educational community has made concerted efforts to maintain learning continuity during this period, children and students have had to rely more on their own resources to continue learning remotely through the Internet, television or radio.” According to this report, this global crisis has highlighted several flaws and injustices in our education systems, ranging from internet access and computers required for online education, to the supportive environment needed to focus on learning and to the misalignment of resources and needs. As we can see on the image below, covid has had a massive impact on students, which risks endangering their knowledge and their learning if proper adaptation measures aren’t implemented..



<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/styles/report-large/public/resources-pdf-previews/1523156-780-Sim-Report-IG---FINAL.png?itok=P4VPgHl2>

Furthermore, UNESCO made an informative video called [Education for all](#) (which we strongly encourage you to watch) in which they state : “In the year 2000 global leaders met and promised to reach six education goals by 2015, to ensure anyone would be able to access basic human rights to education. Despite this engagement around half of the world's countries have failed to ensure that older children get to primary school. Only a third of the countries have completed all of their education goals, most of which are wealthy countries”. UNSECO highlights a crucial element: adults are also “missing out on education, at least 781 million lack basic literacy skills.” This shows that education is highly relevant to children but to adults as well, and solutions should focus on both.

Lastly, despite our priority to develop educational access in countries where schooling for children and women isn't even acquired yet, wealthy countries are still one of our concerns. In fact, the Government of New South Wales' website published in 2017 an article: [Preparing today's students for tomorrow's world](#), in which Marc Scott, the secretary of NSW department of education, states that “In an era of acceleration and increasing uncertainty, we cannot be in the business of predicting what employers will want in 2030, much less 2050. But we can describe the kind of citizen we want to emerge from our schools - students who are critical and reflective,

open to a lifetime of learning and relearning, who are comfortable with change, have empathy and a global outlook. This demands that we all take a broader perspective about what we judge a good education to be because students with these skills and attributes will likely be best placed to flourish in a world of intelligent machines.” Marc Scotts defends the idea that our goal when speaking of education should be centered on the assertion that “the future demands that our children develop connections with one another, a sense of community, citizenship and collaboration. [which] will require them to be well-informed and engaged, well-educated in ethics and civics, and to have the social and emotional ability to understand and work with people from diverse cultures.”

RELEVANT UN TREATIES AND EVENTS

26-28/ 04 / 2000 WORLD EDUCATION FORUM IN DAKAR, SENEGAL.

On this date the United Nations organized the world of education forum in Dakar, Senegal, to boost the drive for education for all. The UN aimed for an improvement in access to education irrespective of gender. As cited in the press article “more than 180 countries have prepared for the Forum by participating in the Education for All 2000 Assessment, a massive and detailed review of the state of basic education in the world. Based on the assessment, the Forum will redefine education strategies, set clear goals and draw up a Framework for Action to meet the basic learning needs for all by 2015.”

[link here](#)

10/2013 CHILD LABOUR AND EDUCATION FOR ALL

In October 2013, ILO released Child Labour and Education for All, a resource Guide for trade unions and a call against Child Labour and support for Education for All. As cited in the foreword “the manual is both a resource guide and a call to action. It provides a general overview of the reality of child labour, and outlines the strategies and tools unions can put in place. It is illustrated with many examples of union activities from around the world to promote quality education for all as a key strategy in tackling child labour, both at national and international level.”

[link here](#)

19 / 05 / 2019 FORMAL EDUCATION AND THE PREVENTION OF CHILD

On May 19th 2019, the ILO has released an article Formal education and the prevention of child labour, which defends the need for better access to education for all in order to not only improve our workforce but as well prevent child labour in less developed countries.

[link here](#)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1) Promoting education by supportive legislative measures

> Countries can adopt new laws which will support and encourage education, such as recognising education as a fundamental right, promoting education for girls as well as boys, trying to reduce the gap between rural and urban areas by constructing more schools in isolated regions, hiring more teachers and providing proper training for them, increasing employment benefits for teachers, introducing incentives for families who refuse to allow their children to attend school. As an example, Sri Lanka accompanies their young people throughout their studies, in order to ensure a prospering workforce (see in ILO's [Employment Diagnostic Study](#)).

2) Greater sensibilisation towards the importance of proper education

> Media campaigns and interventions raising awareness regarding the dangers and obstacles of poor or no education, contrasted with the benefits of educated citizens. Organising local, regional, and national contests, involving school children, higher education students and employees who benefitted from upskilling or reskilling programs. As an example, Omega Schools, which is a low-cost investment in Ghanaian schools, started a “pay-as-you-go revenue model”. In other words, the students pay the equivalent of \$0.62 USD to cover school fees, supplies, and lunch. This model has removed the monetary barrier for parents (see [US Chamber of Commerce Foundation's](#) article).

<https://www.alleducationschools.com/teaching-degrees/bachelors-in-education/>



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3) Engaging the help of Transnational Corporations and Non-governmental Organisations

> Encourage companies to be more aware of issues such as child-labor (a major obstacle to children’s education) and ban all forms of worker exploitation, promote retraining services for their employees as technical advancements and automatisation increase, favor greater cooperation with schools and universities to facilitate entries into the workforce.

> Soliciting the help of NGOs for data regarding the issue, implementing awareness campaigns, raising funds to support governmental or non governmental initiatives, offering reskilling services, and acting as pressure groups. TalentGuard has published an article named [Reskilling and Upskilling: A Strategic Response to Changing Skill Demands](#); in this article they defend the claim that “upskilling and reskilling are key” to negating the lack of education related to adults. Similarly in 2015, Harvard Business' Review published an article named [Free Community College Would Help Fix the Skills Gap](#) speaking of the at the time President Barack Obama’s solutions for reskilling.

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