



International
Labour
Organization

World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All

14–15 June 2023, Palais des Nations, Room XX

► Panel: Fostering equal opportunities and full, freely chosen and productive employment for all through education, lifelong learning and skills development

Wednesday, 14 June 2023, 3.20–4.40 p.m.

The Transforming Education Summit, held at the headquarters of the United Nations in September 2022, noted a triple crisis in education: a crisis of equity and inclusion, a crisis of quality, and a crisis of relevance. Over 244 million children and young people are still out of school, including one third of children in child labour and an estimated seven out of ten children in low- and middle-income countries who cannot read and understand a simple text at age ten. In developed countries, significant education disparities remain, which are often based on income, race and gender, and they are particularly acute in crisis contexts. All regions of the world need more teachers, especially those countries that have rapidly growing school-aged populations.

Even where access to education and training can be provided, many educational and training systems are not equipping new generations with the values, knowledge and skills they need to face challenges throughout their lives such as just transitions (climate, digital, energy and demographic transitions). Lifelong learning provides equal access to training and skills development and promotes decent work, secure livelihoods and career prospects for millions of people. If implemented through social dialogue, it can act as a powerful social equalizer, preparing societies for change and unforeseen crises and empowering people and enterprises to address new challenges such as the digital and green transition as well as known challenges such as the informal economy. The development of core and future-oriented skills allows workers to adapt and to explore career pathways that would otherwise be closed to them. It enables the public sector and private enterprises, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, to be more sustainable, develop resilience and adaptability, enhance productivity and generate decent work opportunities. It enables successful job transitions, intra-enterprise mobility and transitions into formality, and promotes access to social protection, with positive impacts on the incomes of vulnerable groups.

To this end, countries must develop well-coordinated systems and policies, supported by a whole-of-government approach, and engage in social dialogue with the social partners. They need skills intelligence, a flexible and inclusive training offer, strong and effective institutions, sustainable financing and quality assurance alongside robust skills validation and career guidance. This requires curricula, pedagogy and teaching and training staff that are relevant for diverse communities. Skills recognition is also important. Last but not least, having qualified, motivated and well-supported education personnel, working in a conducive teaching and learning environment, is essential to delivering quality education.