



# Transforming Today's Education for the Unknown Future – Opportunities and Challenges

**Davendra Sharma**

Lecturer and Course Coordinator. University Wide Programme and Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies Programme, University of Fiji, Fiji Islands

**Abstract.** This paper will discuss how and why there is a need to transform today's education for the unknown and unpredictable future with opportunities and challenges in mind. The whole world is changing so fast now that it is getting difficult to keep pace with these changes and innovations. Technological revolution, globalization, changing labour markets are all putting pressure on education and education out of today. These rapid changes are making today's education more and more irrelevant, ineffective and obsolete. Today's education has served well till now, but we need to transform to meet the challenges of the future. Technology has opened new opportunities in every sector, and education is no exception. The main purpose of education has changed now due to technological revolution. Education is expected to prepare students of today for the jobs of the future, without being able to predict or confirm the future. That is a challenge in itself. How can we prepare our students for the future, the future that we have not seen or know about.

**Index Terms-** Technology, obsolete, challenge, irrelevant, predict, holistic, diverse, digital Framework, pandemic, critical, collaboration, transformation, revolution

## I. Introduction

The education systems and outcomes that served us in 19th or 20th century will or may not be enough to prepare and educate the students for the 21st century and beyond. Nobody can predict what education outcomes or skills will be needed in future, but one can start preparing for the future demands and expectations through a modern education system. To change the education system is not easy or cheap. It needs lot of funds and proper planning, which the small developing countries lack in abundance. But we cannot sit ideal and do nothing. Technology has increased the changes around us with great speed. Every day the current education systems used around the world is becoming effective and irrelevant. Ways and means have to be found to navigate these rapid changes that are creating numerous opportunities and challenges to teaching and learning world-wide.



Several researches have claimed that the current education outcomes are not enough to prepare students for the 21st century. The world is changing faster than ever before, with new challenges like climate change, economic crises, and pandemics. The 21st century requires new skills like critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. New technologies are changing how people learn and work. People now expect to learn throughout their lives, not just in school. New beliefs and technology are what empower people to get things done in the 21st century.

To prepare students for the 21st century, education systems need to change in several areas and ways. Curriculum needs to change to focus on 21st century skills. Teachers need to be encouraged to ask questions that encourage critical thinking, inquiry, and reasoning. Teachers need to be trained and supported to equip students with 21st century skills. More people should have access to education. Technology should be used more in the classroom. The 21st century requires new skills like critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. New technologies are changing how people learn and work. People now expected to learn throughout their lives, not just in school. New beliefs and technology are what empower people to get things done in the 21st century.

The 21st century is a century that is characterized by amazing developments in Information Communication Technology (ICT). Therefore, in building the desired 21st century learning environment for 21st century digital Education, there should be changes in education sector. Development in computer and internet technology in particular and over the years is revolutionizing all aspect of human activities. The integration of these technologies in Education is gradually making human interactions more and more dependent on these technological developments

Teaching and learning in the 21st-century, is evolving and only schools and educators with the ability to evolve through adaptability, flexibility and innovation will be effective and reckoned with in the near future. 21st-century teaching and learning refers to the modern educational approaches, strategies, and methods that are designed to align with the skills and demands of the modern world.. We live in the digital era where technology has opened a world of possibilities for the education sector. It is, therefore, time to upgrade the traditional education system with outcome-based education to focus on learning outcomes.

Education policies should change for the 21st century to prepare students for the future by equipping them with skills like critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability. Education should focus on the life skills needed to be a contributing citizen of the world. This includes practical applications of knowledge and understanding. Educational policies can support 21st century skill development by integrating technology. Collaboration is an important 21st century skill that involves working with others, learning from them, and sharing ideas. Project-based learning allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, as well as future skills. Some other factors that are testing the limits of the existing international normative framework include, digital education, increasing human mobility, changing



demographics, climate change, and expectations of opportunities for learning throughout life.

The concept of "21st century skills" isn't new—skills like critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving have been taught in classrooms for decades. Yet, as the demands of our changing economy rise, many educational institutions are now including 21st century skills in strategic plans to better prepare students for college, career, and life. A 21st century education is about giving students the skills they need to succeed in this new world, and helping them grow the confidence to practice those skills. With so much information readily available to them, 21st century skills focus more on making sense of that information, sharing and using it in smart ways.

Today's graduates are challenged when joining a workforce driven by digital transformation, emerging technologies such as Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, and an evolving corporate landscape. This is why 21st century skills are critical to produce graduates who succeed in their careers. The traditional approach to learning may have served us well in the past, but it is no longer sufficient for the ever-evolving needs of today's students. We must embrace new methods that cater to the diverse learning styles and skills of this generation. Integrating traditional and modern education can create a more holistic educational approach that respects cultural heritage while preparing students for contemporary challenges.

#### **Some ways students can work together**

- **Curriculum Integration:** Combine traditional knowledge, values, and practices with modern subjects. For example, incorporating local history, languages, and cultural practices into the science or social studies curriculum.
- **Project-Based Learning:** Use projects that address local community issues, blending modern problem-solving techniques with traditional practices. This can enhance students' engagement and relevance of learning.

The converging impact of globalization, ICT and knowledge explosion has led to phenomenal changes in the modern society, which have challenged every aspect of our modern lifestyle. To cope with these run-away changes, we need to prepare workforce with the skills to handle a range of electronic technologies that characterize this digital era. To prepare citizens with cosmopolitan outlook, cross-cultural understanding, capable of working in multicultural settings on group projects and capacity to think creatively and critically a different approach to the delivery of education is required.

Today, there are significant differences of opinion between those who advocate and oppose technology. Techno-optimists believe that ever-evolving technology can make the world a better place by improving people's lives and that the solution to social problems depends on technological innovations. Techno-pessimists, on the contrary, believe that modern technology creates more problems for humanity than it solves and argue that the search for more technology will lead to new, unpredictable, and dangerous consequences (Diana, 2016).



The rapid technological revolution has brought several opportunities and challenges to Education systems and labour market demands world-wide. There is a clear need and desire for additional skilling, reskilling, and upskilling opportunities for students and adult learners that align with the skills and competencies the current and future job market requires. The evolving labour market has greatly changed the types of skills needed to succeed in the workplace. Soft Skills -- include good communication and interpersonal skills, leadership, problem-solving, work ethic, time management, and teamwork.

To thrive in today's innovation-driven economy, workers need a different mix of skills than in the past. In addition to foundational skills like literacy and numeracy, they need competencies like collaboration, creativity and problem-solving, and character qualities like persistence, curiosity and initiative. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), 65% of children entering primary school today will ultimately work in completely new job types that don't yet exist.

As we look ahead to the future of education, we must consider the requirements of the future workplace. Indeed, the successful workers of both today and of the future need to be flexible and mobile, and more skilled than ever before in adaptability, reflection and self-direction. The need for direct skills and knowledge is constantly diminishing; as we lose the ability to predict what the careers of the future will look like, it is in the development of inquiring, curious and critical learners that schools can best serve the workforce of the future.

A real wake-up call of the global pandemic is the enormous skills gap between the demands of a modern economy and the current workforce's capabilities—especially when it comes to the evolution of technology. We must urgently transform our education and workforce development systems to meet the demands of the modern economy. As these trends reshape the workplace, organizations must adapt to thrive in this dynamic environment. From embracing flexibility and lifelong learning to fostering creativity and self-organization, the time to act is now.

The labour markets of the world are in a rapid change. New labour market skills are identified. Many of the “learning outcomes” prominent in conventional education systems have become obsolete or shifted to lower priority levels. In today's rapidly evolving job market, technical expertise alone isn't enough. Employers are now emphasizing the importance of soft skills and how they are just as important as technical ability.

What are soft skill? Soft skills include attributes and personality traits that help employees effectively interact with others and succeed in the workplace. Examples of soft skills include the ability to communicate with prospective clients, mentor co-workers, lead a team, negotiate a contract, follow instructions, and get a job done on time. Soft skills are personal, social, and emotional skills that help people interact with others and solve problems. Some soft skills that students need to develop in and out of classrooms.



### Some Soft Skill Students Need to Develop

- **Teamwork** - Working together with others to achieve a common goal. Teamwork can help students improve their communication, listening, and compromise skills.
- **Problem-solving** - A skill that can be developed and improved over time.
- **Leadership** - The ability to make decisions, coordinate others, and lead a situation.
- **Communication** - The ability to interact with others, share ideas, and negotiate.
- **Creativity** - The ability to develop innovative solutions to problems.
- **Critical thinking** - A core soft skill that involves self-awareness and taking feedback from others.
- **Time Management** - An essential skill that can positively impact a student's personal, professional, and educational life.
- **Adaptability** - The ability to deal with changes in the learning environment and in the future workplace.

Soft skills are important for students because they can help them succeed in their careers and academics, and in their personal lives. Soft skills can improve academic performance. It can help students stand out in a competitive job market and prepare them for rewarding careers. Employers value soft skills for collaboration and innovation. Soft skills can help students manage stress, navigate social interactions, and handle conflicts. They can also lead to increased confidence, resilience, and overall well-being. Soft skills can improve relationships with teachers and peers

A mismatch between the education system and labour market needs can threaten economic growth and development. This mismatch can lead to a discrepancy between the supply and demand for labour, which can inefficiently utilize human capital. Design curricula that respond to changing industry trends and technological advancements. The mismatch between education system and labour market needs is the disparity between supply of and demand for labour.

The concerns of technology causing mass unemployment, due to machines replacing human labour, are hardly new in history. In fact, the idea of “technological unemployment” as a new disease was already highlighted by John Maynard Keynes in 19309. Some years later, Wassily Leontief was also pessimistic and predicted more and more workers being replaced by machines and new industries not being able to employ all the labour supply. Nowadays, ever-increasing computing power, artificial intelligence and the “Internet of Things” threaten to further extend the scope of job automation to non-routine and cognitive tasks that were deemed non-automatable only a few years ago. These include, for example, driving a car or writing reports on stock market changes. Estimates by Frey and Osborne (2013) suggest that around 47% of total US employment is potentially automatable over the next decades. A wide range of occupations would be affected, in transportation and logistics, office and administrative support tasks, production, construction, sales and services. A similar study by the World Bank (2016) found an even higher share of the workforce at risk of automation in developing countries, which was, 57% in members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)



As for the impact of Education and the global job market, information, communication and technology (ICT), is expected to create both challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, the rapid advancement of technology and automation may lead to job displacement and make certain skills obsolete. On the other hand, it may also create new job opportunities that require different skills, such as data analysis, coding, and digital marketing.

The relationship between the digital divide and educational outcomes has been widely studied, and the evidence suggests that students who lack access to technology are at a disadvantage compared to their peers who have access. The digital divide also has implications for the development of digital literacy skills. Digital literacy refers to the ability to access, evaluate, and use digital information effectively (Gilster, 1997). In today's digital world, digital literacy skills are essential for success in education and the workplace. However, students who lack access to technology may not have the opportunity to develop these skills, putting them at a further disadvantage.

Efforts to bridge the digital divide have been ongoing for many years, but progress has been slow. Some initiatives have focused on increasing access to technology, such as providing computers and internet access to low-income families and schools. Other initiatives have focused on providing digital literacy training to students and teachers. While these efforts have had some success, the digital divide remains a significant challenge. The digital divide is a complex problem that has significant implications for educational outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged students. The lack of access to technology can exacerbate existing educational inequalities and hinder the development of digital literacy skills. Efforts to bridge the divide are ongoing, but more needs to be done to ensure that all students have equal access to technology and the opportunity to develop the digital skills necessary for success in education and the workplace.

Automation, digitalization and new technologies herald new challenges in limiting the relevance of previous education and training. Young men and women are spending more time in education, allowing them to achieve more knowledge and qualification levels. Yet, the main labour market challenge they face nowadays is the school-to-work transition.

To thrive in the global job market, students will need to develop skills that are in high demand and not easily replaceable by machines. These skills include critical thinking, creativity, adaptability, and emotional intelligence. Additionally, they will need to continuously learn and upskill throughout their careers to keep up with the fast-changing technological landscape. Overall, education leaders at all levels must commit to new policy solutions that offer early exposure and access to career-oriented experiences for students and adults, encourage localized partnerships between education systems and industries, and address retention challenges in high-demand fields. There is a clear need and desire for additional skilling, reskilling, and upskilling opportunities for students and adult learners that align with the skills and competencies the current job market requires. The evolving labour market has greatly changed the types of skills needed to succeed in the workplace.



It is very important to remember that the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn. The education system is in constant flux. Teaching curricula and accompanying teaching styles need to be constantly updated in order to keep up with the changing times. The fact is, traditional learning methods no longer take us far enough. It's time to break the cycle of failure in education by learning, unlearning, and relearning. The 21st century education systems are now required to design and practice practical strategies and ideas to help learners explore, unlearn, and relearn. Educators and learners should be prepared to let go of outdated mindsets and be empowered to shape the world by making choices that transform your personal experiences.

The learn, unlearn, relearn cycle engages a deeper level of thinking that gives a more comprehensive understanding. Learning, unlearning, and relearning are lifelong learning processes that ensure educators and learners stay ahead in a rapidly changing world. The remarkable capacity of humans to learn, unlearn, and relearn skills and knowledge allows learners to become life-long learners.

The upskilling and reskilling learning theory is equally gaining momentum in the quest for education for 21st century. Upskilling and reskilling in today's world are essential steps to help individuals acquire new skills. Continuous learning helps you stay competitive in an ever-changing job market. Upskilling and reskilling progressively are necessary for every individual. Research reveals that, by 2025, half of all employees will require reskilling.

As we move forward towards Industry 4.0, the Future of Work is all about the Future of Skills. When you look at job postings today, most employers are looking for people with particular skill sets rather than a particular degree or certification. This shift is due to technological advancements, which have created an environment where jobs have become more dynamic and multifaceted. Employers are finding it challenging to find people with the right skills for their positions, and this is where the workplace of the future comes in. In the future, workplaces will focus on developing and nurturing skills rather than just filling positions. Employees will be encouraged to build their skills through training, mentorship programs, and experiential learning.

It is possible that 50% of the job roles available today will be expected replaced with new ones. With technological advances in AI, a number of new roles will emerge in various sectors. For the learner today, this means that students should look at continuous learning, upskilling, reskilling and multi-skilling as a way of life to catch up with the latest industry trends. It is a cruel fact that current education systems in many developing countries are not keeping pace, and ageing degrees may be less applicable to current and future needs. The skills and mindsets that got us to our present positions will not get us to the future, so we need to invest in learning and resetting, refining and re-skilling. Education policies needs to be relooked at now and bring in necessary adjustments or changes to to it effective and relevant.

Some policy changes needed in education for the 21st century. A broader concept of teaching and learning goals that focuses on the holistic development of each student. This includes helping students develop the ability to cope with change,





participate in directing change towards the common good, and learn throughout their lives. Viewing 21st century skills as part of a complete package that includes basic skills and specific skills. A shift from teacher-centred learning to student-centred learning, where teachers act as facilitators of learning and coaches. Students learn by doing, and teachers help students work on projects. Encouraging students to ask questions, evaluate, synthesize, and translate ideas to solve problems and complete projects. Ensuring students have a broad base of knowledge across several traditional subject areas, including math, biology, chemistry, history, geography, literature, and art. Teaching students about their national and international situations, and the challenges that mankind faces. Training students to update themselves to the present situation and for the future.

We cannot predict the future but we can prepare for the future and all uncertainties it will bring. The future cannot be predicted, but futures can be invented. It was man's ability to invent which has made human society what it is. The mental processes of inventions are still mysterious. They are rational but not logical, that is to say, not deductive. We're living through a fourth industrial revolution, characterised by technological advancements in areas such as robotics, artificial intelligence and machine learning. While this inspires hope in future prosperity, the pace of invention means we can't even imagine what jobs will make up most of the workforce in a generation from now.

One of the most prominent challenges for educators today is harnessing the power of technology for enhanced learning experiences. While digital tools and online resources offer unprecedented opportunities, integrating them effectively into the classroom can be overwhelming. Teachers must become proficient in utilizing technology to engage and empower students, while also ensuring responsible and ethical use. Additionally, technology-driven distractions and information overload can impede students' ability to focus and retain information. Thus, striking a balance between leveraging technology and fostering critical thinking skills remains a key challenge for teachers.

The COVID pandemic has exposed the need to further equip schools with the infrastructure and technologies, and provide teachers and students with the skills needed to adapt to a digital environment. Education sectors at all levels are going through a major change. COVID-19 has provided a lever to deeply reflect on education policies and reforms that are required in the 21st century. These changes relate to primary, secondary and tertiary education. There is no doubt that developed countries are moving fast and others are catching up.

Educational policy makers, employers and other stakeholders are urging schools and universities to promote twenty first century skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, and self-management, which are regarded as important for success in the workplace, citizenship, and family life. These skills are critical for success in the modern world because they allow people to negotiate complex situations, form strong connections, and achieve their goals. Furthermore, these skills are not set characteristics, but rather may be acquired and enhanced via conscious practice and feedback. There is an urgent need to focus on the importance of integrating twenty





first century competencies into education to bridge gaps between education and the workplace in the post-pandemic era. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for digital transformation since students are expected to possess different twenty first century competencies such as digital literacy, problem-solving, adaptability, and communication skills.

A real-world education should involve hands-on learning experiences, a focus on problem-solving, and opportunities for students to engage with mentors and authentic audiences. By redesigning education to emphasize these elements, we can better prepare learners for the challenges they will face in higher education, the workforce, and life in general.

As much as understand, education has focused on knowledge (learning facts & information) for a long time, but in the 21st century, when all the world's knowledge is accessible at the click of a button, we believe skills are more important. By providing students with real-world learning opportunities and fostering critical thinking skills, we can empower the next generation of entrepreneurs, nonprofit leaders, and innovative thinkers to make a meaningful impact on the world.

In 2020's many schools, students are still being taught the skills and knowledge that were needed to function in the industrial society where there was a need for citizens that could absorb knowledge via rote learning, follow orders, not questioning superiors, arrive on time, and compete with their fellow students learning that cooperation is suspicious, and in many cases will be called cheating. Students were taught to work individually competing with each other, despite the fact that the serious problems we face today can only be solved via cooperation. This was killing or hindering critical thinking, creativity and independent thinking. Now, our societies need people who can think out of the box, think creatively and innovate.

In many cases, students are treated like "objects" for the teaching and not as "subjects in their own learning". Most schools are organised with the teacher (and not the students) in the centre. The teacher asks, although he knows the answer, and the students try to guess which answer the teacher wants. However, newer pedagogy and many national laws for education suggest a student-centred teaching. We knew the past. We can prepare for that. We do not know the future, but the children we teach in 2020 will live their adult life from 2030 to 2070 – under very different circumstances from the ones we know about today. Education is witnessing unprecedented scrutiny from all segments of society. The world is changing at a previously inconceivable pace. We must now understand that we are preparing our children for the unknown, unseen and unpredictable. This is not easy to digest. Therefore, 21st century school education needs to be capable of teaching students how to deal with unpredictability and change.

The change in the economic order that the 21st century has brought in every walk of life has required many new skills that individuals need to possess in order to succeed in modern workplaces. 21st century skills refer to a new set of skills which respond to the current century characterized by a rapid advancement in information and communication technologies (ICT) and students who are digital natives as well as



conscious users of technology. Selected 21st century skills, previously known as soft skills, have been deemed critical to modern workplaces. These are the skills that today's graduates need in order to succeed in their careers during the Information Age, remaining competitive in the ever-changing job market. The 21st century skills have been broken out into three main groups as follows:

As artificial intelligence continues its relentless advance, becoming ever more sophisticated and entrenched in every aspect of our lives, the true battleground for human relevance in the workforce is becoming clearer. The most valuable assets in an AI-dominated future won't be the skills that machines can replicate, but rather those innately human skills that AI cannot.

This emerging reality necessitates a significant pivot in educational strategy. We can no longer afford to focus solely on the traditional foundational literacies (reading, writing, and arithmetic), as the core of our educational systems. While these skills remain important, they position our students on a precarious edge where the rapidly advancing capabilities of AI are poised to overshadow human competencies in these areas. A recent report by the World Economic Forum in their Future of Jobs 2023 underscores this shift. While the classic "three R's" still make the list of necessary skills, they now rank below 24 other skills that are in higher demand and more critical for future job markets. This indicates a pressing need to broaden our educational goals beyond the basics, which are increasingly at risk of automation.

Education systems are faced with the double challenge of improving the quality of education to make it relevant to the labour market given the automation challenge and giving students the ability to navigate the post-truth society. As daunting as that challenge might be, it turns out that the solution to both problems is more and better education. The challenge, however, is that this is expensive and difficult. At the same time, governments have to increase educational attainment, improve cognitive skills, and teach non-cognitive skills. These are expensive and difficult tasks, and the evidence base on how to improve non-cognitive skills is limited.

As we stand on the brink of unprecedented technological advancement, the stakes for education have never been higher. The rapid encroachment of automation and AI into every sector underscores a pivotal truth: merely equipping students with basic literacy and numeracy skills is no longer sufficient. If we continue down this path, we risk preparing a generation that is not only unprepared for the future but is also alarmingly replaceable.

To avert this potential disaster, we must redefine what it means to be educated in the 21st century. We must ensure that the development of robust, uniquely human skills — creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, adaptability, and leadership — become as foundational to our educational systems as the traditional three R's. This is not merely an enhancement of the curriculum; it is a necessary evolution to secure a future where our students are the creators, innovators, and leaders who will harness technology, not be overshadowed by it.



Future education needs to embrace a holistic skills framework. Educators must broaden their approach, integrating human skills seamlessly with academic learning. Every lesson should be an opportunity to develop the competencies that distinguish humans from machines. There is an urgent need to prioritize skills over memorization: Shift the educational focus from memorizing facts to applying knowledge in complex, real-world situations. This shift not only prepares students for the challenges of tomorrow but also makes learning more engaging and relevant. Future education also needs to foster continuous learning: Create an educational environment that values growth and curiosity over rote learning. By nurturing a mindset that views education as a lifelong journey, we prepare students for the fluidity and dynamism of the future workforce.

If we want our students to thrive in a world where AI and automation are ubiquitous, we need to act swiftly and decisively. By re-envisioning the core of our educational practices to focus on developing the full spectrum of human capabilities, we can prevent a generation from becoming obsolete. The time to adjust our sails is now as the future will belong to those who are prepared to innovate, adapt, and lead. Let's ensure that our students are among them.

More than half of the world's population is currently under the age of 30, making this the biggest generation of children and young people the planet has ever seen (World Bank, 2021). These young people are inheriting a world which will challenge them in unprecedented ways, and it is the responsibility of school leaders, educators, parents and guardians to work together in empowering them to rise to these challenges. By giving students their own toolkit of skills, their own compass in which to navigate, we can effectively prepare them to take on the unknowns of tomorrow as successful, global citizens, who are equipped to contribute to a better world.

The journey of transforming today's education for the unknown and unpredictable future will not be without several challenges. It will need collaborative, determined, well planned and committed action from all stakeholders, like students, teachers, parents, communities, societies, policymakers and mostly importantly finance. Can developing and poor countries compete with rich developed countries? According to the new report by World Bank, (2023), prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2018-19, high-income countries were spending annually the equivalent of US\$8,501 for every child or youth's education compared to US\$48 in low-income countries. COVID-19 has only widened this huge per-capita education spending gap between rich and poor countries. With this level of disparity between rich and poor countries will be almost impossible to reduce. With limited resources, increasing population, depleting natural resources, racial and ethnic tensions, conflict, poor governance, declining economies in poor, under developed and developing countries, it will be a tremendous challenge to invest any more in education for future.

Developing countries face many challenges when modernizing their education systems to meet the expectations of 21st century workforce. A lack of funding for education is a major challenge. Shortage of teachers, or they may be untrained or well trained. There may not be enough classrooms and learning materials. Students may struggle to access schools due to family finances, gender, or



distance from the school. The teaching staff to student ratio may be too high, which can affect the quality of instruction. Teacher pay may be an issue in schools and higher institutions of learning, which will affect the retention rate. Poverty and inequity can affect learning levels at all levels. Chronic malnutrition, disease, and chaotic or violent environments can undermine children's early development. School management may be weak and corrupt, due to poor education and skills. Adopting to western education systems, as part of aid and support, can lead to the phasing out of traditional values and languages. Poor school infrastructure: Schools may be unsafe, overcrowded, or distant. They may also lack basic resources like clean water and sanitation. Child labour: Children may be forced to work to support their families. Learning crisis: Children may not learn foundational skills, or they may not receive an education that prepares them for the jobs of the future.

The most daunting challenge that will affect the transformation of today's education for the unknown and unpredictable future education funding. School funding is a significant issue in developing countries. The education sector is consistently underfunded compared to other sectors. In 2023, the UN's global humanitarian appeal for education requirements fell by 26%. Less than 20% of global educational aid goes to low-income countries. Many countries have inequitable and inefficient education spending. The ability to mobilize more resources varies across countries, and the COVID-19 pandemic made it even harder. African countries are under international pressure to review and renegotiate their external debts to address their sustainable development goals.

Some challenges to school funding in developing countries include:

- Underinvestment in education
- Misallocation of public spending
- Low aid to low-income countries
- Inefficient and inequitable spending
- Difficulty mobilizing resources
- Debt crises – inability to obtain or service existing loans

Some possible solutions to school funding challenges include:

- Developing and using new methods of financing education
- Implementing income-contingent loans (ICLs)
- Ensuring funding is used effectively and reaches the poorest and most marginalized children
- Practicing good governance and better financial management system.
- Public and Private sector partnership.

## II. Conclusion

The journey of transforming today's education for the unknown and unpredictable future will not be easy, cheap and unchallenging. It will not be achieved in a day or two, rather it will take lot time and funds. It may need some hard, bold, policies and practices on the way. The fact is that future can not be predicted or planned. Technological revolutions, fast evolving labour markets demands,



globalization, climate issues, rapidly decreasing relevance and effectiveness of the current education systems will make the task more and more challenging and costly, especially for poor, developing and under developed countries world-wide. Time and resources are not in favour of these poor developing countries, who already have so many issues at the door step. Students and their families in these poor developing countries are struggling to barely meet their basic need like food and shelter. How can they be expected to invest in education.

Developed and rich countries, donor agencies, multinational corporations, UNESCO, World Bank, WHO, UNICEF and others will need to pump in billions of dollars in these poor countries, so that education can be transformed for the unknown and unpredictable future. Aid and donations could come in the form of improving the governance, financial management, teacher training programmes, revising the curriculums, making teaching and learning resources available to students, schools and parents. Improvements can be done in infrastructure such as internet, connectivity, electricity, water, buildings, roads, agriculture, health centres and hospitals, training programmes for parents, community leaders who all major stakeholders of education. Just pouring in dollars in these countries will not solve the problems. It will do more damage and open doors for mismanagement of funds and corruption. A very well-known Chinese proverb makes sense in these situations.

**If you give men some fish, you feed him for a day. But if you teach a man how to fish, you heed him all his life**

We do not have time on our side. Time is fast running out. It will need a very collaborative, well planned, and collective effort from everyone involved directly or indirectly in education, to contribute in the journey of transforming today's education for the unknown and unpredictable future. It may be challenging but not impossible. The more we delay, the more challenging and complex it will become. It is very important to understand that different countries, either rich or poor, small or big, developed or undeveloped, have different needs, expectations, resource bases, geographical features, so global policies, borrowed curriculums, and foreign teaching and learning programmes and practices may not be suitable to for all countries at all times. One size, fits all, will never be true and beneficial.

## References

1. Stiglitz Joseph E, Noman Akbar and Jayadev Arjun (2024 )The Challenge of Employment in the 21st Century, Institute of Policy Dialog, [https://www.jica.go.jp/english/jica\\_ri/news/topics/2024/\\_icsFiles/fieldfile/2024/04/26/ipd.pdf](https://www.jica.go.jp/english/jica_ri/news/topics/2024/_icsFiles/fieldfile/2024/04/26/ipd.pdf)
2. Tushar Hasanuzzaman and Sooraksa Nanta (2023) Global employability skills in the 21st century workplace: A semi-systematic literature review, Heliyon, [www.cell.com/heliyon](http://www.cell.com/heliyon), Cell Press Open Access Journal
3. Charitonos, K., Kukulska-Hulme, A., Huxley, S., Hedges, C., Law, P., Power, T., ... & Whitelock, D. (2023). Consultation for the 2023 GEM Report on Technology and Education.
4. Haugen, V. (2023). Mid-term evaluation report (final): Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Centre Phase 3.



5. Unicef. (2021). The state of the global education crisis: a path to recovery: a joint UNESCO, UNICEF and WORLD BANK report. Paris: UNESCO, cop. 2021.
6. Jones, P. W. (1997). On world bank education financing. *Comparative education*, 33(1), 117-130.
7. Jones, P. W. (2007). *World Bank financing of education: Lending, learning and development*. Routledge.
8. Rogers, D. L. (2000). A paradigm shift: Technology integration for higher education in the new millennium. *AACE Review (Formerly AACE Journal)*, 1(13), 19-33.
9. Owens, R. F., Hester, J. L., & Teale, W. H. (2002). Where do you want to go today? Inquiry-based learning and technology integration. *The reading teacher*, 55(7), 616-625.
10. Furia, D., Castagna, A., Mattoscio, N., & Scamuffa, D. (2010). Education and labour market in the age of globalisation: some evidence for EU-27. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 9, 1140-1144.
11. Sangaré, I., & N'Zué, F. F. (2023). How Effective Is the Official Development Assistance in the Education Sector? Evidence from the WAEMU Countries. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(11), 551-571.
12. Gorski, P. (2005). Education equity and the digital divide. *AACE Review (Formerly AACE Journal)*, 13(1), 3-45.
13. Weisbrod, B. A. (1962). Education and investment in human capital. *Journal of political Economy*, 70(5, Part 2), 106-123.