

Achieving a Learning Generation

The Role of Business

Over the coming decades, education and skills will matter more than ever to the prosperity of individuals and economies. With up to half of today's jobs – especially low- and medium-skilled jobs – at high risk of disappearing due to automation, and with shifting global demographics placing greater pressures on productivity, higher levels of skills will become increasingly vital for growth. Some 40 percent of employers globally are already finding it difficult to recruit people with the skills they need. If current trends continue, more than 1.5 billion adults will have no education beyond primary school in 2030. If education in much of the world fails to keep up with changing skill demands, the growing skills gap will stunt economic growth around the world, and threatens to have far-reaching social and political repercussions.

The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity has set out a proposal for the largest expansion of education opportunity in modern history: creating the Learning Generation. If all countries accelerate progress to the rate of the world's top 25 percent fastest education improvers, then within a generation, all children in low- and middle-income countries will have access to quality pre-primary, primary, and secondary education, and a child in a low-income country will be as likely to reach the baseline level of secondary school skills

and participate in post-secondary education as a child in a high-income country today.

Business has a major stake in the future of education, nationally and around the world. The success of the private sector depends both on the future skills of the workforce and on the health and success of the economy as a whole. Business will have a critical role to play in creating a Learning Generation – as employers and providers, as investors and innovators, as leaders and advocates.

In presenting its conclusions and recommendations, the Commission invites business leaders to consider in particular:

- Proposals for how to **strengthen business's voice in education**; its leadership in advocating for educational reform and investment; and its role as a partner of government in helping to ensure that the design and delivery of education and training keep pace with changing labor market needs.
- A range of recommendations to **encourage increased business investment in education**. These include, among others, the development and deployment of innovative financial instruments, financing mechanisms, and results-focused investment approaches; strengthening government procurement and partnering capacity; and action to encourage investment in educational infrastructure, technologies, platforms, and resources.
- Action to encourage **employer-led innovation in the design and delivery of education and training** – in particular, to help support transitions into work through programs such as apprenticeships or employability training; improve the quality and

status of vocational training; and help the existing workforce to adapt to changes in the workplace and new skill demands.

- How employers can help support and expand **innovation in the recognition and accreditation of skills**, including through "badging" or other new forms of recognition and qualification – vital for enabling the growth of new delivery models, such as online learning, which can radically expand access and lower costs of learning.
- Ways to encourage **corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility** – including considering how core business practices or investment decisions can be "pro-learning"; and a proposed "Education Giving Pledge," encouraging business leaders and high net worth individuals to make a substantial and public commitment to education.

The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity is a major global initiative engaging world leaders, policymakers, and researchers to develop a renewed and compelling investment case and financing pathway for achieving equal educational opportunity for children and young people. For more information, please visit www.educationcommission.org.

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