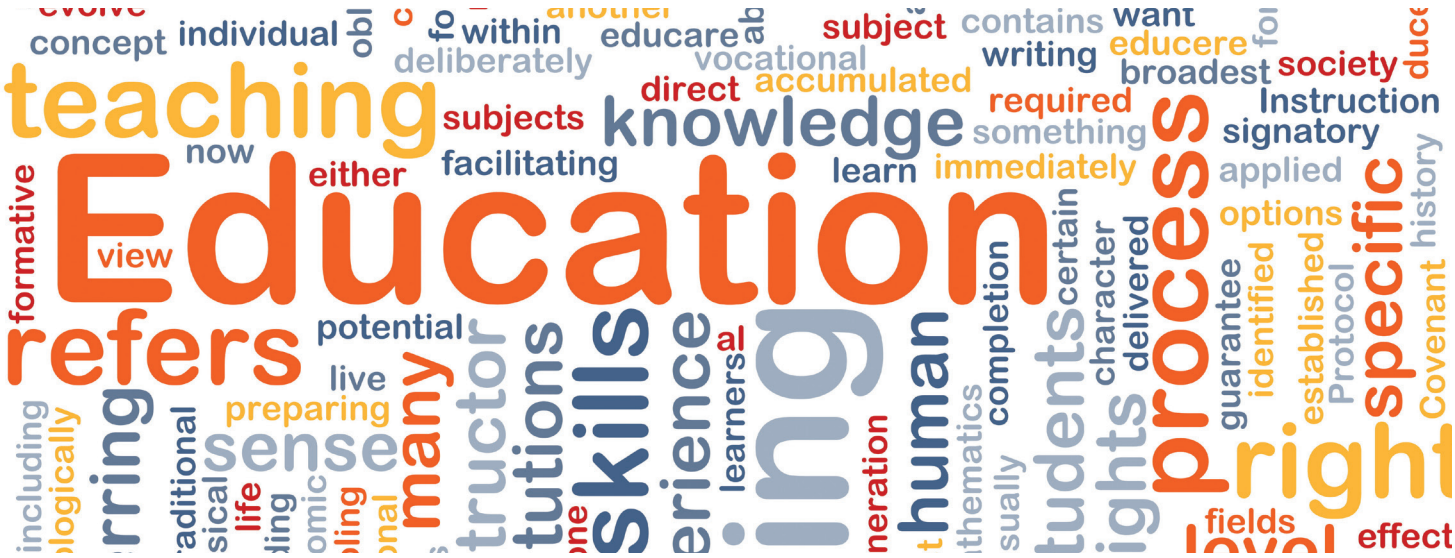
Global Agenda Council on Education & Skills 2012-2014

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE STATE OF THE WORLD



Understanding/Context

Although the percentage of children enrolled in primary or secondary education increased from 84% to 90% between 1999 and 2009, according to UNESCO, significant challenges remain in the field of education. For instance, studies show that illiteracy rates among women exceed 70% in more than 20 developing nations. Improving education worldwide is essential for spurring productivity, innovation, job creation and, ultimately, economic growth. Such improvement requires identifying and adopting a new set of short- and long-term policies and practices. Appropriate investments in education can achieve the desired results, but the outcome depends on awareness at the global and local levels of the changes that are needed. Political support and substantial public and private resources are necessary. Fortunately, the evidence base needed to identify required reforms is becoming more widely available.

Shaping the Agenda

The Global Agenda Council on Education & Skills has identified the need to focus on the most optimal way of bringing together experts to help leaders advance the education and skills agenda by raising global awareness on the need to improve education systems. The Council is preparing a book on new or relatively neglected challenges and opportunities related to education and skills. The book will have a forward-looking focus, with emphasis on actions and corresponding outcomes – for which public policy-makers and private stakeholders can be held accountable – to foster dialogue among all stakeholders of society. The book is expected to be launched at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2014. Work will continue during the remainder of the Council's term to examine the numerous factors related to countries' abilities to improve their educational systems while keeping in mind the skills gap. Among the topics to be investigated are:

- The pathways for improving access to education, for assessing and strengthening educational quality, and for increasing equity across income levels and gender and demographic subgroups of all types
- The potential of technological change and its diffusion to help overcome deficiencies in education systems throughout the world
- The need to highlight that demographics are changing in all countries; the changes have implications for countries' fiscal situations and their opportunities for economic growth, and changing demographics interact with the changing nature of jobs – in particular, the accumulation and importance of scientific knowledge emphasizes the necessity of early preparation for education: in-utero health matters for education, as do infant and child health and pre-primary learning
- The need to focus on schools (i.e. formal educational settings) as well as informal systems, and the role of mothers and family settings

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Contact Information

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