

INCLUSIVE AND SHARING CITIES

FUTURE OF WORK & EDUCATION: Skills for a Digital and Automated World

Concept Note

[Automation](#) is changing the way we work and, to an increasing extent, the way we live. Whether we like it or not, robots and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are redefining [the workforce development](#), which is not intrinsically bad, as many people may think.

Societies have been automating the process of making and providing goods and services for centuries, from the plough, to the printing press, to the steam engine. These changes have improved living standards and life expectancy, and economists agree that increased productivity is key to improve Gross Domestic Product, and in turn jobs and wages.

Yet people fear that with this new wave of automation, [many professions will extinct](#) and employees won't find alternative jobs. However, the reality is machines can replace specific tasks while creating a greater demand for certain job profiles.

We can't predict exactly what work will look like in the future or the specific types of jobs that will exist for the next generation. Experts say that the majority of the workforce will freelance by 2027, based on workforce growth rates found in [Freelancing in America 2017](#). They also forecast that technological change will keep increasing and, as a result, [learning new skills throughout life](#) will be a must.

Be it as it may, the education ecosystem will have to actively prepare future workers to develop new jobs and cope with new business and social models that will require to respond to new processes and methods, and new ways of living. In fact, it is estimated that 65% of children entering primary school today will end up in jobs that do not yet exist.

That is the reason why experts insist that [21st century skills](#) include critical and creative thinking, problem solving, metacognition, collaboration, communication and global citizenship. Some call these capabilities 'soft skills', a term that describes a complex combination of empathy, emotional intelligence, creativity and will to communicate and collaborate. All in all, this means that professionals will need more soft skills than ever before if they are to stay relevant and competitive. Yet, at the same time, employees will expect more from the organizations they work for.

How well we do as individuals will depend on how broad our interest in changing is and how extensive the support is. In this sense, the role of cities is fundamental. How can



they promote the active inclusion of all citizens not to leave anybody behind, aligning labor supply with demand and work with institutions to fill the education gaps? [The future of work](#) is the future of cities.

Outcomes

Participants will:

- Learn about 21st century skills and the future of education.
- Get new perspectives on the tight link between education and work in the digital age.
- Identify the key challenges to better articulate education and work and how cities can contribute to this goal.
- Learn how automation will help redefine workforce development.
- Discover innovative initiatives developed in cities around the world.

Guiding questions

- What are the necessary skills and 'soft skills' to thrive in the digital age?
- What are the curriculum reforms needed to adapt the education ecosystem to the requirements of the 21st century society?
- How can education promote active inclusion of all citizens?
- How is automation redefining the workforce development?
- How to learn to work alongside robots?

Keywords

robotics; AI; workforce skills; soft skills; education; legislation; universal income; workspace models; creativity; life-long learning