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We need a global reskilling revolution – here's why



1 billion jobs will be transformed by technology in the next decade. Here's how we can prepare the workforce.

Image: NESAs by Makers/Unsplash

22 Jan 2020

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This article is part of the [World Economic Forum Annual Meeting](#)

- As jobs are transformed by the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we need to reskill more than 1 billion people by 2030.
- In the next two years – by 2022 – 42% of core skills required to perform existing jobs are expected to change.

- In addition to high-tech skills, specialized interpersonal skills will be in high demand, including skills related to sales, human resources, care and education.

The world is facing a reskilling emergency.

More than 1 billion jobs, almost one-third of all jobs worldwide, are likely to be transformed by technology in the next decade, according to OECD estimates. By just 2022, the World Economic Forum [estimates](#) 133 million new jobs in major economies will be created to meet the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

At the same time, economic and demographic shifts are putting additional pressure on the workforces of today. As we enter a new decade, one that the United Nations and others have called the “decade of delivery” for important transitions to a more sustainable world, we must also focus on achieving equitable, inclusive progress to equip and enable the world’s people to thrive in the jobs of the future.

How can we ensure people around the world are not left behind? We must come together – governments, businesses and society – to provide education, skills and jobs for at least 1 billion people by 2030.

As jobs evolve, so will the skills needed to perform them. Forty-two percent of the core skills within roles on average are expected to change by 2022.

There’s a clear cost to inaction. Across G20 countries, failing to meet the skills demand of the new technological era could put at risk \$11.5 trillion in potential GDP growth over the next decade, [according to Accenture estimates](#). The human cost is infinitely worse.

To make meaningful progress in reskilling the world, it will be especially important to focus on the fastest-growing professions of the future. A [new report](#) from the World Economic Forum finds that much job growth will come from seven professional areas: care, engineering and cloud computing, sales marketing and content, data and AI, green jobs, people and culture, and specialized project managers.

Figure 1: Emergence of clusters of professions of the future, 2020-2022

Professional Cluster	Number of opportunities (per 10,000)	
	2020	2022
figures extrapolated from data for 20 economies (LinkedIn)		
Data and AI	78	123
Engineering and Cloud Computing	60	91
People and Culture	47	58
Product Development	32	44
Sales, Marketing and Content	87	125
figures extrapolated from data for the United States (Burning Glass)		
Care Economy	193	260
Green Economy	9	14
ALL CLUSTERS	506	715

Note
Number of opportunities refers to the number of new opportunities for every 10,000 opportunities in the labour market and is calculated as a compound average annual growth rate.

Sources
LinkedIn and Burning Glass Technologies.

These are the job clusters expected to see the most growth in the next few years.

Image: Jobs of Tomorrow: Mapping Opportunity in the New Economy (World Economic Forum)

There's a common misconception that we'll all need to develop highly technological or scientific skills to succeed. Yet while it will be necessary for people to work with technology, we're also seeing a growing need for people to develop specialized skills for how they interact with each other. These include creativity, collaboration and interpersonal dynamics, as well as skills related to specialized sales, human resources, care and education roles.

Many of these fast-growing jobs are currently undersupplied. This offers an opportunity for a majority of those in the most at-risk roles. However, with 70% of such workers needing to find new opportunities outside of their current industry, such transitions also require better safety nets and stronger private-sector commitments.

In addition to innovative policy solutions and business efforts around reskilling and upskilling for their employees, collaboration between the public and private sectors is necessary to advance a new agenda that empowers people with the resources and tools they need to improve their lives.

This focus on reskilling and future-proofing workforces for the jobs of the future will be instrumental in improving social mobility, a key factor in reducing inequality. An improvement of just 10% in global social mobility would boost economic growth by nearly 5% over the next decade, according to a new [report](#).

At the World Economic Forum, we are working with governments, business and civil society to align on new metrics, new financing models, new business practices, new public policy and –

most importantly – new delivery accelerators to ensure people have the skills to fulfil their potential.

If we do nothing, our current skills crisis will only exacerbate the growing divide between the world's rich and poor. In such a world it will be impossible to achieve peace, environmental sustainability or prosperity.

It's time for a reskilling revolution. Join us.

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