



COALITION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



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01 A world in transformation

The 21st century will not happen in the future: it is happening now. Accelerated environmental, demographic, and technological changes are reshaping the social, economic, and political order and this new configuration requires rethinking the way we develop and train individuals. Depending on how well they are educated and trained in this dynamic environment, these changes can become real opportunities to be effectively capitalized and to positively transform our countries and the region as a whole.

02 Transversal skills as a currency in the 21st century

Individuals need to be equipped with a set of skills that will be the currency in a world in transformation. Transversal skills are essential for the development of each individual; they are necessary to navigate healthy, productive and happy lives; they are reusable because they are widely transferable from one area of life to another; and they are not specific to a job, task, sector, discipline or occupation..

03 People's "operating system"

Foundational skills contribute to the development of a mindset or a mental structure which serves as a buffer to respond to the uncertainties in today's world. This implies ensuring all individuals are equally equipped with an operating system not only to fulfill the basic functions but also to develop more sophisticated skills that will help them both professionally and in their lives in general. These include but are not restricted to digital skills, advanced cognitive and socioemotional skills as well as executive functions such as teamwork, communication, creativity, critical thinking or problem solving , perseverance, resilience, tolerance, empathy, and equally important, lifelong learning, none of which are new but are critical in the 21st century.

04 Transversal skills go beyond work: they have positive impact on the individual and collective wellbeing

Apart from their impact on the labor market, transversal skills have an effect on the different dimensions of a person's wellbeing as well as their personal and social life. Our countries and organizations cannot afford to miss the opportunity to guarantee the continuous development of such skills throughout a person's lifetime, not only to ensure a better professional career but also to reach higher standards of wellbeing.

05 21st century skills as an opportunity to tackle inequality

In an extremely unequal environment, where the education of parents can determine the academic future and career opportunities of their children, and in a context in which almost half of the students in the region do not complete their secondary education, improving the quality of our education and training systems is essential to render them more relevant and flexible so our children and youth are given the opportunity to break with that legacy. No 21st century society can afford the cost of having low qualified citizens. In a world in which less skilled workers will be displaced and that our human skills will mark the difference, equipping our citizens, regardless of their age, with those foundational skills should be at the core of any education and training system.

06 Transforming the education and training systems of the 21st Century

Education is one key factor to predict employability, salary, physical and mental health, as well as people's happiness or their level of political and social participation. However, what marks the difference is not the accumulation of years of schooling or training, but the skills acquired during that time. In this sense, education is failing to adapt to our current needs. Many changes are coming from outside of the traditional formal education and training systems. They are disruptive and agile models, capable of responding to the demands of a world in transformation.

07 A call for action coordinating the different actors from the public and private sectors

It is essential to establish an ecosystem of actors, from the public and private sectors, organizations and civil society, to enable a joint action to consider preparation, skill prioritization, strategies and best practices, timeliness for our interventions, identifying resources in the region in terms of education and training, and how we can offer concrete services and tools, through a public policies and the private sector, to enable our citizens to navigate an uncertain and everchanging environment.

08 Transitioning from the world of degrees to the world of skills

It is necessary to develop a dynamic credential certification system that reflects a new and increasingly flexible reality and that allows for greater freedom of choice and more access to a variety of education offerings. In a world where our professional specialization will need to change on a regular basis, where people will have to constantly upskill and reskill, and where companies look for employees that have hands-on skills rather than theoretical knowledge, the importance of a "paper" or a diploma is progressively fading. In this context, it is necessary to identify new ways from education and training systems, of certification not only of knowledge but also of that "know-how", so that we can make these relevant skills visible. In this transition, new spaces can be generated to close the opportunity gap between children, youth, and adults from high and low-income backgrounds.

09 Technology as our ally

Technology is an opportunity to adapt learning, improve pedagogical practices, measure and certify new skills, reduce costs, expand access, and increase the effectiveness of learning. Many of the alternative training that exists today would have not been possible before, simply because there was no technology to support them.

10 Responsibility for all: Public private partnerships

We come from a world in which the life of an individual was structured in phases: a learning phase, another to work, and the other to retire. In a time in which we will live longer and will continue to learn throughout our lives, the responsibility lies in both hands of the public and private sectors to train people.

11 As members of the Coalition

We are committed to promoting the development of transversal skills in Latin America and the Caribbean and to coordinate, across the public and private sectors, relevant organizations and the civil society, a range of services and concrete tools for individuals to successfully navigate an uncertain world in constant transformation.
