

Skills Friendly Cities:

A local solution to the global youth skills crisis

Alarming trends indicate that nearly half of the 1.8 billion youth worldwide will not have the skills or qualifications required to participate in the workforce between now and 2030.

The pace of change in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), fueled by the development and accessibility of technology, automation, and robotics, means that the labor market will continue to evolve, simultaneously making a large proportion of today's jobs obsolete and creating a new wave of employment opportunities. Given these dynamics, 50% of the jobs we are training young people for today will not exist by the time they enter the workforce.

The uncertainties of 4IR are further compounded by the impact of COVID-19 which has created new jobs and transformed others overnight, all the while further exposing inequalities of opportunity for young people. Over the coming months and years, the impact of shifts in labor market priorities, economic downturn, and public recovery spending will impact the outlook for the next generation of young people.



Why cities?

In times of disruption in the workforce, cities are experiencing a renaissance making them the ideal setting to address the global skills crisis. By 2030, six out of every ten people will live in cities and urban centers. As we have seen in the response to the global pandemic, city policies will become even more relevant as they are able to react quickly to local trends and be responsive to large proportions of young people. Cities are often considered the best place to generate wealth and improve living standards at a faster rate because of density, interaction and networks. City governments often engage with the business community on issues of talent and employability. In addition, the leaders of cities often have the power to influence educational institutions and help to oversee policies and practices that govern these institutions. These dynamics present an opportunity to proactively address the looming crisis of youth skills and participation in the economy – one city at a time.

The initiative

Through the Skills Friendly Cities Initiative, the Global Business Coalition for Education (GBC-Education) aims to achieve practical, rapid, and relevant solutions to the youth skills crisis for communities by bringing young people, the business community, and policymakers together at a city-level to deliver new ways of learning and working. Our goal is to influence the lives of young people by inspiring the creation of the necessary policies, systems, processes, and stakeholder coordination for “skills friendly cities” that support youth in preparing for, finding, creating, and succeeding in meaningful, quality jobs.





“We believe that the business community must proactively work with young people to support its future workforce needs to keep up the industries of the future. Our objective is to improve youth innovation and skills, with an emphasis on marginalized populations most likely to be left behind.”

Jamira Burley, Head of Youth Engagement and Skills, Global Business Coalition for Education

Here's how the initiative will work:

1

Define and Communicate Standards

The initiative will provide clarity to cities on how to become “skills friendly” by defining critical activities to undertake and indicators to track. These standards will be communicated through a report and dashboard that is shared broadly.

2

Incentivize Excellence and Innovation

The initiative will incentivize cities to become more “skills friendly” by administering a national challenge that rewards achievement related to the standards and recognizes innovations and aspirations. The competition will also encourage intra-city collaboration among city leadership, youth-serving organizations, industry, and education systems through the application process. Cities will self-submit data, and winning cities will be selected by an advisory board. Winning cities would receive support to scale existing best practices or launch new initiatives.

3

Foster a Cross-City Learning Community

The initiative will create opportunities for cross-city collaboration through a learning community to elevate best practices, enable joint problem solving, and promote collective success.

For more information, visit www.gbc-education.org/youthskills.