Skills and Competencies
Background Note

At a glance

Education aims to equip learners with the ability to gain knowledge, find decent work and contribute meaningfully to society. This implies that it must nurture the development of relevant skills and competencies. As we look towards 2030, we can consider three broad categories of skills/competencies that learners will have to acquire. This categorization is informed by the concept of “the four pillars of learning” and the 2012 Education for All Global Monitoring Report on youth and skills. The three categories of skills/competencies are as follows:

1. Skills/competencies for knowing (“foundational skills”), including literacy and numeracy;
2. Skills/competencies for doing (“specialized skills”), including occupation-specific and generic skills/competencies; and
3. Skills/competencies for being and for living together (“transferable or transversal skills”), including intra-personal and inter-personal skills/competencies.

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1 Under this theme, “skills and competencies” is used as a general term. However, it should be understood to include not only skills and competencies, but also values and attitudes.
2 By “learners”, this group will discuss both children and young people in school, as well as adults out of school.
3 The “four pillars of learning” were espoused by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century led by Jacques Delors, which presented its landmark report Learning: The Treasure Within to UNESCO in 1996.
4 The 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report classified skills in three broad categories: foundational skills, TVET skills and transferable skills. The conceptualization of skills/competencies for this session is informed by this as well as the Delors Report, though using the moniker of “technical and vocational skills” instead of “TVET skills” so as to go beyond the realm of TVET.
5 Other terms are often used to cover similar skill sets, such as 21st century skills, soft skills, higher-order skills, non-academic skills, meta-cognitive skills and generic skills.
I. Trends, issues and challenges towards 2030

a. Trends, issues and challenges in regard to skills/competencies for knowing (“foundational skills”)

Overall trends, issues and challenges

Despite increased participation rates over the past two decades, the progress in improving quality of education, particularly student learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy, has been rather slow. Globally, around 250 million children are not learning the basics, thus calling for greater attention to ensuring that all children and youth obtain foundational skills in reading, writing and mathematics by 2030. While the Asia-Pacific region has socio-economically advanced countries with top-performing education systems, many children, particularly in the developing countries of the region, still lack the most basic literacy and numeracy skills. The available data on some of the Asia-Pacific countries which participate in international assessments suggests that the average scores of students in reading and mathematics were near or below basic competency levels. The results of the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicates that Australia, Hong Kong (China), Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Shanghai (China) and Singapore were amongst the top ranking countries, while other countries of the region, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan performed below minimum achievement levels in reading, mathematics and science (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2012b).

In addition, reading levels in early grades as well as adult literacy rates are very low in the region and are highly likely to remain as challenges post-2015. According to a survey conducted in rural areas in India in 2010, 50 percent of grade 5 students could not read at all, while another survey conducted in Pakistan in 2014 showed that only 44 percent of students in grade 3 were able to read sentences (level 1 text) in their own language (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2012b). The Asia-Pacific region is also home to the majority of the world’s adult illiterate population, accounting for a little less than 513 million adult illiterates (65 percent of all adult illiterates in the world), out of which the South and West Asia sub-region alone had 411 million illiterate adults in 2009, making up more than half (51.8 percent) of the world total (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2012a).

The issue of illiteracy is particularly alarming for marginalized or vulnerable groups, such as women, girls, people in remote or rural areas, those from ethnic and language minority groups, migrants and people with disabilities. Globally, women make up almost two-thirds of the total illiterate population (UNESCO, 2014a), and this share has remained the same over the past 20 years (UIS, 2010), which calls for strong focus and action on this issue as well. The gender disparity is particularly high in South and West Asian countries, where, for instance, only 51.3 percent of adult women had the ability to read and write as of 2009 (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2012a). Furthermore, diversity in socio-economic conditions, culture, tradition and language in Asia-Pacific countries makes it more challenging to improve literacy rates in the region. The urban-rural literacy gap is widening mainly due to unbalanced economic development across countries and a lack of public infrastructure which limits the provision of educational services. Additionally, many children from ethnic minority groups tend to perform poorly because the national curricula often do not allow for learning in their mother tongues (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2012a).
These current trends and prevailing issues and challenges in attainment of foundational skills across different age groups require further attention and significant interventions in three areas, namely, *curriculum*, *pedagogy* and *assessment*. These are the common yet crucial factors to define the quality of teaching and learning.

**Curriculum**

In many developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, the curriculum, which focuses on foundational skills, is not tailored to the needs and abilities of learners, especially those from marginalized groups. Thus, there is a need to focus on and integrate the foundational skills into the curriculum, particularly in early grades. In addition, delivering curricula which covers too many subjects within a short time or at too fast a pace poses the risk that many children will be left behind their peers in class, without acquiring solid foundational skills of numeracy and literacy. On the other hand, well-tailored curriculum offers many benefits, which become even more obvious at later grades due to the attainment of good foundational skills in the early grades. Educational programmes for non-formal settings, such as second-chance accelerated learning programmes, have proven to be effective in improving children’s learning mainly because the curricula of such programmes are usually developed and modified to suit the realities of these children and their communities. Moreover, the at times, inappropriateness of textbook content (for example, giving the impression that girls are inferior to boys) and the absence of curriculum which is suited to the needs of disabled children or those from ethnic or language minority groups have increasingly become a cause for poor performance and dropout rates among learners from these groups.

**Pedagogy**

Pedagogy is a very critical part of any education reform that intends to improve the quality of education. Teachers’ effectiveness and their teaching methods are strong determinants of what students can learn in the classroom. Despite various efforts made to shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred pedagogy, traditional teaching practices, such as “chalk-and-talk”, and an overreliance on lecture-driven and rote learning are still dominant in the classrooms in most Asia-Pacific countries. These teaching methods may limit students’ creative and critical thinking abilities and lead to passive students who are less motivated to learn and hence perform poorly (UNESCO, 2004). In addition, rapid changes in technological development require teachers and learners to have enhanced ICT skills, and demand the adoption of more innovative or technology-aided pedagogies in the classroom. Even though such technology-based teaching practices are appreciated in delivering educational services both in formal and non-formal settings, their effective implementation still remains a challenge in many countries.

**Assessment**

The development of appropriate assessment systems is critical in monitoring and ensuring student learning. As the quality of education has become an increasingly prominent concern, many low- and middle-income countries have paid significant attention to improving the measurement of learning outcomes. However, in many of these countries, the results of national assessments are not analysed properly or used effectively for policy making purposes, which could potentially result in better quality of teaching and learning. In addition, some others lack institutional infrastructure with clear and coherent policies on monitoring the quality of
education, as well as well-designed and established assessment systems (Ho, 2012). These are mainly due to unstable sources of funding, lack of ownership and low capacity. Furthermore, as most developing countries do not organize frequent national assessments, or participate in international assessments (TIMSS, PISA etc.), the availability of comparable data within or across countries is very limited. This makes it challenging to evaluate the extent to which education systems succeed in delivering desired skills and competencies to students.

b. Trends, issues and challenges in regard to skills/competencies for doing (specialized skills)

Overall trends, issues and challenges

It must be acknowledged that greater access to education cannot always be equated with better employment prospects for graduates. Employment opportunities are largely shaped by the economic context. Therefore, regional economic trends are expected to impact on future skills needs and the development of higher education, as well as technical and vocational education and training (TVET). As widely acknowledged, the Asia-Pacific has experienced relatively rapid economic growth which could continue for another 40 years (ADB, 2011). The industry and service sectors are and will continue to be the predominant sectors of employment in the region. In the agriculture sector, employment is expected to continue falling, but currently still provides 42.82 percent of Asia’s total employment (ADB, 2013). Despite falling employment numbers, technological advances in agriculture are expected to improve productivity. As a consequence, education and training will have to focus on equipping graduates with the required technological skills to ensure adequate levels of agricultural production for their large and growing populations, as well as to supply expanding export sectors in the region.

Beyond the economic factors, there are a number of other dynamics which impact on the development of education and training systems in the region, including population growth/decline, environmental concerns, migration and growing urbanization. Of particular significance is youth unemployment in the region, which in 2012 stood at 10.6 per cent and which is expected to rise in the coming decades (ESCAP, 2012). Despite relatively high youth unemployment, employers in the Asia-Pacific region still report challenges in filling positions. A survey of 8,600 hiring managers in select countries revealed that a shortage of applicants (32 percent) followed by a lack of applicants with occupation-specific skills (31 percent) and non-occupation specific skills (28 percent) were the three most cited challenges in filling positions (Manpower Group, 2013).

To meet employer demands and to nurture entrepreneurial skills, education and training systems have to be developed and reformed. While TVET as a sub-sector aims to meet these demands, TVET systems vary and are largely determined by external factors, such as the low attractiveness of vocational education. For example, in Mongolia where employment is focused on mineral extraction, the majority of students graduate with university degrees that are incompatible with labour market needs. Similarly, in the Republic of Korea, which has undergone a transformation to become a high-income economy in the past decades, TVET remains unpopular, with more than 60 percent of vocational high school students choosing to enter college rather than employment after their high school graduation (Jin, 2014), which exacerbates the mismatch between education outcomes and the needs of the labour market.
Skills mismatches are, amongst many, strongly related to the quality of learning and teaching in higher education and TVET. Although the depth and seriousness of such problems and ways to approach them differ country to country as indicated above, significant policy interventions are needed in three particular areas, namely, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. These are the common yet crucial factors to define the quality of teaching and learning of specialized skills. Improvement of these factors can help reduce skills mismatch, as well as the learning gaps among marginalized groups, including girls and women.

Curriculum

The curriculum is a key tool for linking students’ skills and competencies with the needs of the labour market. In the Asia-Pacific region, several countries have introduced TVET at the upper secondary level to counter a growing skills mismatch. Two approaches can be identified in the region: (1) a mixed curriculum approach which allows general stream students to choose vocational subjects, and (2) joint delivery of general and vocational education at the same or different school premises. For example, Uzbekistan took the former approach by introducing professional colleges (PCs) and extending compulsory education to the secondary level. Although its efficacy is yet to be gauged, the percentage of students enrolled in general secondary education who chose to follow the vocational track increased from 32 percent in 1990 to 99 percent in 2011 (UNESCO, 2013a). In Thailand, on the other hand, general and vocational education are provided in a single type of secondary school as “career education”. At the higher education level, technical and vocational education is expanding as ‘academic’ universities are increasingly displaying a ‘vocational drift’ by adopting more applied programmes, and technical universities display an ‘academic drift’ by broadening their programmes and research focus, as well as their admission criteria. This convergence between TVET and ‘academic’ curricula has shifted the balance between theory and practice, and therefore practical and ‘academic’ skills, in recent years. Given the diversity of the region, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to curriculum development in regard to the specialized skills. Rather, curricula should reflect the needs of the labour market and ensure access as well as equity of education and training.

Pedagogy

There is a continuing shift in emphasis from input to learning outcomes in education and training. In TVET the focus on outcomes is further shifting from technical/vocational skills (occupation-specific) skills towards generic skills/competencies (ability to solve problems, communicate ideas and information effectively, be creative, show leadership and conscientiousness, demonstrate entrepreneurship capabilities, etc.). There are different understandings and conceptualizations of generic skills across the Asia-Pacific region, but in general, they refer to a number of important competencies that can be learned and that everyone requires to successfully adapt to changes and to lead meaningful and productive lives (UNESCO, 2014a). The development of such skills implies the need for a transformation from traditional teacher-centered to learner-centered pedagogies, meaning that the role of teachers needs to shift from ‘knowledge transmitters’ to ‘learning facilitators’ while students change from passive to active learners. To become active learners, and subsequently employable graduates, students also have to acquire adequate levels of skills in regard to information and communications technologies (ICTs). Today’s workplaces are increasingly technology-dependent and, therefore, require workers who can confidently operate technology-based equipment in their daily work lives. Despite increased policy focus on ICTs in education in the
region, these challenges need to be further addressed to ensure that current and future skill needs are met.

Assessment

Assessment, as a tool for improving learning outcomes, should be reflective of skills and competencies required by employers. In some countries in the Asia-Pacific region, however, national systems of testing and certification in TVET need to be established, and in others they need to be improved (Maclean and Lai, 2011). A recent trend is to introduce a modular competency-based assessment where "learning is module-based and competency-based assessment is conducted to evaluate whether individuals have acquired the required skills and knowledge in each module. Instead of a one-off exam at the end of the semester or school year, assessment is undertaken throughout the learning process based on evidence collected on an individual's performance and knowledge vis-à-vis national competency standards" (UNESCO, 2013c).

Another regional trend can be observed in the impact of international assessments, such as PISA and TIMSS, which have a visible impact on ‘academic’ learning, but indirectly also influence employers' desire to hire employees with recognized qualifications and from recognized higher education institutions. This trend is and will continue to have an impact on hiring practices “at the technician, technologist and skilled-trades levels.” (Maclean and Lai, 2011: 6). To meet this and other demands, many countries in the Asia-Pacific have established, or are establishing, national training frameworks which are linked to broader national qualification frameworks (NQFs). The underlying drivers for the development of NQFs include ensuring the relevance of learning outcomes, creating multiple learning pathways, recognizing prior learning and increasing standardization. The development and strengthening of national qualification frameworks is expected to continue given the growing desire to improve regional collaboration in the Asia-Pacific region.

c. Trends, issues and challenges in regard to skills/competencies for being and for living together (“transferable skills”)

Overall trends, issues and challenges

In recent years, there has been a shift towards an education that can better promote behavioural and socio-emotional domains of learning through so-called ‘transferable’ skills. Recognizing that learning must go beyond foundational skills, students need to be equipped with transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and conflict resolution in order to develop as responsible global citizens (UNESCO, 2014a: 36). This shift in focus may be in response to emerging challenges that require education to be relevant to social, economic and political realities. Indeed, globalization, technological advancements and regional integration open up new opportunities that people can leverage in their search for better life and work. Societies and labour markets are increasingly requiring that people acquire necessary transferable skills and competencies.

On the other hand, tensions and potential conflicts are mounting across and within national boundaries in several parts of the Asia-Pacific region, resulting in increased misunderstanding, intolerance and even hatred among people and nations. Add to this the increasingly
multicultural societies and cities in which much of the region’s population lives today, and it is clear that there is a potential risk of increased social tension and violence. In schools, this has led to racial, ethnic, cultural and sexual discrimination and related problems such as gender-based violence and bullying. This calls for education to be better able to promote skills such as tolerance and acceptance, and ultimately to contribute to building peace and respect for diversity.

When examining the four pillars of learning as defined in the Delors Report, transferable skills can be found in the third and fourth pillars: ‘Learning to Be’ and ‘Learning to Live Together’ (Delors et al., 1996). Skills associated with these two pillars include the following:

Skills for being and living together (‘transferable skills’):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning to Be</th>
<th>Learning to Live Together</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic appreciation</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Knowledge of other cultures / Cultural sensitivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical thinking/Judgment</td>
<td>Understanding of discrimination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-discipline</td>
<td>Tolerance / Acceptance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-motivation/zest</td>
<td>Concern for the environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Well-being (physical, mental, emotional)</td>
<td>Community involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optimism/Hope</td>
<td>Teamwork/Leadership</td>
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*Source: Adapted from Faure (1972) and UNESCO (2014)*

**Curriculum**

In order for transferable skills to be successfully developed in students, they also need to be reflected and made a priority in national curricula. A recent study conducted by UNESCO Bangkok on Learning to Live Together in ten countries⁶ shows that some countries have taken the approach of integrating transferable skills across the curriculum as cross-curricular priorities. Others aim to teach these skills as specific, dedicated subjects (UNESCO, 2014b). In addition, there is an important need to thoroughly review curriculum content and textbooks to ensure that learning/teaching materials are inclusive of each country’s diverse cultures and ethnicities, and that they do not perpetuate discrimination, stigma or gender stereotypes. The curriculum also has great potential for enhancing the potential for mental and physical well-being in students, whether through academic content, such as health education, or through increased outdoor extra-curricular activities. The time allocation given to these activities, as well as to relevant curricular subjects, should be considered.

**Pedagogy**

Teachers are fundamental agents of social change, and thus also play a fundamental role for transferring transferable skills to students in the classroom. As critical role models for their students, teachers who can themselves demonstrate competencies such as empathy, communication, leadership and teamwork through participatory and collaborative teaching

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⁶ Afghanistan, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
approaches are more likely to impart these competencies among learners. At the same time, the findings from the study on Learning to Live Together shows a deficiency in teacher knowledge and support for the transfer of these skills and competencies in classroom settings, which indicates the need to further embed and promote transferable skills in pre- and in-service teacher training and teacher policies (UNESCO, 2014b).

Assessment

Given the increasing prominence of transferable skills, attention must also be paid to how they can be measured. In assessing these skills, it is hoped that they will become a priority for students, teachers and policymakers alike. In large-scale assessments, increased emphasis on real life application and understanding of academic content, as well as psychometric assessment of values and attitudes, facilitated by new technologies and growing availability of existing tests, could provide a more holistic form of student assessment. At the same time, transferable skills may be better assessed as ‘grades’ through classroom-based and school-based assessments. Evidence shows that these skills can be assessed in various ways. Findings from the study on Learning to Live Together show that while there is very little information or examples of how these skills have been assessed in the region, assessment of ‘Civics and Citizenship’ in Australia and learner-centered indicators for assessment of these competencies in the Philippines are both examples that these assessments can, in fact, be achieved (UNESCO, 2014b). The growing debate at the international level on how transferable skills can be measured is an encouraging step for making them an important part of education systems in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

II. Key strategies and action areas

Curriculum:

• National curriculum frameworks should be reviewed/improved in order to ensure that the content is contextualized and closely matched to the needs of learners, and delivered at appropriate pace with sufficient instructional time.
• School-to-work information bases, which are a set of policies and practices for collecting information about skills needed by employers and types of employment found by TVET graduates, can serve as the basis for evidence-based curriculum development. If adequately developed, these information bases can provide crucial information on skills demand and supply, which, reflected in the curriculum, can help ensure that TVET graduates are equipped with the required skills and competencies.
• The development of multi-dimensional curricula, that include and emphasize the importance of transferable skills as cross-cutting across all subjects, with increased time allocation to relevant curricular and extra-curricular subjects/activities to enable innovative and participatory learning strategies, is important.
• Clear linkages between skill requirements for each education level within the curriculum can prevent overlap and ensure that students acquire adequate levels of skills and competencies.
Pedagogy:

- Teachers’ professional development in areas such as ICT usage in classroom practice should be enhanced along with the promotion of technology-based teaching in both formal and non-formal settings.
- Teacher recruitment policies are needed that place emphasis on prospective teachers’ potential as role models to nurture transferable skills in students.
- It is important that pre- and in-service teacher training enhances teachers’ knowledge and capacity in pedagogies that promote participatory and collaborative learning in order to foster the development of transferable skills in the classroom.

Assessment:

- Linkages between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment should be improved to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
- There should be a strong emphasis on building the capacity of teachers to effectively conduct assessment (particularly at the classroom level) and monitor student progress.
- Information on assessment results needs to be conveyed (to communities, schools and policymakers) through appropriate channels to promote increased motivation for learning, accountability for results and continuous quality improvement.
- National assessments should increasingly be used as diagnostic tools to monitor the quality of education systems, while the effective use of assessment results should be strengthened through institutional capacity building.
- An increased focus on assessment of transferable skills is important and should emphasize the ability to apply knowledge, think critically and solve problems.

III. Target and indicators

In regard to skills and competences, the following three overall targets are proposed:

- By 2030, all youth and at least x% of adults will reach a proficiency level in literacy and numeracy sufficient to participate in society, with particular attention to girls and women, and the most marginalized.
- By 2030, at least x% of youth and y% of adults will have the knowledge and skills for decent work and lives through technical and vocational education and training, upper secondary education, and tertiary education and training, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.
- By 2030, all learners will acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to establish sustainable and peaceful societies; including through global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

Each of these targets must be translated into specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-phased (SMART) indicators for the Asia-Pacific region. The thematic working group on skills and competencies will discuss which specific indicators should be set, but some suggestions are given on the following page.
### TARGETS

By 2030, all youth and at least x% of adults reach a proficiency level in literacy and numeracy sufficient to participate in society, with particular attention to girls and women, and the most marginalized.

By 2030, at least x% of youth and y% of adults have the knowledge and skills for decent work and life through technical and vocational education and training, upper secondary and tertiary education and training, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.

### INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input level</th>
<th>Process/Output level</th>
<th>Outcome level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of countries that review curriculum content and reflect the needs of marginalized groups, including girls and women</td>
<td>Number of trainings organized for capacity development in the area of assessment</td>
<td>Percentage of youth who acquire foundational skills in literacy by Grade 3</td>
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<td>Number of countries that review national educational policy in view of alignment between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment</td>
<td>Percentage of teachers trained in the area of assessment</td>
<td>Percentage of youth who acquire proficiency in literacy by the end of primary school</td>
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<td>Number of countries that use national assessment results for policy making purposes</td>
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<td>Percentage of youth who acquire basic skills in numeracy by the end of primary school</td>
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| | Number of countries which introduced national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) | Number of lifelong learning programmes introduced | Number of countries which introduced national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) |
| | | | Percentage of adults who acquire occupational skills through lifelong learning programmes |
| | Percentage of education budget spent on TVET | Percentage of education budget spent on higher education | Percentage of youth who acquire TVET qualifications |
| | | Number of lifelong learning programmes introduced | Gross enrolment ratio in higher education |
| | | Number of countries which introduced national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) | Percentage of youth and adults trained on the use of new technologies in their occupations |
| | | | Percentage of youth and adults trained through industry training (apprenticeships/industry attachments/internships, etc.) |
| | | | Percentage of youth who acquire updated occupational skills through re-training |
| | | | Youth employment rate |

<p>| | | | Percentage of adults who acquire skills and competencies through lifelong learning programmes |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of youth and adults who find employment matching their qualifications</th>
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By 2030, all learners acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to establish sustainable and peaceful societies; this includes through global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of countries that review the curriculum to ensure the reflection of transferable skills</th>
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<td>Number of countries that review teacher policies in view of reflecting transferable skills</td>
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<td>Number of countries that review national assessments to include measurement of transferable skills</td>
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<tr>
<th>Percentage of teachers trained on tolerance, non-violence, respect for diversity, collaboration and human rights (including teaching strategies for integrating these competencies into classroom practice)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of teachers trained on transversal skills and competencies for work</td>
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<td>Percentage of curricula that include transferable skills throughout subjects</td>
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<td>Percentage of time allocated to relevant curricular and extra-curricular subjects that promote the development of transferable skills</td>
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<th>Percentage of countries that include measurement of transferable skills in national, sub-national, or school-based assessments</th>
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<tr>
<th>Percentage of youth who acquire skills and competencies in regard to tolerance, non-violence, respect for diversity, collaboration and human rights</th>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of youth who acquire knowledge of global and local issues related to peace and sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of youth acquiring proficiency in the application of knowledge to real life problems</td>
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<td>Percentage of youth participating in extra-curricular and community activities</td>
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IV. Questions for discussion

- What are the new and emerging issues in the region (economic, demographic, socio-cultural, environmental, etc.), and what implications do they have for skills and competencies?

- What are the skills and competencies which learners need and will need in order to effectively progress to higher levels of education, the world of work and/or their role as active members of society? Of these skills and competencies, which are the most important in the Asia-Pacific region?

- What are the overall trends, issues and challenges in the region in terms of achievement of these skills (e.g. literacy, technical skills)?

- How can curriculum development and reform promote the attainment of the desired skills/competencies?

- What are the pedagogical considerations in regard to the attainment of the desired skills/competencies? How can ICTs be harnessed for this purpose?

- How are these skills/competencies assessed (if they are)? How can they be better assessed? What kind of reforms should be introduced to improve the assessment of these skills?

- What are the overall targets that are realistic for the region in terms of attainment of the desire skills/competencies, with particular reference to GEM targets 3, 4 and 5?

- Which specific indicators should be set for the measurement of these skills/competencies?
V. References


