Globalization has had a profound influence on today’s society, highlighted by an increasingly integrated world economy and new information and communications technologies. Information and innovation, two of the main driving forces of globalization, are highly knowledge intensive, and therefore rooted in the education agenda. As flows of information and knowledge spread across borders, so too do people. The increasing mobility of students and scholars, as well as internationalization of academic programs and institutions, illustrates the international importance of education. Globalization has a major effect on education at many different levels, but recently the focus has shifted on how to effectively prepare students for a global arena.

Governments have identified that knowledge and education are the keys to long-term development, and begun to embrace “global competences” to harness and build capacities for the current and future generations. These global skills can refer to the acquisition of in-depth knowledge and understanding of international issues, as well as the ability to learn and work with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and the ability in a foreign language. Companies increasingly are looking for students who are skilled communicators, effective critical thinkers, dynamic problem solvers, and productive team members.

Governments, under the influence of current global challenges, need to ensure students are adequately prepared to navigate an increasingly integrated world once out of school. In this context, UNESCO, the Center for Research on Educational Testing (CRET)/Benessse Corporation, and DIPF – German Institute for International Education Research, aim to launch a set of “expert working groups” that will identify global competences and skills that are vital for global education. These working groups will (1) identify potential challenges and risks of globalization from a non-education perspective (ie; industry, labour, and technology); (2) identify how education systems can effectively implement and deliver these emerging skills and competences; and (3) develop assessment frameworks to monitor and evaluate progress.

UNESCO, CRET/Benessse, and DIPF plan to jointly organize the first of such working group meeting in October 2014, to gather international experts to define/articulate global competence in education for further policy discussion.
Expected outcomes of the meeting

The meeting will aim to review the approach to globalization and education and set out the procedure to reach the following goals:

1) Organize three workshops in early 2015 that will address a) globalization; b) globalization and education; and c) global competencies assessment
2) Carry out a 1 year preparatory study for a longer-term international research and development programme to cover the three facets in item 1)
3) Develop a 7-year Priority Program as defined under item 2

Participants

The meeting is by invitation only. Educationists with substantial experiences in addressing impact of globalization will be invited to the conference. The participants will be researchers from leading universities and think tanks, senior officials from Ministries of Education, and high-level staff from the development partners as well as from the private sector.