



# The 2030 Skills Scorecard

Bridging business, education, and the future of work

## South Asia Edition

This scorecard is a joint publication  
by the Global Business Coalition  
for Education and the Education  
Commission.

 **Global Business  
Coalition For  
Education**

**the  
Education  
Commission**

Photo: Asian Development Bank

## INTRODUCTION

---

The workplace of the future will look very different from that of today. Automation, digitization, and other forms of technology will wipe out millions of jobs while, at the same time, create many new opportunities. Next generation workers must be prepared to participate in what is called the Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0 for short. Education must rise to the challenge of delivering the necessary skills for the future and move beyond the traditional subjects to include entrepreneurship, soft leadership, technology, and workforce readiness.

Under current trends, the workforce of tomorrow looks woefully unprepared for Industry 4.0.

Estimates<sup>1</sup> indicate that by 2030, there will be 1.5 billion school-age children in low- and middle-income countries. If current trends continue, well over half of them — 880 million children — will not be on track to acquire the most basic skills they need to succeed in the workforce.<sup>2</sup>

Countries with rapidly growing youth populations are most at risk of falling behind. More than two-thirds of children in low-income countries — many of them in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East — will not be on track to have the skills they need to succeed in the workplace of 2030. In lower-middle-income countries this figure is 60% and for upper-middle-income countries it is around 40%.

Unless dramatic reforms in delivery, innovation, inclusion, and financing take place to change the trends, these children will be left behind by the global economy. They are likely to be unemployed, stuck in poverty, not contributing fully to their economies and societies, and dependent on government assistance. The opportunity to become drivers of — or even participants in — Industry 4.0 will remain just a dream. The world's already staggering income divide will widen and inequality will grow.

This scorecard highlights the world's skills deficit so we can understand it and help address it. But the picture needs to become much clearer and we urgently need better data to inform our actions.<sup>3</sup> Large gaps in learning data persist globally, making it difficult to address the global skills gap and plan for the future.

However, this bleak future is not inevitable. We need to continue to strengthen the pre-primary and primary-level foundations of education, but we also need a reimagining of secondary education to meet the workforce demands of the future. The business community needs to be alarmed and inspired by the magnitude of the crisis to support and invest in public education systems so we can dramatically transform the skills landscape for the next generation.

Help end the global education crisis.  
Learn more at [gbc-education.org](https://gbc-education.org).

## 2030 Skills Scorecard

### Children on Track to Complete Secondary School & Learn Basic Skills by 2030









Based on current trends <sup>4</sup>

Region	Today	2030 Projection	School-Age Children in 2030
Sub-Saharan Africa	9%	17%	426 Million
Middle East and North Africa	36%	57%	102 Million
South Asia	26%	46%	404 Million
Latin America	37%	50%	102 Million
East Asia and the Pacific	30%	79%	325 Million

## South Asia Edition

### Children in South Asia on Track to Complete Secondary School & Learn Basic Skills by 2030

Based on current trends <sup>5</sup>

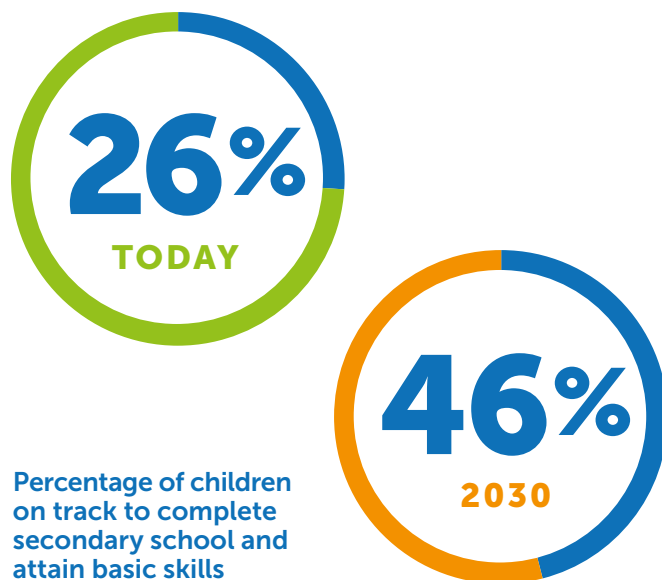
Country	Today	2030 Projection	School-Age Children in 2030
Afghanistan 	†	†	13.9 Million
Bangladesh 	26%	55%	37.8 Million
Bhutan 	47%	81%	0.2 Million
India 	19%	47%	309.6 Million
Maldives 	16%	46%	0.09 Million
Nepal 	13%	46%	7.1 Million
Pakistan 	18%	40%	64.3 Million
Sri Lanka 	61%	68%	3.8 Million

<sup>†</sup> Afghanistan is not included due to lack of recent learning assessment data at the secondary level. <sup>5</sup>

To learn more about how you can help end the global education crisis and take action to improve the skills of the next generation, visit [gbc-education.org](https://gbc-education.org).

## South Asia

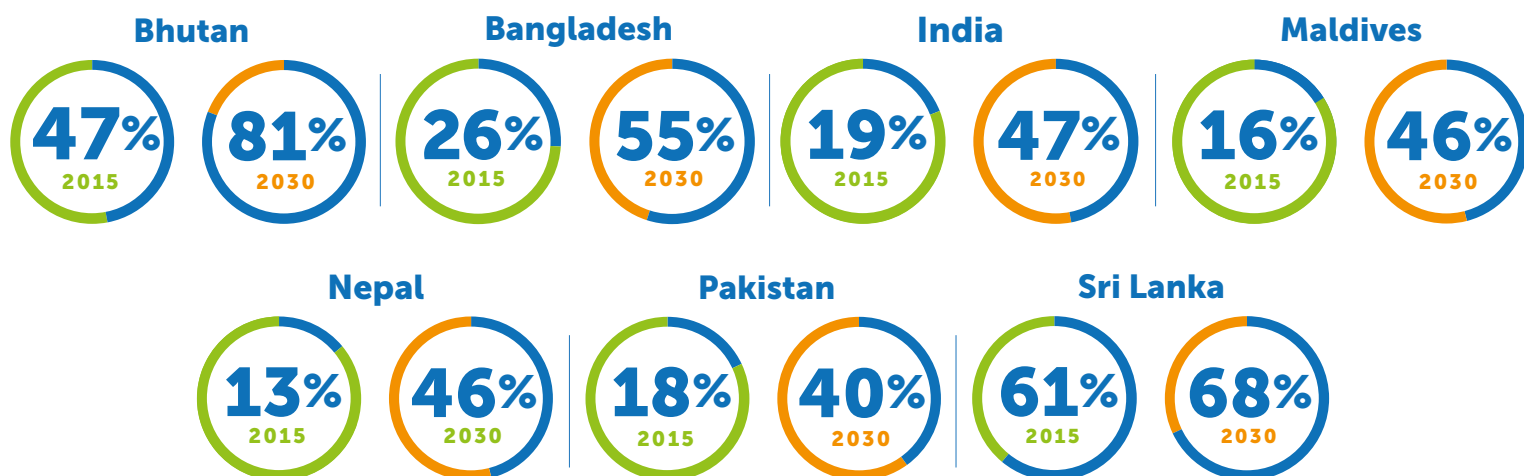
South Asia has experienced some of the fastest economic growth rates globally. If strong investments in skills development are made, the region is poised to maintain growth in the coming decades. Today, South Asia is home to the largest number of young people of any global region, with almost half of its population of 1.9 billion below the age of 24. Youth unemployment remains high (at 9.8% in 2018) because of changing labor market demands and over – or under – qualification of job candidates. In most South Asian countries, the projected proportion of children and youth completing secondary education and learning basic secondary skills is expected to more than double by 2030. Still, on current trends, fewer than half of the region’s projected 400 million primary and secondary school-age children in 2030 are estimated to be on track to complete secondary education and attain basic workforce skills.



### Children in South Asia on Track to Complete Secondary School & Learn Basic Skills by 2030

Based on current trends <sup>4</sup>

This South Asia edition of the 2030 Skills Scorecard shows workforce readiness projections for countries in the region. While all eight countries will likely see progress between today and 2030, the year we are meant to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, some countries will still have more than half of all secondary students entering the workforce unprepared with the basic skills they need.



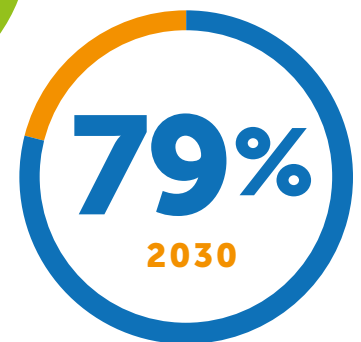
Afghanistan is not included due to lack of recent learning assessment data at the secondary level. <sup>5</sup>

## East Asia and the Pacific

The East Asia and the Pacific region is characterized by great diversity in terms of demographics and socio-economic progress, but common challenges related to technological change, employment landscape, and skills shortages are present throughout the region. Increasing numbers of employers are demanding highly skilled workers with transferable competencies like critical thinking, technical, socio-emotional and cross-cultural skills. Demographic trends, such as aging populations and increasing migration within and across countries, are further exacerbating skills shortages in some countries. On current trends, the proportion of children completing secondary education and attaining basic secondary skills will reach 79% before 2030. A majority of more populous low- and middle-income countries in the region, like Vietnam, Indonesia, and Philippines, will see strong improvement in skill levels between today and 2030.



Percentage of children on track to complete secondary school and attain basic skills



## Latin America

In order to overcome the middle-income trap in Latin American countries, there must be a greater focus on quality education and increasing the number of skilled workers. Other regions like East Asia and Europe have achieved sustained increases in income per capita by improving the stock and quality of skills and maintaining openness to innovation. Yet, many firms in Latin America report that they struggle to find employees with the right skills. Projections show that the number of children completing secondary school and learning basic workforce skills will improve in all Latin American countries in the next decade, but still only half of 102 million school-age youth in Latin America are estimated to be on track to achieve these skills by 2030.



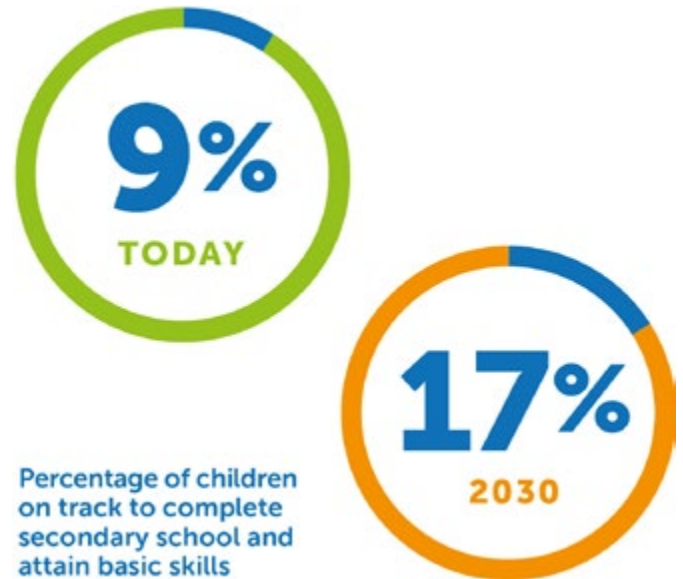
Percentage of children on track to complete secondary school and attain basic skills





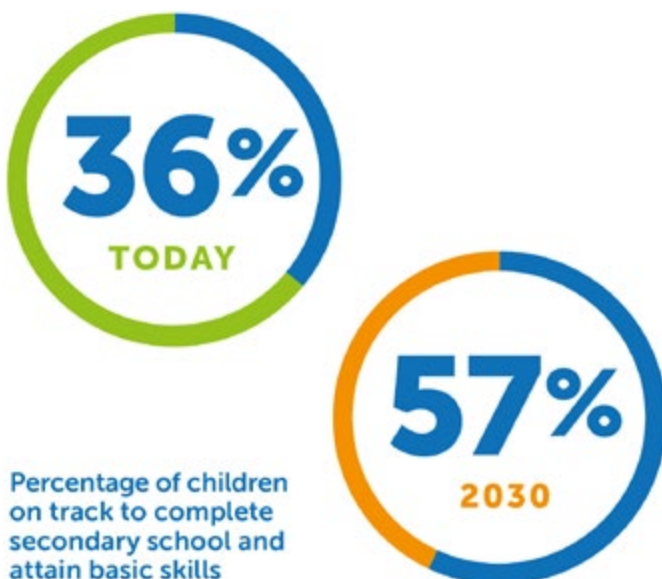
## Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is already the world's youngest region with three fifths of its population under 25, and its youth population is growing at a fast rate. In the coming decades, one third of global youth will be in Sub-Saharan Africa. This increase in working-age population could create a window of opportunity which boosts productivity and economic growth, but current employment and skills trends are worrying. Only 17% of young people are projected to complete secondary education with basic skills by 2030; this region will be home to the largest concentration of young people not prepared with the skills to productively participate in the workforce.



## Middle East and North Africa

The Middle East and North Africa region has the highest levels of youth unemployment of any global region. Fewer than 1 in 4 youth aged 15-24 is working, which is largely driven by female youth unemployment. The unemployment rate for young women exceeds that of young men by about 20 percent. By 2030, almost 60 percent of school-age children are projected to be on track to complete secondary and attain basic skills, and the secondary school-age population in the MENA region is expected to increase by a third. Projected learning levels by country are mixed, with strong progress in some countries, and stagnation in other countries – especially those countries affected by conflict and impacted by the refugee crisis.



## ABOUT

---

### Global Business Coalition for Education

The [Global Business Coalition for Education](#) is a movement of businesses committed to ending the global education crisis and unleashing the potential of the next generation.

Our mission is to ensure that every child has the best start in life, a safe place to learn, and skills for the future. Established as an initiative of the global children's charity Theirworld in 2012, the Global Business Coalition for Education is committed to bringing together the expertise and resources of the business community with the campaign for global education and Sustainable Development Goal 4.

We serve as the business community's social impact advisor, combining the expertise of education and business to develop customized programs and identify investments, partnerships, and opportunities that will have the greatest impact.

### The Education Commission

The [Education Commission](#) is a global initiative encouraging greater progress on Sustainable Development Goal 4 – ensuring inclusive and quality education and promoting lifelong learning for all. The Commission is helping to create a pathway for reform and increased investment in education by mobilizing strong evidence and analysis while engaging with world leaders, policymakers, and researchers.

The Commission was co-convened in 2015 by the Prime Minister of Norway, the Presidents of Malawi, Indonesia, and Chile, and the Director-General of UNESCO. The Commission is chaired by the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown and supported by 26 high-level Commissioners.

The members of the Commission include current and former heads of state and government, government ministers, five Nobel laureates, and leaders in the fields of education, business, economics, development, health, and security.



## ENDNOTES

---

1. These estimates were generated based on a 2019 update of the Education Commission's original 2016 projections model for the Learning Generation report, including most recent available data. A background paper on the Commission model can be found on the Commission's website.
2. Based on available global data, basic skills for the workplace is measured as a minimum level of secondary skills, using existing data and minimum benchmarks of "low" levels of achievement on learning assessments, including those measuring math and science, such as the TIMSS Grade 8 assessment and the PISA assessment or equivalent regional and national assessments.
3. We use existing historical data and advanced estimation methods to paint the most complete picture possible for regions. Over the coming year, the Global Business Coalition for Education and the Education Commission will release country-level skills data to show the divides, gaps and opportunities within regions and between countries.
4. Regional averages are weighted by population, rather than by country.
5. Most recent national learning assessment data used for each country as follows: BCSE 2015 for Bhutan, GCE O Levels 2016 for Sri Lanka, LASI 2015 for Bangladesh, NAT 2016 for Pakistan, NCERT 2017 for India, Nepali country assessment 2017 for Nepal, O Level Exam 2016 for Maldives. Current and projected data for Afghanistan are unavailable due to lack of recent learning assessment data at the secondary level.

## REFERENCES

---

- African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET). 2018. Future of Work in Africa: Implications for Secondary Education and TVET Systems. <https://mastercardfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Future-of-Work-and-Implications-for-Secondary-Education-and-TVET-FINAL.pdf>
- Asian Development Bank. 2015. Challenges and Opportunities for Skills Development in Asia: Changing supply, demand, and mismatches. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/176736/challenges-and-opportunities-skills-asia.pdf>
- OECD. 2018. Getting skills right: Chile. Paris: OECD Publ., 2018. <http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/adult-learning-work-in-social-partnership-2019.pdf>
- UNICEF. 2017. From Education to Employability: Preparing South Asian Youth for the World of Work. <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/1326/file>
- Weforum. 2018. The Future of Jobs Report 2018. [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Future\\_of\\_Jobs\\_2018.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2018.pdf)
- World Bank. 2017. Partnering for Skills Development in East Asia and the Pacific. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/brief/partnering-for-skills-development-in-east-asia-and-the-pacific>
- World Economic Forum. 2017. The future of jobs and skills in the Middle East and North Africa. [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_EGW\\_FOJ\\_MENA.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_EGW_FOJ_MENA.pdf)
- World Economic Forum. 2018. Latin America has the biggest skills gap in the world. Here's how to bridge it. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/03/latin-america-has-the-biggest-skills-gap-in-the-world-here-s-how-to-bridge-it>

