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HAYAKUM BRIEF

المجلس العالمي

THE WORLD MAJLIS

CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER



“Connecting Education and Opportunity
in the Fourth Industrial Revolution”

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WORLD EXPO AND GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS

The first World Majlis of Expo 2020 Dubai brought together a select group of thought leaders and informed people to discuss the potential of connecting education and opportunities in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It is the first of a series of conversations aimed at expanding our thinking to drive positive change.

Expo 2020 will bring together a global community so that collectively we can address some of society's most pressing challenges. Supporting this, the World Majlis series will connect informed minds that can explore emerging opportunities, learn, communicate and collaborate.



CONTEXT

We live in a constantly evolving and connected world where it is possible to share ideas and information at the click of a button. However, despite this, and at a time when society is facing significant global change, it is difficult for people to understand each other's motivations and actions. The fourth industrial revolution, which promises to further automate services and intellectual activities, is challenging how we learn, work and live.

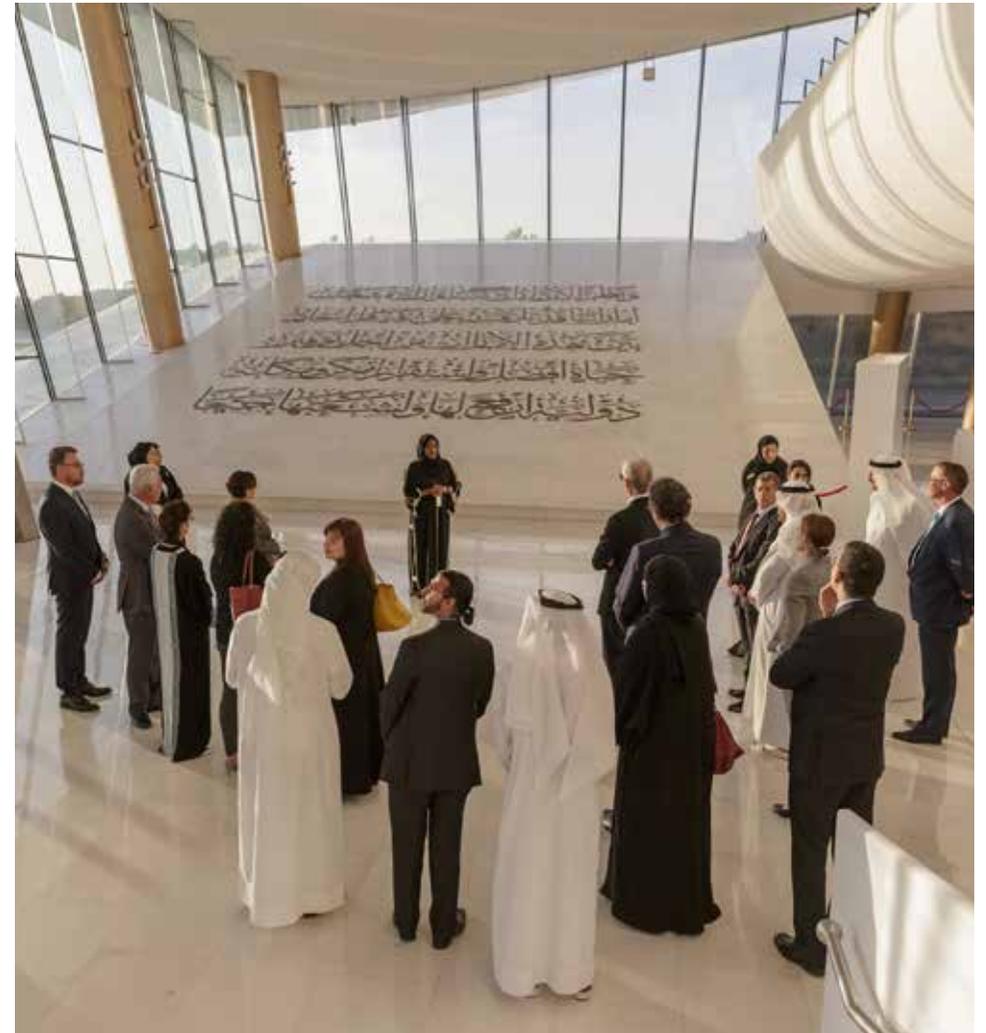
The traditional path from books to jobs, from degrees to careers, that brought us into the fourth industrial revolution may not sustain it and ensure that people can shape their future successfully and inclusively.

With different waves of technological development we have seen major changes in our societies and economies. The transitions between manual labour to machines, the advent of large-scale assembly-line manufacturing and, later, the shift from mechanical to digital production and distribution, have transformed jobs, educational systems and policies.

Today, however, many fear that the scale and speed of the changes taking place will impact society beyond current expectations and require us to rethink how we live and what we value.

Others consider that some of the shifts underway may benefit just some and that a technological and opportunity divide could increase inequality and widen gaps within society and between nations.

Understanding the connection between education and opportunity is probably one of the most interesting, complex and inspiring challenges we face today.

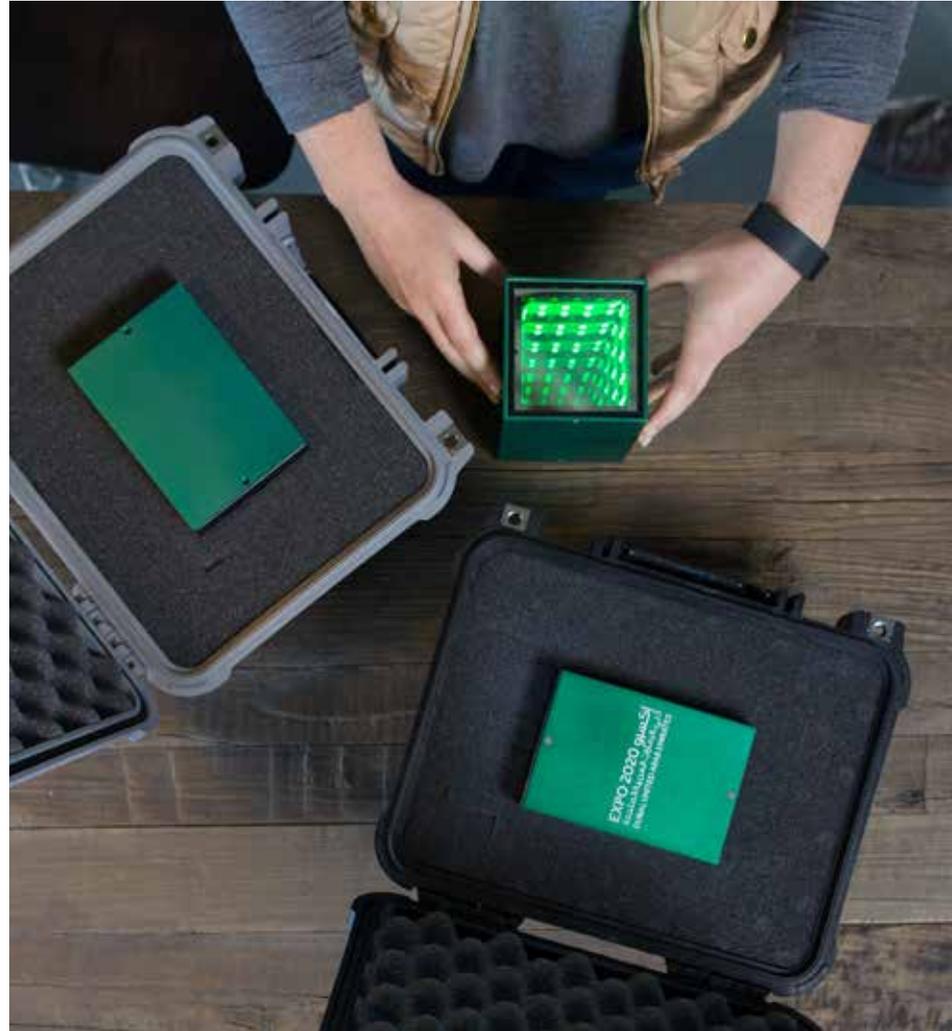


THE WORLD MAJLIS

The Expo 2020 initiated a series of conversations that matter around some of the most engaging questions that society is tackling today. The first of these was on *Connecting Education and Opportunity in the Fourth Industrial Revolution*.

We set out to explore three questions:

- What type of knowledge and skills will connect people to new opportunities in different contexts?
- How are technology and sustainability together affecting the future of education and jobs?
- How do we enable talent, skills and knowledge to move around the world flexibly?



The students who took part in the World Majlis also had their own questions.

They asked:

- How will change impact society and how should our education system respond to this?
- What major should I study to have the best opportunities in the future?
- How can we change the current fixed education system to take account of all the different ways students can learn these days?
- Grades are key to getting a job and some students can pass exams without having a true understanding of their subject. How can we stop worrying about grades and concentrate more on understanding?

This report reflects the conversations inspired by the questions above.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION?

During our conversation, many expressed the belief that the biggest global challenge is to create an education system fit for purpose in an ever more connected world.

They agreed that the three areas of focus should be

- **What to study:** “How do we teach people to think for themselves and become responsible leaders for humanity?”
- **Employment:** “How do we prepare the next generation for a world of increasing technological change?”
- **Inequality:** “How do we ensure that education creates opportunity when the divide between the rich and poor is growing?”

In addition, the discussion identified the following themes as important elements to address when helping the next generation prepare for the future.



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

How can we retain our culture and sense of humanity?

To educate derives from the Latin *educare*, meaning “I bring forth” and it was suggested that this idea of using emotion to inspire the pursuit of knowledge and, encouraging students to study the subjects they love, will foster both a passion for learning and a hunger for information. This will help the next generation best prepare for their future role in society: “The primary aim is to pick something that motivates you”.

Encouraging the development of the human spirit should be a fundamental part of education as it will not only help build better understanding between communities, and across generations, but will inspire future leaders and generate a sense of public responsibility.

Alongside technological skills, “going forward we need to educate our hearts”. Emphasis was placed on the need to ensure that art and culture are more formally integrated into learning to celebrate the success of human creativity and build empathy between communities. Indeed, increasing the opportunities for students to learn a wide range of subjects, across humanities, science and the arts, will, it was argued, help broaden their perspectives bringing them a more balanced, collaborative view of society and greater enjoyment of life.

LEARNING AND TECHNOLOGY

Technology is changing society and humanity – how do we make this a positive experience?

Technology, and especially digital technology, is having a profound effect on society and, although it brings with it many benefits, there are concerns about how to manage its development.

The solution is to ensure that we can equip students for roles that technology, including fast developing areas such as AI and cognitive computing, is unable to undertake. We must embrace the fact that many of the repetitive and time-consuming jobs can potentially be done by robots and algorithms. We should take advantage of the unpredictable opportunities and the skills that humans possess that robots do not have.

We must also work hard to reduce the growing concern that technology will take over jobs. Many believe this is the result of a general fear of the unknown. Key to overcoming this will be good governance around ethics and the development of AI. We have faced similar global technology shifts in the past and many have created more new jobs, careers and opportunities than they have replaced.

Example: In modern hospitals, robotics, AI and algorithms are changing how doctors, surgeons and radiologists do their work – enhanced but not replaced. Overall, however the role and structure of healthcare in caring for the sick remains a human activity just as it always has.

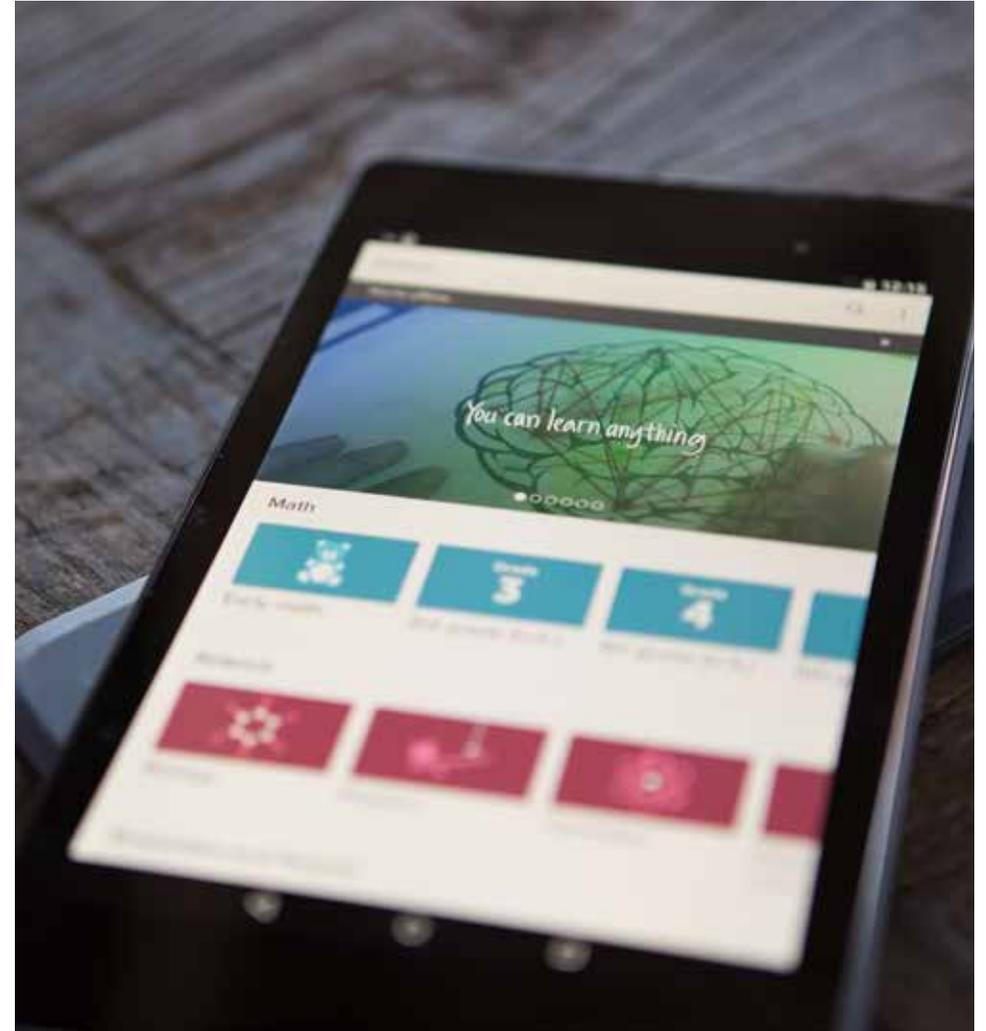
CHANGING DEMANDS ON THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

How can we provide an education system for the future not the past? How do we create a more flexible, holistic education system for the future?

Much of our current university education system is largely fixed and has not yet adapted to the changing ways in which people can learn. Although some pioneering institutions have adopted more flexible curricula and learning styles, many are still focused on traditional approaches that have been the same for decades. The growth of MOOCs, platforms such as Coursera, YouTube and other open learning initiatives are enabling access to education for millions. However, it is difficult for their achievements and academic ability to be assessed. With many students today focused just on their GPA, perhaps we need to develop and share new standards and ambitions for education not restricted to conventional norms. A more flexible approach that embraces multiple ways of learning, but maintains academic standards needs to be found. We need to create curricula that focus on values, beliefs and behaviours. To do this we may increasingly need to make changes to the current governance structures.

Alongside the ability to work with technologies, universities should also consider the need to teach new skills that can better prepare students for the 21st century. These include transferable softer skills such as collaboration, the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, between information and propaganda, and a deeper understanding of ethics.

Example: With its multi-disciplinary courses such as Politics, Philosophy, Economics and Politics, Psychology, Sociology, universities such as Oxford have led the way for many years. Now, we can see other institutions, at both tertiary and secondary level, embracing a more holistic view of education. Why should someone trained in law, be constrained to always being a lawyer?





EDUCATION AND WORK

Looking ahead we need to embrace life-long education models. How can we create new pathways to learning in the way we work?

The next generation must expect to take a more adaptable approach to the type of skills necessary for work, as it is likely they will experience a growing number of different jobs over their lifetime. They need to become ‘job creators’ more than just job seekers. Many agreed that to prepare for this, education must become not only increasingly personalised, but it should also be continuous and life-long enabling mature individuals to return to student life in order to build new knowledge and develop different skills.

While in the past we may have had five different jobs over a career, today for some it is an average of 17. In the future it may be more – or less. Given the wide variety of future jobs, many of which we have not yet identified, personalisation will be key – so students should

be able to choose a range of topics, from across the academic spectrum that are most relevant to them.

There was wide agreement of the need to recognise that people are all individuals - and therefore have different needs both intellectually and personally. The ability to share skills and knowledge to “create a networked mindset” will create a better world.

Example: At Emirates Airlines, every crew is a mix of multiple nationalities and cultures but they have to work together to deliver a seamless world-leading customer service. Within this, ensuring that learning supports increasing personalisation and individuality for everyone is a key focus.

ADDRESSING INEQUALITY

The over-emphasis on the value of intellectual property has let down the vulnerable. How can we find ways to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor?

We have experienced a period when the nature of the corporation has changed and there is an emphasis on excessive profit, particularly among technology companies. We need to create more mindful organisations, not factories that do not support their workers. We need more companies that are part of wider society. In addition we must focus on how business can help the poor, provide opportunities so that more ‘reverse innovation’ can take place and, importantly, offer hope for those who are at the bottom of the pyramid.

One suggestion was to look at some of the low-tech solutions available such as better health education. “Although the technology exists to drive personalised medicine, few people can afford it. There are important low-tech solutions to some of our big problems, these need to be explored.”

Example: Good jobs are not all dependent on having a good degree. In an aerospace factory, 75 percent of the jobs that have been created have been for those without a final qualification. They are making aircraft parts for some of the world’s leading airlines.





LOOKING AHEAD

Many believe that the Arab world has a significant role to play in shaping a better future. Not least because 70 percent of the population is under 30 – and from the first World Majlis, it is clear that this next generation is going to lead in a different way.

World Majlis guests acknowledged that society seems currently to be “drifting apart”. However, in many ways the UAE, with its multicultural community, is a regional, and potentially global, exception here. With support of the media it has an opportunity to share inspirational, positive stories with the world in order to paint a vision of a more positive future. We should share hearts and minds about a positive future.

It is clear “we live in abundance, living longer, healthier, wealthier lives with more food, more goods and services” and have vastly improved the lives of millions of people. There are new problems but we are confident, with the right skills we can create new solutions.

Looking ahead we need to help our young people feel responsible for the future, to take more control of their learning and have the skills to be able to shape it through building better innovative partnerships – including, for example, non-traditional partnerships such as the way that drones are now used in Rwanda to deliver blood to hospitals.

What is the one thing that we want everyone who attends Expo 2020 Dubai to leave with? This is a key question. We have the opportunity to not only build an ambitious vision and a talent magnet with Expo 2020 but also to celebrate the successes already being achieved around the world.

Taking the long view has never been easy but, as change accelerates in an increasingly connected world, it has never been more important. We believe that sharing knowledge across subjects and across continents can add real value, particularly as much-needed innovation often occurs at the intersection of different disciplines, industries or challenges.

QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- How can we best support the development of new skills that will reduce inequality and the digital divide?
- How can we encourage learning among those who do not want to engage?
- How can we use education to better engage the world around the challenges and power of sustainable action?
- How will the education system value and recognise emotional intelligence as much as grades?
- How can we help parents to let go of traditional learning structures and embrace a new paradigm so their children can be better prepared for an industry 4.0 world?
- As the world of work evolves, how can we effectively re-skill populations so they can more easily adapt and succeed in multiple careers during their lifetime?



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We thank all participants and students who joined us in the first steps of our journey to explore new thoughts about Connecting Education and Opportunity in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

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