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**Dr. Chandra Shekhar Singh**  
University Department of  
Commerce & Business  
Administration, T.M.B.U.,  
Bhagalpur, Bihar

## Educated institution and skill development program post COVID-19

**Dr. Chandra Shekhar Singh**

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### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic is the most significant health crisis that the world has faced in the past 100 years. It has disrupted our way of living with unprecedented consequences for our daily lives, including how we work and learn. According to estimates from the International Labour Organization (ILO), 14 per cent of working hours were lost globally in the second quarter of 2020 when compared to the last quarter of 2019 (ILO 2020a). The situation jeopardizes the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goal 8: "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all," and its target 8.5, which calls for the achievement, by 2030, of full and productive employment and decent work for all. Education in India needs to improve by leaps and bounds, especially in remote corners and rural areas. There is a need to upgrade teaching methodologies, plug the shortage of teachers, improve the student-teacher ratio, and enhance knowledge resources. E-learning is going to be the face of future education in the country. Currently, both the learner and the academia are embracing e-learning methodology more as a temporary solution for Covid-19 times, but the need is to take e-learning forward and add it as a long-term framework to existing learning models. With the internet becoming affordable and more accessible, we will have a greater convergence of digital and traditional teaching-learning mediums.

This report is based on the findings of an interagency survey on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development in the time of COVID-19. The online survey, which was targeted at TVET providers, policymakers and social partners, was implemented by the ILO in collaboration with the UNESCO and the World Bank over the period from 05 April to 15 May 2020.

**Keywords:** ILO (international labour organization), COVID-19, SDGS (sustainable development goals), E-learning, TVET (technical and vocational education and training), situation jeopardizes, methodology

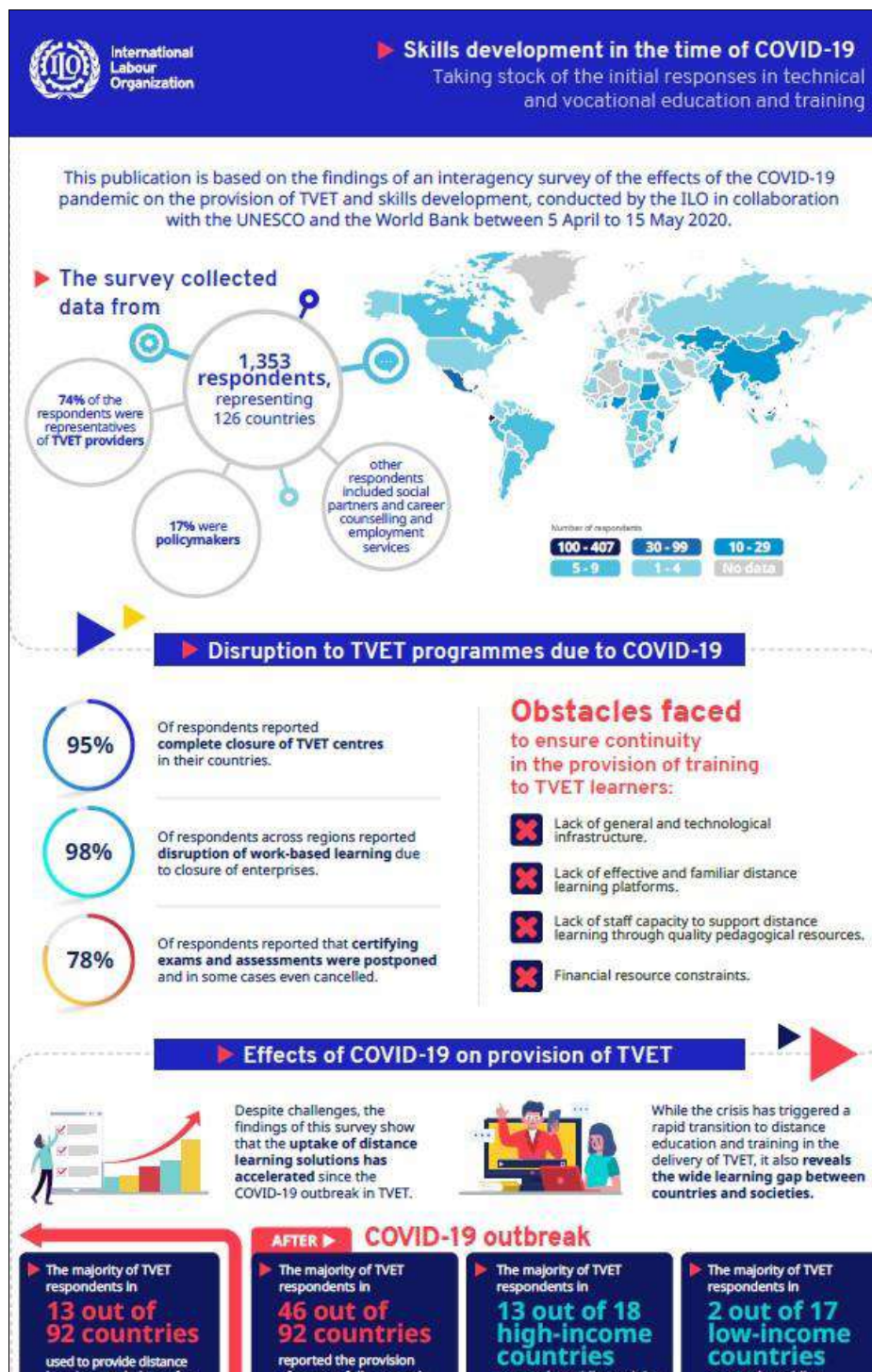
### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is the most significant health crisis that the world has faced in the past 100 years. It has disrupted our way of living with unprecedented consequences for our daily lives, including how we work and learn. According to estimates from the International Labour Organization (ILO), 14 per cent of working hours were lost globally in the second quarter of 2020 when compared to the last quarter of 2019 (ILO 2020a). This loss is equivalent to 480 million full-time jobs,<sup>1</sup> an indication of a massive disruption to labour markets around the world (ibid). The situation jeopardizes the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goal 8: "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all," and its target 8.5, which calls for the achievement, by 2030, of "full and productive employment and decent work for all."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there is an important change in the work modality, as roughly one third of the world's workers live in countries where workplaces were required to close (with the exception of those for essential workers), and another 42 per cent of workers were in countries with partial workplace closures (ILO 2020a). In order to keep businesses running, a large number of workers were required, where possible, to radically adapt their everyday approach to work. Teleworking (when the nature of the job allowed) became one of the most widespread adaptations. Major disruptions were faced in the education sector, setting back progress in the achievement of Goal 4 of the SDGs, to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

**Corresponding Author:**  
**Dr. Chandra Shekhar Singh**  
University Department of  
Commerce & Business  
Administration, T.M.B.U.,  
Bhagalpur, Bihar

At the peak of the crisis, in late March 2020, close to 1.6 billion students worldwide were affected by school closures (World Bank 2020). Education and training institutions struggled to achieve a timely compliance with physical distancing measures in order to contain the spread of the pandemic and to switch from face-to-face training to distance learning. In the light of the crisis, the partner agencies the ILO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank (WB) launched an interagency survey on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Under normal circumstances, TVET programmes typically involve school-based training, a combination of classroom and workplace-based training, or wholly on-the-job learning. Given the severe disruption, it was of crucial importance to identify

adequate, quick, practical and innovative solutions to respond to this crisis. The aim of the survey was to understand the challenges faced by TVET institutions during this crisis and to identify emerging innovations implemented in different contexts, in order to facilitate the sharing of information among TVET providers, policymakers and social partners. The survey collected information on policies, training measures, the challenges faced, and the resources developed. This information can help countries to address the impacts of current and future crises in their delivery of TVET, to manage the learning and training process more effectively and to ensure that quality training continues to be provided to students and trainees. Lessons will also be useful for the post-crisis period, to strengthen the resilience and responsiveness of TVET systems and to inform broader reform efforts.





### Disruption in the delivery of apprenticeships and other practical skills training

TVET faces a particular challenge in ensuring the continuity of practical skills training measures during the COVID-19 crisis. In most TVET programmes, practical training is a critical dimension and one that is not easily deliverable through remote modalities for many occupations. In addition to the practical training modules provided in workshops and laboratories, TVET programmes often include a work-based learning component wherein trainees participate in practical training at the workplace in the form of apprenticeships and internships. The delivery of work-based learning, including apprenticeships, has faced serious disruption from the lockdowns imposed on enterprises. In many countries the COVID-19 crisis led to the closure of enterprises. Based on results derived from the Global Survey on the impact of COVID-19 on the training of employees, apprentices and interns in enterprises, over three fourths of the respondents representing enterprises reported either a partial or a total closure of their premises (ILO forthcoming). While this led many countries to enter an economic slowdown, it also resulted in the suspension of practical training activities in the form of apprenticeships and work-based learning. 10 A TVET provider from Australia reported the lack of any coordinated response to the challenge of incorporating work-based learning in distance learning at the time of the survey, a reality that is likely to be faced by many other countries. The sudden onset of the crisis gave little time to develop contingency measures to ensure the continuity of work-based training. TVET providers, representatives of ministries of education and other respondents from countries in various parts of the world such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Uganda and Ukraine reported the complete suspension of work-based learning activities with no clear plan for restarting activities, while the learners had only covered a portion of the planned programme. Respondents from the Congo (TVET providers) and Côte d’Ivoire (Ministry of Education) reported that the disruption has severely delayed practical training modules and their assessment. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, respondents (TVET providers and the representative of an employer’s organization) reported that they were waiting for the resumption of business activities in order to continue training.

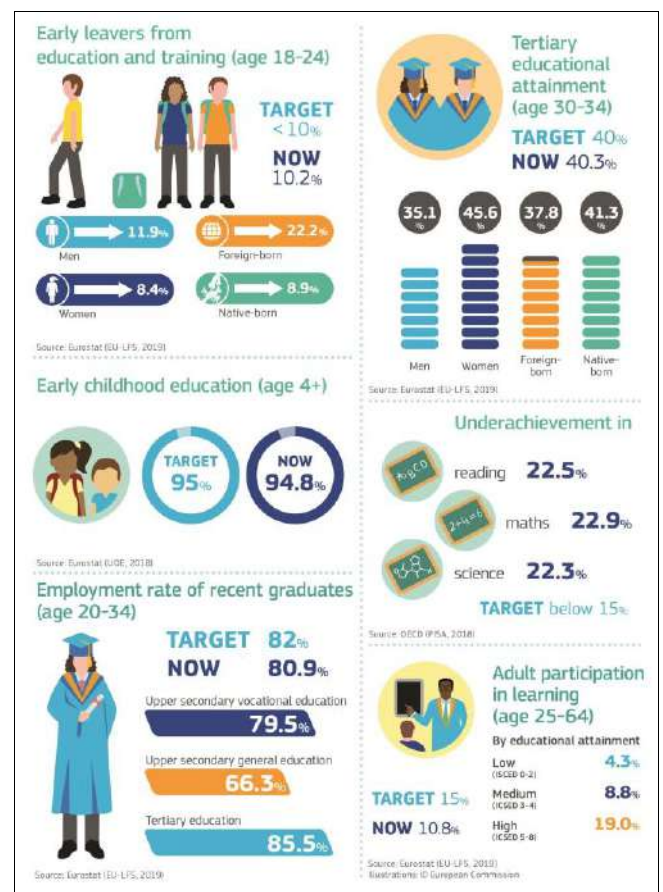
### Facilitating learning and skill acquisition for youth during the pandemic

Since 11 March 2020 when the World Health Organisation declared the COVID-19 pandemic, AU Member States have taken steps to suppress and control the spread of the Coronavirus in Africa, including closing of schools, universities and training institutions. While closing education institutions are important in mitigating the spread of COVID-19, prolonged closures negatively impact all students and disproportionately affect the deprived and vulnerable youth. This situation therefore calls for creating opportunities for learning from home for millions of young people whose education have been affected. The Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology (STC-EST 3) held its Virtual Extraordinary session on 30 April 2020 to address pressing challenges that have been created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the key recommendations of Ministers was the prioritization of the following areas to mitigating

the impact of COVID-19 on the Education Sector.

Take advantage of the opportunity for online teaching and learning to ensure continuity of education on the continent; improvement of education systems and robust e-learning infrastructure; ensuring quality and integrating lessons learnt and good practices from COVID-19 response as espoused by the DOTSS\* approach; and conceiving a model roadmap for post COVID-19 which integrates continuity of education in the different regional and national responses.

- Plan for re-opening schools with appropriate strategies to catch-up on lost period of learning by identifying time periods for catching-up on work and implement back to school campaigns and measures to curb further infections in educational institutions including schools, universities and colleges. To this end, Ministries of Education should work closely with ministries of finance to safeguard the education sector funding including establishing a Contingency Fund for Education in emergencies.



Document the impact of school closures on children, girls, disabled persons and vulnerable populations, including those living in vulnerable conditions such as refugees, migrants, IDPs and asylum seekers. Member states should also document good practices, and monitor learning engagement with support from local and international partners, and with the view of sharing information with AUC to facilitate inter-country learning and up scaling of good practices. In implementing the decisions of the Ministers, the African Union Commission is embarking on the Continue Learning Initiative as part of the Youth Sector Response to COVID-19, which focuses on four key elements—each with several activities carried out since the onset of the pandemic.

This pandemic has made all the educational schools across

the world to adopt teaching online. Courses are conducted online, examinations are conducted online, assignments are submitted through email. For countries like India, this is a good opportunity to strengthen the internet connectivity across rural India. Every village and towns in India should be digitally connected for better interaction between the students and teachers. Institutes like IITs have “a sort” of infrastructure to connect students but the experience shows that not all students had good interaction due to various reasons. Some of the students are quick to adapt to this system and some take little longer time to acquaint with this system. India should establish a good infrastructure for online education like some of the advanced countries. The greatest advantage of such a system is education can become international. Advance institutes like IITs and NITs can globalize online educat while Universities, initially, nationalize online education.

The strength lies in the faculty and institute nurture. Faculty need to change their mundane teaching methods and adapt to evolving technology-centred teaching. The faculty should establish themselves as “competent” individuals who can deliver what the students expect. To establish faulty should be active in research and research publications and gain experience /skills in online teaching. In a way, the learning institutes become virtual institutes. Every student’s home becomes his institute. This will reduce the demand for the infrastructure of the institute. However, research labs should function as usual to support research. Research collaboration can go online and can be internationalized.

Online education does not mean without laboratory experience to students. Skill development needs laboratories/workshops. There could be centers across the countries to support skill development activities. These centers could be institutes, colleges, universities. On the research front: it is all collaboration and not competition. Projects needs to be designed through collaboration so that laboratory/research facilities could be shared. This will lead to strong centers of research laboratories on the scale of a region—for example, there could be a strong collaboration within the SE Asia region. There is none till now.

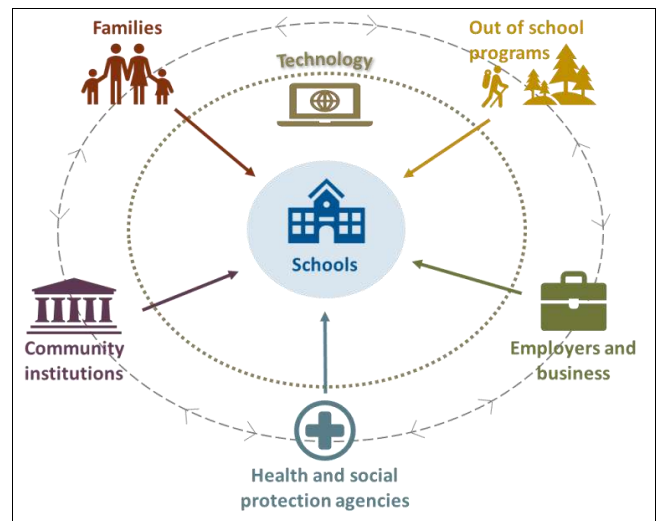
Post Covid-19 is an opportunity to transform the higher education system. Institutes/ universities should utilize this opportunity to transform itself. Curriculum design, collaborations, skill development and faculty involvement—all should focus on internationalizing higher education. Today it is Covid-19...we don’t know what lies ahead in future for the million youngsters.

“.....finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the top 100 universities in the country will be able to start online courses via radio and television for students who don’t have constant access to the internet amid the coronavirus lockdown. “Online education is being taken up in a big way. Another 12 channels will be added. It will be a great help to students in rural areas. Children love technology and adapt quickly. Top 100 universities will be allowed to start online courses by May 30,” she said.

Experienced teachers can now get affiliated with universities/institutes to offer an online course that fits into the curriculum. I said previously, the curriculum also needs to undergo drastic change to accommodate the course with losing the standard and content. Skill development is a part of this modified curriculum.

This is the right time to strengthen online education to be prepared for any future pandemic situations. The entire

education system has to undergo changes with the active involvement of faculty. Institute like IITs and IISc should now go global and be part of the international education system. The strength of this system lies in the faculty that an institute nurtures. Faculty need to change their mundane teaching methods and adopt to evolving technology-centred teaching. The faculty should establish themselves as “competent” individuals who can deliver what the students expect. To establish faulty should be active in research and research publications and gain experience /skills in online teaching. In a way, the learning institutes become virtual institutes. Every student’s home becomes his institute.



According to Dr Francisco, Adviser, Qatar Foundation, India, true international engagement comes with curriculum integration and active participation by the faculty. Faculty need to be motivated and actively involved in curriculum integration. The greatest advantage of CI is that students can choose the course of his choice while fulfilling the academic credit requirement where he is registered. Student migration will be curtailed because without spending a substantial amount, the student can get international credits and he/she can sell herself in the job market.

If the institutes cannot do it now then these institutes will die in future because no student will register for any programme in such institutes. The head of the institutes play a key role in this transformation. They can not sit back and go back to the old style of education post Covid 19. This will reduce the demand for the infrastructure of the institute. However, research labs should function as usual to support research. Research collaboration can go online and can be internationalized.

The current lockdown period is an excellent opportunity for online transformation. IITs should lead the role and guide the other 100 universities. Govt. has come-out with connectivity to rural areas. This could be strengthened in future with good internet connectivity.

Future institutes/universities will be virtual and only research activities will be carried out through international collaboration. Here it is important to establish “truest” amongst faculty. The amount saved on infrastructure (hostels, mess, water and electricity bills etc.) can be diverted to strengthen research laboratories. Research collaboration will replace research competition. Institutes can accommodate a large number of students and quality education can be given to all the students....whether within the country or abroad.



**Three skilling trends are likely to speed up after the crisis ends**

**New skills for the ‘distance economy’**

The crisis has accelerated the levels of digitization to help reduce avoidable physical interactions. This has meant finding ways to reinvent work and, in some cases, a partial disruption of jobs and changes in the way workers perform them.

For example, the UK healthcare system has seen years of digital evolution take place within weeks. In 2019, less than 1 percent of appointments took place via video link, with the vast majority in person.

**Imbalances in talent supply and demand**

COVID-19 has changed not only how people work but also how they shop and eat, as well as basic patterns of movement and travel. In this way, the pandemic is setting up what could be lasting employment-landscape shifts that could require the large-scale reskilling of new workers. For example, the pandemic has accelerated the trend toward e-commerce rather than brick-and-mortar sales.

**Changes to supply chains**

With sourcing and production moving closer to end users, the crisis could trigger a restructuring of supply chains. As companies localize or regionalize them, that will shift which skills are needed and where.

**Six steps to reskilling**

To make sure that organizations thrive after the crisis, leaders and their teams can take six steps to build workforce skills now. The first three will help define your strategy and the last three will help you execute it.

**1. Rapidly identify the skills your recovery business model depends on**

As companies decide on strategies that will shore up the future of the business, they need to map out which skill pools will disproportionately affect it and drive it forward. To do this, they should quickly identify crucial value drivers and employee groups.

**2. Build employee skills critical to your new business model**

Start up skilling the critical workforce pools that will drive a disproportionate amount of value in your adjusted business model. The first step is to build a no-regrets skill set—a tool kit that will be useful no matter how an employee’s specific role may evolve. Focus your investments on four kinds of skills: digital, higher cognitive, social and emotional, and adaptability and resilience (Exhibit 1). The skill building in these four areas should be predominately digital and self-paced but not tailored to the individual in most cases.

**Build a skill set that will help employees in key parts of your business respond well to changes.**

	<b>Expand the ability to operate in a fully digital environment</b>	Build technical awareness and skills so employees can fully operate in a remote world and be productive within the company’s ecosystem (clients, partners, suppliers, public authorities). If moving to a more tech- and data-enabled model, a basic understanding of critical tech and data concepts and processes will be essential, including data visualization, applied machine learning, and advanced analytics. In commercial service industries, such as banking, companies are likely to widen the scope of those who receive digital upskilling.
	<b>Develop cognitive skills to ensure that critical players can respond to the need for redesign and innovation</b>	Critical thinking and sound project management are needed in an atmosphere of increased autonomy brought on by remote work. Problem solving, creativity, and innovation are required to take on the challenges of a rapidly changing environment and business model. For example, in order to relocate production strategically, companies will have to rethink critical components of their supply chains, including sourcing and logistics, which will typically require enhanced creativity, innovation, problem solving, and project-management skills.
	<b>Strengthen social and emotional skills to ensure effective collaboration</b>	Advanced interpersonal skills are needed to ensure that professional ties are kept strong despite distance. These skills will also be crucial for leaders trying to drive change and support their employees remotely.
	<b>Build adaptability and resilience skills to thrive during an evolving business situation</b>	Support critical employees to build their self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-reliance so they can use new experiences as a source of learning. In addition, help them develop their personal tool kits to manage time, boundaries, and mental wellness to reinforce resilience.

**McKinsey & Company**

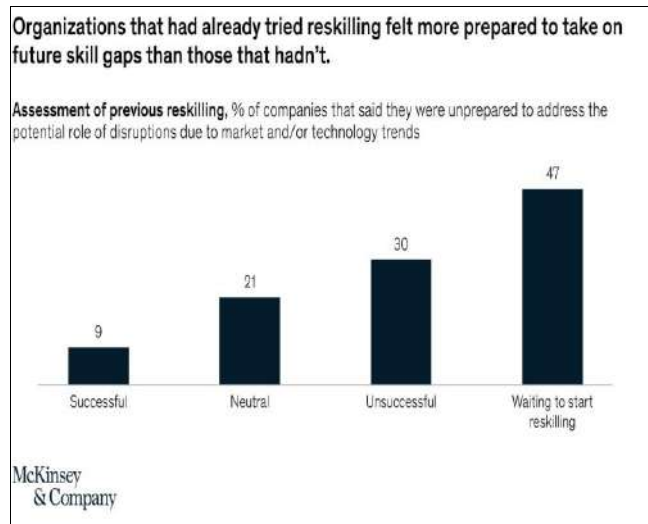
**3. Launch tailored learning journeys to close critical skill gaps**

As companies prepare to reimagine and ramp up their business models, it is important to go deeper on strategic

workforce planning. Leaders need a detailed view not only of the core activities that critical groups will begin undertaking in the next 12 to 18 months but also of which skills each of these groups will need.

#### 4. Start now, test rapidly, and iterate

In a survey, we found that most companies that had launched successful reskilling programs said they were better able to address skill gaps caused by technological disruptions or to implement new business models or strategies. And companies that viewed their reskilling programs as unsuccessful were still glad they had gone through the process, with a majority saying they were prepared to take on future skill gaps. The lesson here is that simply getting started on reskilling programs makes organizations better prepared for potential future role disruption—and is preferable to waiting (Exhibit 2).



#### 5. Act like a small company to have a big impact

The reskilling programs at small organizations (fewer than 1,000 employees) are often more successful than those at large ones, the global survey showed. This may surprise some, since larger companies generally have access to more resources.

But smaller companies are often more successful at following agile principles—making bold moves more quickly because they don't have to shift around large groups of people to try something new. They also may be more willing to fail, because they have fewer layers of approval to go through.

At the same time, smaller companies tend to have a clearer view of their skill deficiencies, so they're better at prioritizing the gaps they need to address and at selecting the right candidates for reskilling. That's not to say larger organizations can't be agile when it comes to reskilling, just that it can be harder for them.

#### 6. Protect learning budgets (or regret it later)

Companies should not cut their employee-training budgets. According to the Training Industry Report, US data during and after the Great Recession showed a significant drop in overall training expenditures in 2009 and 2010, followed by a surge in 2011 and a drop back to 2008 levels in 2012. What this tells us is that if companies cut their learning budgets now, they're only delaying their investment, not netting a saving—especially since the current crisis will require a larger skill shift than the 2008 financial crisis did. Use your training budget to make skill building a key strategic lever for adapting to the next normal. Don't waste two to three years and forego the efficiency and resilience

you could develop now. What you can and should do is focus on the resilience of your learning ecosystem: make it both more digital (including in-sync digital components to replace in-person ones) and more accessible to your employees. Finally, leverage the ready-made learning journeys and objects of external partners. We know from past crises that companies must act quickly to build up critical workforce capabilities. The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated a trend in workplace dynamics that was already underway through automation and AI, shifting marketplaces, and changing workplace roles. To respond, leaders should pursue a broad reskilling agenda that develops employees' digital expertise and their cognitive, emotional, and adaptability skills. Companies can't be resilient if their workforces aren't. Building your reskilling muscle now is the first step to ensuring that your organization's recovery business model is a success.

#### Conclusion

As presented in this Communication, the success of the European Education Area shall hinge on the legacy of cooperation, a renewed commitment to pursue common objectives, and a robust framework to make it happen and become a reality by 2025. The Commission invites the Council to endorse the six dimensions underpinning the European Education Area, its means and milestones, and its proposed enabling framework until 2025. The European Education Area provides a perspective for the future of education and training in the European Union. It identifies key issues and sets out ways forward in line with the principle of subsidiarity and in full respect of Member States' competences for education and training at national, regional and local level. Education and training will be a key driving force for achieving a recovery geared on the Green and Digital transitions. Furthermore, work on the European Education Area will help contribute to the geopolitical positioning of the EU and its Member States. The Commission is fully committed to achieving the European Education Area by 2025 and calls upon the other European institutions, Member States, the education and training community and all those for whom education matters, to join forces and rejuvenate together the power of education to shape a sustainable and generous world.

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