

5 paradigm shifts to revolutionize lifelong learning



How should **lifelong learning be transformed**? What role does **lifelong learning** play in current and future labor markets?

In his keynote address at the opening of the [International Conference on Educational Innovation \(CIEI\)](#), [Michael Fung](#), Director of [Tec de Monterrey's Institute for the Future of Education](#), shared **5 paradigm shifts** to revolutionize the education of the future.

Fung considers that these **shifts** will give people the opportunity to update their skills to take on new challenges in their professional lives.

*“Certain **capacities and skills** of our workforce are becoming obsolete and need to be renewed for people to continue to be employable and for companies to be competitive,”* he said.

He added that nowadays people must be prepared to go through **many different phases of life** and **acquire experience of different kinds of jobs** and career paths.



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The 5 paradigm shifts to revolutionize lifelong learning

The director put forward **5 paradigm shifts** required to transform lifelong learning in the future and the way in which people will acquire and strengthen the skills they need for the labor market.

1. Rethink academic tracks

Fung points out that a great deal of global education is structured around **academic and vocational tracks** that are limited and need to be widened and turned into broad avenues of learning.

"We should change these limited tracks to multiple modular tracks to be able to serve different students from different backgrounds," he said.

2. Encourage lifelong learning

The director said that the current educational model has to evolve to promote lifelong learning.

*"In our current educational system, **we invest a lot in the first 4 to 16 years of schooling**; thereafter, the investment varies greatly from country to country.*

*“We need to reflect a little on how **to change our educational model** to one more focused on lifelong learning. Lifelong learning could and should become a public good,”* he added.



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3. Transfer classroom learning into the real world

According to the director, predominantly classroom-based learning should be replaced by a **combined leaning** approach through which students can get to know the labor market.

*“If we want to develop **labor-relevant skills**, we should bring the workplace into the classroom. This could be done with challenge-based, cooperative education programs like the one we offer in the Tec21 Model,”* said Fung.

4. Greater emphasis on cross-cutting adaptive skills

Fung said that another urgent paradigm shift is to take the emphasis that is currently on technical skills and place it on **cross-cutting adaptive skills**.

*“As our world becomes increasingly complex, people need to find ways of coming to terms with change, innovating, and thinking critically. They will have to **find solutions to problems** that are inconceivable today.*

*“Skills and technical knowledge quickly become **obsolete**. Our courses should include a set of skills that help people adapt”, insisted Fung.*

5. Greater collaboration between public and private sectors

The IFE director underscored the relevance of moving on from education provided by the **public sector** to education involving a **partnership** with the **private sector** so as to offer everyone a learning opportunity.

*“It’s difficult for the government to demonstrate that the whole system is too costly; it is also too slow because **it cannot respond quickly enough** to meet the needs of people and companies.*

*“**The private sector must become much more involved** when we are contemplating an educational and **lifelong learning system**. We need to come up with ways of making the private sector a very important part of this system,” he added.*



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Sharing the vision of global leaders on lifelong learning

During his talk, Fung cited the ideas of several leaders and thinkers who recognize the need to provide opportunities for **lifelong learning** so that the population is able to cope with different kinds of challenges in labor markets.

Lifelong learning may be understood as a type of **education aimed at self-learning** and based on **personal development** that recognizes this **need to continue learning over the long term** through a variety of approaches.

*“There are a number of areas we focus on when think about **transforming higher education.**”*

He quoted **Tharman Shanmugaratnam**, a government minister in Singapore who said at the [Global Lifelong Learning Summit 2022](#) that we need ways of providing optimal, relevant, and high-quality learning opportunities for the work force.

Fung also discussed the viewpoint of **El Iza Mohamedou**, the [leader of the OECD Centre for Skills](#), concerning the acquisition of skills that may be used both in everyday life and at work, and coordinating all parties involved in the labor market.

Moreover, he recalled that **Michael Crow**, the president of [Arizona State University](#), had called for a new generation of universities that make an impact on a social level and promote the transformation of the future of work through innovation.

He further agreed with **Sanjay Sarma**, a professor at [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) and author of a book proposing new affordable academic institutions, redesigning syllabuses, and visualizing a university degree as a set of micro-credentials.

In the area of in-service training in a diverse, increasingly automated work environment, he cited the author **Michelle Weise**, who proposes that universities should offer a “buffet” of learning opportunities focusing on specific skills.

Fung reflected on the need for rapid adaptation and response both from people and organizations to deal with ever increasing obsolescence; he cited the thinker **Gary Bolles** on the subject of more flexible, innovative learning systems.



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International Conference on Educational Innovation (CIIE)

The **9th International Conference on Educational Innovation (CIIE)**, organized by Tec de Monterrey's Institute for the Future of Education, is a space for sharing **trends** and **practices** that are revolutionizing the world of education.

*"CIIE is an invaluable opportunity to reflect on the value of **educational innovation** in the **development of nations**,"* said José Escamilla, Associate Director of Tec de Monterrey's Institute for the Future of Education and chairman of the organizing committee.

Since 2006, it has helped innovative people to improve education, making an impact on about 2 million people in **40 countries**.

CIIE 2023 will offer keynote speeches and panels, special events, presentations, networking sessions, sponsored events, and other events for teachers, academics, graduates, and the general public.

This event will be held from **January 16 to 18** on the Tec's **Monterrey campus**.

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