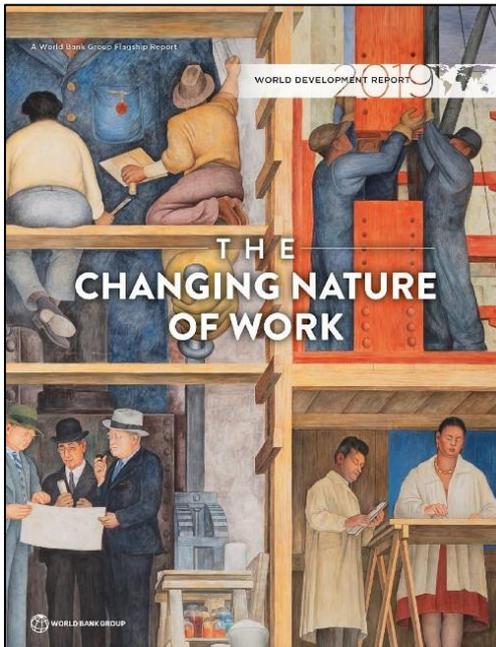


## World Development Report 2019: The Changing Nature of Work



The [World Development Report \(WDR\) 2019: The Changing Nature of Work](#) studies how the nature of work is changing as a result of advances in technology today. Fears that robots will take away jobs from people have dominated the discussion over the future of work, but the World Development Report 2019 finds that on balance this appears to be unfounded. Work is constantly reshaped by technological progress.

Firms adopt new ways of production, markets expand, and societies evolve. Overall, technology brings opportunity, paving the way to create new jobs, increase productivity, and deliver effective public services. Firms can grow rapidly thanks to digital transformation, expanding their boundaries and reshaping traditional production patterns.

The rise of the digital platform firm means that technological effects reach more people faster than ever before. Technology is changing the skills that employers seek. Workers need to be better at complex problem-solving, teamwork and adaptability. Digital technology is also changing how people work and the terms on which they work. Even in advanced economies, short-term work, often found through online platforms, is posing similar challenges to those faced by the world's informal workers.

The Report analyses these changes and considers how governments can best respond. Investing in human capital must be a priority for governments in order for workers to build the skills in demand in the labour market. In addition, governments need to enhance social protection and extend it to all people in society, irrespective of the terms on which they work. To fund these investments in human capital and social protection, the Report offers some suggestions as to how governments can mobilise additional revenues by increasing the tax base.

Education International offered a critique of the inherent assumptions in the WDR 2019. In an [open letter](#) to Jim Yong Kim, Director of the World Bank, General Secretary of Education International (EI), David Edwards, raised concerns about the policy views and values contained in this report. Edwards criticised the “*narrow understanding of the role of education in society*” and the Bank’s “*one-dimensional view related almost exclusively to the needs of the economy – one that can be reduced to limited learning outcomes and misguided measurement and assessment schemes*”. Further, the Bank also seems to continue to under-estimate the importance of teaching as a profession, ignoring the voice of educators as expressed through their organisations. This stands in the way of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), while welcoming the WDR 2019 and its recognition of the value of early childhood education, noted the WDR “*lacks a substantive discussion of the concept of*



**In its review of the WDR 2019, Education International criticised the Report's narrow understanding of the role of education in society, related almost exclusively to the needs of the economy and one that can be reduced to limited learning outcomes.**

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**The ILO highlighted the lack of a substantive discussion of the concept of lifelong learning and recommended the need to adapt and strengthen lifelong learning policies.**

Second, we need to adopt a rights-based approach to lifelong learning that gives everyone the possibility of training at any point of their working life. Third, rethinking lifelong learning requires a whole-of-government approach to coordinate a number of policy actions: the implementation of labour market measures to support workers during their job transitions; strengthening relevant support systems (e.g. career guidance and childcare during training to enable parents to invest in their skills); targeting workers in SMEs and low skilled workers who are traditionally under-represented in training; and ensuring tripartite social dialogue and involvement of social partners in national, sectoral and local governance arrangements to make sure that policies are fair and are implemented. Unless we take these steps, rapid technological change stands to exacerbate inequality.”

This write-up draws from information available on the [World Bank website](#) and the website of [Education International](#) and the [International Labour Organisation](#).

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*lifelong learning and does not sufficiently address its importance and the urgency to change the current model. The report is also silent on the financing of lifelong learning and on the use of financial incentives to encourage the participation of individuals and employers in post-compulsory education and training.”*

The ILO offered powerful recommendations on lifelong learning and work - “We therefore need to adapt and strengthen our lifelong learning policies. First of all, we urgently need to expand public funding to cover continuing training of the adult workforce. But government can’t do this alone. We also need incentives for employers to co-fund training.



**The ILO further recommended the need to adopt a rights-based approach to lifelong learning that gives everyone the possibility of training at any point of their working life and the need to rethink lifelong learning as part of a government approach to coordinate policy actions.**