

Key Insights on “What will it take to equip students to shape a better future?”

Reshaping Education Steering Group

May 2026

The **Reshaping Education Steering Group** was formed at the [Global Forum](#) organised by the Global Institute for Shaping a Better Future in April 2025 to enable shared learning and collaboration among peers in the global education ecosystem to advance the agenda for reshaping education in order to equip students to shape a better future for everyone. The Group agreed to explore the guiding question—“**What will it take to equip students to shape a better future?**”

20 convenings globally
2500+ total participants across convenings
40+ countries represented

Glimpse into Insights Gained

1. Redefining Success from Academic Achievement to Holistic Human Flourishing

“There was a shared recognition that if we want young people to shape a better future, we need to value not only what they know, but who they are becoming — their mindsets, attitudes, sense of purpose, and belief in what is possible for themselves and their communities.” (Kids Education Revolution 2026, Mumbai, India)

Education must move beyond narrow academic outcomes and traditional metrics, which often prioritize grades and standardization over broad human development. Across the convenings, participants called for redefining success to focus on collective human flourishing, emphasizing competencies like empathy, resilience, collaboration, and a sense of purpose. Achieving this requires purpose-driven measurement approaches that can turn so-called “soft skills” into actionable data, helping teachers support students’ holistic growth.

2. Recognizing Students as Leaders Today, Not Just “Future Leaders”

“Students are not becoming leaders someday — they are already leaders today. More importantly, this revealed a deeper truth: student leadership is not limited by student capacity; it is limited by system design.” (Learning Planet Festival 2026, Online)

A critical realization is that student leadership is not limited by student capacity, but by system design and adult mindsets that act as gatekeepers. Students are often treated as if they are in a “waiting room” for adulthood, but they are capable of being active leaders and problem-solvers in the present. Unlocking this potential requires giving students collaborative autonomy, genuine opportunities to contribute to real-world issues, and roles where their input leads to actual change and decision-making.

3. Elevating Teachers from Instructors to Co-Learners and System Leaders

“Teachers are not implementation risks, but system architects...” (EducationHouse@World Economic Forum’26, Davos, Switzerland)

There is a strong cross-sector consensus that teachers are the primary lever for educational transformation, serving as system architects rather than mere content deliverers. To equip students to shape a better future, educators must shift from a model of top-down instruction to becoming facilitators of transformation and co-learners who build trust with their

students. This paradigm shift requires that systems redesign their support structures, granting teachers greater autonomy, continuous mentorship, and the flexibility to innovate without being constrained by heavy bureaucracy.

4. Shifting Classroom Power Dynamics Through Trust and Co-Creation

“For too long, the adult world has operated as a gatekeeper, inadvertently constraining student potential through a lack of trust. To unlock the agency necessary for systemic change, we must transition from a model of control to one of collaborative autonomy.” (EducationHouse@UNGA’80, New York, United States of America)

Supporting holistic student development necessitates a departure from traditional classroom hierarchies where teachers hold absolute authority over knowledge. Instead, learning environments must become spaces where power is distributed, allowing students to feel psychologically safe to take risks, fail, and express themselves authentically. Educators are encouraged to make intentional pedagogical choices to “do less”—stepping back to create space for students to pursue their own curiosities, ask questions, and take ownership of their learning journeys.

5. Navigating AI by Doubling Down on Human-Centered Capabilities

“The most promising models discussed were human-centered, where AI augments educator judgment, reduces administrative burden, and strengthens relationships rather than replacing them.” (EducationHouse@Davos, Davos, Switzerland)

As AI becomes an integral part of the future of work and learning, it is not diminishing the importance of human capabilities, it is sharpening their value. Rather than competing with educators, AI presents an opportunity to elevate the uniquely human aspects of education. Across conversations, there was strong alignment that empathy, ethical judgment, and meaningful relationships remain irreplaceable at the core of learning and that education systems should strengthen these enduring human capabilities while using AI as a tool to enhance learning.

6. Developing Leaders at All Levels of the System to Foster Collective Leadership and Cross-Sector Collaboration

“By embracing a ‘village’ culture, where extended diverse actors offer multiple perspectives, we ensure that education is not a fragmented effort but a collective commitment. When the wider community takes responsibility for all children, we create a supportive network of education leaders across the ecosystem that enables every student to step into their role as a leader of the future.” (Malaysia Teacher Prize 2025, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

The transformation of education cannot be achieved in isolation or by a single actor or institution. It demands collective leadership, commitment and intergenerational solidarity that enhances collaboration between students, educators, parents, the wider community and, ultimately, leaders at all levels of the system. By cultivating a “village” culture of shared responsibility, education leaders provide the comprehensive emotional, technical, political and system-wide support necessary for students to thrive. Furthermore, aligning efforts across education actors, business, government, and civil society is essential to translate these shared ambitions into system-level transformation at scale.

Check out reflections and insights from convenings here: <https://shapingabetterfuture.org/shaping-global-dialogue>

Member Organizations: The Reshaping Education Steering Group includes representatives from African Leadership Academy, Aga Khan Foundation, Big Change, Brookings Institution CUE, Cambridge Partnership for Education, Global Institute for Shaping a Better Future, Global School Leaders, Global Schools Forum, HundrED, IIEFG, Learning Generation Initiative, Learning Planet Institute, National Center on Education and the Economy, OECD, Salzburg Global, Shikshalokam, Teach For All, UNESCO, and United World Colleges.

For further information, please contact Carolyn Lai (carolyn.lai@teachforall.org) and Dominic Regester (dregester@salzburgglobal.org).