

2024 Human Progress Report



PURPOSE

The 2024 Human Progress Report explores the transforming landscape of education and career progression. Shifting from linear trajectories to dynamic journeys, this report delves into the evolving perspectives of people globally and unveils critical insights for action.

Preface

Human progress has historically been driven by the innovative and collaborative spirit of people, continuously shaping new ways to live, learn and work. The pace of change has only accelerated with the rapid evolution of technology, becoming a transformative force that redefines the skills necessary for leading fulfilling and prosperous lives. As we navigate this ever-evolving landscape, a fundamental question emerges:

How can we foster equitable opportunities for prosperity amidst such dynamic change?

The answer lies in the continuous study and evaluation of people worldwide to understand the critical factors necessary for building successful societies. This way, we can adapt to the shifting world and ensure the broadening of prosperity to each and all.

People all over the world are keenly aware of this shift and are actively striving to acquire the skills needed to adapt. There is a global emphasis on continuous learning as a necessity for attaining security, well-being and prosperity. Remarkably, 8 out of 10 people globally now identify themselves as “lifetime learners.” This seismic shift signifies a collective recognition of the inherent connection between continuous learning and individual security and well-being.



Amit Sevak, Chief Executive Officer ETS

However, the journey is not without its challenges. Surveying 17,000+ respondents across 17 countries, our research identifies three factors that contribute to human progress — Access to Education, Pursuit of Upward Mobility, and Engagement in Upskilling/Reskilling. These factors intertwine, forming the bedrock of societal advancement. In this report, we introduce the ETS Human Progress Index, a gauge of global advancement and an opportunity to identify gaps that demand increased attention.

Designed to establish an annual baseline, this index not only serves as a tool to track the evolving landscape of human progress but invites collaboration and partnership with ETS, across industries and nations to measure, assess and address global gaps together.

In this report, we discuss the complexities surrounding these factors, exploring the balance between global aspirations for prosperity and the practical barriers faced on the ground. While the vast majority believe access to the three factors is crucial, citizens across the world continue to struggle with access, with heightened difficulty in middle-income countries* — prompting calls for innovative government- and corporate-led solutions.

Simultaneously, there is a pressing desire for modern assessments. Despite recent scrutiny surrounding the value of its testing, people globally acknowledge their importance in driving successful outcomes, leveling playing fields, and opening doors. The question at hand does not center on standardization but rather on the comprehensive nature of assessments, with a push to advance assessment science for the holistic measurement of individuals.

This is further emphasized by a desire for non-traditional skill assessment, as the majority envisions micro-credentials rivaling traditional degrees by 2035. Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a pivotal role in this narrative, serving as both a disruptor necessitating a re-evaluation of vital skills and a facilitator promising tailored and enhanced learning experiences. While skepticism still is at play, the majority have confidence in AI-driven assessments, with 66% of global respondents expressing trust in assessments created or scored by AI.

As we navigate these intricacies, the imperative becomes clear: continuous skill acquisition and measurement are not just aspirations but necessities in a world where skills are ever-evolving and can rapidly become obsolete.

*High-income and middle-income countries used in this report are classified by the standards set out by the World Bank Atlas method. In this study, middle-income countries include Mexico, Brazil, Nigeria, Kenya, India, Vietnam, China and Indonesia. High-income countries include Canada, the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, UAE, South Korea, Japan and Australia.

Respondents for this study were selected from adults aged 18+ who agreed to participate in our survey. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the overall sample data (n=17,143) is accurate to within ± 0.9 percentage points. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

Please refer to the appendix for complete survey methodology, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes. For any inquiries, please contact mediacontacts@ets.org.

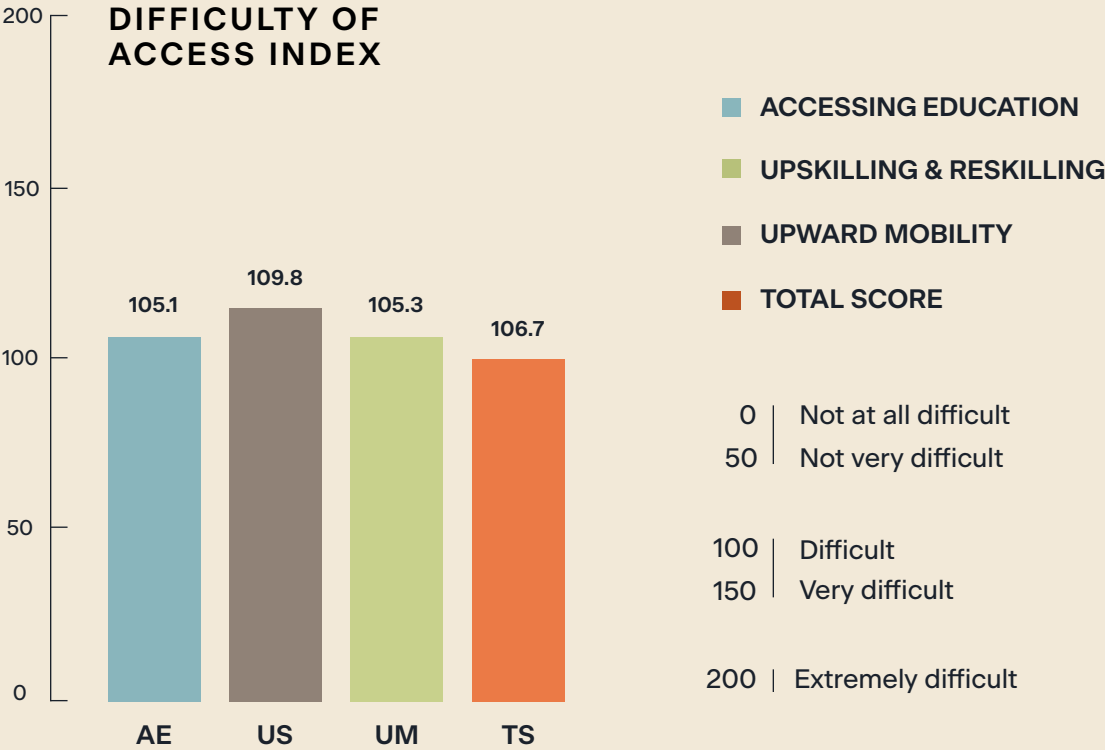
Executive summary

Continuous learning is critical to achieving security and well-being.

88% of global respondents feel continuous learning is essential to succeed in today's society, making it vital for their security and well-being. In a rapidly evolving world, individuals feel a heightened pressure to keep up. There is a clear opportunity to offer increased touchpoints, skill-building curricula and certifications that extend far past traditional schooling journeys.

The ETS Human Progress Index reveals global gaps in factors that foster prosperity.

Access to education, the ability to achieve upward mobility and engagement in upskilling/reskilling are deeply interconnected and are identified as essential factors of prosperity. However, they are not globally accessible. Disparities in access are often rooted in socioeconomic status and government investment.



Upskilling is the future's new currency.

Our findings indicate that upskilling increasingly mirrors the importance of formal education. With the rapid evolution and obsolescence of skills, individuals globally voice the need for continuous skill acquisition. However, financial constraints and uncertain returns on personal investment limit individual adoption, prompting calls for innovative government incentives and corporate solutions.

There is a desire for modern assessments.

There is interest in contemporary skills assessments, including personalized and holistic measurement opportunities. There is also an emerging but significant interest in micro-credentialing, with 78% of global respondents believing that evidence of new skill acquisition will be as valued as a university degree by 2035. With increased activity but no clear leader in this space, there is an untapped opportunity for credible institutions or companies to lead the way, with the majority expressing a desire for credentials coming from universities, technology companies, and assessment providers.

AI presents as both disruptor and facilitator.

AI emerges dual-faced in the educational journey — as both a disruptor, necessitating a re-evaluation of vital skills, and as a facilitator, promising tailored and enhanced learning experiences. With 72% of global respondents agreeing that they would trust AI-generated guidance for improving skills, trust in AI-driven assessments is strong, suggesting a future where AI-driven evaluations and guidance become both accepted and mainstream.

The state of learning

In a permacrisis world, learning becomes the cornerstone to global citizens' security and well-being.

In uncertainty, citizens believe continuous learning is the path forward. Continuous learning is viewed as essential for well-being, financial stability, and a fulfilling life.

86% agree, "Continuous learning is necessary to create financial stability in today's world."

86% agree, "Continuous learning is essential to well-being."

Those in middle-income countries are particularly leaning into their learning identity as core to who they are.

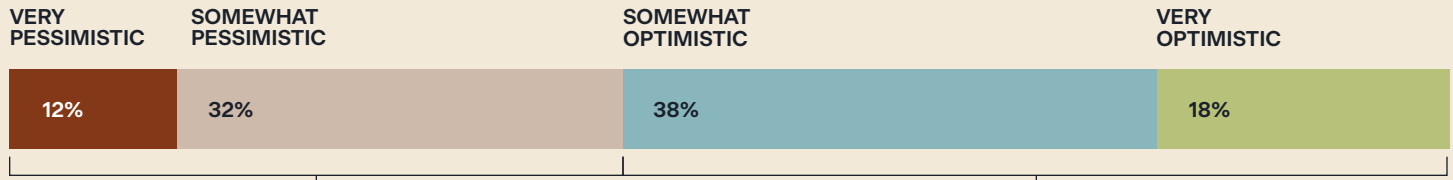
However, people in high-income countries are more likely to be pessimistic about the current state of learning. There is greater pessimism around K-12 education, particularly in France, Germany, the US and Japan.

"Being a lifetime learner is core to my identity."

	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE (NET)
Brazil	30%	61%	93%
Nigeria	31%	61%	92%
Mexico	37%	55%	91%
China	53%	37%	89%
India	37%	52%	89%
Kenya	32%	56%	88%
UAE	39%	48%	87%
Vietnam	41%	45%	87%
Indonesia	46%	40%	86%
France	52%	30%	82%
Canada	49%	31%	80%
United States	45%	32%	77%
Germany	49%	27%	76%
Australia	49%	26%	74%
United Kingdom	44%	24%	68%
South Korea	46%	15%	61%
Japan	44%	9%	53%

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

SENTIMENT SURROUNDING THE CURRENT STATE OF LEARNING K-12 (PRIMARY-SECONDARY) IN YOUR COUNTRY



Pessimistic (Net): 44%

More likely to be Pessimistic (Net):

- 71% France
- 64% Germany
- 58% US
- 58% Japan
- 57% UK
- 55% S. Korea
- 52% Canada
- 52% Brazil
- 45% Australia

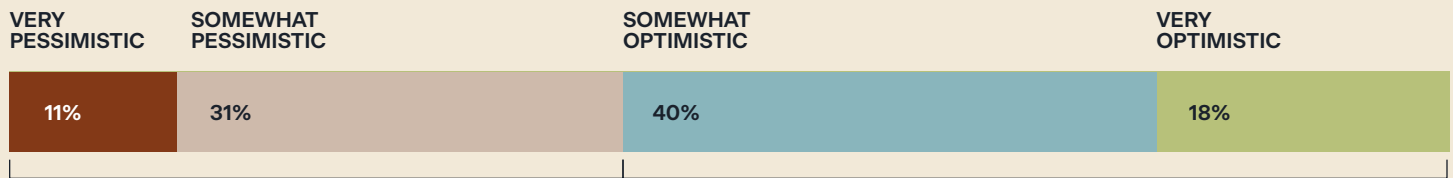
Optimistic (Net): 56%

More likely to be Optimistic (Net):

- 81% China
- 80% UAE
- 74% Vietnam
- 71% Kenya
- 70% India
- 70% Indonesia
- 63% Nigeria
- 60% Mexico

-
- 60% Employed | 40% Unemployed
 - 61% Gen Z | 62% Millennials
 - 52% Gen X | 46% Boomers

THE CURRENT STATE OF LEARNING HIGHER EDUCATION IN YOUR COUNTRY



Pessimistic (Net): 43%

More likely to be Pessimistic (Net):

- 68% France
- 61% S. Korea
- 59% Japan
- 57% UK
- 54% Germany
- 54% US
- 47% Brazil
- 47% Canada
- 45% Australia

Optimistic (Net): 57%

More likely to be Optimistic (Net):

- 83% China
- 79% UAE
- 74% Vietnam
- 72% Indonesia
- 70% India
- 69% Kenya
- 62% Mexico
- 58% Nigeria

-
- 60% Employed | 51% Unemployed
 - 60% Gen Z | 63% Millennials
 - 53% Gen X | 49% Boomers

Given the high priority citizens place on continuous learning and a pessimistic view of the current state, a notable tension emerges, demanding intervention. We see that people are not just open to improvement but are expecting it, with the majority holding an optimistic outlook on the future.

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

64%

OF GLOBAL RESPONDENTS ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT, “LEARNING / EDUCATION WILL BE IN A BETTER STATE BY 2035.”

26% Very Optimistic

- 39% Opinion Elite | 21% Not Opinion Elite
- 39% Employed | 18% Unemployed
- 39% Gen Z | 31% Millennials
- 39% Gen X | 13% Boomers

“Learning/ education will be in a better state by 2035.”

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE (NET)
China	49%	39%	88%
Indonesia	41%	44%	85%
Vietnam	41%	43%	83%
UAE	35%	47%	82%
Kenya	35%	46%	81%
India	24%	52%	76%
Nigeria	34%	39%	73%
Mexico	45%	28%	73%
Brazil	41%	23%	65%
Australia	47%	14%	60%
South Korea	50%	9%	59%
Canada	41%	11%	53%
United States	38%	14%	52%
United Kingdom	39%	10%	50%
Germany	35%	7%	42%
Japan	36%	5%	39%
France	27%	4%	31%

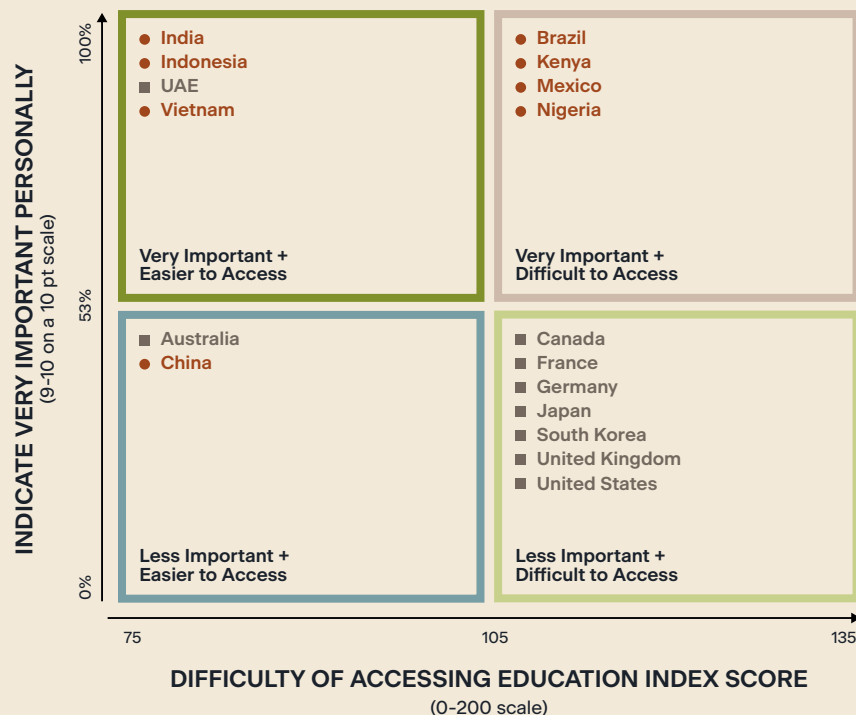
The state of accessing education

Accessing education: intense pressure to change, slow to react

The ETS Human Progress Index highlights a concerning tension: among the eight nations that emphasize the importance of quality education, India, UAE, Vietnam and Indonesia report easier access to quality education relative to Nigeria, Kenya, Mexico and Brazil, that report heightened difficulty

IMPORTANCE OF ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION VS ACCESSIBILITY

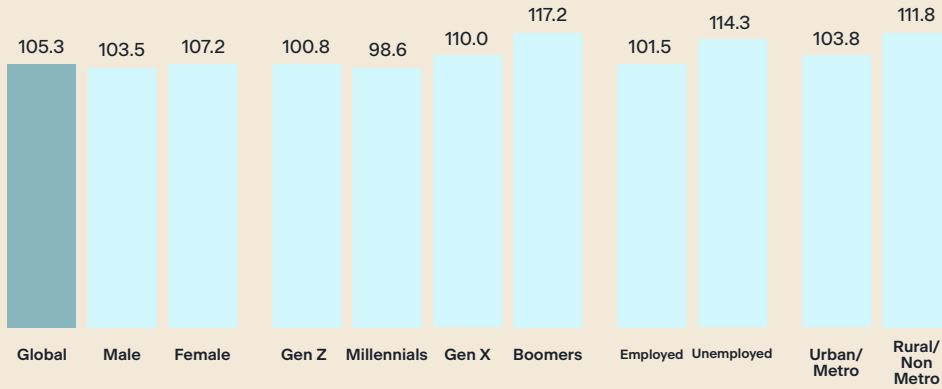
■ HIC: High-income country ● MIC: Middle-income country



All the countries in the lower quads still agree between 68–97% that accessing quality education is personally important to them. The grid shows the relevancy of high importance.

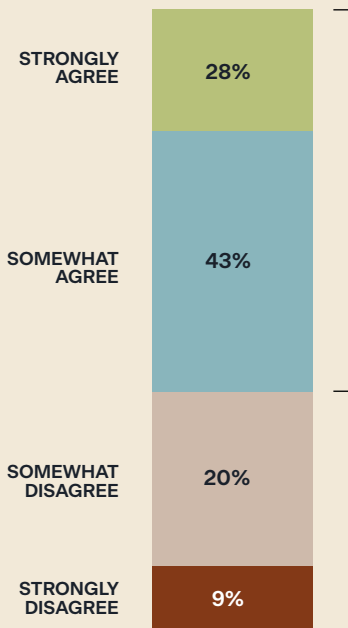
SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

DIFFICULTY OF ACCESSING EDUCATION (INDEX)



In addition to global disparities, the ETS Human Progress Index revealed that women, older generations (Boomers and Gen X) and individuals who are unemployed or in rural areas also report more difficulty in accessing quality education.

0 | Not at all difficult 100 | Difficult 200 | Extremely difficult
 50 | Not very difficult 150 | Very difficult



71% agree

“QUALITY EDUCATION IN MY COUNTRY IS ONLY ACCESSIBLE TO CERTAIN GROUPS OF PEOPLE.”

Countries with above average agreement

- 83% Indonesia 74% Nigeria
- 83% Brazil 74% South Korea
- 78% Mexico 74% France
- 78% India 73% China
- 75% Kenya

84% agree

“I WISH IT WAS EASIER TO ACCESS QUALITY EDUCATION IN MY COUNTRY.”

45% Strongly Agree

% Strongly Agree

- 75% Indonesia | 69% Brazil
- 61% Mexico | 60% Kenya
- 49% Gen Z | 50% Millennials
- 42% Gen Z | 35% Boomers

Additionally, there is a worldwide belief that access to education is artificially limited to certain groups of people, with over 8 in 10 wishing it were easier to access quality education in their country.

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

“Higher education is very slow to react ...I think there are two major forces that are putting pressure on higher education. One is technology, and second is the needs of the market.”

Shai Reshef, Founder and President, University of the People

TOP BARRIERS THAT HINDER INDIVIDUALS FROM ACCESSING QUALITY EDUCATION

We find that money is the top reported barrier preventing people from gaining access to quality education. Those without money are stuck in a perpetual loop of valuing and wanting education, but not having the means to obtain it.

The largest lever for change is perceived to be government funding, followed by technological advancements and corporate sponsorships.

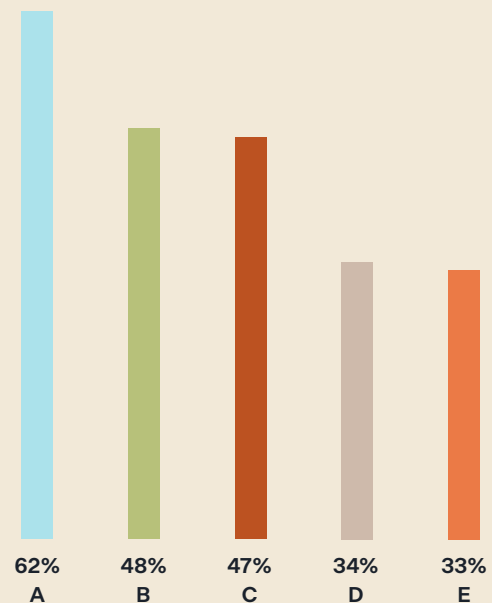
#1 Too expensive/ lack of financial resources **57%**

#2 Socioeconomic background **32%**

#3 Limited number of qualified teachers **31%**

MOST IMPACTFUL IN ACCELERATING PROGRESS FOR ACCESSING EDUCATION % SELECTED

- A** Government initiatives that prioritize funding and policies aimed at improving education standards and access
- B** Technological advancements that leverage digital tools and platforms to enhance learning experiences and accessibility
- C** Corporate partnerships that collaborate with educational institutions to enhance coursework, provide resources and offer real-world experiences
- D** Non-profit organizations dedicated to supporting educational initiatives, providing resources and advocating for quality education
- E** Private educational institutions that invest in resources, infrastructure and innovative teaching methods



A 83% Kenya 80% Nigeria 75% Indonesia	B 63% Kenya 63% Nigeria	C 54% Opinion Elite 45% Non-Opinion Elite	D 51% China 42% Mexico 42% Kenya	E 50% Vietnam 49% India 47% Indonesia
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The responses of groups in the countries in A, B, D and E are statistically significant (95% confidence level). The responses in C are not statistically significant.

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

“Technology has the potential to democratize access to education, leveling the playing field for learners around the world.”

Lorraine McMillan, Global Asset Management
Director, VisionFund International

These findings highlight a compelling call to action in addressing global disparities in access to quality education. The pronounced tension between countries with and without access underscores the need for intervention. Beyond geographical discrepancies, the ETS Human Progress Index identifies additional challenges faced by women, older generations, unemployed individuals and rural residents in accessing education. The widespread belief that education access is unjustly restricted, combined with the identified financial barrier, paints a vivid picture

of the obstacles individuals face in pursuing knowledge. It becomes evident that governments and corporations play a pivotal role in overcoming these challenges. By implementing innovative solutions, these entities can significantly contribute to creating a more equitable and accessible educational landscape, ultimately fostering societal progress and empowerment.

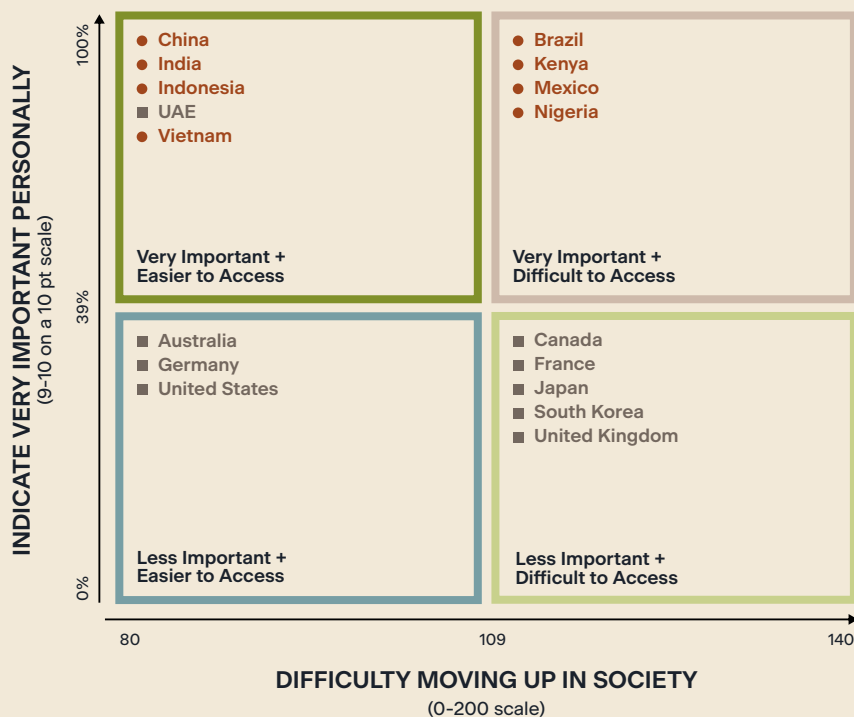
The state of upward mobility

Upward mobility: Shifting mindsets and creating social capital

The ETS Human Progress Index highlights the same four countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Mexico and Brazil) that report heightened difficulty in access to quality education and face similar barriers to achieving upward mobility.

IMPORTANCE OF THE ABILITY TO MOVE UP IN SOCIETY VS ACCESSIBILITY

■ HIC: High-income country ● MIC: Middle-income country



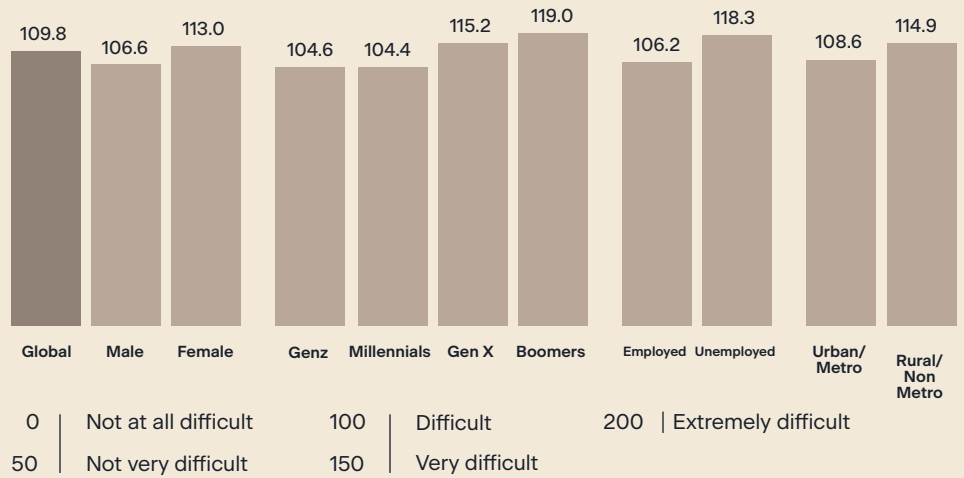
All the countries in the lower quads still agree between 56-82% that ability to move up on society is personally important to them. The grid shows the relevancy of high importance.

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

Women, older generations, unemployed and rural areas have the most difficulty achieving upward mobility.

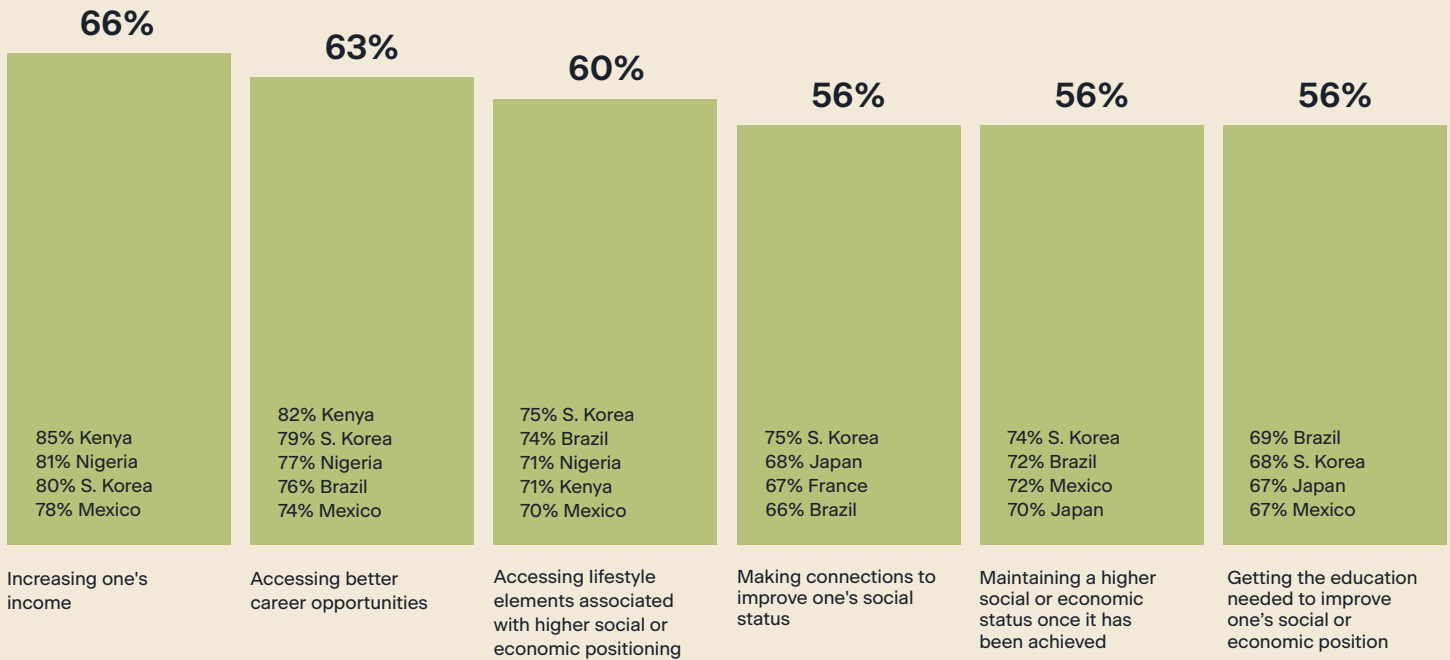
Additionally, in further alignment with the disparities seen in access to quality education, it is revealed that women, older generations (Boomers and Gen X) and individuals who are unemployed or in rural areas report more difficulty achieving upward mobility.

DIFFICULTY OF ACCESSING UPWARD MOBILITY (INDEX)



CHALLENGES IN UPWARD MOBILITY

% Somewhat / Very Difficult



We see that achieving upward mobility is a constant struggle for people, with the top challenges being tied to income, access and social connections.

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

60% agree

“I’M CONCERNED THAT MY CURRENT OR FUTURE CHILDREN MIGHT END UP IN A LOWER SOCIOECONOMIC BRACKET THAN I AM IN NOW.”

21% Strongly Agree

% Strongly Agree

41% Mexico | 39% Indonesia | 32% India

80% agree

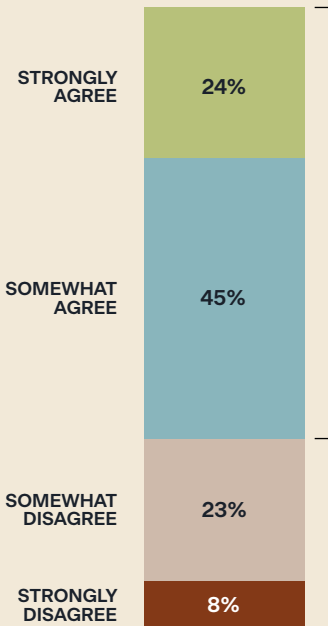
“ATTAINING SOCIOECONOMIC STABILITY FEELS LIKE A CONTINUOUS STRUGGLE.”

30% Strongly Agree

% Strongly Agree

50% Brazil | 46% Indonesia | 42% Vietnam

Furthering these hurdles, generational barriers to upward mobility make it challenging to break the cycle. Similar to challenges in access to quality education, upward mobility feels like a gateway only accessible to certain groups of people.



“UPWARD MOBILITY IS ONLY POSSIBLE FOR CERTAIN GROUPS OF PEOPLE.”

69% agree

Countries with above average agreement

- 79% India
- 78% Brazil
- 77% China
- 76% Japan
- 75% Indonesia
- 75% Mexico
- 73% France

“MY FAMILY HAS HISTORICALLY FACED CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING SOCIOECONOMIC STABILITY AND FINANCIAL SECURITY IN MY COUNTRY.”

67% agree

23% strongly Agree

% strongly agree

39% India | 37% Vietnam | 33% Kenya
US: 18% total | 26% POC | 13% White

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

TOP BARRIERS THAT HINDER INDIVIDUALS FROM ACHIEVING UPWARD MOBILITY

Citizens report that income inequality, lack of job opportunities and systemic bias are acting as anchors to people as they try to achieve upward mobility.

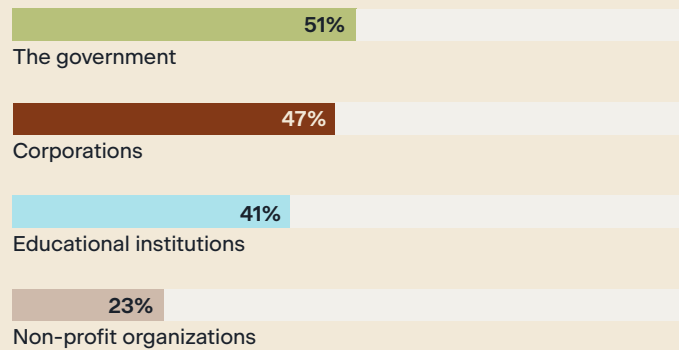
#1 Income inequality **39%**

#2 Lack of job opportunities **34%**
 40% Gen Z | 37% Millennials
 33% Gen X | 27% Boomers

#3 Systemic bias **28%**

WHO SHOULD PLAY A ROLE IN ACCELERATING THE PROGRESS OF THE ABILITY TO MOVE UP IN SOCIETY?

Globally, respondents believe the responsibility of accelerating mobility does not lie in one place. We see that citizens are placing almost equal weight on the government's role and corporations' role in accelerating mobility.



SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

Through these insights, we can identify the barriers impeding upward mobility, especially in the same four countries facing educational constraints. The overlapping struggles faced by women, older generations, individuals who are unemployed and rural residents further underscore the need for targeted intervention. Achieving sustained progress remains a persistent struggle, tied to income, access and social connections, compounded by generational barriers. Similar to education access, upward mobility remains restricted to certain groups, with income

inequality, job scarcity and systemic biases acting as substantial hurdles. Globally, citizens expect governments and corporations to equally contribute to accelerating mobility. By recognizing and addressing these challenges, there is an opportunity to reshape mindsets, dismantle barriers and create social capital, fostering greater upward mobility and inclusive progress.

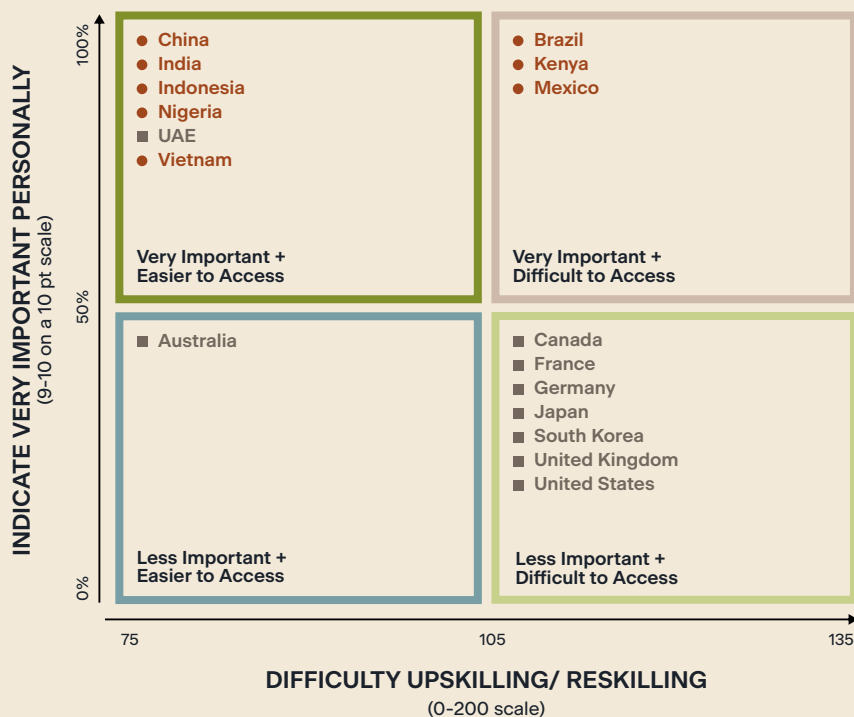
The state of upskilling & reskilling

Upskilling & reskilling: Widening gaps, missing market needs

The ETS Human Progress Index highlights middle-income countries are more likely to find upskilling and reskilling very important, with China and India leading the way towards access.

IMPORTANCE OF UPSKILLING/ RESKILLING ACCESSIBILITY

■ HIC: High-income country ● MIC: Middle-income country



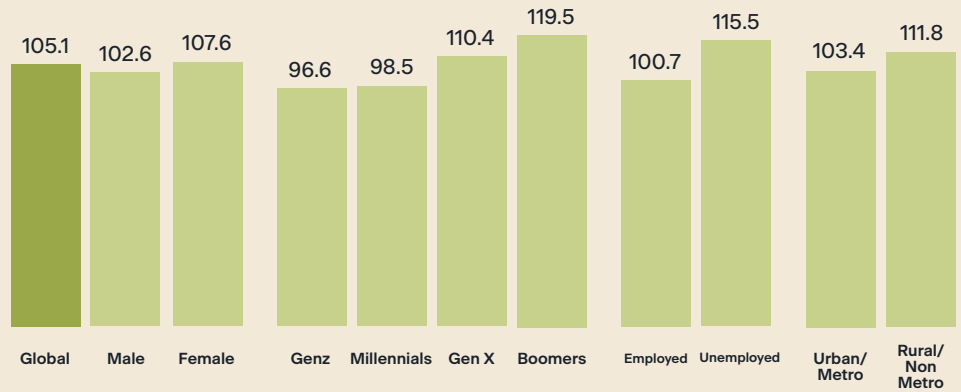
All the countries in the lower quads still agree between 56-82% that ability to move up on society is personally important to them. The grid shows the relevancy of high importance.

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

Following the global trend across factors, the ETS Human Progress Index reveals that women, older generations and individuals who are unemployed or in rural areas have more difficulty in accessing upskilling and reskilling opportunities.

While people globally are witnessing the skill gap, they do not yet know where to invest for upskilling. Additionally, we find that lack of employer support and time constraints hold them back. This amplifies the emerging need for a dynamic, personalized set of solutions that continuously rethinks existing norms.

UPSKILLING & RESKILLING (INDEX)



0 | Not at all difficult 100 | Difficult 200 | Extremely difficult
 50 | Not very difficult 150 | Very difficult

“AS TIME GOES ON, MORE JOBS WILL REQUIRE NEW SKILLS PEOPLE DON’T CURRENTLY HAVE”

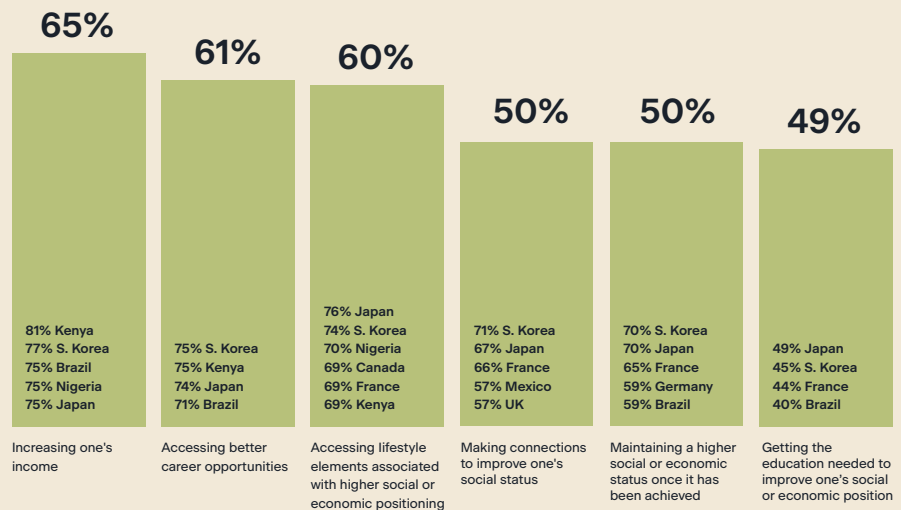
86% agree

39% Agree Strongly

% Strongly Agree

66% Kenya | 61% Nigeria | 52% Brazil | 52% India
 47% Mexico | 46% Indonesia | 45% Vietnam

US: 66% POC | 77% White



Additionally, shifting market dynamics will necessitate a vastly expanded set of core skills and specific career paths. With the pressing urgency to keep up with changing skill sets, 75% of global respondents feel that their current skills may become outdated as technology and industries evolve.

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

“Learning how to learn is probably the key skill. The half-life of skills is getting shorter as more and more technology comes in. The most important ability is learning how to use the new tools in the way that is resonant with being a human and the job to be done.”

Eric Lavin, Partner, Avalanche VC

Globally, individuals are navigating how to optimize their skill sets to promote success in both life and at work. While communication, problem-solving and creativity are crucial for both, technical skills and digital literacy are considered critical to remain competitive in the job market.

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

	NECESSARY FOR LIFE SUCCESS	NECESSARY FOR JOB MARKET
Communication	36%	27%
Problem solving / Critical thinking	35%	25%
Creative	31%	27%
Technical skills	28%	34%
Digital literacy	18%	26%
Financial Literacy	21%	20%
Emotional intelligence	21%	14%
Leadership	18%	19%
Time Management	24%	18%
Collaboration	14%	13%
Perseverance	24%	15%

“The biggest mismatches are now on the quality and relevance of skills.”

Andreas Schleicher, Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills OECD

TOP BARRIERS THAT HINDER INDIVIDUALS FROM PARTICIPATING IN UPSKILLING OR RESKILLING ACTIVITIES

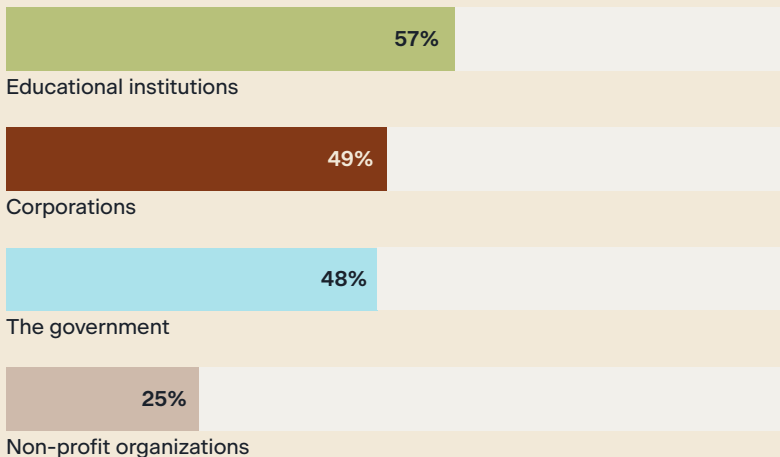
Respondents report that the most prominent obstacle is the lack of financial resources, followed by unclear personal rewards. This points to a need to clarify and standardize rewards, with solutions such as verified credentialing.

#1 Too expensive/ lack of financial resources **53%**

#2 Lack of financial rewards, benefits or recognition for upskilling / reskilling efforts **41%**

#3 Limited upskilling opportunities **36%**

WHO SHOULD PLAY A ROLE IN ACCELERATING THE PROGRESS OF THE ABILITY TO LEARN NEW SKILLS THAT CAN IMPROVE JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND PERFORMANCE?



Global respondents are seeking guidance from educational institutions, corporations and the government to develop future-ready skills. They are uncertain about how to allocate their time and resources for upskilling and are looking for guidance and support from these sources.

Educational institutions	Corporations	The government	Educational institutions
71% Kenya	59% Vietnam	64% Nigeria	41% Nigeria
66% Canada	56% Indonesia	60% Kenya	31% Indonesia
65% US	55% Germany	55% Indonesia	30% US
65% Germany	54% France	54% Australia	30% Kenya
63% Brazil	54% China	54% India	28% UK
63% Australia	54% Japan	53% Brazil	28% India
61% Nigeria	52% Canada	51% UK	27% Brazil
61% UK	51% US	57% Opinion Elite	35% Opinion Elite
60% Indonesia	58% Opinion Elite		
60% India			
60% UAE			
59% Mexico			
65% Opinion Elite			

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

We observe a global demand for upskilling and reskilling solutions, especially in middle-income countries. The findings highlight a worldwide recognition of the skill gap, accompanied by uncertainty regarding where to invest in upskilling, hindered by insufficient employer support and time constraints. Changing market dynamics require a broader range of core skills, emphasizing the urgency of taking action to keep pace with evolving skill sets. Financial limitations and allocation ambiguity emerge as significant obstacles, indicating an opportunity to standardize rewards and recognition through verified credentialing. The current state of uncertainty presents a significant opportunity to establish a comprehensive framework for upskilling and reskilling, bridging gaps and aligning skill development with evolving market demands.

The future of learning & skill assessments

In an era marked by continuous evolution and rapid technological advancements, the landscape of skill assessment is undergoing a transformative shift. Despite this shift, the persistent need and desire for assessments remains steady. Globally, there is

a demand for assessments that encompass a broader set of human capabilities, with 85% of respondents advocating for measurements that go beyond cognitive to include social and emotional skills. These findings underscore a collective desire for assessments to go beyond just a single-point snapshot, as 87% of global respondents believe learning assessments should provide ongoing feedback. As assessment science moves towards providing a more holistic view of individual learning journeys, it also has the potential to create greater emotional well-being. Currently, 84% of global respondents agree that learning assessments play a significant role in enhancing self-esteem, as well as overall career satisfaction. These insights point to a collective belief that innovative learning assessments can emerge as the key to unlocking personal and societal prosperity, bridging skill gaps and providing equal opportunities for advancement across diverse backgrounds.

85% agree

“Learning assessments can help individuals **to achieve better job opportunities and career advancement**”

35% strongly agree

% strongly agree

38% Employed	29% Unemployed
39% Gen Z	40% Millennials
32% Gen X	26% Boomers

82% agree

“**Learning assessments can bridge skills gap** to provide equal opportunity for advancement (e.g., across different backgrounds such as socioeconomic, racial, gender, etc.)”

29% strongly agree

% strongly agree

32% Employed	24% Unemployed
34% Gen Z	34% Millennials
25% Gen X	21% Boomers

United States

% strongly agree

23% Total	29% POC	19% White
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84% agree

“Learning assessments **provide valuable opportunities for advancement**”

34% strongly agree

% strongly agree

37% Employed	28% Unemployed
40% Gen Z	39% Millennials
31% Gen X	24% Boomers

SOURCE: ETS THE HUMAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024, N=17,143 GLOBAL RESPONDENTS

“In the past, the benchmark for everyone was the same, we were all measured against the same criteria. In the future, we will be able to develop a personalized assessment, based on individual abilities and aspirations, which would be a great step forward.”

Joana Lenkova, Futurist and Strategist,
Futures Forward

The future of learning and skill assessment is undeniably being shaped by AI. Acting as both a disruptor and facilitator of skills, people are enthusiastic about the possibilities AI presents. However, there is an equal need to address potential biases that AI can amplify. This intriguing duality reveals that each side of the coin holds nearly equal weight with citizens. A substantial 78% of global respondents agree that AI has the potential to enhance learning assessments by tailoring them specifically to individual learners' needs.

Despite this optimism, 71% of global respondents acknowledge that AI also has the potential to negatively impact learning assessments due to unintentional biases and programming flaws. Trust in AI-driven assessments is high, with 72% of global respondents agreeing that they would trust AI-generated guidance for improving skills, and 66% indicating trust in a learning assessment created or scored by AI.

For a further examination of the shifting landscape, see our [Charting the Future of Assessments](#) report.

Closing

There is a necessity to work together to shape a future where continuous skill development and fair assessment propels us toward unlimited human progress and prosperity.

Continuous learning emerges as the currency of tomorrow. Those proficient at leveraging certifications, micro-credentials and AI will lead the charge, creating innovative paths to success. The resounding acknowledgment of “lifetime learners” as a global majority highlights an inseparable link between continuous learning and individual security. Despite challenges in accessing education, achieving upward mobility and engaging in upskilling/reskilling, society recognizes the importance of these factors for human progress. The challenges, while formidable, are not insurmountable. They demand innovative solutions, assessments and credentialing to ensure a holistic and accessible educational journey.

If you're interested in learning more, explore our commitment and the actions we are taking toward this mission at [ETS.org](https://ets.org).

Appendix

Survey methodology:

The research was conducted online in 17 countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, South Korea, United Arab Emirates, UK, US and Vietnam by The Harris Poll on behalf of ETS (Educational Testing Service) among 17,143 respondents who are adults 18 years or older. The survey was conducted from September 18-27, 2023.

Data for each country are weighted, using a raking (aka RIM weighting) procedure, where necessary to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population. Raking allows for weighting based on multiple variables to adjust each variable by as small an amount as possible.

Responses from Australia, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, South Korea, United Arab Emirates and UK were each weighted by age, gender, education, region and urbanicity.

Responses from Brazil and Mexico were each weighted by age, gender, education, region and socioeconomic level.

Responses from Canada were weighted by age, gender, education, knowledge of official languages, region, race/ethnicity, household size and marital status.

Responses from Japan, Kenya and Vietnam were each weighted by age, gender and region. Responses from Nigeria were each weighted by age, gender and education.

Responses from United States were weighted by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size and propensity to be online.

Respondents for this survey were selected from those who agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the overall combined sample data (n=17,143) is accurate to within + 0.9 percentage points. The credible intervals will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest, including the following country-level intervals: Australia (n=1,013), accurate to within + 3.3 percentage points

Brazil (n=1,012), accurate to within + 4.0 percentage points

Canada (n=1,001), accurate to within + 4.0 percentage points

China (n=1,006), accurate to within + 3.8 percentage points

France (n=1,012), accurate to within + 4.1 percentage points

Germany (n=1,012), accurate to within + 3.8 percentage points

India (n=1,018), accurate to within + 3.7 percentage points

Indonesia (n=1,010), accurate to within + 3.8 percentage points

Japan (n=1,004), accurate to within + 3.5 percentage points

Kenya (n=1,011), accurate to within + 3.6 percentage points

Mexico (n=1,010), accurate to within + 4.1 percentage points

Nigeria (n=1,013), accurate to within + 3.6 percentage points

South Korea (n=1,003), accurate to within + 4.2 percentage points

United Arab Emirates (n=1,008), accurate to within + 4.7 percentage points

United Kingdom (n=1,000), accurate to within + 3.6 percentage points

United States (n=1,004), accurate to within + 4.0 percentage points

Vietnam (n=1,006), accurate to within + 3.9 percentage points

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question-wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

Countries may be referred to as high-income or middle-income as defined by World Bank definitions for this report.

World Bank Country and Lending Groups. Atlas Methodology.

Further, we classify 'Opinion Elite' respondents. These respondents are identified through reporting regular following of business issues and are involved with some activities related to current affairs (i.e., societal issues, issues in the news media).

■ HIC: High-income country	● MIC: Middle-income country
Australia	Brazil
Canada	China
France	India
Germany	Indonesia
Japan	Kenya
South Korea	Mexico
UAE	Nigeria
United Kingdom	Vietnam
United States	

The ETS Human Progress Index methodology:

Respondents were surveyed on the perceived difficulty of related tasks, utilizing a nuanced 4-point scale ranging from 'Very difficult' to 'Very easy.' Each of these factors was composed of questions with high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .873 for Accessing Education, .891 for Upward Mobility, and .874 for Upskilling & Reskilling) and each question had an equal weight into that factor. Each factor was equally weighted into the ETS Human Progress Index.

This index demonstrates how difficult or effortless it is to access the foundational factors or progress. **A score above 100 indicates that the task is generally difficult for consumers**, while a score below 100 indicates it is relatively easy. The distance from 100 is indicative of the level of difficulty or ease.

*Accessing Education

1. Finding the right educational institutions or programs for one's needs (e.g., schools, courses, etc.)
2. Paying for the costs associated with education (e.g., tuition, fees, materials, etc.)
3. Accessing education by people from a variety of social backgrounds (e.g., different levels of income, different parts of the country, ethnicity, social class/caste, etc.)
4. Prioritizing quality education over other needs (e.g., job commitments, family commitments, etc.)
5. Gaining admittance to institutions that offer quality education
6. Accessing teachers that offer quality education

Two statements were asked to parents only for accessing education and were not included in the index calculations.

Upward Mobility

1. Accessing better career opportunities (e.g., finding job openings, career advancements, etc.)
2. Increasing one's income (e.g., getting a new higher-paying job, finding additional jobs, etc.)
3. Making connections to improve one's social status (e.g., networking, finding mentors and/or support, etc.)
4. Getting the education needed to improve one's social or economic position
5. Accessing lifestyle elements associated with higher social or economic positioning (e.g., housing, transportation, etc.)
6. Maintaining a higher social or economic status once it has been achieved

Upskilling & Reskilling

1. Identifying the right skills or areas for upskilling/reskilling
2. Paying the costs associated with pursuing upskilling/reskilling (e.g., courses, materials, etc.)
3. Finding time to learn new skills while maintaining current workload
4. Getting employer support to upskill and/or reskill (e.g., help with new opportunities that align with new skills, time to focus on trainings, etc.)
5. Determining which upskilling/reskilling programs fit one's career goals
6. Determining which upskilling/reskilling programs fit one's personal strengths

This methodology formed the foundation for The ETS Human Progress Index, offering a gauge of global advancement and pinpointing gaps that require a heightened focus on closing. Designed to establish an annual baseline, this index not only serves as a tool to track the evolving landscape of human progress but invites collaboration and partnership to address global gaps in prosperity.

Contributors

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