

A BRAVE NEW BEGINNING

We, the participants in the Education Track of the Digital with Purpose (DWP) Global Summit 2024, coordinated this year by Dr Veerle Vandeweerd and Dr Georgios Kostakos, came together in Cascais, Portugal, for three productive days of plenary meetings and workshops, roundtables and innovative announcements. Representing the public, private, and civil society sectors from different countries/regions and continents, we focused on the crucial question of how to change, in concrete and implementable ways, the education systems from the local to the global level in line with the ambition of Sustainable Development Goal 4 ([SDG4](#)), adopted by all countries in 2015.

The event was filled with positive energy and determination by all stakeholder groups to effectively respond to the rapidly changing and increasingly digital world. Last year's Summit had called for an immediate transformation in education. **This year it was confirmed that the transformation was ready to take off in all education sectors** – formal and informal, early-life and life-long learning – with digital tools serving as catalyst.

Advances since the publication of the DWP 2023 [Manifesto](#) clearly demonstrate that knowledge and pilot projects are there, ready to be scaled up. **The question is no longer whether the transition will occur or not, but when it will be mainstreamed** to have a noticeable impact on all societies and economies.

SOME KEY FINDINGS:

1. Education systems should move away from being content intensive (memorization) to being competence focused, through **experiential learning** that equips the students with the critical mindset, resilient character and skills to live and thrive in a changing world.
2. Such a drastic overhaul of the education system is possible, facilitated by the **use of digital tools** like gaming and AI, if employed in a responsible and human-centric manner.
3. **Teachers** and those training them should embrace the changing role of a teacher from content provider to mentor of individual students according to the latter's individual needs and capabilities, assisted by digital tools.
4. **Economic and moral incentives** and rewards should be directed towards innovation by all education stakeholders, not towards rewarding the old system.
5. The focus should be on **learning - how to learn** throughout one's life.
6. **Governments** set the framework for the formal education sector. But a small policy opening towards testing innovation, as small as it may be, coupled with a

small financial incentive to schools can go a long way to getting the transition going; students are ready for it, schools are ready for it, the digital tools to power the transition exist.

Potential actions to be pursued till DWP Global Summit 2025:

1. **Teachers who make an effort to innovate** and try new tools in the classroom should be celebrated as champions, while the introduction of tools like AI should also be used to reduce the administrative burden on teachers, rather than undermine their employment.
2. Currently information on the availability of digital solutions by private sector companies is fragmented and difficult to access. An online clearing house – **the “Agora” platform** – could be developed as a stakeholder meeting place and one-stop shop for tools and curated material, to support an effective transition to an education system apt for the 21st century. Crucial to the viability of such a platform is to secure the necessary funding.
3. The **safety of private data**, especially of children, is an issue of paramount importance, on which no compromise is possible. Technical solutions exist to achieve it, either provided by the state and/or procured by the school.
4. **Gaming**, already practiced by 3,5 billion people, can be an effective tool in acquiring the needed skill sets the new education system aims at instilling in students, making them ready to be productive and happy citizens in the emerging new world.
5. The **university rating system**, which directly affects university funding, needs to change towards skill and competency-based assessment, thus encouraging innovation instead of cementing the status quo.
6. Potential **gender** biases in the development and deployment of digital tools should be identified and corrected, to ensure equal treatment, learning and advancement opportunities for all.

Digital with Purpose Global Summit