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World Youth Skills Day 2025

Youth survey report on AI and digital skills

Education 2030

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UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to ***"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."*** The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

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Foreword

Today is a special milestone. We are celebrating ten years since the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed World Youth Skills Day—a decade of recognizing the critical importance of equipping young people with the skills they need for employment, entrepreneurship and active participation in society.

We also mark the fifth anniversary of the Global Skills Academy, launched in 2020 under the Global Education Coalition to close skills gaps and empower learners for a rapidly changing world.

With over 230 partners in 150 countries, the GSA has supported 1.8 million learners with training in digital and green skills, tailored to local needs.

Yet even as we celebrate these achievements, we cannot ignore the challenges.

Today, an estimated 450 million young people worldwide lack the skills they need to succeed in employment, entrepreneurship or further education, according to the World Bank. This figure speaks to the urgent need for action.

Digital transformation, climate change, demographic shifts and economic uncertainty are reshaping the future of work. Automation and AI alone could displace over 90 million jobs by 2030, even as they create new roles that demand entirely different skills.

Education and training systems have too often struggled to keep pace. Many young people still leave school without the foundational, digital or transversal skills they need to thrive.

Marginalized groups—including girls, rural youth, refugees and learners with disabilities—face especially steep barriers to accessing quality training and opportunities. And in many places, technical and vocational education remains wrongly seen as a "second choice", deterring investment and enrollment.

Despite these obstacles, we see clear pathways forward.

If we are to truly empower young people in the age of AI and digital transformation, we must reimagine education and training systems to be inclusive, future-ready and responsive to labour market needs. This means modernizing curricula to include digital, green and soft skills, while building strong partnerships with employers to create more work-based learning opportunities like internships and apprenticeships.

We also need to strengthen career guidance and information systems so that every learner, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, can make informed choices about their futures. UNESCO is leading an Interagency Working Group on Career Guidance, helping countries develop stronger policies, training counsellors and sharing best practices.

Expanding inclusive access is equally essential. Through initiatives like the CapED programme, we are supporting vulnerable youth in Africa to access training opportunities, while promoting recognition of prior learning to help learners gain credit for their skills.

As the world becomes increasingly digital, we must accelerate the transformation of education and training to bridge—not deepen—the digital divide. Tools like UNESCO's Global Skills Tracker and

resources like our new AI Competency Frameworks for Teachers and Students help countries align education and training with real demand.

Finally, these challenges cross borders. That is why international cooperation and solidarity matter so deeply. From global and regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications in higher education to knowledge-sharing networks like UNEVOC and the Global Education Coalition, we are committed to building a more connected and supportive global learning ecosystem.

Today is above all a day to celebrate youth and their creativity, resilience and right to a future of dignity and opportunity. Let us work together to make this vision a reality.

This is an excerpt from a speech delivered by Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, at the Learning Planet Institute in Paris on 15 July 2025 to mark the 10th anniversary of World Youth Skills Day.

Introduction

In June 2025, UNESCO-UNEVOC conducted a global survey reaching 4,268 young people from 128 countries to explore their perceptions and experiences with artificial intelligence (AI) and digital skills. The findings reveal a generally optimistic view of AI's role in education and skills development, with many respondents highlighting its potential to improve efficiency and expand access to learning. However, the survey also surfaced concerns around digital inequality, a potential decline in critical thinking and a clear need for more support in navigating AI tools responsibly. These insights underscore the importance of youth-centred approaches in shaping inclusive digital and AI education policies.

Methodology

The survey employed a digital questionnaire disseminated globally through online platforms to gather youth perspectives ahead of World Youth Skills Day 2025. Designed to be inclusive and multilingual, the tool collected both quantitative and qualitative responses on AI and digital skills access, training and impact. While the approach allowed for broad outreach and rapid data collection, it may have excluded youth in remote or underserved regions due to digital access limitations, particularly those without reliable internet or devices. As such, findings may reflect a more connected and digitally literate demographic, and caution is advised when generalizing results across all youth populations.

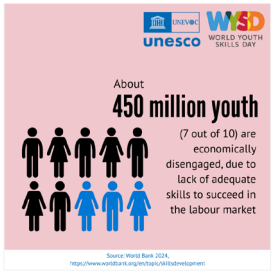
Context and purpose

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) is fundamentally transforming the global landscape of work, education and youth empowerment. As AI-driven technologies reshape industries and redefine the skills required for employment, young people face both unprecedented opportunities and significant challenges. AI offers innovative tools for personalized learning, adaptive training and immersive experiences in fields like healthcare and engineering, making technical and vocational education and training (TVET) more accessible and aligned with labour market needs. However, without comprehensive reforms and equitable access, the digital divide threatens to deepen, leaving marginalized youth behind and exacerbating existing inequalities.

For today's youth, equipping themselves with digital and AI skills is no longer optional; it is essential for unlocking their full potential and actively participating in the economies of the future. While AI can bridge skills gaps, improve career guidance and empower youth for an automated world of work, it also raises concerns about algorithmic bias, data privacy and the underrepresentation of women and marginalized groups in tech fields. To ensure a just and inclusive future, TVET systems and policy-makers must prioritize ethical, human-centered approaches to AI, invest in teacher training and infrastructure, and promote lifelong learning for all.

UNESCO-UNEVOC's World Youth Skills Day 2025 survey provides critical insights into the experiences, aspirations and challenges young people face in the rapidly evolving digital and AI-driven world. With over 4,000 responses from diverse countries, these results are especially significant for policy-makers, education providers, youth organizations and technology companies seeking to design responsive and inclusive programmes.

By understanding youth experiences, particularly in terms of digital access, AI literacy and participation in policy discourse, stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to bridge gaps, foster ethical and inclusive AI practices and empower youth to play an active role in shaping their digital futures.



Key insights

62%

AI in practice: 62% of youth already use AI tools in real-world work settings, highlighting its practical relevance.

76%

Access challenges persist: While 76% have digital access, "limited reliable access" is the top barrier to AI/digital skills learning for many (1878 respondents).

40%

Gap in ethical AI training: 40% have not received training on ethical AI use, media literacy or digital responsibility.

44%

High demand for training: Only 51% have received AI/digital training (formal and informal); 44% are interested but untrained, indicating significant unmet demand.

34%

Institutional gaps: Only 34% report school access to AI-enhanced learning tools, indicating substantial institutional lag in adopting advanced digital educational technologies.

Significant AI concerns

Key worries include "misleading information" (2305 respondents), "academic dishonesty", "over-reliance" and "job displacement".

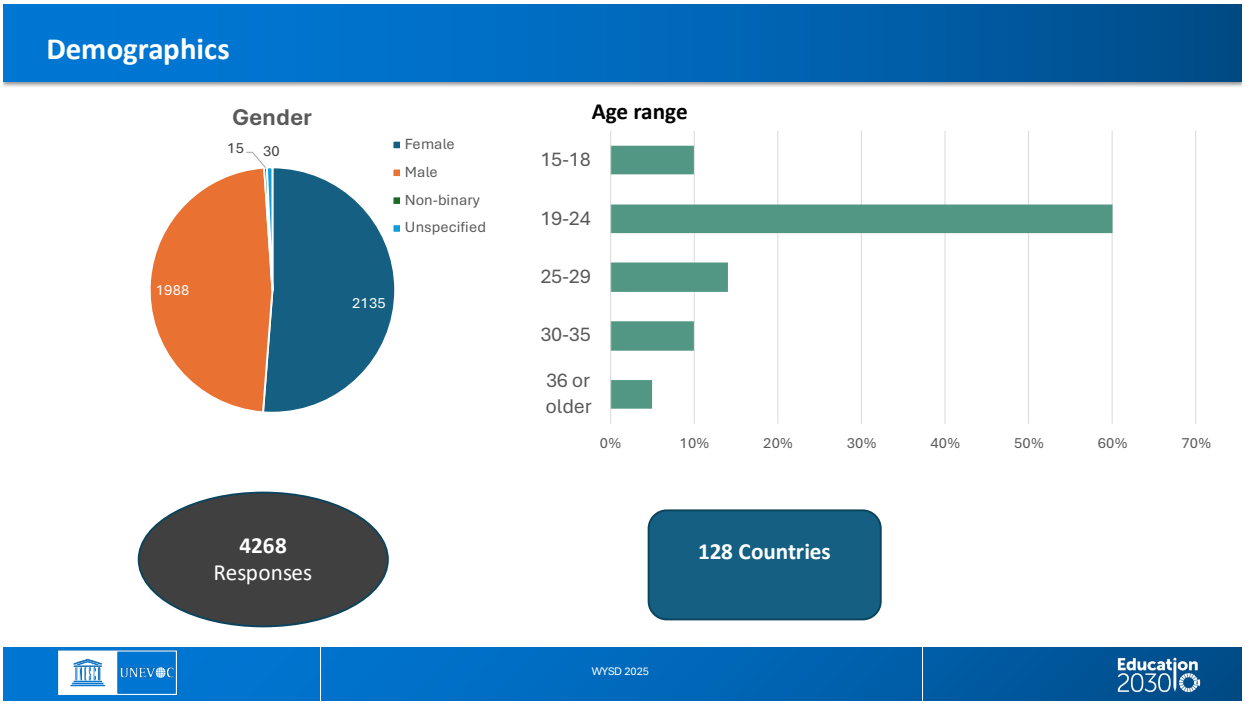
Youth want policy involvement

Youth strongly desire to participate in shaping AI policies, seeking more platforms and education on digital rights.

Youth value both technical and soft skills

Communication and interpersonal skills are considered the most important in the age of AI, alongside technical AI skills and critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

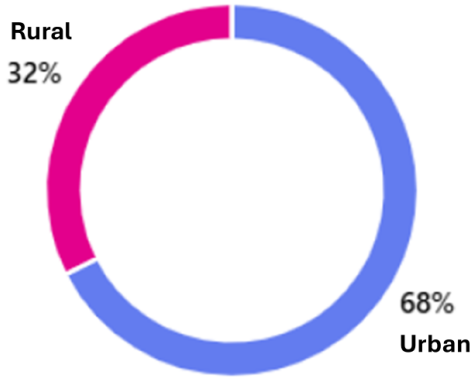
Respondent overview

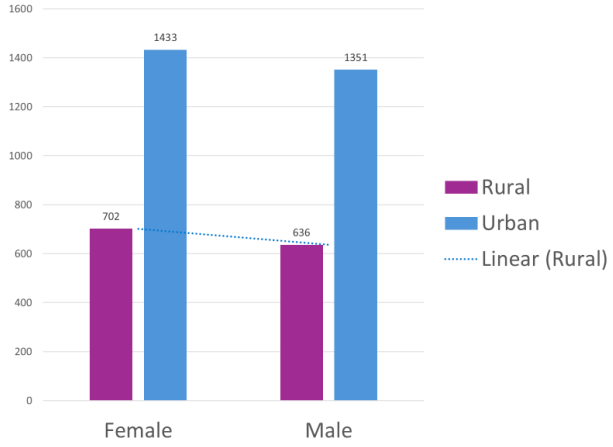


Of the 4,268 responses received from 128 countries, the majority of respondents (60%) were young people within the age range of 19 to 24. Gender distribution was nearly balanced, with 51% identifying as female and 48% as male. Representation was highest from countries in the Global South, with Ecuador contributing the largest number of responses, followed by the Philippines, Malaysia, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, and others.

Urban-rural gap

A significant urban-rural gap exists (68% urban vs 32% rural respondents). There is a higher number of both female and male respondents in urban areas compared to rural areas.





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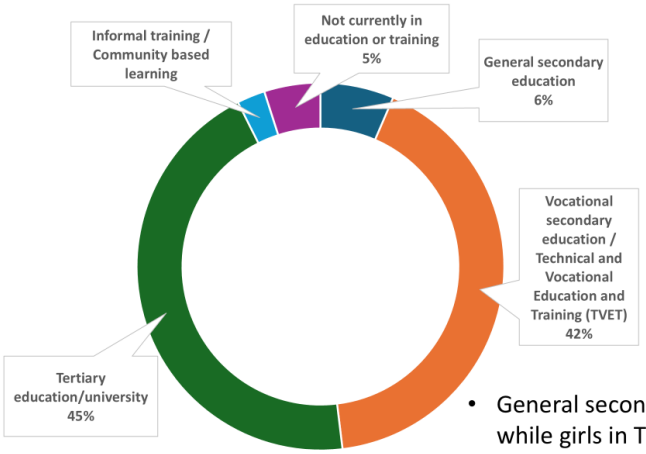
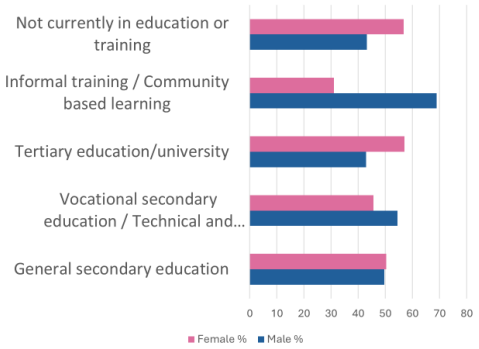
The survey reveals a significantly higher number of urban respondents compared to their rural counterparts, alongside a relatively balanced gender distribution. This urban–rural gap underscores existing disparities in digital access, infrastructure and educational opportunities, with rural youth—particularly young women—facing compounded barriers such as limited connectivity, restricted mobility and inadequate outreach. The lower participation from rural areas is therefore more indicative of structural and personal challenges.

Discussion: Addressing the digital divide between urban and rural areas is essential to ensuring inclusive access to AI and digital skills development for all youth.

Level of education

There is a strong representation from Higher Education and TVET





- General secondary education shows near-perfect gender parity, while girls in TVET are less compared to HE. More males than females are undertaking informal learning, while there are slightly more girls not in education and training than boys.

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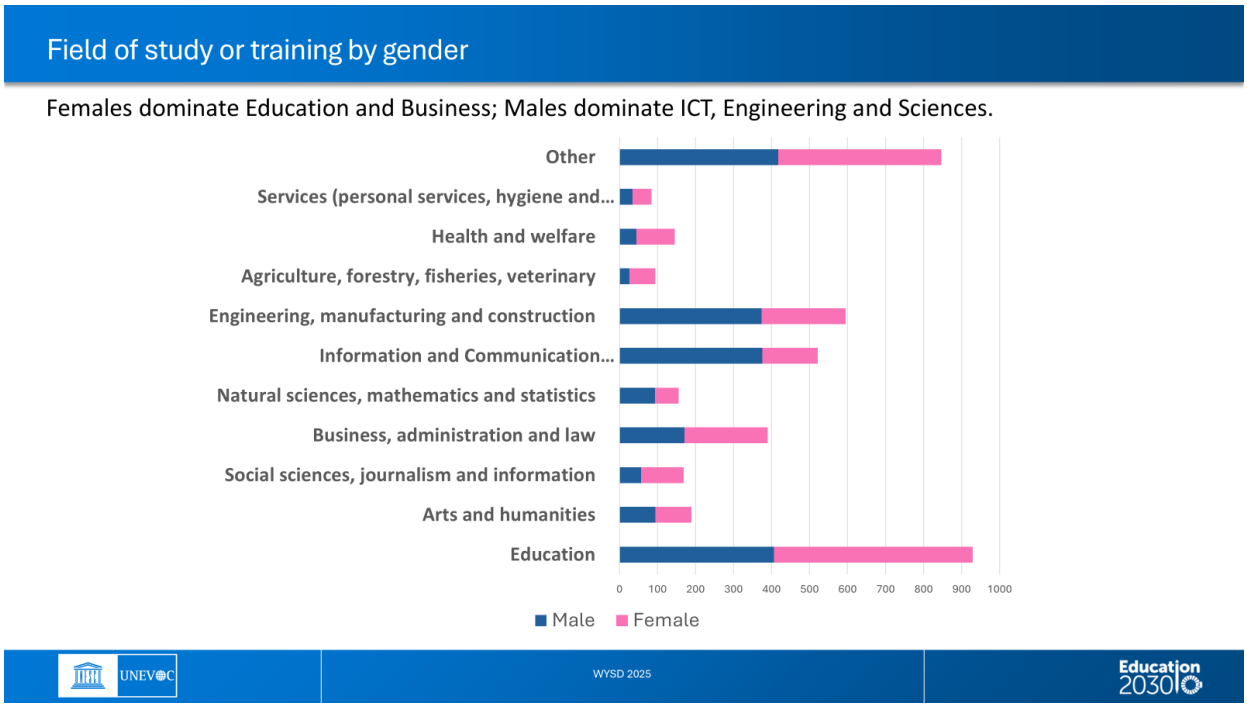
The data indicate that respondents from general secondary education exhibit an almost equal gender balance. However, fewer female participants take part in TVET compared to higher education. More males that responded to the survey are involved in informal learning pathways, while slightly more female respondents are not in any kind of education or training.

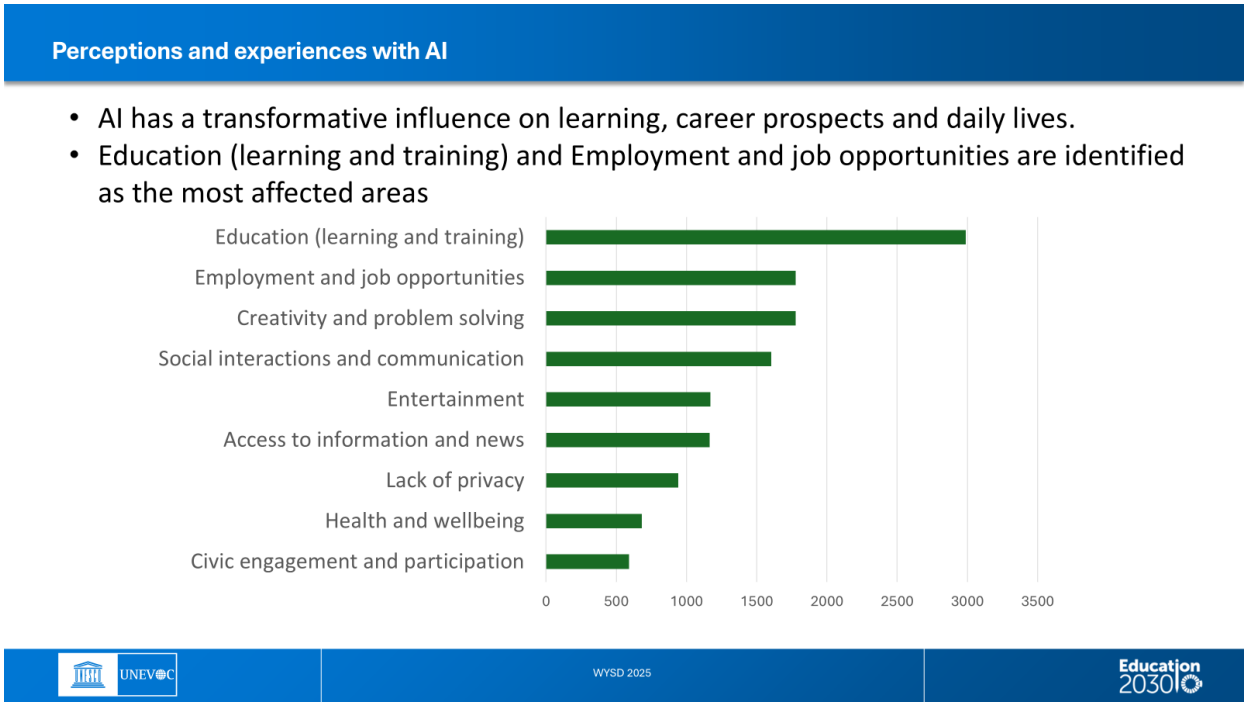
Discussion: While TVET and higher education attract significant youth participation, gender imbalances could occur when there is a lack of more targeted efforts to ensure equitable access across all learning pathways.



The data highlight disproportionate representation of gender across fields of study. Education and Business Administration are predominantly female-dominated, while ICT, Engineering and Natural Sciences show significantly higher male participation. Engineering and Manufacturing, in particular, display the most pronounced gender gap, with approximately 85% male and only 15% female representation—despite being one of the most subscribed fields. In contrast, Education reflects the highest concentration of female students, with a similar 85% female to 15% male ratio.

Discussion: These patterns underscore the occurrence of stereotypical gender roles in education and training. The underrepresentation of girls in TVET and technical fields directly mirrors their limited presence in high-demand sectors such as engineering and technology, potentially restricting their future economic opportunities. Meanwhile, the strong female concentration in traditionally "caring" fields like education and health, though socially valuable, may reinforce occupational segregation and limit broader career diversification for young women. Addressing these disparities requires targeted policies and inclusive guidance to expand gender equity across all educational and professional pathways.

Perceptions and experiences with AI



AI is perceived by respondents as having a transformative impact on their learning experiences, career prospects and everyday lives. The areas that respondents view as the most affected are education and employment, with many reporting both benefits and concerns. AI tools are seen as valuable for developing key skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, while these tools also indirectly support young people in discerning their sources of information and news. This reveals that AI is perceived more highly for impacting learning than affecting the ways young people source their information. The distribution of positive, mixed and negative perceptions indicates a growing level of critical awareness among youth regarding AI adoption, particularly around issues of privacy, bias and job displacement.

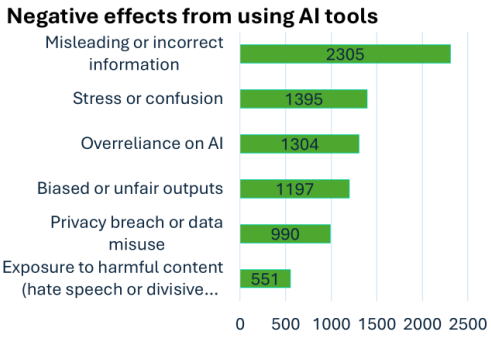
Discussion: While AI is broadly viewed as a catalyst for opportunity, as indicated by the respondent's recognition of how it has positively impacted learning and employment, it also raises ethical, social and economic concerns that must be addressed to ensure responsible and inclusive integration.

Activity Area	***High Frequency Use***	***Moderate Use***	***Low Frequency Use***
Research/Writing, Revision, Learning	✓		
Voice Assistants, Coding, Language		✓	
Creative writing and storytelling, Career Guidance, Social media/Content Management:		✓	
Mental Health, VR/Gaming, Image/Video generation, Operate Machines and Tools			✓

Perceptions and experiences with AI

- AI is helpful but requires balance; both benefits and risks are acknowledged
- While youth acknowledge AI's utility, awareness of its potential pitfalls and systemic issues is also very high

Effect Type	Description	Common Themes
Strongly Positive	AI enhances efficiency, access, and learning; opens new opportunities	Productivity, personalization, innovation
Mixed/Neutral	AI is helpful but requires balance; both benefits and risks are acknowledged	Efficiency vs. dependency, ethical use
Strongly Negative	AI fosters over-reliance, reduces critical thinking, threatens jobs, and raises ethical issues	Laziness, loss of originality, job displacement



As a campus journalist, AI has tremendously affected my field of study; my writers publish articles that they didn't even make but rather are the product of AI prompts, which hurts me; they're not even hiding it at this point. The art of journalism has been distained because of artificial intelligence... I fear that my dream will be gone, AI doing the job I want in the future.

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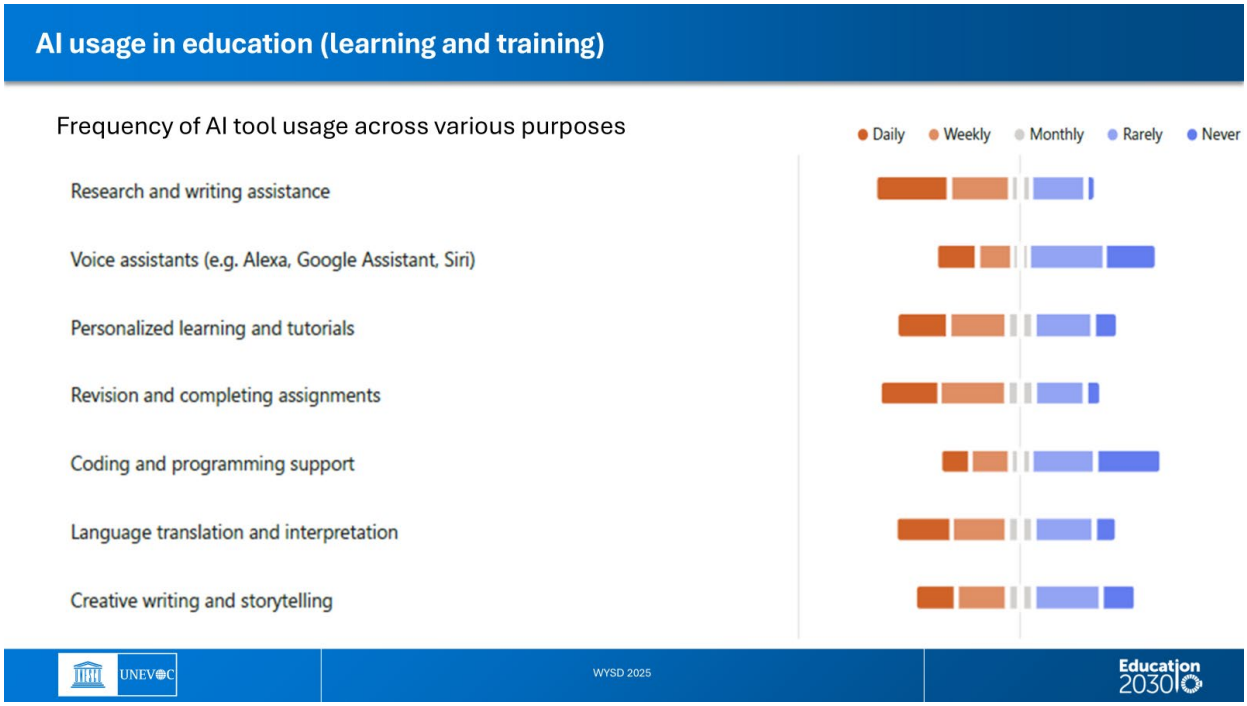
The survey responses reflect a nuanced understanding among youth of AI's impact on education and training. While many acknowledge its benefits—such as increased efficiency, personalized learning and new opportunities—there is also a strong awareness of its risks. Concerns include over-reliance on AI, reduced critical thinking, academic dishonesty, job displacement and ethical issues like misinformation and bias.

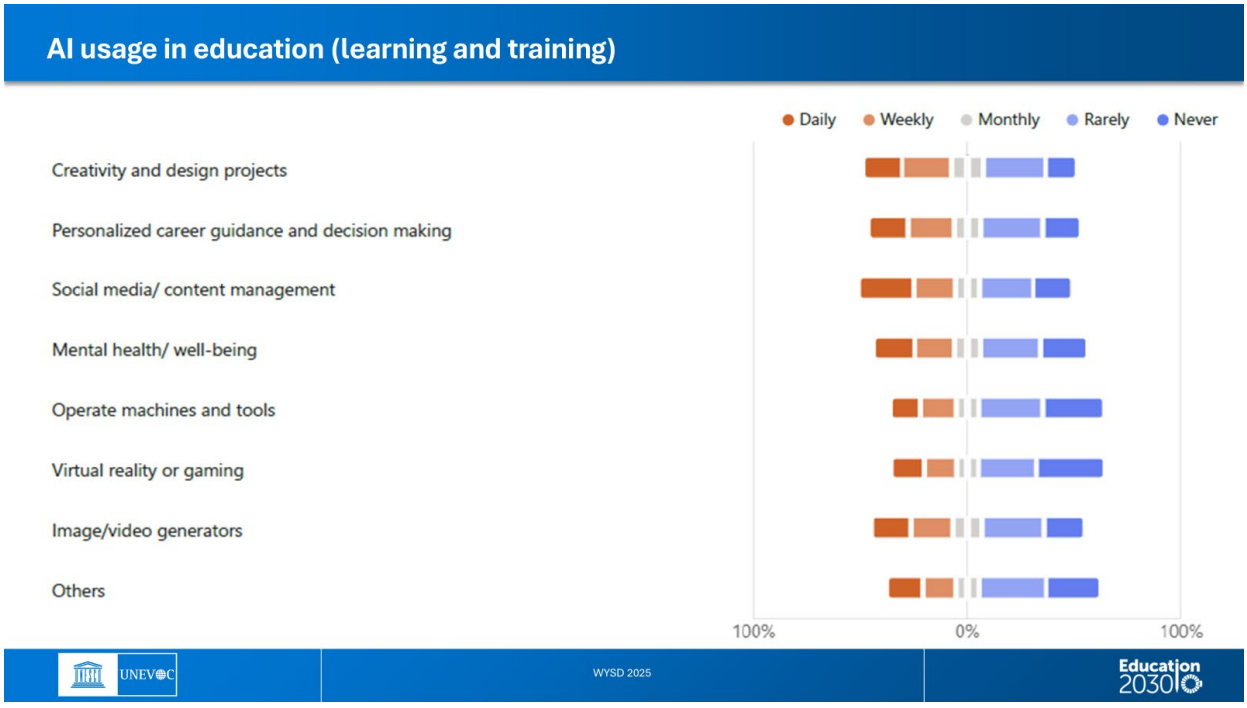
Discussion: This balanced view indicates that young people are not only engaging with AI tools but are also critically evaluating their role in learning and future careers.

Selected respondent quotes

> *"AI has made my work easier, convenient, and way more knowledgeable. In a positive manner, it helps a lot in accumulating the information we need in our field; however, there is also a bad side of AI like being dependent on it that leads to laziness."*
>
> *"AI has significantly impacted my field of study by enhancing both learning and productivity. For example, in academic research and writing, AI tools can help with summarizing sources, checking grammar, and even generating ideas or outlines, which saves time and boosts creativity... However, AI also challenges us to develop critical thinking, digital literacy, and ethical responsibility, especially in evaluating when and how to use technology appropriately."*
>
> *"AI has decreased a lot of critical thinking in a way that most of the things a student may need they end up moving straight to AI without having time to think and evaluate on their work, hence reducing their problem-solving skills."*
>
> *"As a campus journalist, AI has tremendously affected my field of study; my writers publish articles that they didn't even make but rather are the product of AI prompts, which hurts me; they're not even hiding it at this point. The art of journalism has been distained because of artificial intelligence... I fear that my dream will be gone, AI doing the job I want in the future."*

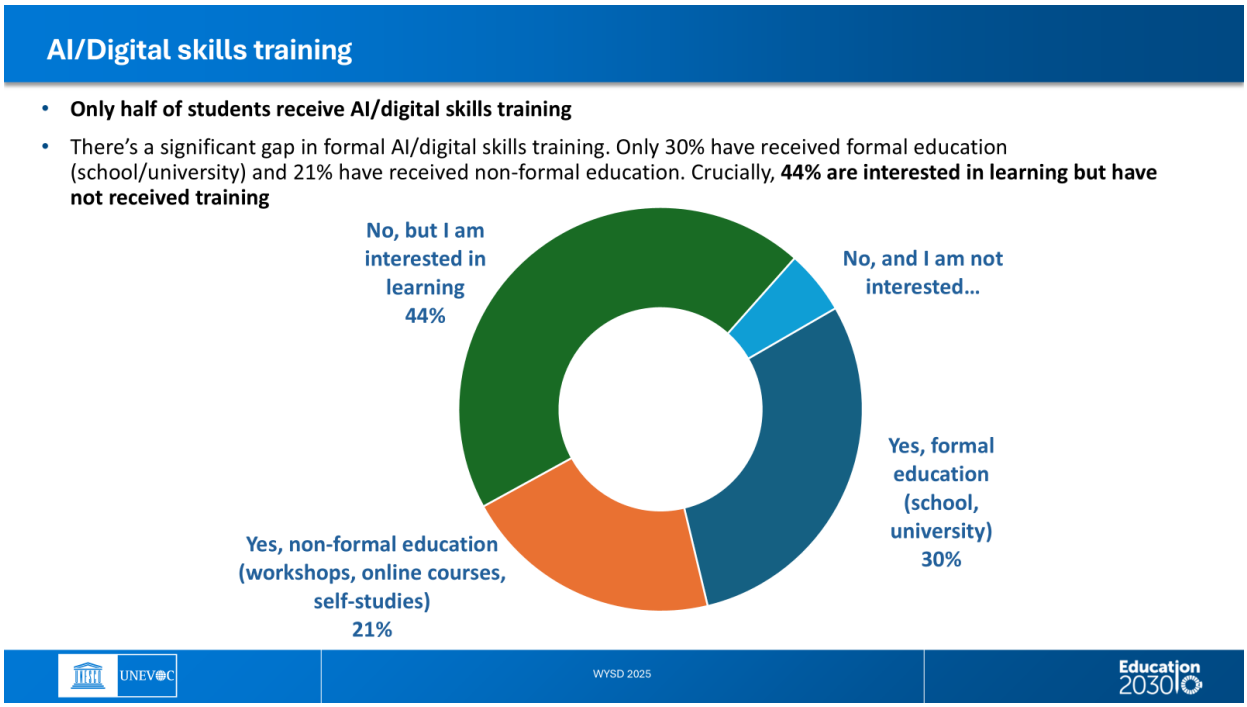
AI usage in education (learning and training)





AI is widely used by learners for research, writing and personalized and self-directed learning, but remains underutilized in creative areas like storytelling and design and is even less used in more complex learning processes where technical skills would be required to use AI tools for deeper and complex engagement. This indicates organic adoption without full integration across all learning contexts.

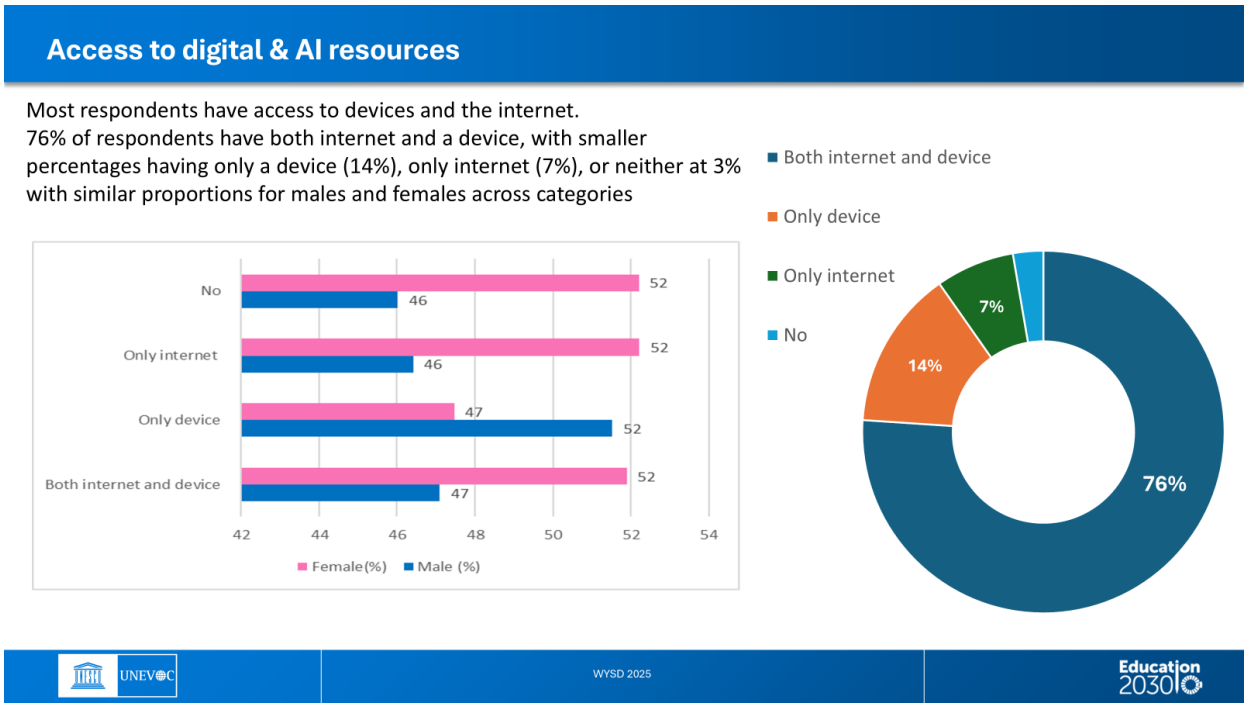
Discussion: For TVET institutions and educators, there is a need to strengthen existing high-use areas, introduce pilots in underused applications like career guidance and mental health, and make tools more accessible through onboarding and user support. It is also necessary to expand skills development that can allow for taking full advantage of the potential of these tools in engaging youth for higher and technical fields that can apply AI to support solutions to complex problems.



The findings reveal a youth perception of existing deficits in formal training for AI and digital skills. Only 30% of respondents had received structured instruction in these areas, while an additional 44% expressed a clear interest in such training but currently lack access.

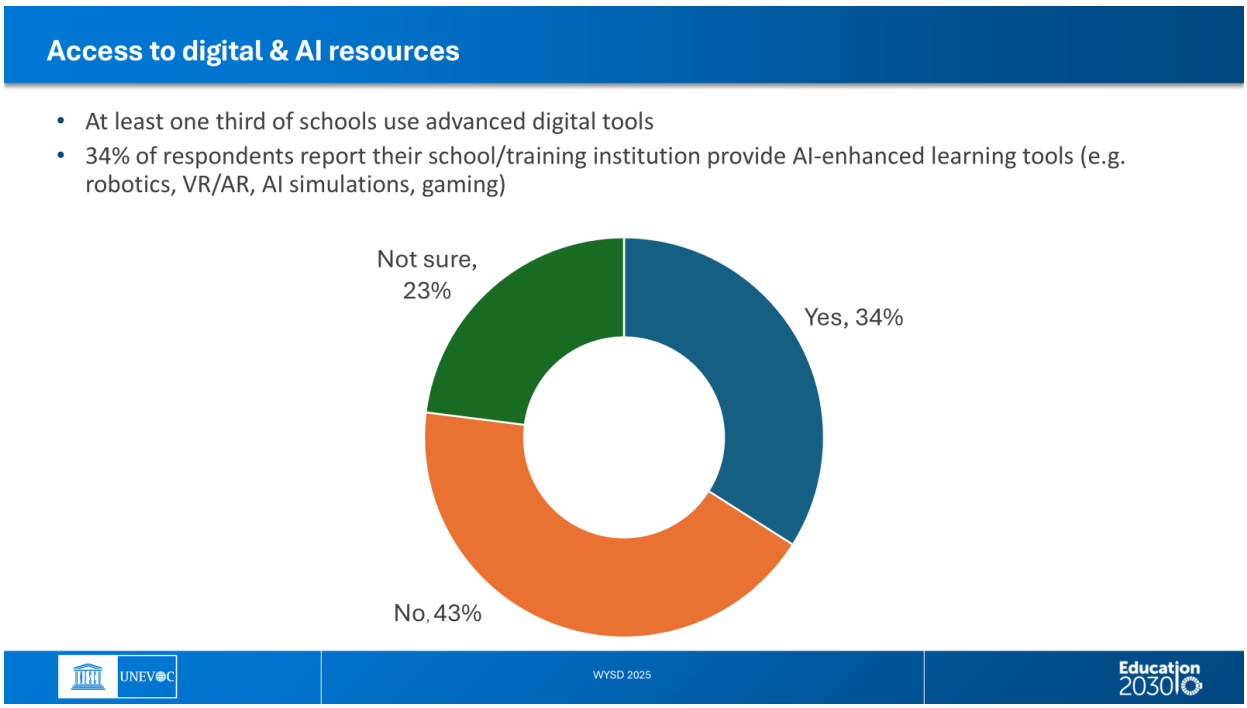
Discussion: This significant disparity underscores a pronounced and unmet demand for formalized AI education, highlighting the need for expanded training opportunities and targeted interventions to bridge the skills gap.

Access to digital and AI resources



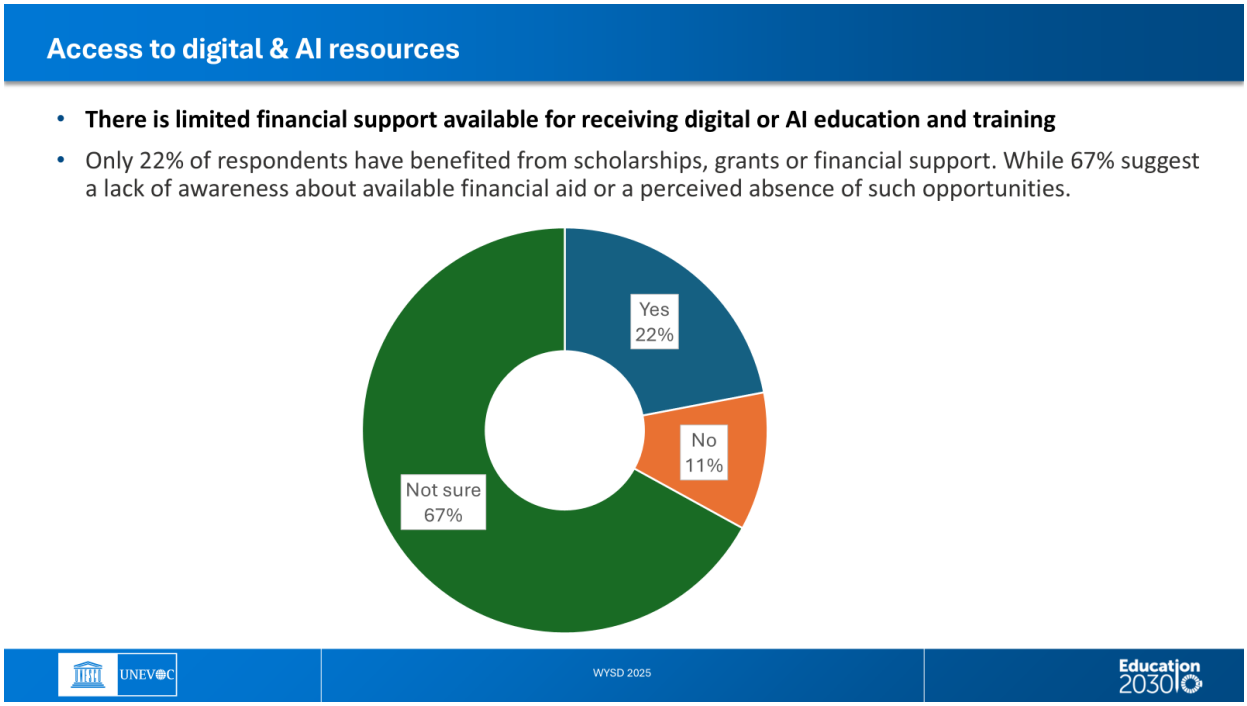
While 76% of respondents report having access to both internet and digital devices, a significant 24% still lack reliable connectivity or equipment. Furthermore, financial barriers continue to limit access to digital and AI training for many.

Discussion: This indicates that despite broad nominal access, digital inclusion remains uneven, with deeper structural challenges—such as affordability, connectivity quality and infrastructure gaps—hindering equitable participation in digital learning.



A significant institutional gap persists in the integration of advanced digital educational technologies. Survey data indicate that only 34% of respondents report their schools have access to AI-enhanced learning tools.

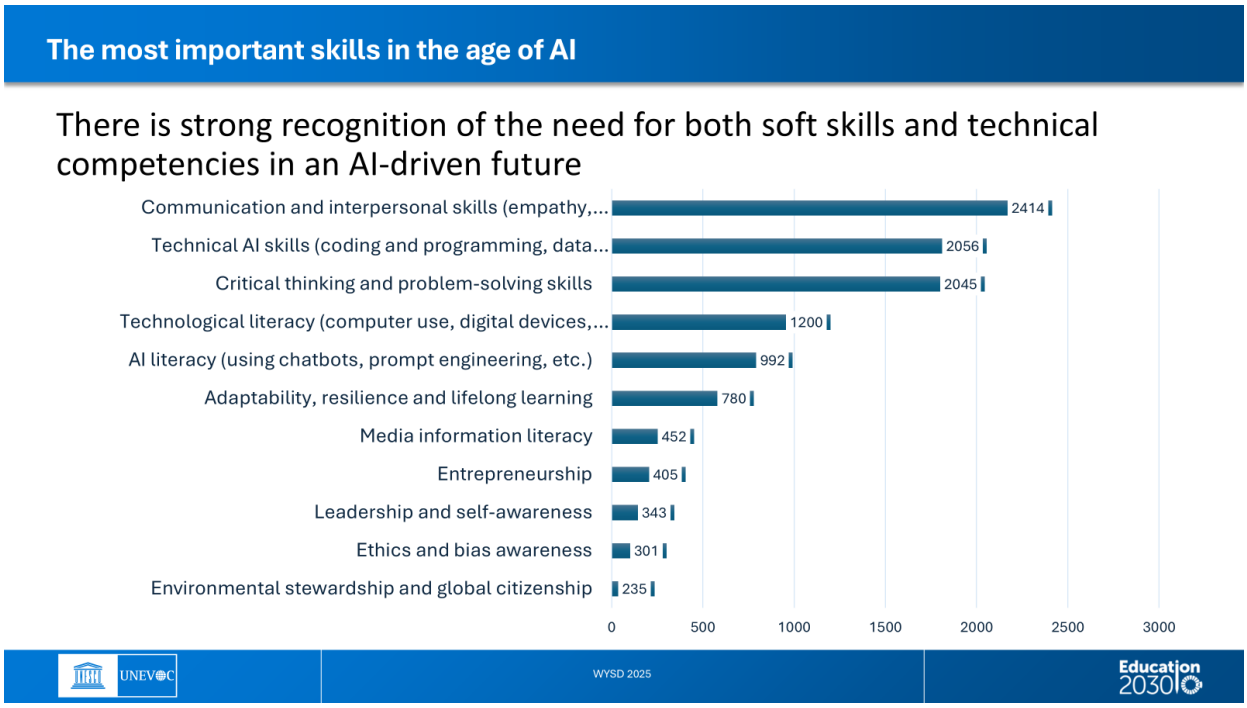
Discussion: This low adoption rate underscores a considerable lag within educational institutions regarding the implementation of contemporary digital resources designed to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. The limited penetration of AI-driven technologies in schools highlights the urgent need for targeted policy interventions and investment to bridge this institutional divide and ensure equitable access to innovative educational solutions.



The data reveal a pronounced gap in both the provision and awareness of financial support for digital and AI education. Only 22% of respondents reported having received financial assistance for such educational initiatives, while 67% indicated uncertainty regarding the availability of relevant funding opportunities.

Discussion: This pattern highlights not only a shortage of direct financial support but also significant informational barriers, suggesting that existing funding mechanisms may be insufficiently publicized or accessible to intended beneficiaries. Addressing these dual challenges will require both increased investment and enhanced communication strategies to ensure that learners are aware of and able to access available resources.

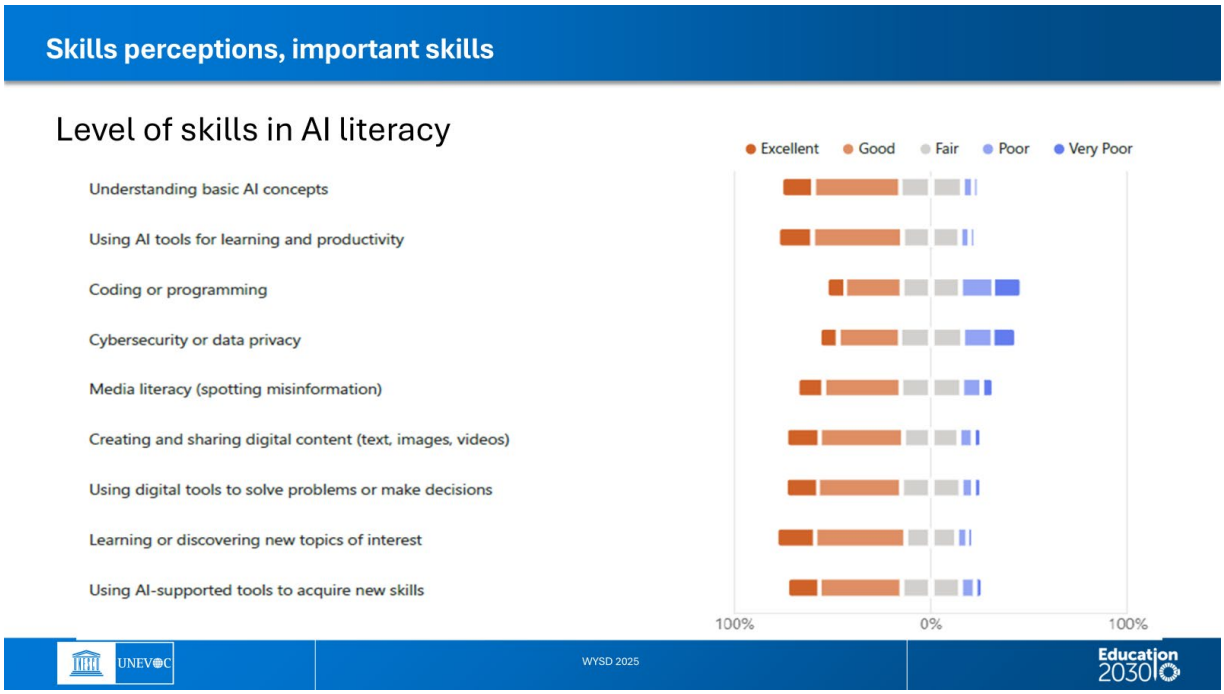
Skills for an AI-driven future of work

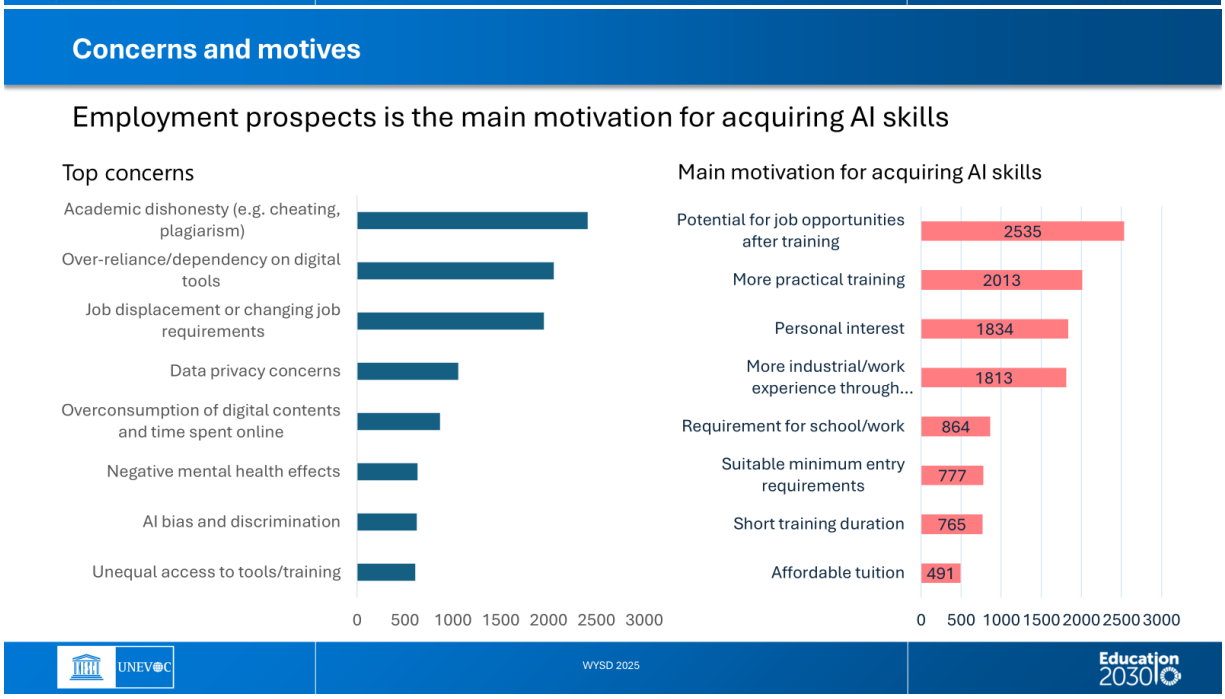


Survey results indicate that youth place equal importance on communication and interpersonal skills (2,414 responses) and technical AI competencies (2,056 responses). This balanced prioritization reflects a sophisticated understanding among young people that effective AI integration in education and the workforce necessitates both robust technical expertise and strong human-centric skills. The data suggest that youth recognize the value of a holistic skill set, where technical proficiency is complemented by the ability to collaborate, communicate and engage effectively with others.

Furthermore, the high prioritization of critical thinking and problem-solving skills (2,045 responses) underscores a widespread awareness that AI technologies are most effective when paired with human judgment and analytical capacity.

Discussion: This emphasis reveals that youth not only appreciate the technical aspects of AI but also understand the indispensable role of human insight in interpreting, applying and overseeing AI-driven solutions. Collectively, these findings highlight a forward-thinking perspective among youth, who view the future of AI as one that is fundamentally interdisciplinary, blending technical, cognitive and interpersonal competencies.

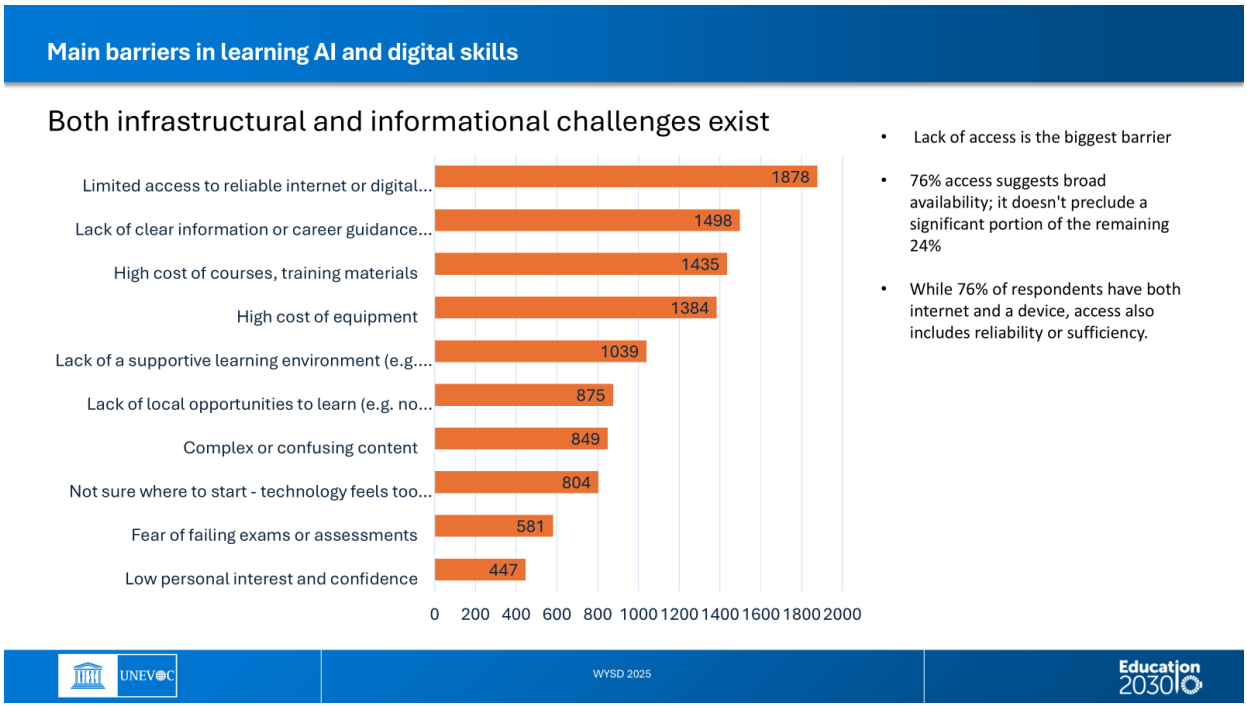




The results demonstrate that job opportunities (2,535 responses) and access to practical training (2,013 responses) are the leading factors that can raise youth motivation and engagement in AI skills development. This pattern reflects a pragmatic, career-oriented approach, with respondents prioritizing AI education as a means to enhance employability and secure better job prospects.

Discussion: The findings align with broader labour market trends, where AI competencies are increasingly recognized by employers as critical for workforce readiness and professional advancement. The emphasis on practical training further underscores the demand for applied, hands-on learning experiences that directly translate to workplace requirements. Collectively, these insights highlight the importance of aligning AI education initiatives with labour market needs to support youth in navigating a rapidly evolving employment landscape.

Main barriers to AI and digital skills learning

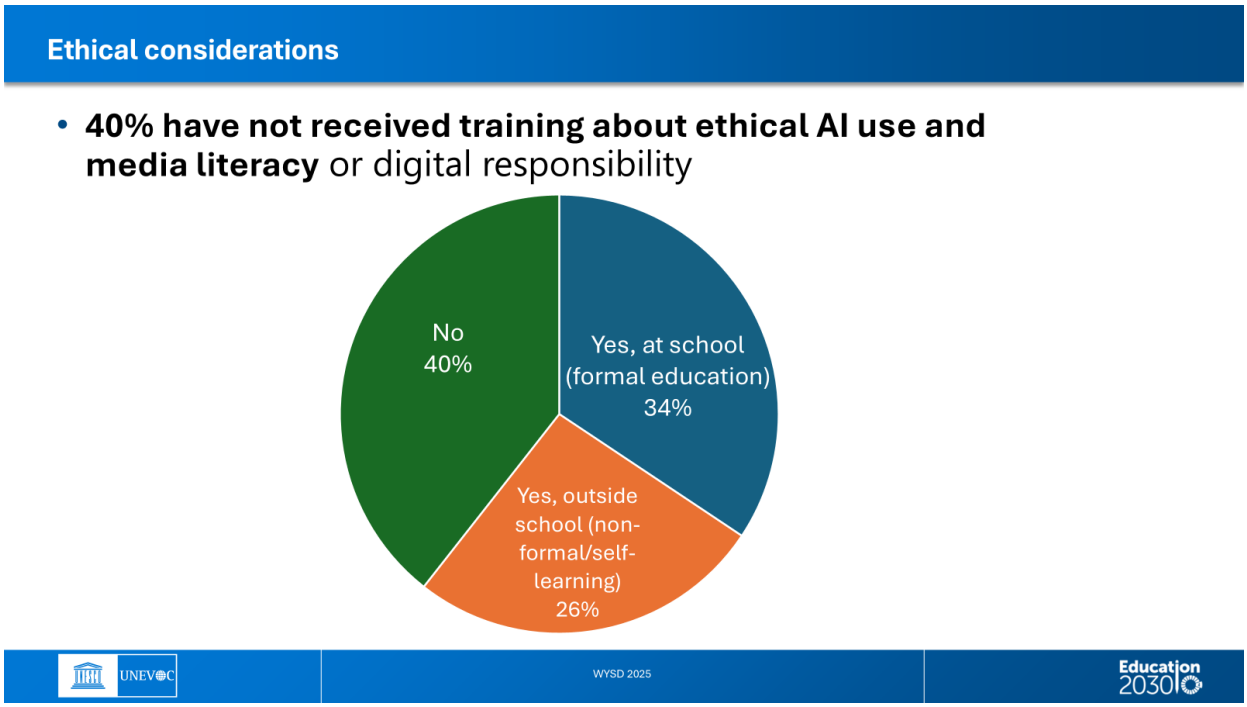


Infrastructure as a primary barrier to AI and digital skills learning

Survey data indicate that limited internet access (1,878 responses) and high equipment costs (1,384 responses) are the most significant barriers to acquiring AI and digital skills. These findings confirm that persistent infrastructure challenges—specifically inadequate connectivity and prohibitive costs for necessary devices—continue to impede equitable access to digital learning, despite reported improvements in overall access levels.

Discussion: This pattern is consistent with broader research, which highlights that resource constraints and gaps in digital infrastructure remain substantial obstacles to the widespread adoption of AI-enhanced education, particularly in underserved communities. Addressing these foundational barriers is essential for ensuring that advancements in digital education reach all learners and do not exacerbate existing inequities.

Ethical considerations



Survey data indicate that 40% of respondents have not received any formal training on the ethical use of AI, highlighting a critical gap in current educational provision. This deficit raises significant concerns regarding the preparedness of learners to navigate the complex ethical challenges associated with AI technologies. Without structured instruction in responsible AI use, there is an increased risk of problematic applications and misuse, as individuals may lack the necessary frameworks to assess the societal and ethical implications of their actions.

The prevalence of this gap suggests that existing AI education initiatives are predominantly focused on technical skills development, with insufficient emphasis on ethical principles and responsible use. This trend is consistent with recent findings in literature, which emphasize the need for comprehensive AI literacy frameworks that integrate ethical reasoning and decision-making alongside technical competencies. Addressing this shortcoming is essential to ensure that future users and developers of AI systems are equipped not only with technical expertise but also with the critical judgment required for ethical and responsible innovation.

Discussion areas

1. **Digital equity and access**

The survey reveals a complex access landscape where basic connectivity statistics (76% with internet and device) mask deeper issues of reliability, quality and institutional support. The rural-urban divide and infrastructure barriers suggest that digital equity requires more nuanced approaches than simple device distribution.

2. **Gender and educational pathway integration**

The intersection of gender segregation in education fields and AI skills training raises questions about how to ensure equitable access to AI competencies. The concentration of males in technical fields and females in education/social sciences may create gendered AI skills gaps that require targeted interventions.

3. **Formal vs. informal learning balance**

The survey shows youth are actively using AI tools (informal learning) while receiving limited formal training. Whereas they recognize both the learning and potential employment impact on individual success and skills building, the opportunities to succeed are relative across the youth population where gender, access to educational pathways, institutional uptake and capacities to take full advantage of AI's potential in education and training settings come into play. This suggests a need to bridge organic adoption with structured pedagogical integration and approaches that include ethical considerations and critical thinking frameworks.

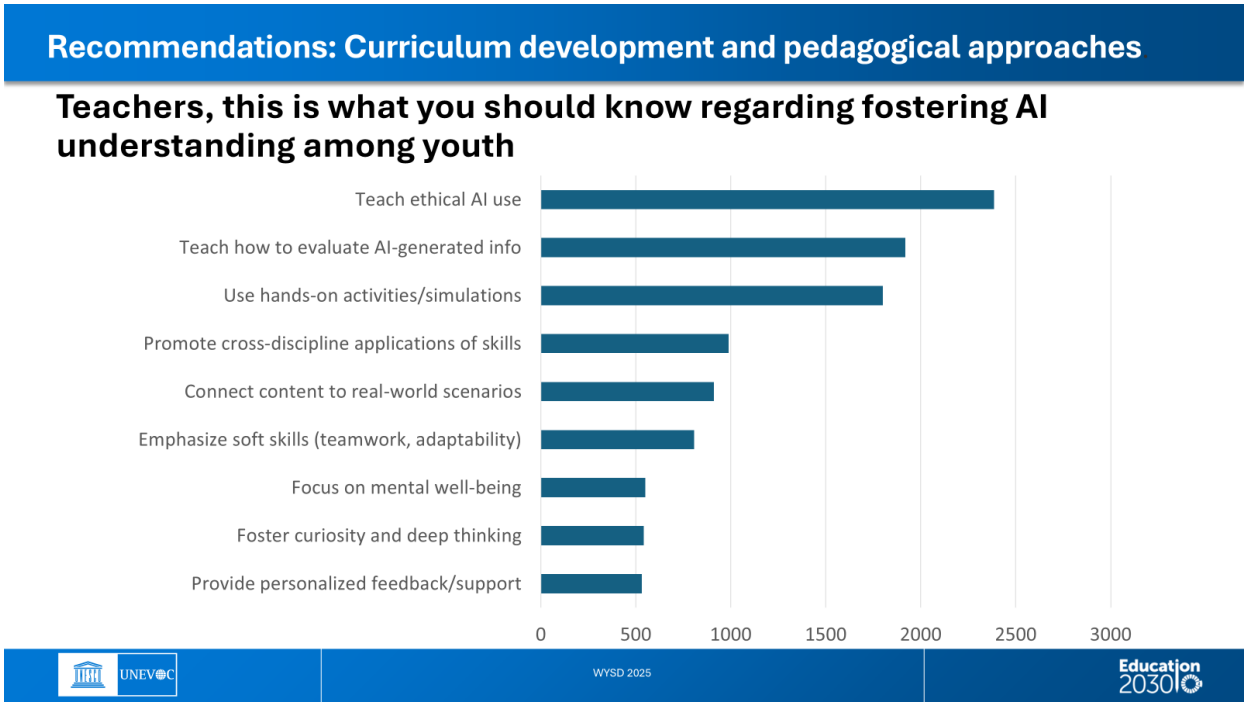
4. **Youth agency in AI governance**

The strong desire for policy participation (72% viewing engagement as important) contrasts with limited current participation. This represents an opportunity to harness youth perspectives in shaping AI governance frameworks that will affect their futures.

5. **Ethical AI education integration**

The 40% gap in ethical AI training, combined with sophisticated awareness of AI risks, suggests readiness for comprehensive ethical AI education that goes beyond technical skills to include responsible use, bias awareness and critical evaluation of AI outputs.

Conclusions and recommendations



Survey data on curriculum development and pedagogical approaches highlight that teachers should prioritize fostering ethical AI use among youth, as this was the most recommended strategy. Other top recommendations include teaching students how to critically evaluate AI-generated information and incorporating hands-on activities or simulations to enhance practical understanding. Respondents also emphasize the importance of promoting cross-disciplinary skills, connecting learning to real-world scenarios and developing soft skills such as teamwork and adaptability. Additionally, there is recognition of the need to focus on students' mental well-being, encourage curiosity and deep thinking, and provide personalized feedback and support.

Discussion: Collectively, these insights suggest that an effective AI education should be holistic, integrating ethical, practical and interpersonal dimensions to prepare students for the complexities of an AI-driven world.

Recommendations: Support required by youth on applying AI more effectively in learning/work

Theme	Needs / insights
Training & guidance	- Hands-on workshops, practical tutorials, real-world case studies - Clear ethical-use guidelines (academic honesty, privacy)
Access & infrastructure	- Reliable internet, modern devices, premium AI tools - Affordable access; localized languages; accessibility features
Institutional & peer Support	- Integration into curricula and teacher training - Mentorship from AI experts; peer communities/forums for knowledge sharing
Ethical use & best Practices	- Guidance on critically evaluating AI outputs - Strategies to avoid over-reliance and misuse

"Access to high-quality training and resources on how to effectively use AI tools for learning and work would be invaluable. This would include tutorials, workshops and ongoing support to address challenges and questions as they arise. Additionally, having a community or forum where users can share best practices and troubleshoot problems would significantly enhance the learning experience and promote effective AI usage."

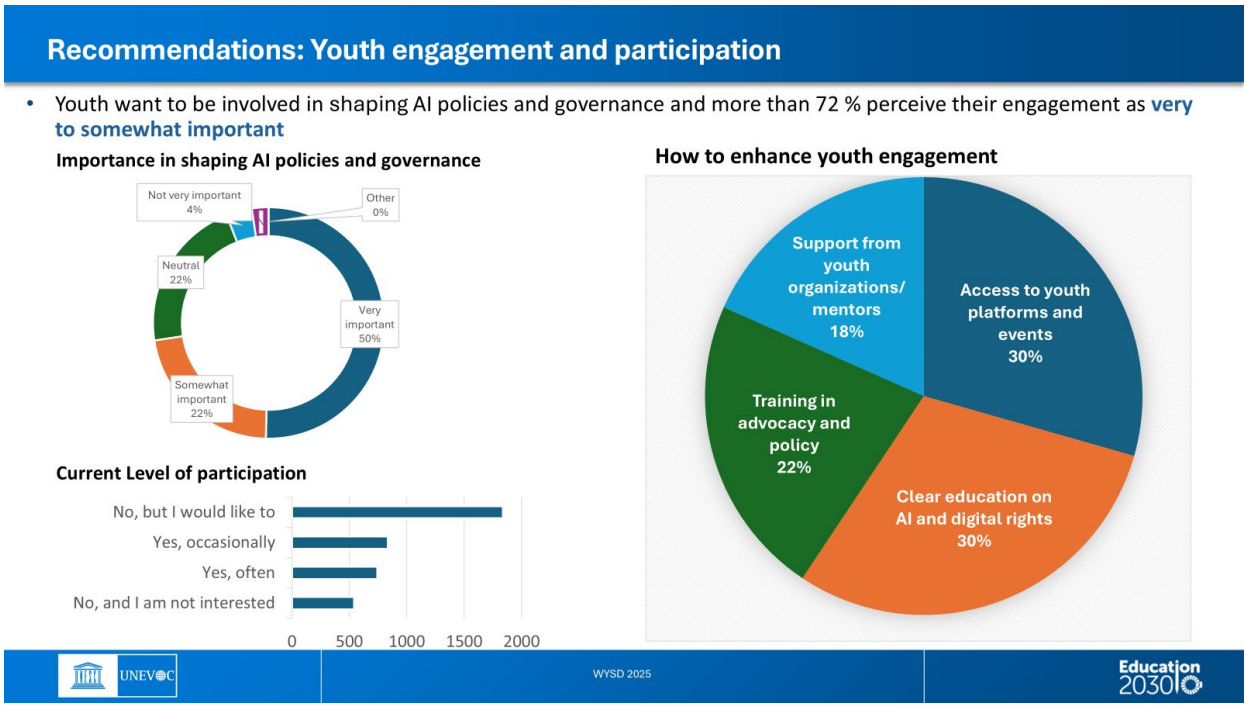
"Financial support for internet and AI materials accessibility as well as training fee".

"Directional support form trainers"

Recommendations based on the survey results highlight youth demand for comprehensive support to effectively integrate AI into learning and work. A key focus is on **practical, hands-on training**, including workshops and real-world case studies, coupled with clear ethical guidelines to address concerns like academic integrity and privacy. Youth also emphasize the need for **reliable infrastructure**, such as affordable internet and modern devices, alongside localized and accessible AI tools to ensure inclusiveness. These insights reveal a critical gap between the potential of AI and the current lack of structured resources, underscoring the urgency for institutional investment in both technical and ethical training.

Beyond infrastructure, youth have called for **systemic changes**, including AI integration into formal curricula and stronger peer support networks. Mentorship programmes and community forums are seen as vital for knowledge sharing and troubleshooting. Financial barriers—such as high training costs and inaccessible tools—remain significant obstacles, particularly for marginalized groups.

Discussion: The recommendations collectively stress that empowering youth in the AI-driven future requires not only **technical upskilling** but also fostering **ethical awareness** and **collaborative learning ecosystems**. Addressing these needs calls for coordinated efforts from educators, policy-makers and industry leaders to create equitable opportunities for all.

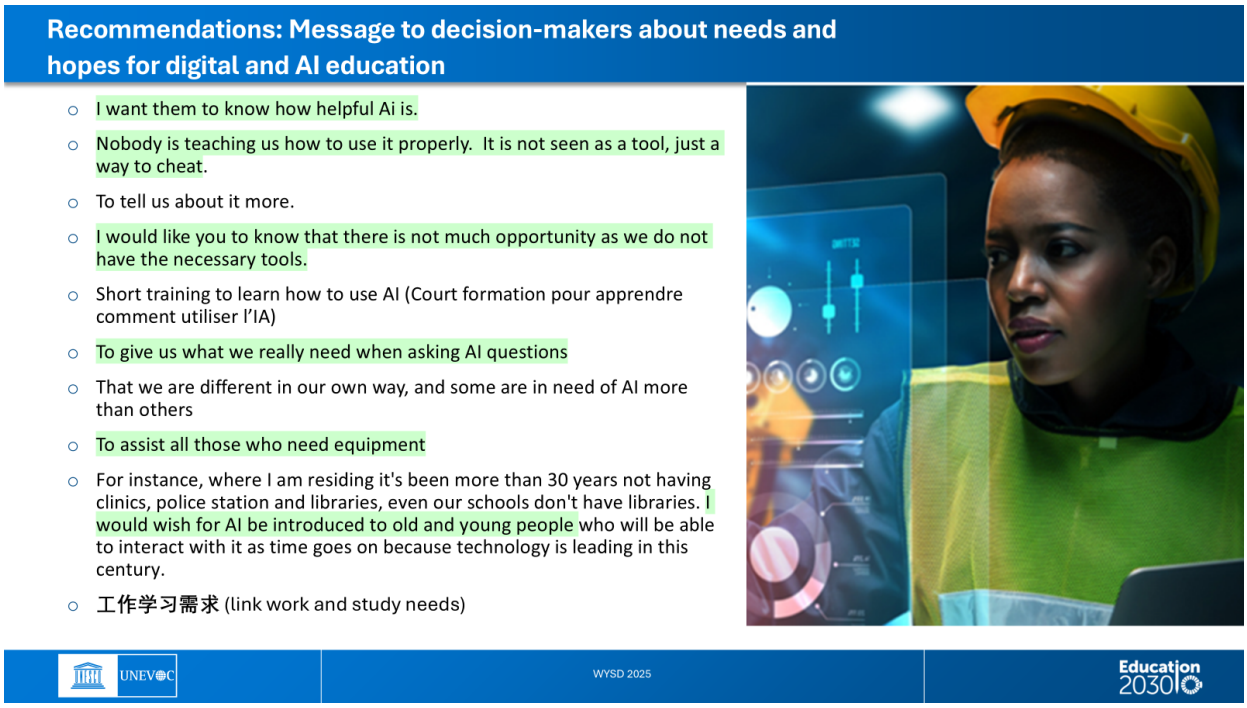


Survey findings reveal a pronounced desire among youth for meaningful participation in AI policy-making, with 72% of respondents indicating that their engagement in AI policy is important. Despite this strong interest, actual participation level remains low, highlighting a significant gap between youth aspirations and current opportunities for involvement. This discrepancy underscores a substantial, yet largely untapped, potential for democratic engagement in the governance of AI and digital technologies.

Key barriers identified by young people include limited access to participatory platforms (30%) and a lack of clear education on their rights and mechanisms for engagement (30%).

Discussion: These obstacles suggest that, while youth are motivated to contribute to AI policy, they are often hindered by structural and informational constraints. The literature and recent policy analyses emphasize that addressing these barriers—by expanding access to participatory spaces, providing targeted education on civic rights, and fostering inclusive, youth-centered policy processes—is essential for realizing the full democratic potential of youth in AI governance.

Recent international initiatives and policy recommendations consistently call for the integration of youth perspectives in AI governance frameworks, the establishment of advisory boards and the co-design of policy mechanisms that are accessible and relevant to young people. Without such measures, the risk remains that youth will continue to be marginalized in decisions that directly impact their futures, despite their demonstrated readiness and willingness to engage.



Key findings

1. **Infrastructure inequality:** While basic access appears adequate, quality and reliability issues create persistent barriers to advanced AI learning.
2. **Gender segregation impact:** Traditional educational gender patterns are likely creating disparities in AI and digital skills acquisition.
3. **Ethical education gap:** Technical AI skills training is outpacing ethical AI education, creating potential risks.
4. **Youth engagement potential:** Strong desire for policy participation remains largely untapped.
5. **Practical learning demand:** Youth show pragmatic, career-focused approaches to AI skills acquisition.

Strategic recommendations

- **Infrastructure investment:** Focus on reliable, high-quality internet access and institutional technology support rather than basic connectivity metrics.
- **Gender-inclusive AI education:** Develop targeted programmes to ensure equitable AI skills development across all educational pathways and fields of study.
- **Integrated ethical training:** Make ethical AI education mandatory and comprehensive, not optional or supplementary.
- **Youth policy engagement:** Create accessible mechanisms for youth participation in AI governance and policy development.
- **Holistic skills development:** Balance technical AI competencies with critical thinking, communication and ethical reasoning skills.
- **Financial support systems:** Improve both funding availability and information access about digital/AI education financial support.

Future considerations

The survey reveals a generation of youth who are sophisticated consumers and critics of AI technology, ready for more advanced and comprehensive AI education. Their pragmatic approach to skills acquisition, combined with strong ethical awareness and democratic engagement desires, positions them as valuable partners in developing responsible AI integration frameworks.

The challenge lies in bridging the gap between their current informal AI usage and the formal, ethical and comprehensive AI education they need to thrive in an AI-integrated future. This requires coordinated efforts across educational institutions, policy-makers and technology providers to create equitable, accessible and responsible AI education pathways.

World Youth Skills Day 2025

Youth survey report on AI and digital skills

Drawing on insights from over 4,000 respondents across 128 countries, this survey report examines how young people are navigating both the opportunities and challenges of the digital era. While 62% of youth are already using AI in real-world contexts, only 30% have received formal training — highlighting critical gaps in access, ethics and infrastructure.

These findings underscore the need for equitable digital education, responsible AI integration and greater youth participation in policy-making, offering valuable guidance for supporting youth in harnessing the skills and opportunities they need for a digital future.