

The NationalThe National

Abu Dhabi, UAE Sunday 19 November 2017

UAE Edition

International Edition



Around 1,300 students from more than 70 countries will take part in 51 skill competitions during of WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017, which will be held at Adnec between October 15 and 18. Photo Courtesy WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017

In recent years, the UAE has taken a sharp turn towards a knowledge-based economy (<https://www.thenational.ae/uae/government/long-term-plan-for-the-uae-paves-the-way-for-prosperous-generations-1.661895>), preparing its future generations to face the challenges of a world where technological innovations and digital evolution have changed, and are still changing, economies.

These changes have had repercussions on traditional education systems, leading authorities around the world to introduce reforms in curricula to cater to the needs of an ever-evolving job market. Students and pupils will have to look beyond traditional skills and develop talents that prepare them to be nimble in

responding to unpredictable developments -- whether that is in the field of robotics and artificial intelligence or in biotechnology and so on.

And that is precisely what this country has initiated, as the government introduced reforms in education with the beginning of the new academic year to help shape students and pupils for the future. "Natural resources are not everlasting. However, the intellectual person who pioneers the future and adapts to global changes will persevere," said Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice President and Ruler of Dubai, last week during the Annual Government Meeting.

And this is also why Abu Dhabi chose to host the upcoming WorldSkills competition (<https://worldskillsabudhabi2017.com/en/>), encouraging future generations to tap into unexplored talents. It is, in a way, an attempt to "future-proof" the economy (<https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/editorial/the-uae-is-preparing-for-the-century-ahead-1.662162>). In this manner, the workforce of tomorrow will have all the skills needed to cater to all sectors of the economy, vocational and technical skills being no exception. From cybersecurity to nursing, landscaping and others, many possibilities lie ahead. And such is the vastness of the horizon of possibilities, we need to be ready for the full range of jobs.

This will require creativity, skill and talent. But above all, it will require perseverance and a willingness to explore new possibilities throughout one's career. In other words, keep learning.

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Read more on WorldSkills Abu Dhabi

50,000 UAE pupils sign up to visit world's largest vocational skills competition (<https://www.thenational.ae/uae/50-000-uae-pupils-sign-up-to-visit-world-s-largest-vocational-skills-competition-1.484352>)

Countdown to WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017: How ancient skills create jewels for the modern woman (<https://www.thenational.ae/uae/countdown-to-worldskills-abu-dhabi-2017-how-ancient-skills-create-jewels-for-the-modern-woman-1.660881>)