

Foreword by ETH Zurich Rector Sarah M. Springman

How can we prepare our university graduates for a future that is increasingly uncertain, a future that will demand problem-solving on a global scale, a future where paradigms can change within days or weeks?

The COVID-19 pandemic, emerging at the back end of 2019 and charging into and through 2020, acutely foreshadows this uncertain future, and brought sweeping changes on a global scale. Just like in most universities around the world, ETH Zurich's staff and students had to undertake heroic, unprecedented measures to uphold teaching and research, while doing our best to keep members of our university safe. What would have been an extremely innovative and engaging international conference entitled "The Future-Ready Graduate", with over six hundred participants from all around the world, who would have been giving hundreds of presentations at ICED 2020, had to be cancelled: *just like that*.

We had planned to host a highly interactive forum to discuss educational development strategies that foster the skills, attitudes and competences required by university graduates to face an uncertain future: critical thinking, life-long learning, communication, improvisation, intercultural intelligence, data-driven and science-based decision-making, agility, adaptability, and timeless qualities such as integrity, curiosity, resilience and stamina. Cancellation of ICED 2020 was extremely sad for the international educational development community, and, on the face of things, a setback.

The conference was prepared before the pandemic hit. However, these ICED papers have all been coloured by the events of 2020, and many have been visibly adapted to take into account the year's ongoing lessons. They provide a truly fascinating record of the educational developments that have evolved throughout this period. In publishing the ICED 2020 conference proceedings, the hard work of all contributors has been honoured.

At the heart of all challenges lie exciting and often unthinkable opportunities that can stimulate astonishing paradigm shifts. So, it has been in 2020. The current crisis, even when it is "over", will have brought about irreversible changes to the way we live, work and interact globally. It remains to be seen how the world will learn from its sobering experience. But what new ways forward has the pandemic shown us?

The measures taken by ETH and higher education institutions around the globe – for example, putting teaching online at the speed of light, accompanied by didactic, technological and social considerations, have enabled an unprecedented, unparalleled learning experience. They have catapulted us into a new age. Here one might argue that although the conference was cancelled in its intended form, its reflections have, due to COVID-19, become more relevant than ever!

Higher education has been subjected to enormous disruption, with unforeseeable consequences. However, "unforeseeable" does not mean "unshapeable". As educators, we are being called upon to shape post-COVID higher education actively and dynamically. Are we ready for this future? We hope that the ICED 2020 proceedings, viewed in light of what we have learned in 2020, will help us to gather our thoughts and develop tools that our graduates may use to be ready for whatever the future holds.

We wish you a great read.

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