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What are the future prospects for the human race?

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Well, first of all, 20 years is a very long period of time. I think it's very difficult to make an accurate forecast of what may happen. It would somehow constrain human freedom, human creativity. So it's probably a long period of time. But from the history of higher education, there are a few themes or ideas that we can rely upon. And perhaps the evolution of society and learning, and actually the expectations that society and organizations and companies have about the education and development of young people. We can draw some conclusions or some ideas. I think the first is that we're going to live and I think each generation has to go through the same challenge, but it's true that we're going to live in a world that is becoming more complex. And the complexity of the world comes over the next years, not only because we have limited resources or that we have additional needs, it's because we have created a world which is in many ways interdependent. It's not just about globalization, it's about the impact of technology on personal and societal relations. It's about the development in the business world of those very deeply integrated, the global value chains by which companies actually distribute throughout the world, different parts of the whole activity that the company actually develops. So a number of issues that actually have made our world a bit more complex. And I think that in this world of, you know, which becomes more complex, there are some ideas about the purpose of higher education that can help us think about how we can better prepare the next generation of students, okay, for this complex world. I think that there is a first goal, a first objective of higher education, which is I think very important, which is to offer students a deep knowledge, a deep understanding of the specific area, the specific themes that are covered by a certain university degree, okay? So somebody who wants to study chemistry or somebody who wants to study math, or somebody who wants to study literature. Obviously, you know, any higher education institution has to be good at providing that specific content, that specific area of knowledge, okay, that's very important. And obviously, in this complex world, the contribution that a person can make also depends on his or her command of that specific knowledge. That's very important. But I think that as the world gets a bit more complex, I think there are a couple of dimensions that we should not forget about that have been always very much part of higher education, okay, throughout the centuries. We go back to the first universities in Europe, in Spain, in Italy, in the UK, also in other parts of the world, for instance, in India. The purpose of higher education was also to try to help young people understand the world a bit better, okay? Understand the context where actually they live, where they come from, and how this context is going to evolve. And that involves a type of education that has to do not just with the specific knowledge of the area, the theme, OK, that actually shapes a specific college degree. It's also about understanding history, understanding literature, understanding the great artistic contributions, understanding how society has evolved. And this is more important than ever. It's always important. But in this world that becomes more complex, trying to find meaning, trying to find understanding

is really part of what young people actually need and expect. And so we need to somehow balance this, I would say, very pressing need that we see in our universities for a specialized vertical type of education with a horizontal education that actually helps people make sense and understand, you know, the world we live in. Okay, so this is the T-shaped type of education that we need to consider. But this is more important today than ever, okay, because of this complexity. And then there was a third point, which is very important. In a world that actually changes very quickly, where we have this dense web of interconnections between people, countries, companies, organisations, governments, it's more important than ever that higher education institutions give students the opportunity to get to know themselves deeper and better, okay? Not just for self-assessment, obviously, self-assessment is something very important, but also to help them unlock all the potential that every person actually has. And this is very important because it's true that this complexity that we're seeing in the world makes things a bit more difficult for people in general. We see this mismatch in many advanced countries, not just in developing countries, in advanced countries, between the capabilities that companies and organizations actually need and the capabilities that students graduate with from higher education institutions. But it's not just about the mismatch, it's about how we help young people find a place in the world, not just in terms of jobs, in terms of professional work, but also in terms of their flourishing as individuals, as human beings. Because prosperity in society depends not only on wealth creation, which is very important, but also on how people can build a good life, okay, with all the, you know, not just the knowledge, but also the virtues, the capabilities that they are able but also the virtues, the capabilities that they are able to develop during their years at university.

Transcribed with Cockatoo