
WORK STREAM 4: RE-SKILLING, UP-SKILLING AND MICRO-CREDENTIALS ROUNDTABLE 2 | MINUTES

DATE & TIME: October 20, 2021 | 10.00 - 11.30 AM CET

PRESENT: *(alphabetically listed)*

Aiofe O'Shea, Zurich Insurance
Alastair McMenamin, Zurich Insurance
David Espinosa, UNI Europa
Eirini Papadopoulou, Seldia
Iwona Ganko, European Training Foundation
Jelena Šapić, Reshaping Work
Jovana Karanović, Reshaping Work
Kalle Palling, Cachet
Laure Alexandre, Seldia
Laure Joachim, The Adecco Group

Lizeth Tijssen, Zurich Insurance
Maudie Derks, Acture Group
Natalija Counet, Amsterdam Economic Board
Olivia Blanchard, Digital Future Society
Roos Wouters, De Werkvereniging
Sebastian Köhler, Delivery Hero
Thanos Moysiadis, Uber
Wiggert de Haan, Roamlar
Wouter Zwysen, ETUI

ABSENT:

Alok Alström, AppJobs
Bertan Baytekin, AppJobs

Dimitris Theodorakis, UNI Europa
Ignacio Doreste, ETUC

AGENDA:

▶ **Project Updates:**

- October edition of tailor-made [monthly policy briefing](#) sent on October 12, 2021
- Expert Lecture by Konstantinos Pouliakas, Expert in Education and Training Expert at CEDEFOP is available in the Member Library along with lectures of the work stream on access to social protection (Jeremias Adams-Prassl) and algorithmic transparency (Ivana Bartoletti). The videos are for internal purpose only
- Edited volume of blogs prepared and published on the occasion of the World Day for Decent Work is available [here](#)
- The afternoon sessions of the Future of Work Conference (September 10) are available on the [YouTube channel](#)

➤ **DISCUSSION TOPIC: NAVIGATION, TRANSLATION, PORTABILITY**

Skills gaps, shortages and mismatches act as a brake on innovation and adoption of advanced technologies. Emerging skills, such as digital, green and clean tech skills, are a pressing challenge, while a broader set of traditional skills, such as problem solving, communication, creativity, readiness to learn, and critical thinking, are increasingly demanded by organisations and the market. There are many different skills taxonomies available O*Net, European ESCO, the U.K. Skills Taxonomy, and Singapore's Skills Framework, as well as AI-based approaches to building skills taxonomies used by companies like IBM or Skyhive. In order to be able to address skill mismatch and prepare the workforce for the work of tomorrow and growing demands of today, it is important to be clear about which skills they need to develop, how they can develop those and prove that they have certain skills. Using the shared principles and language in skill development would support making skills transferrable and micro-credentials legit for, for example, inter-sectoral or upward mobility.

In particular, the second roundtable focused on how stakeholders select and prioritise skills development, what taxonomy they rely on, how they translate highly demanded skills into up-skilling and re-skilling programs and work with micro-credentials, as well how skills portability and recognizability of micro-credentials can be ensured across the EU Member States.

- Proliferation of taxonomies and terminology at organisational levels creates misunderstanding between different stakeholders. Another issue is trust and responsibility. Parties on the receiving end would need to have trust in exported credentials and to responsibly act around data they receive in the way they process it and implement it on their portals.
- At the moment, traditional organisations are easier to accept exported credentials by a platform and may benefit more, because their internal processes are too resource-intensive (e.g., it requires someone to review, carry out, and monitor process of credentials development and export which is inefficient). On the other hand, exchange of credentials between platforms will take time (currently, there are no clear incentives to require data processed by another platform) and will be either done through a third party or directly, points Roamler.
 - However, it is an open question how to ensure micro-credentials transfer. In the Netherlands, there is an ongoing discussion about issuing skills passport at the national level.
 - Issuing a digital badge could be one way around micro-credentials but it would require coordination among platforms to issue such 'recognisable' badges.
- As suggested by several stakeholders such as Zurich Insurance, it is necessary to select core soft skills to focus on.
- The Adecco Group, which needs to translate skills between employers and job seekers looks at around 15 soft skills that are transferable across most of top jobs (irrespective of whether it is a lower- or higher-level occupational job). Databases do not tell much about skills importance relative to jobs; that is why the Adecco Group emphasizes the importance of AI software and tools.
- LinkedIn provides plenty of learning materials, most of which are based on the American philosophy around soft skills, says Zurich Insurance, which is not applicable to European and other contexts. Furthermore, the quality of the LinkedIn learning materials is rather uneven.
- Roamler relies on its own skills classification. Embracing the gamification process established by Duolingo, a language learning application, they intend to break down skills to different levels and

- ▶ simultaneously attach them to certain tasks. By doing so, they would be able to direct workers towards things they need to learn, the tasks they may need to master, ultimately resulting in higher earnings, shall those newly acquired information be monetised.
- ▶ Zurich Insurance relies on World Economic Forum's [taxonomy](#) as a guide on how to consider and analyse skills. Based on the WEF taxonomy, they created internal framework which defines three levels of skills - leadership, functional, and transferable skills - on a global level leaving freedom and flexibility to individual functions and to countries for further adaptability. Each skills level has to be evaluated against proficiency levels.
- ▶ Skills in ride-hailing and delivery sectors are pre-decided for all the actors involved; they differ according to different jurisdictions (e.g., one set of requirements regarding a Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) licence is required in London, other in Brussels).
 - Nonetheless, a space for re-skilling and up-skilling exists so, for example, a person needs two different skillsets - before and after obtaining a PHV licence. Prior to getting the licence, they need to follow certain steps to become a professional driver. Afterwards, they need soft skills to maintain good customer relationships and these soft skills are teachable and transferable. Uber did such a project in partnership with JobReady in France, but the reception by drivers was not significant (the [source](#) in French). Therefore, Uber underlines not only the importance of skills codification but also purpose and motivation beyond it.
- ▶ Seldia, European Direct Selling Association, shed light on several challenges stemming from their experience and observations:
 - Challenge of recognition and transferability of skills - all Seldia's members have their training programs for independent sellers covering myriad of topics (from legal obligations, marketing, tech skills, up to soft skills). Commonalities within different programs have emerged, which opened the question of Seldia's role in establishing building blocks that would serve as a foundation for companies to develop learning programs and adhere to the skills recognition and transferability between member companies.
 - Besides individual companies' approaches, there are examples of structural sectoral approach. For example, in France, a trade association set an academy at the national level, whereas in other countries, local sector associations stepped up and created training programs. There are also examples of chambers of commerce developing and implementing training, particularly in specific sectors such as medical one.
 - Challenge of certification and validation of skills brings in questions of who should be responsible for it and how we should implement it (is it a company or an independent body, at what level, etc.).
- ▶ Discussion evolved around top-bottom approach, leaving out of the scope workers' involvement and their input on determining what skills are needed at workplace, points ETUI. Traditionally, collective bargaining at an industry helped map skills and training development accordingly. This bottom-up approach could be especially important in case of workers who are multihoming, as their inputs on what is missing and what is needed to help them perform better has not been covered by discussions.
 - On that note, Seldia underlined that its members develop training programs on the feedback of independent sellers as well. Some of the members employed AI software that facilitates training access.
 - The Adecco Group quoted a [study](#) depicting French learning and training landscape. According to its results, 49% of workers indicated they considered a career change within

2 years; yet, 55% think they are not well informed. This is despite the creation of

Individual Learning Accounts 2015, and heavy investment into this mechanism in the last few years across France, points the Group.

- ▶ Another sector worth drawing attention to is the care sector. In Spain, the care sector, both the formal and informal one, is enormous - it accounts for a third of all EU's domestic workers, points Digital Future Society. Many of care workers have a lot of experience but do not necessarily have formal training or certificate. The Spanish government has already postponed certification programs in institutional care multiple times. According to the [research results](#) of Digital Future Society, platform founders are in favour of the sector professionalization, but they did not provide workers with any training opportunities because, as they say, the platforms hire already professional workforce. Nonetheless, the platform founders welcome programs offering credentials and skills certification but have not considered such programs prior to interviews with Digital Future Society.
- ▶ The number of prospective students is growing; 20 new universities annually are needed in Europe to accommodate new comers, which is not feasible in the near future, says the Amsterdam Economic Board. Therefore, the future of higher education is not in physical buildings but microprocesses. The Adecco Group is a part of the Erasmus+ project [YUFE](#) aimed at building a 'university of tomorrow' that will allow students to learn and work across Europe and obtain a 'true' European degree. One of the discussions within the project is the difficulty of getting micro-credentials recognized at national and cross-national levels, although these are able to bring in lifelong learners and citizens.

▶ **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

- International organizations (like OECD) or supra-national organization (like European Commission) could establish the overall skills framework and provides actors with consolidated terminology and proposed course of action. These organisations could further perform certification role instead of training providers.
- Establishing an EU framework on micro-credentials that will facilitate and accelerate their recognition across sectors and countries.
- Platforms could coordinate on developing a 'digital badge', which could be portable between platforms and ensure labour-market mobility, giving workers more choice and flexibility.
- Workers' voices need to be incorporated so that there is a clear overview of skills they believe they need to improve their work performance.
- Policy makers should encourage and facilitate informal education, whereby workers can obtain formal certification but also soft skills that can be invaluable to their work performance and management of work-life balance.

NEXT STEPS & ROUNDTABLE:

- ▶ The third roundtable of this work stream is on November 10. The agenda will be sent by Friday, November 5 at the latest.
- ▶ The next monthly policy briefing will be sent in the week 8-12 November.

ADJOURNMENT:

- ▶ Minutes submitted by: Jelena Šapić
- ▶ Minutes approved on: TBA