



# BUILDING LIFELONG LEARNING SYSTEMS

Green Inclusive Digital



**ENSURING  
INCLUSIVENESS &  
ACCESS FOR ALL**

**#SKILLS4CHANGE**

# BACKGROUND

In the period of transformation that we are living through, we all need to become learners. Learning is a precondition for adaptation, resilience and personal growth. If people do not have access to learning, they miss out on development, opportunities and life satisfaction. It also jeopardises the cohesion of the society as a whole. The European Pillar of Social Rights makes access to quality education, training and lifelong learning for all citizens the first principle for building fairer societies. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and in particular SDG 4, sets targets to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

Despite countries' efforts to broaden access of citizens to education and training, there has been limited progress in achieving an equitable distribution of quality learning opportunities, especially for adults and for the most vulnerable. The pandemic has exacerbated the situation through its negative impact on learning outcomes for young people and the expected increase in drop outs rates. The green and digital transition is giving rise to new skills needs for both young people and adults, and this risks creating new vulnerabilities. Addressing existing inequalities in education, training and lifelong learning and preparing to address new learning needs is a priority to avoid wider and deeper divisions in society.

The challenges are many and require action at different levels. First, learners vary widely in terms of their motivation, preferred learning mode and existing level of knowledge and skills, as well as in their personal and professional interests and aspirations. The challenge is how to address the needs of a wide diversity of learners, and how to make learning appealing and useful to them all. Second, in recent years, we have seen positive trends in the diversification of education and training provision. Digital and online learning courses (massively expanded during the pandemic) and learning in the workplace provide alternative or complementary opportunities to traditional learning. Informal and non-formal learning are becoming more and more important for upskilling and reskilling. The challenge is how to build bridges between the different forms

of learning (formal, non-formal and informal) and create learning pathways towards visibility and recognition of skills people have, regardless of how and where they were acquired. Third, learners must be empowered and supported to take responsibility and steer their own learning. One challenge is how to inform learners and help them navigate the variety of training on offer and the changing world of work. Another is how to ensure they have the time and financial means to take part in learning. Last but not least, additional effort will be required to reach some groups of learners: disengaged youth, who have been failed by existing education systems, the low skilled, people in precarious employment, people in deprived areas and people who will need substantial upskilling and reskilling to find work or create their own jobs. Outreach services will be needed to engage them in learning. Early warning systems will be needed to limit the number of people in the most vulnerable categories, and learning opportunities will need to be made attractive and easily available to them.

In the face of all these challenges, is building an inclusive lifelong learning system utopian? Or can we still make it happen, and if so how?

The purpose of this session is to explore what should change to build more inclusive lifelong learning systems and identify possible solutions and policy actions to make it happen.

The discussion will be organized around the following questions:

- ▶ What do people need to become active learners?
- ▶ How can we broaden access to fit-for-purpose learning opportunities and ensure that people's skills are recognised?
- ▶ What are the policy priorities to ensure flexible and attractive lifelong learning systems that leave no one behind?

# AGENDA

14.00 **Welcome and warm up**

14.10 **Introductory remarks**

14.20 **First panel discussion: How can we broaden access to and visibility of skills?**

Biljana Radonjic Ker-Lindsay, Associate Director, Access to Skills and Employment, Gender and Economic Inclusion, Economics, Policy and Governance, EBRD

Fation Dragoshi, project manager of Skills for Job project, Albania

Marcel de Leeuwe, Leerbeleving B.V., Independent consultancy and training.

15.10 **Coffee Break**

15.15 **Second panel discussion: What are the policy priorities to ensure flexible and attractive lifelong learning systems?**

Alison Crabb, Head of Unit, Unit E2: Skills and Qualifications, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, European Commission

Snezana Klasnja, Minister Advisor, Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia

Raimo Vuorinen, Ph.D., Adjunct Associate Professor, Finnish Institute of Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä, Chair of the Board of International Centre for Career Development and Public Policies (ICCDPP)

15.45 **Conclusions and closure**



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