

## PRIORITY FOR ACTION N°2

### Establish a lifelong learning culture and reinforce adult education to ensure economic growth, social inclusion and digital/green transition

This recommendation means to address the challenges related to the segmentation and fragmentation of the learning system and the insufficient upskilling and reskilling (continuous training) opportunities to adapt the labour market needs, ease transition from school-to-work and from work-to-work and ensure better social inclusion.

Technological transformation in general, and digital and green transition in particular, call for more agile and responsive skills systems that initial and formal education and training systems alone cannot always ensure. Individuals need support to upskill and to update their skills in a permanent manner. The Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 4 (Quality education), which puts the focus on ensuring quality, equitable and inclusive education for all, takes a lifelong learning approach from early childhood to higher education and from general education to VET. It also emphasises the need to substantially increase the number of young people and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment and decent jobs.

**Lifelong learning** entails enabling individuals to master a wide range of skills and competences and navigate through the education and training system, using state-of-the-art technologies and learning tools across the boundaries of education and training institutions. **Continuing vocational education and training** (CVET) should thus move to a systemic approach to adapting to technological shifts during the whole working life. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture and providing quality, accessible, inclusive, relevant and sustainable lifelong learning systems is a responsibility of all stakeholders – social partners, VET providers and learners. LLL brings considerable benefits for learners themselves, for employers and for the wider community.

The new lifelong learning culture implies that individuals benefit from career guidance and gain key competences to actively handle their education, training and employment phases, with the support and increased responsibility of all stakeholders. The lifelong learning culture relies on demand-driven and practice-oriented VET policies and frameworks. This new culture also implies that WBL and on-the-job learning are given prominence in CVET strategies: learners and companies should be aware of their needs and develop learning-conducive work environments to grasp their full potentials. Moreover, in SEMED countries, it is also important to ensure equity and effective access to training for all, including, for example, training privileges, funds and other measures that are in line with national circumstances.

Promoting a culture of lifelong learning calls for more awareness on the part of employers and workers on the value and benefits of upskilling and reskilling, the availability of guidance and career development support, the development of appropriate financial resources, and the existence of regular monitoring and quality assessment.

It is suggested to analyse the main issues that inhibit lifelong learning to turn them into opportunities. The key messages for creating a culture of lifelong learning<sup>1</sup> are as follows:

- recognise the holistic character of lifelong learning;
- promote transdisciplinary research and intersectoral collaboration for lifelong learning;
- place vulnerable groups at the core of the lifelong learning agenda;
- establish lifelong learning as a common good;
- ensure greater and equitable access to learning technology;
- transform schools and universities into lifelong learning institutions;
- recognise and promote the collective dimension of learning;
- encourage and support local lifelong learning initiatives, including learning cities;
- re-engineer and revitalise workplace learning;
- recognise lifelong learning as a human right.

### Questions for the working group:

1. *Do you consider this priority relevant for the region? Do you think this priority is also applicable in the context of your own country?*
2. *Based on the recommendations provided, which action do you consider most relevant and appropriate to implement at regional level: (Please precise under which form: Regional projects, Networks, CoP, Peer learning etc.)*
3. *Do you have a good practice in your country, to share with other participants, on the implementation of one or more actions in the area of lifelong learning?*

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO report (UIL, 2020)