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Introduction to the Skills Innovation Network

Recognizing the importance of building an innovation ecosystem that supports great ideas and turning these into real world solutions, the ILO Skills Innovation Facility will launch the "Skills Innovation Network".

This global collaborative network intends to engage all participant, the 473 participants, having submitted proposals in the Skills Challenge Call and provide them with space to connect with lead organizations working on similar issues across the world.

To make this possible, a **Core Group** composed by a selected group of top innovators who submitted the best applications to the Skills Challenge Innovation Call, will meet five times between November 2020 and January 2021 to co-design and implement the Network's vision and activities.

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Objectives of the 1st Meeting Core Group meeting

The 1st Meeting of the ILO Skills Innovation Network gathered the best applications from each region to discuss the objectives and design the network. The purpose of this meeting was to:

1. Introduce the ILO Skills Innovation Facility and the ILO Skills Innovation Connections initiative;
2. Explain the role of the members of the network; and
3. Take initial steps towards the design of the network.

Agenda of the 1st Meeting Core Group meeting

Time	Session
14:00 – 14:05	Opening Remarks
14:05 – 14:15	Icebreaker (plenary)
14:15 – 14:45	Visualizing the Skills Innovation Network
14:45 – 15:15	Exploring areas of interest in the Network
15:15 – 15:35	Introducing the role of the Skills Innovation Network Core Group
15:35 – 15:55	Aligning interests and outlining next steps
15:55 – 16:00	Closing remarks

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Visualising the Skills Innovation Network

To kick off the meeting, participants were presented with a preliminary mapping of their proposals based on identified ILO categories[1].

Participants were invited to comment on the categories and ask for clarifications.

[1]*See definitions in Annex I*

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▶ **The categories**

- Apprenticeships and work-based learning
- Assessment, certification and recognition of skills
- Career, entrepreneurship and employment services
- Data analysis for skills development
- Industry linkages, clusters and skills ecosystems
- Sectoral approach
- Training delivery
- Social inclusion

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Exploring areas of interest in the Network

Participants were invited to discuss the relevance, validity and scope of 8 ILO skills categories.

In groups, they brainstormed on what needs to be improved for given categories and what is missing, and agreed on a revised list of categories.
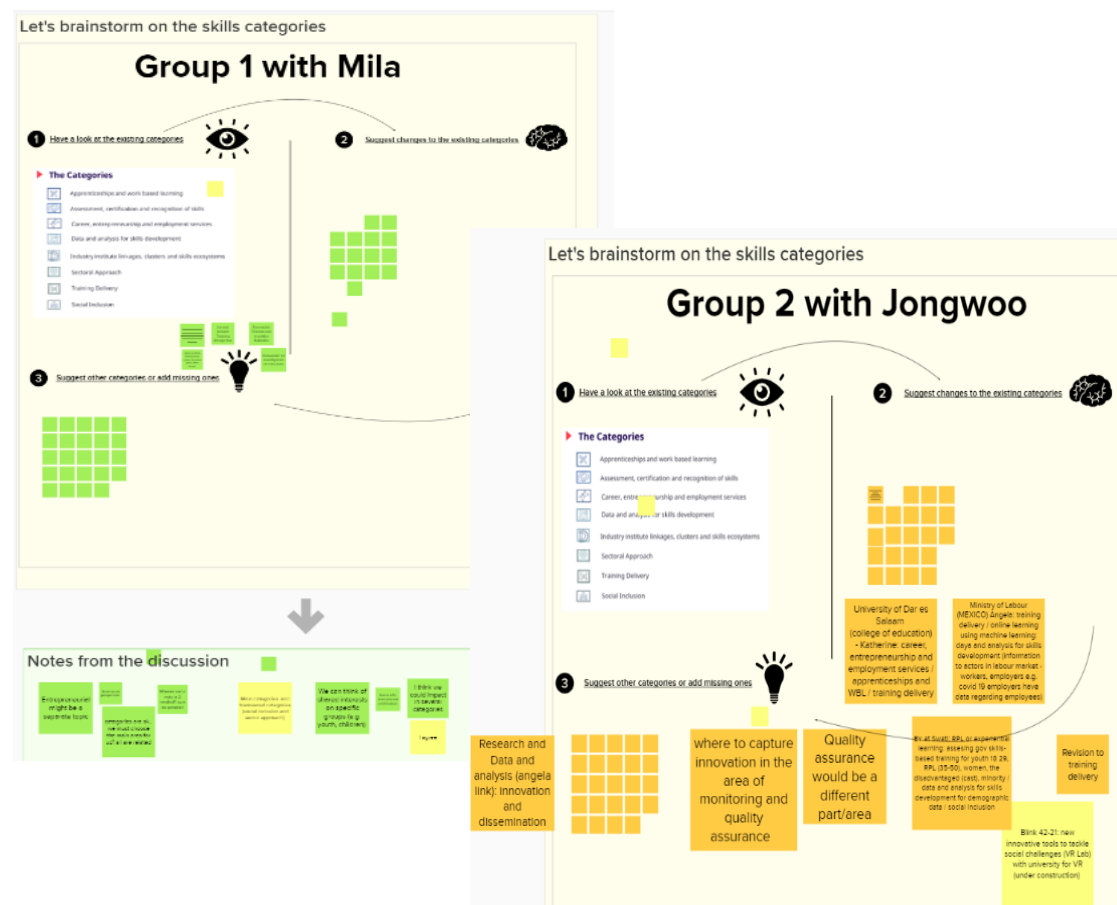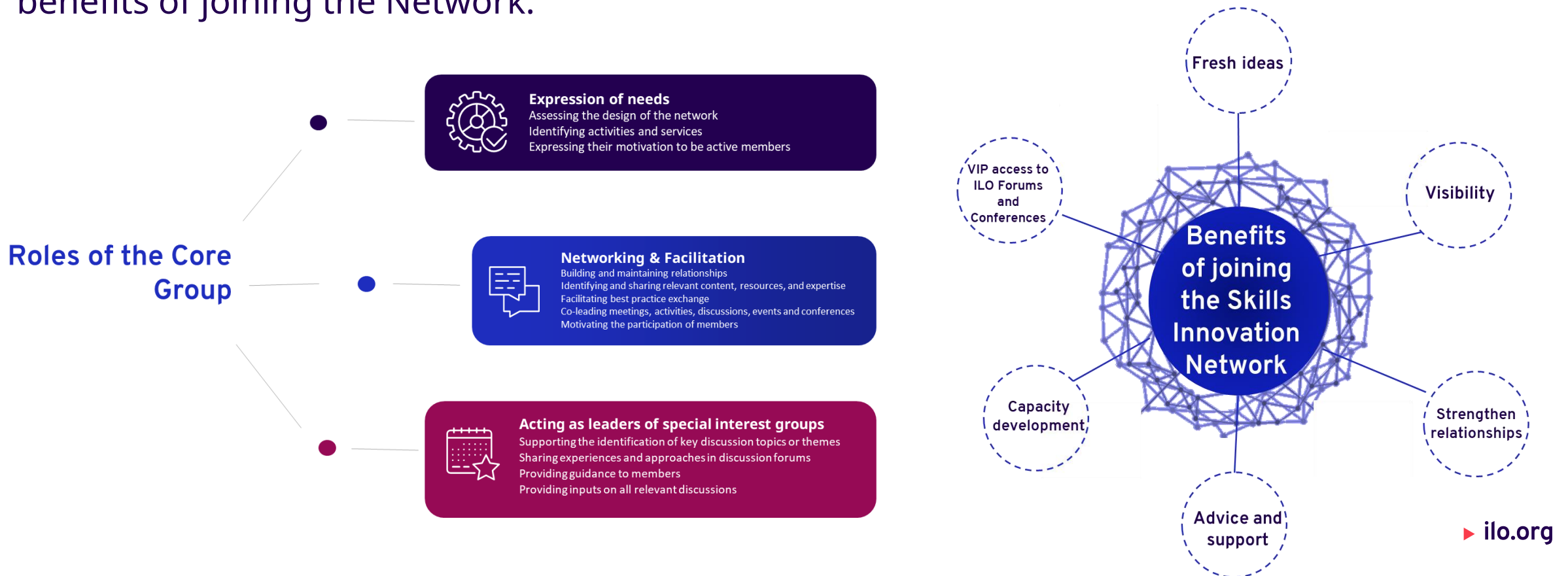
Several reflections from the groups

- **The influence of media:** The media has become one of the most influential tools to scale up the projects and ideas for advocacy and education provision. However, separate category only for the media seems rather insufficient since it is a measure or tool to help tackling the skills mismatch rather than policy intervention.

- **Youth needs:** A specific focus on youth needs in the situation of vulnerabilities must be paid. Accordingly, it will be duly included in the category of people skills in the context of skills development.

- **Scope of training delivery:** Beyond the conventional training delivery, current and future training delivery must encompass the digital and online training delivery. The training delivery also must be supported by data analysis to identify the needs of trainers and trainees in TVET. Especially, emergence of digital and online learning/digital learning platform will facilitate the new innovative training delivery in TVET.

- **Social inclusion:** Social inclusion could be seen as a transversal topic or theme. However, there are many skills projects and interventions that have a social inclusion component only, therefore it is important to have a different category for this type of interventions.

- **Beneficiaries:** The network map should include the beneficiaries or target group of each organization.

Introducing the role of the Core Group

Participants were introduced to the roles and responsibilities of the Core Group, as well as the benefits of joining the Network.

Roles of the Core Group

Expression of needs
Assessing the design of the network
Identifying activities and services
Expressing their motivation to be active members

Networking & Facilitation
Building and maintaining relationships
Identifying and sharing relevant content, resources, and expertise
Facilitating best practice exchange
Co-leading meetings, activities, discussions, events and conferences
Motivating the participation of members

Acting as leaders of special interest groups
Supporting the identification of key discussion topics or themes
Sharing experiences and approaches in discussion forums
Providing guidance to members
Providing inputs on all relevant discussions

Benefits of joining the Skills Innovation Network

Fresh ideas

Visibility

VIP access to ILO Forums and Conferences

Capacity development

Strengthen relationships

Advice and support

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Aligning interests and outlining next steps

Display of 9 skills categories after accommodating feedbacks from participants

1. Work-based learning (apprenticeships, internship, on-the-job-training)
2. Recognition of skills (certification and assessment)
3. Career guidance and employment services
4. Research, data and analysis for skills development
5. Skills ecosystem (industry linkages, innovative finance, partnerships and sectoral approach)
6. Training delivery
7. Social inclusion and interaction
8. Entrepreneurship and self-employment
9. Life skills (e.g. soft skills, healthy lifestyle and positive attitudes)

The red font refers to the newly added input from the 1st Meeting participants

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Aligning interests and outlining next steps

Based on the revised list of categories, a network map was developed using KUMU software.

The map in KUMU shows the participants from the Core Group. It displays all network actors by region, country, language or by category. Moreover, it provides information on the organization as well as the contact person.

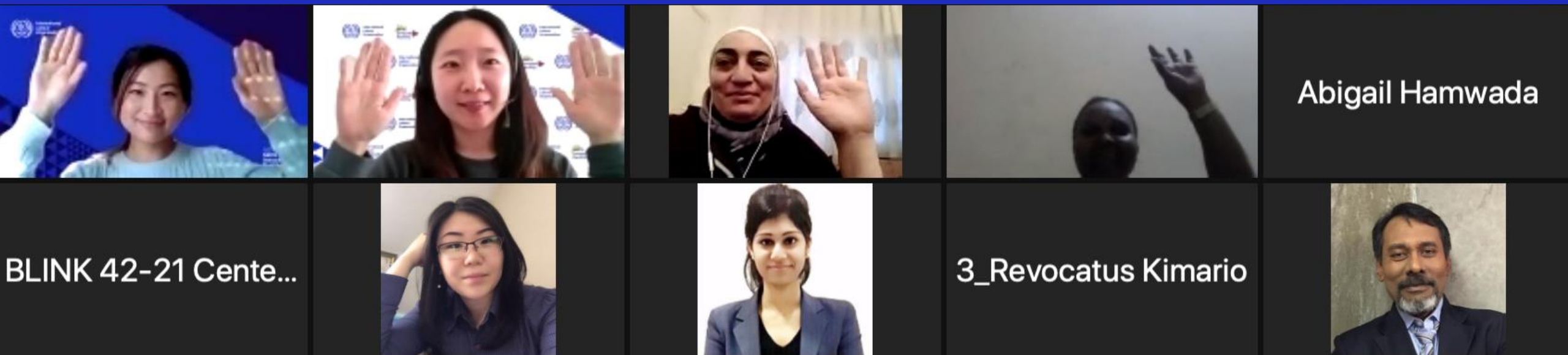The map will serve as a means of connecting, exchanging & collaborating.
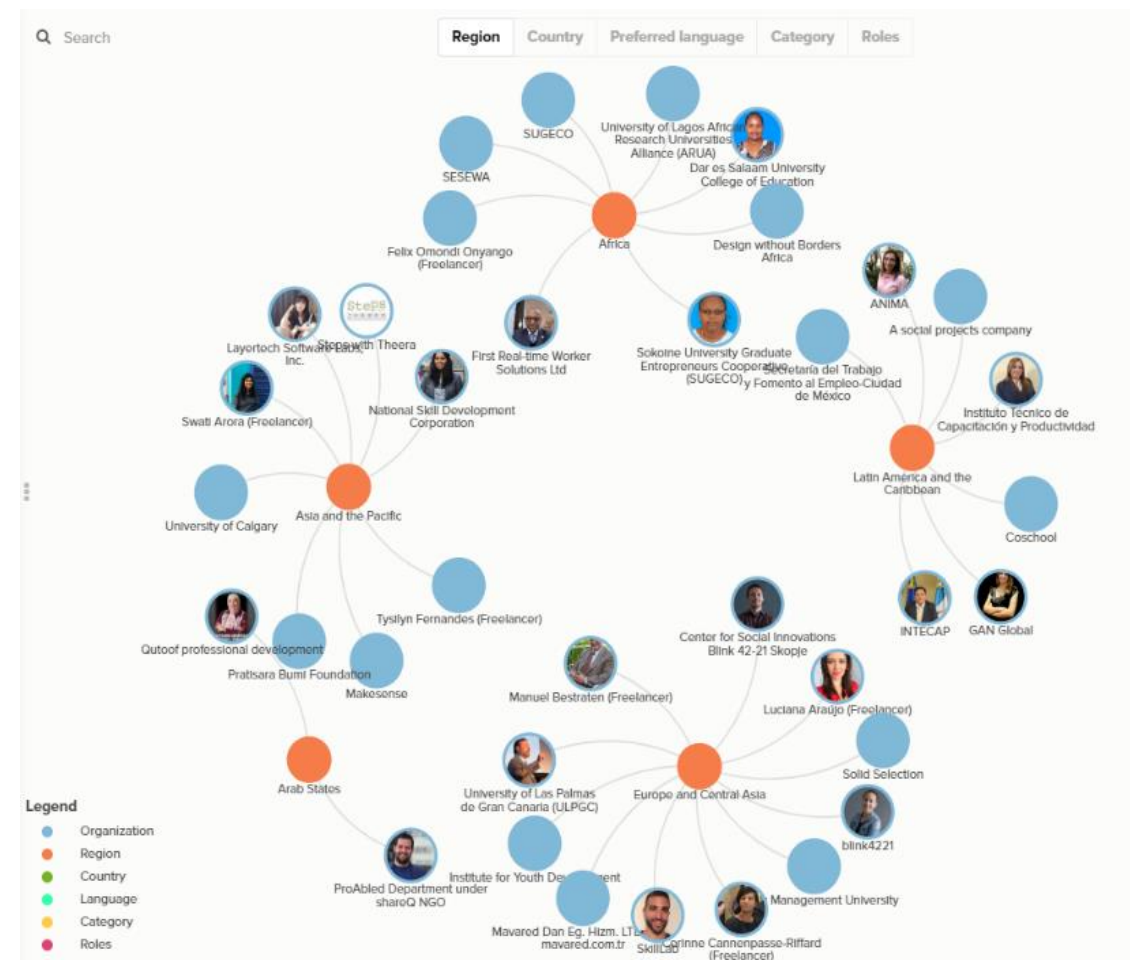
A glance at our 1ˢᵗ Core Group Meeting Participants

A glance at our 1ˢᵗ Core Group Meeting Participants

Skills Innovation Connections team

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For further information and any enquiry

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Annex I: Categories definition

1. Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning

Apprenticeship means any system by which an employer undertakes by written or verbal contract to employ a young person and to train him (or her) or have him (or her) trained systematically for a trade for a period the duration of which has been fixed in advance and in the course of which the apprentice is bound to work in the employer's service.

Work based learning refers to all forms of learning that takes place in a real work environment. Apprenticeships (formal and informal), internships/traineeships and on-the-job training are the most common types of work based learning.

Annex I: Categories definition

2. Assessment, Certification and recognition of Skills:

Assessment and certification are the key processes by which an individual's knowledge, skills and attitudes are evaluated and formally recognised against a predetermined standard. The assessment and certification of skills formally recognises that a person is able to perform a defined job or occupation, resulting in the award of a credential which gives formal recognition of skills acquired. Recognition of skills is a process used to identify, assess and certify knowledge, skills and competencies – regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred – against prescribed standards of part (modular) or a full qualification.

Annex I: Categories definition

3. Career, Entrepreneurship and Employment Services

Individual careers increasingly involve a combination of part time and full time employment, self-employment and volunteering across various job roles in different sectors. In increasingly dynamic labour markets, career guidance, employment support services and lifelong learning to support more frequent career transitions is a growing need. Entrepreneurialism is an increasingly important skill, both for self-employment and active career management. Public and private employment services are one of the major conduits for implementing employment and labour market policies. Strong employment services play a key role in job matching, enhancing employability, addressing skill mismatches and linking support directly to employers and workers through operating various active labour market programmes.

Annex I: Categories definition

4. Data and Analysis for Skills Development

Skill systems require labour market intelligence and system data to understand the demand for skills and to develop and implement program and policy responses. Participation in skills forecasting and skills anticipation activities at the national or sectoral level will help create the necessary feedback loops to provide the evidence to inform skills strategies, policies and programmes. . Data on key performance indicators and outcomes are central to measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of skill systems. With a systematic approach to the collection, analysis and use of data, government and employers' and workers' organisations can strengthen labour market and management information systems

Annex I: Categories definition

5. Industry- institute linkages, Clusters and Skills Ecosystems

Strong links between education and training providers and enterprises are at the heart of effective skills systems. Providers should develop strong local partnerships that connect their products, services and learners with enterprises and employers. How skills are used in the workplace and how businesses engage with the local skills ecosystem are important factors that shape the real demand for skills. Linking skills policy and programmes with other efforts to support innovation and enterprise growth in regions through integrated skill ecosystems is necessary to ensure that skills contribute to and drive workplace and industry innovation.

Annex I: Categories definition

6. Sectoral Approaches

Sectoral approaches allow education and training stakeholders to understand and respond more effectively to a sectors' skill needs. They are a means of connecting national systems, policies and programs with the specific challenges and demands of individual economic sectors. In this way sectoral approaches bring the demand and supply sides of skill systems closer together.

Sectoral approaches also allow for institutional arrangements, like sector skills bodies, which bring together employers' and workers' organizations, education and training providers, research institutions, development agencies, regulatory bodies and other sector stakeholders active in a sector to develop coordinated strategies to respond to the needs of that sector.

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Annex I: Categories definition

7. Training Delivery

The delivery of training is central to any skill system and there is considerable scope for innovation. Courses and programs should be accessible to all learners, and be delivered through quality pedagogy, using tools, equipment and methods used in industry. Experiential and work based learning is an increasingly important of element of skills development and the development of professional competence. Training should be of high quality and relevant to labour market needs. Flexible scheduling, modular and micro learning options and the use of digital technologies should make learning more accessible and relevant to the needs of every individual in both the formal and informal economies.

Annex I: Categories definition

8. Social Inclusion

Improving the labour market prospects and quality of work for those disadvantaged in the labour market is a key element of effective skill systems. Concerted and focused efforts are needed to improve outreach, quality and relevance of education and training, and improve the links to the world of work. Given the heterogeneity of disadvantaged groups, such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, workers in rural areas or in the informal economy, migrants or refugees, education and training systems and programmes need to overcome the range of existing barriers through carefully designed policy intervention; respond flexibly to different needs, and address questions of status and challenge social perceptions.