

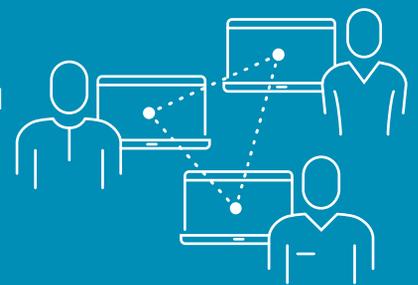
Boosting the digital transition through lifelong learning

NORDIC INITIATIVES

Abstract

Ensuring the provision of relevant lifelong learning seems to be a hard nut to crack, but the transition into the digital age demands that we find new ways to do this. For many decades, our education and professional paths have been defined by the so-called 70 – 20 – 10 model, where 10 is the formal university degree, 20 is non-formal courses and 70 is learning on the job. In other words, the higher education has traditionally been a one-stop-shop for most university graduates, followed by on-the-job development. The current disruption in our societies makes this model non-sustainable at the moment, the disruption caused both by digitalization¹ and COVID-19 demands that all partners or stakeholders work together to develop new solutions and offer that can ensure lifelong learning and boost the digital and green transition as highlighted in the EC Skills Agenda 2020¹.

The consequences of the 2020 crisis will require new ways of thinking, working, and learning. The pandemic is impacting our labour markets, as is the digital and green transformation that we all need to engage in. The expected changes are huge. According to the World Economic Forum estimations, 54% of employees will require imperative reskilling by 2022². Many other research findings and policy papers point to the need to quickly close the skills shortage, and in particular the need to support the digital transition through lifelong learning – also for the part of the workforce that already have higher education degrees. What is often missing in the calculation is the great potential of those who already have relevant higher education degrees and who would be able to become frontrunners or provide digital leadership in the digital transition with the provision of relevant continuing professional development (CPD). Consequently, the provision of purpose-driven lifelong learning opportunities to boost digital skills is an important building block for the restructuring of job markets and changes in societies.



The challenges that the digital transition pose are being addressed – to some degree – in the Nordic Region due to its capability to access and use digital infrastructure, the engagement in innovation and development and the tradition of engaging in lifelong learning when changes are needed. The political commitment to position the Region as digital frontrunner has been voiced by the Nordic Council of Ministers in its declaration from 2017³. The Nordic countries have also engaged in the EU Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition (DSJC)⁴ where one of the ambitions is to make use of available funding to support digital skills development, underlining their importance for employability, competitiveness and participation in democratic societies. However, moving to the implementation phase to close the digital skills gap and ensure adequate provision of relevant lifelong learning courses is still a challenge for the Region.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22832&langId=en>

² http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2018.pdf

³ <https://www.norden.org/en/declaration/nordic-baltic-region-digital-frontrunner>

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-skills-jobs-coalition>

Through Lifelong Learning

To be prepared for the unprepared is something that we can learn from history, as is the importance of being adaptable, agile, and flexible in our societal responses to challenges. The need for a swift updating of knowledge, skills and competences both for those with and without higher education degrees has grown larger, almost overnight. This is reflected in the European Council conclusions from 8 June 2020 on “Reskilling and upskilling as a basis for increasing sustainability and employability, in the context of supporting economic recovery and social cohesion ⁵” and the Skills Agenda 2020. A key message is the importance of working together to achieve results. The ten Nordic initiatives that have been showcased in the report support this by emphasizing the concept of learning together.

The ten chosen initiatives show how quickly we can adapt, re-think and react when required. The acquisition of education, training, and competence building benefits both society and individuals, so all parties must bear joint responsibility for the continuing development of skills and competences. To achieve the best effect, it is important to consider both the individual - and the power of partnerships of stakeholders. Stakeholders who, together, can ensure the up- and re-skilling of individuals, which in turn enhances the well-being of both the individual and society by developing a successful continuing education offer as a joint effort.

Policy recommendations will be presented at the conference

You can download the full report [here](#)

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⁵ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44351/st08682-en20.pdf?utm_source=dsmsauto&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Employment+and+social+affairs%3a+the+Council+adopts+conclusions+on+well-being+at+work%2c+upskilling+and+reskilling+and+demographic+challenges