International Labour Organization

ILO Regional Skills Webinar Series

Episode 2: Emerging core skills needs for youth employability and labour market transitions in Asia and the Pacific

Date / Format

On 4 December 2024 at 15:00 Bangkok time (GMT+7) / Online via Zoom

Background

Skills development has become an established priority within the Asia Pacific region as a means of driving inclusive, skills-led, economic growth while improving livelihoods for the region's growing population.

Youth employability continues to be a key focus with more than 1 in 5 of the region's young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), which rises to a rate of almost 1 in 3 for young females in the region[1]. Alongside this focus on youth, lifelong learning and incentives for people to *rejoin* the labour force, are becoming an important policy feature in the region as governments adapt to ageing demographic profiles, and the need to help individuals and industries adapt in the face of economic transitions.

In this context, core skills, also called soft skills or transferrable skills, play an ever more important role within the region's skills systems - not only in equipping young people and lifelong learners to access decent work and realise their fullest potential; but also in supporting industries to adapt and remain competitive within the global economy.

The incorporation of new workplace technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) is predicted to increase, rather than decrease, the demand for core skills. Competencies such critical-thinking, collaboration, creativity and empathy are considered as essential for integrating technological capabilities with the human face of real-customer demands.

Further, the development of core skills such as communication, decision-making and self-management will be increasingly important in navigating complex career and lifelong learning pathways. For example, accessing automated job matching services or evaluating employment opportunities in the gig or platform economy will be new realities for many in the region and will require specific core or soft skills. At the same time, developing an aptitude for lifelong learning will help individuals by promoting resilience and adaptability for the work and life transitions that arise during their working lifetime.

This webinar will bring together insights and practical experience from the Asia-Pacific region, as well as global trends from experts in Europe and the United Kingdom, which will be contextualised for the region.

[1] In 2023, 22% youth in the region are NEET (not in employment education or training, rising to 32% of young women. Data from ILO Asia-Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2024.

Description

The ILO Regional Skills Webinar Series Episode No.2 will provide governments, employers' and workers' organizations, TVET stakeholders and the donor community in the Asia-Pacific region with insights on the emerging core skills demands at regional and global levels. The webinar will share examples of effective policy and practice for boosting youth employability and facilitating inclusive labour market transitions through systematic improvements to core skills development.

Objectives

- To understand the growing demands for core skills in the context of labour market and demographic transitions in the Asia-Pacific region
- To discuss what is meant by core skills or soft skills and offer practical taxonomies and approaches to integration of soft skills both in existing TVET provision and as stand-alone training interventions
- To explore policy initiatives and practical approaches to systematically improve core skills as a component of improving inclusive employment and skills-driven growth.

Main topics for discussion

- Identifying and defining core skills or soft skills and using practical taxonomies.
- The core skills or soft skills that will be in high demand for labour market transitions in the context of accelerated digitisation, AI and technology adoption, the greening of industry, and growth of the platform economy.
- Regional approaches for developing core skills and soft skills, and key challenges of integrating these within national curriculum and training initiatives.
- Digital teaching and learning as a new paradigm for embedding core skills in teaching and training practice.
- Policy approaches to core skills development to facilitate inclusive employment and support individuals returning to the labour market (for example return migrant workers, long term unemployed / economically inactive due to care responsibilities or ill health, etc)

Speakers

- **Patrick Daru** Senior Skills and Lifelong Learning Specialist, ILO Headquarters
- **Jayne Norman,** Inclusive Skills Development Specialist, People 1st, United Kingdom
- **Professor Sheryl Lyn Monterola,** Senior Technical Consultant, Center for Integrated STEM Education (CISTEM), and Former Director, National Institute for Science and Mathematics Education Development (UP NISMED), Philippines
- **Moderator**: Mary Kent, Regional Skills and Employability Specialist at the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

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Programme

Bangkok time (GMT+7)	Subject
15:00 – 15:05	Opening remarks by the ILO
15:05 – 15:40	Setting the scene: Introductory presentation by each of the three speakers to provide policy context (7-8 minutes per presentation).
15:40 – 15:55	Thematic block No.1: What are core skills or soft skills, and how is the demand for these skills changing in the current labour context?
15:55 – 16:10	Thematic block No.2: What are the core skills required for youth employability, supporting inclusive labour market transitions, and encouraging returners to the labour market?
16:10 – 16:25	Thematic block No.3: Effective policy responses and initiatives in the region to improve core skills of young people and existing workers.
16:25 – 16:35	Questions and contributions from participants
16:35 – 16:45	Conclusion, key take aways and close