

The SKILLS Bridge Masterclass Series

Promoting Lifelong Learning (LLL) for the Future of Work

Concept Note

Small Steps, Big Gains – Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning

15 November 2023 - 12:00 – 13:30 GMT



Objectives

Micro-credentials hold immense potential for lifelong learning. They offer a flexible and targeted approach to acquiring specific skills, enabling individuals to stay relevant and adaptable in today's rapidly evolving job market. Micro-credentials can be earned in shorter timeframes, providing a faster pathway to gaining in-demand knowledge and expertise. The recent joint report from the ILO, UNESCO and the World Bank highlighted the opportunities that micro-credentials bring to foster lifelong learning and increase flexible pathways towards alternative learning to traditional TVET¹. The report cited different real-world examples of how micro-credentials have been integrated into formal skills systems while pointing out that this process presents various challenges, particularly in the case of L/MIC countries. Being a relatively recent trend, the report cautioned that there was insufficient empirical evidence of their impact and success and a need to monitor their development closely.

As the popularity of micro-credentials grows, it becomes essential to **establish rigorous standards** and accreditation processes to **maintain the value and integrity** of these credentials. Another challenge lies in the **recognition and transferability** of micro-credentials. Employers and educational institutions need to acknowledge and accept micro-credentials as valid qualifications comparable to traditional degrees. Moreover, the **accessibility and affordability** of micro-credentials can be a challenge. While they are often more cost-effective than traditional degree programs, some individuals may still face financial barriers to accessing micro-credential programs. Lastly, the **rapidly changing nature of industries** and job requirements poses a challenge for micro-

¹ ILO, UNESCO and the World Bank (2023) [Building better formal TVET systems: Principles and practices in low-and middle-income countries](#)

credentials. As new skills and technologies emerge, it is crucial for micro-credential programs to keep pace with these changes and continuously update their offerings.

Addressing these challenges and leveraging micro-credentials' potential can unlock immense opportunities for lifelong learners. With the right frameworks and support systems in place, micro-credentials can empower individuals to acquire relevant skills, enhance their employability, and pursue continuous professional development throughout their careers.

Audience

Anyone interested in improving skills and lifelong learning systems around the world can join these Masterclasses. **There are no fees.**

Language

The working language of the webinar will be English.

Tentative Agenda

Time	
12:00 – 12:10	Introduction and scene setting By Ashwani Aggarwal, Workgroup Leader (Skills Policy, Systems and Digitalization), ILO Opening remarks By Manuela Geleng, European Commission
12:10 – 12:40	Micro-credentials in the European context: lessons learned and way forwards - Anastasia Pouliou, CEDEFOP (12 min) <i>Audience Poll 1</i> Micro-credentials in LMICs: country case (India) - Neena Pahuja, National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET), India (12 min) <i>Audience Poll 2</i>
12:40 – 13:20	Panel discussion and Q & A session Panelists: - Anastasia Pouliou and Iraklis Pliakis, CEDEFOP - Neena Pahuja, NCVET, India - Wesley Teter, UNESCO - Ethel Agnes P. Valenzuela, ASEAN - Sivakumar Moorthy, Ernst & Young Moderator: - Ashwani Aggarwal, ILO Geneva
13:20 – 13:30	Closing remarks By Abba Safir, World Bank Conclusions and way forward Ashwani Aggarwal, ILO Geneva

Technical specifications

The webinar will be conducted via the ILO's Zoom conferencing software.

Participants can register via this link:

https://ilo-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Qez3pLEBQ2Gf0tWgPKZoKg

Coordinator and moderator of the Masterclass series

Ashwani Aggarwal (aggarwal@ilo.org), Team Leader (Skills Policy, Systems and Digitalization), ILO Geneva

Contact Person: Livia Husmann (husmann@iloguest.org), ILO Geneva

Speakers

Name	Institution & Biography
Ashwani Aggarwal 	International Labour Organization Ashwani Aggarwal is the ILO's Workgroup Leader for Skills Policy, Systems, and Digitalization. Holding a PhD degree in the governance and management of Skills Systems and Institutions, and experience spanning 38 years, Ashwani has provided valuable policy advisory and technical assistance to more than 50 countries across the world. His contributions have been instrumental in shaping skills and youth employment policies and programmes, contributing to positive changes in numerous regions. He has also led significant research projects and publications, including the ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships, Core Skills framework for Work and Life, Lifelong Learning and Skills for the future of work, Recognition of Prior Learning and Skills Development Policies.
Manuela Geleng 	European Commission Manuela Geleng works for the European Commission, where she is currently the Director for Jobs and Skills in the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. She is responsible for the Future of Work file as well as Youth Employment, the implementation of the Skills Agenda and Vocational Education and Training policies.

Anastasia Pouliou



European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Cedefop

Anastasia Pouliou is a Cedefop Expert in qualifications and credentials - Future of VET. She is currently leading the Agency's research on Microcredentials for labour market education and training, learning outcomes and the Future of VET in Europe. She is involved in other Cedefop activities (including the TVET-Interagency group on the Future of VET) and has represented Cedefop as keynote speaker at high-level international events in Europe, USA and South Africa.

Neena Pahuja



National Council of Vocational Education & Training (NCVET), India

Neena Pahuja is an Executive Member at the National Council of Vocational Education & Training (NCVET) under Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.

In the Skilling area, she is supporting various policies including Future Skills, Cross-Sectoral skilling, Micro-Credentials and National Credit Framework & its operationalization. She has also supported initiatives on AI, Digital Skilling framework and future of work. Prior to the current role, she was Director General at ERNET India, part of Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (Meity), where she was involved in National Wide policies & new research areas to support "Connected India" initiatives. She was also responsible for National policy on Internet of Things (IoT) with special focus on its Health, Manufacturing Industries and Agriculture, where she also helped in setting-up centers of excellence for Start-ups for Intelligent IOT.

Iraklis Pliakis



European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Cedefop

Iraklis Pliakis is a Cedefop expert in qualifications and credentials. Working in the Department for VET and qualifications since 2017, Iraklis manages the project on National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), mapping and analysing NQF developments in countries participating in the European qualifications framework (EQF) process. His current research areas of focus include Microcredentials for labour market education and training, and Transparency and transferability of learning outcomes. Iraklis is an economist by training, with a PhD in didactics of Economics from the University of Macedonia. Before joining Cedefop he was an advisor to the Deputy Minister of Education in Greece focusing on VET and apprenticeship.

Wesley Teter



UNESCO

Wesley Teter advances collaboration across public and private sectors to design more innovative and open architectures for learning and employment. He is a senior consultant at UNESCO's Regional Office in Bangkok, and expert for UNESCO headquarters in Paris supporting the operational design of Campus Africa, one of the five flagship programs of the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa. In his personal capacity, Wesley is one of three co-editors of the new Handbook of Education Policy by Edward Elgar Publishing (2023), which received strong endorsements from researchers and practitioners worldwide.

Ethel Agnes P. Valenzuela



Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN

Ethel Agnes P. Valenzuela currently serves as the Education Advisor of ASEAN on the Future of Education at the ASEAN Secretariat. She is also a governing board member of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, and the UNESCO ISCED-T Advisory Group. She has been a member of the UNESCO High-Level Steering Committee, Sherpa, and Education 2030 SDG Steering Committee since 2017 and a Jury for the ICT Award in Education of UNESCO HQ and the Jury of Intl Council for Distance Education (ICDE) Norway.

Sivakumar Moorthy



Ernst & Young

Siva is Sector leader for Education Consulting and Skill Technology Consulting Practice at EY. He has over 23 years of experience in the technology development and transformation space and has extensive experience in Education & Skilling and Technology Transformation at India and Global level

Siva has worked in multiple state level and national level projects in the field of education, skilling and digital transformation. He was part of the team that established the national level e-learning platform DIKSHA - a Digital Public Good, across the country. He is also leading the Skills digital transformation program, DESH - Skill India Digital - an inclusive platform bringing together the world of education, world of skilling and world of work. His expertise lies in digital transformation strategy, IT roadmap, advocacy and communication, data driven decision making and market insights.

Abla Safir



World Bank

Abla Safir is a Senior Economist in the Social Protection & Jobs Global Practice of the World Bank, based in Phnom Penh. She is leading the Bank's engagement on social protection and on labor in Vietnam and in Cambodia. At the World Bank, where she has been working for the past 13 years, she has conducted analytical and operational work in the topics of skills development, labor markets, migration, social protection, and service delivery, mainly in Europe and Central Asia, in the Middle East and North Africa, and in Sub-Saharan Africa. She was a core team member of the 2017 World Development Report "Governance and the Law". She holds a PhD in Economics from the Paris School of Economics and M.A. degrees from HEC Business School and ENSAE Graduate School of Economics, Statistics, and Finance in Paris.

The Masterclasses title "The SKILLS Bridge" refers to the invaluable role of Skills and Lifelong Learning in closing skills gaps, aligning demand and supply, and uniting private and public sector collaboration.