

## MAIN AREAS OF WORK

The Skills and Employability Branch supports member states in the development and implementation of national skills policies and strategies to promote employment, economic growth and inclusive societies. Work also includes: fostering social dialogue for skills development and encouraging collaboration with the private sector, for example, through apprenticeships and promoting the adoption of sectoral approaches to skills development that identify and address challenges affecting priority sectors; and building capacity and facilitating knowledge networks among constituents through demand-driven courses offered via the International Training Centre in Turin.

### AMONG THE GLOBAL PRODUCTS AND TOOLS ARE:



The Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification Programme that provides sector-level technical assistance on identifying the skills development strategies required for future success in international trade.



The Training for Rural Economic Empowerment Programme that helps ensure that women and men in poverty gain skills and knowledge they can apply to improve their incomes and take a more active role in shaping their communities.



The ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships, a resource guide to improve the design and implementation of apprenticeship systems and programmes.



The Global Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform, a collaborative space for accessing information and sharing experiences from credible sources on what works to improve skills for employability: [www.skillsforemployment.org](http://www.skillsforemployment.org)

### KEY TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

For the complete list of tools and resources visit: [ilo.org/skills](http://ilo.org/skills); [skillsforemployment.org](http://skillsforemployment.org)



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# SKILLS for EMPLOYABILITY

*"We must leverage the transformations underway to create opportunities for skills development and effective lifelong learning. This is a joint responsibility, requiring the active engagement and support of governments, employers and workers, to shape together a brighter future of work."*

GUY RYDER  
ILO DIRECTOR-GENERAL



International  
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# THE CHALLENGE

The world of work is undergoing major and intensifying transformational changes. These trends – technological, in the organization of work, among others – will present enormous challenges for traditional education and training systems. At the same time, poor quality training - in addition to chronic under investment in skills - erect barriers to the development of the right skills needed by the labour market, both today and in the future.

To address these concerns, education and training systems need to adjust and become more flexible and diversified in terms of learning options and pathways. Core work skills such as critical thinking, teamwork and problem solving will become more vital for enabling people to move between occupations and jobs, and to transition from the informal to the formal economy. As the pace and scope of technological change accelerates, the importance of lifelong learning is increasingly recognized and innovations to encourage and provide training for all are more in demand. Moreover, the effects of digitalization across different sectors and occupations will demand new skills to carry out new tasks and to gain entry to the jobs of the future.


Skills development can be an important “buffer” in this process of transformation, providing workers with re-training opportunities and helping to avoid high social costs. Skills development can also be an “enabler” for increasing productivity and helping enterprises adjust to change and remain competitive. In short, skills development holds the key to the future of work.

# THE ILO RESPONSE

 **Policy guidance, instruments and initiatives.** The ILO has over time taken a number of tripartite actions that lay the groundwork for our efforts to address these challenges. These include the 2008 *Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization*, which identified skills development as critical to improving productivity, employability and social inclusion; the *Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004* (No. 195) that provided guidance on policies for effective education, training and lifelong learning; and, the *Conclusions on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development* adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2008, which established a strategy for skills development, involving continuous pathways of learning, development of core and higher-level skills, and portability of skills and employability.

The Conclusions observed that countries that have succeeded in linking skills to productivity, employment, and development targeted three main objectives: matching skills supply to current demand; helping workers and enterprises adjust to change; and anticipating and delivering skills needed in the future in order to sustain a dynamic development process.

In its landmark report issued in January 2019, the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work significantly moves the process forward. It declares that in the face of existing and anticipated challenges, a new vision for a human-centred agenda is needed. This vision should be based on investing in people’s capabilities, institutions of work and in decent and sustainable work. Among the 10 recommendations made in the Commission’s report is a call for universal entitlement to lifelong learning that enables people to access new skills, as well as to reskill and upskill.


 **Research and knowledge management** focuses on sharing information on good practices and explaining why certain policy approaches work.

Current research includes:

- developing cost-effective methods and sustainable institutions for anticipating skills needs: linking skills provision to productivity and competitiveness of sectors and enterprises, trade, investment and employment policies;
- promoting social inclusion through education and training;
- establishing and strengthening quality apprenticeship systems and other forms of work-based learning (WBL);
- improving the relevance of institution-based vocational education and training by strengthening public-private partnerships and WBL;

- developing policies and effective systems for recognition of prior learning;
- ensuring that skills of migrant workers are developed, recognized and respond to labour market demand;
- identifying and boosting the development of relevant skills for green jobs and responding to climate change;
- supporting skills for technological change and skills for digitalization;
- developing and promoting skills to professionalise workers in the care economy;
- improving the development and use of skills in the workplace by linking them to productivity and working conditions; and,
- promoting training and upgrading skills through social dialogue and collective bargaining.

The ILO works with the OECD, UNESCO, development banks, EU agencies and key regional organizations to ensure that policy-makers, employers’ and workers’ organizations, the private sector and academic institutions have access to a broad base of knowledge and experience.

 **Development cooperation** applies research findings and lessons from evaluations to country-specific circumstances and creates a learning platform for stakeholders. The current portfolio includes, among others:

- supporting national and regional skills reform initiatives;
- developing the capacity of national constituents in establishing and strengthening quality apprenticeship policies and programmes;
- boosting community-based training through the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment programme – in particular to reach young people and women;
- upgrading informal apprenticeships in selected countries in Africa;
- rebuilding training systems as part of post-crisis reconstruction strategies;
- promoting global skills partnerships on migration; and,
- supporting national and sectoral partners in developing forward looking sectoral skills strategies and implementing those strategies.

Particular attention is paid to overcoming barriers that women face in accessing training that leads to improved employment opportunities and apprenticeships; expanding training opportunities for persons with disabilities and in remote rural communities; and combining core skills, training, work experience, employment services, and entrepreneurship in interventions targeting young people.