SKILLMAN

2022 DECLARATION

The Future of Education and Training during a Time of Major Disruption, including Global Conflicts

The Skillman Network is represented in over 95 countries with over 700 members, plus more than 200 newcomers from the recent launch of Skillman China. The network's various activities include a multi-year debate that brings together ideas and initiatives at the annual Skillman Forum, that this year was complemented by the Alliance Summit, a new thinktank platform deployed in association with IVETA[1], AER[2], ENNI[3], EAPRIL[4] and other umbrella organisations. This process has created a preliminary stage where the network, in collaboration with the European Training Foundation of the EU Commission, has gathered high-level stakeholders to identify the groundwork for its annual debate on the future of education and has agreed to merge all results in the final step of this Skillman 2022 Declaration, held in Cagliari, Italy, on the 24 November 2022.

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[1] International Vocational Education and Training Association
[2] Assembly of European Regions
[3] European Network of Innovation for Inclusion
[4] European Association for Practitioner Research on Improving Learning

The world has entered a period of great turmoil, change and disruption. This is therefore a very challenging time which is having a profound impact on communities, civil society and governments, worldwide.

This disruption is occurring due to the deep and widespread impact and implications of:

- The Fourth Industrial Revolution;
- Widespread automation, the use of robotics and the increasing prevalence of digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence;
- The ever-increasing prevalence of new information and communication technologies and the impact of social media;
- The climate, global warming crisis;
- Global health disruptions such as the COVID 19 health pandemic;
- Major global conflicts between and within countries with particular reference to the current situation involving Ukraine.

Each of these disruptions have important implications for education and training with regard to such matters as the curriculum content of education and training programmes, teaching modalities, and modes of delivering whole programmes.

To inject stability and positive energy into the world, during this time of crisis and disruption, requires major behaviour change and new ways of thinking. At the core of such change this declaration puts the need for a re-definition, on the part of communities and governments, of the future of education and training.

For the skillman community the changes need to be so widespread and profound that there is a need for the 're-engineering of education and training' to adequately accommodate such fundamental change.

The *SIF-Skillman International Forum 2022* has provided an excellent opportunity, with its wide range and representation of stakeholders, to critically discuss the roles and benefits of encouraging and actively promoting adaptable *learning societies*, and effective *lifelong learning communities*, during a time of all-pervasive change. This change is occurring within individual countries, at the regional level, and worldwide.

The Skillman network welcomes and regards as extremely important the concept of a *learning society*[5] which has been in circulation, in one form or another, for decades, and which is supported by a wide range of stakeholders.

The Skillman Network adopts the learning society concept as being a life cycle approach to knowledge, and encourages Skillman Alliance members to consider this important concept for the future of society and to adopt it as their own approach.

This concept considers learning as a continuum that takes place well beyond the early stages of school, secondary, and postsecondary education, and in formal and informal settings outside institutions. Learning can thus take place anytime and anywhere through many channels of economy and society and, in terms of skillman understanding, it can be developed especially during working time and within the working environment, an environment in which adults spend most of their time.

Yet new dimensions keep emerging, and an active discourse is relevant concerning how to engage and empower members of the Skillman Network, members of the Skillman Alliance and all other key partners, to

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[5] Sungsup Ra, Shanti Jagannathan and Rupert Maclean (Eds.) (2021, chapter 1) Powering a Learning Society During an Age of Disruption (Springer)

promote a *culture of learning* that supports and motivates individuals and organisations to learn on a community-wide and society-wide basis, during work and and on a lifelong basis.

In this regard, the Skillman Network also aims to develop excellence in TVET as a widespread quality that must apply to all institutions, not just elites, that is inclusive and shared by partners to multiply benefits and impact, and not provoke toxic competition, to engage all individuals, without excluding anyone, to ensure access to skills for all, and to propagate and support the creation of local skills ecosystems driven by TVET.

The Skillman Network supports the idea of local skills ecosystems and focuses on the need to bring education and production closer together and transform the workplace into a place of learning.

The Skillman Network makes the concept of a workplace learning society one of the main objectives of economic policy, which overlaps with the concept of relevant with authors arguing that with the creation of a learning society , a more productive economy will emerge, and standards of living will increase, moving from a 'learning economy' to creating a 'learning society[6].'

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is a particularly important dimension[7] that e Skillman members wish to be considered within two domains for learning: *learning for life* (mainly referring to learning in support of people becoming well-functioning, effective members of a society and wider communities); and *learning for work* (referring to skills development for employability, and TVET).

Both are important aspects of a learning society and involve a need for dynamic change over time as societies and economies adapt to meet emerging challenges and the areas of occurring disruption.

With regard to skills development for employability and learning for work, emerging labour markets of the future require re-imaging skills development and training[8].

In the words of Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz [9], 'This new approach recognises that development is about more than closing the gap in resources that separate developed and developing countries but closing the gap in knowledge as well; and, more than that, the ability to learn and respond to the inevitable shocks and disruptions that confront the economy and society.'

To help close the knowledge gap, the Skillman Network is promoting understanding and implementation of a new concept and methods for collaborative curriculum design based on learning outcomes and the provision of microcredentials, that enable giving credentials for the future and shifting learning accounts from the education provider to the individual. Future societies need to embed an effective continuous skills foresight exercise, to designing future scenarios

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[6] Greenwald and Stiglitz (2014) Creating a Learning Society, New York: Columbia University Press
[7] see Ra et. al. 2019. 'Emerging Labor Markets of the Future- Reimagining skills development and training' International Journal of Training Research, 17, 1-181

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[8] For further ideas and information on this matter, including a wide range of relevant papers by eminent TVET researchers, policy makers and practitioners, see Sungsup Ra, Shanti Jagannathan and Rupert Maclean, Eds. (2021) Powering a Learning Society During an Age of Disruption (Springer). This cutting-edge volume is available online as an Open Access publication, and also in hard copy form.
[9] in his Forward to the above-mentioned book: Powering a Learning Society During an Age of Disruption (Springer)

through new and updated curricula and appropriate credentials.

The Skillman Network identifies the need to confront and respond to demands created by *an age of disruption* that involves such matters as increasing automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, global conflicts, worsening climate change and the recent global health disrupter in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of these areas of disruption create major uncertainties and challenges, but also potential opportunities, for current and future generations of students, learners, workers and for the members of civil society.

Finally, at this *SIF – Skillman International Forum 2022*, when discussing 'Redefining the Future of Education and Training', there is a need to carefully consider and frame recommendations concerning:

- The impact of the Age of Disruption on the content of TVET training and education pathways
- The need for modifications to accommodate the areas of change and disruption referred to, with regard to contents and modalities of TVET
- The contribution and impact TVET can have on promoting and strengthening learning societies

- The need for renewed and reinforced transnational multi-stakeholder collaboration based on the belief that "excellence" in TVET is a result of a joint strategy to strengthen vocations and/or interdependence among stakeholders.

- The need to find and implement a common pathway to vocational excellence for innovation, and sustainable competitiveness in advanced manufacturing.

- The need for a solidarity-based stakeholder relationship which includes and promotes the acquisition of green, digital and ethical skills for all, for inclusive and sustainable development (without gender discrimination and ensuring decent work for all)

- The need for a strong ethical commitment, that is the base for creating solid local skills ecosystems and the propellent for an effective international collaboration among them on environmental, social and societal challenges.