

Living, Learning, and Earning Longer (LLEL) Collaborative October 2022 Meeting Summary

On October 19, 2022, the Living, Learning and Earning Longer Collaborative hosted its fourth meeting of the year to discuss the value-add of reskilling and upskilling workers, as well as strategies for doing so.

Laura Tamblyn Watts, CEO of CanAge, kicked off the meeting by sharing that CanAge recently released a new report, [*Dementia in Canada, Cross Country Report, 2022*](#). As the first report of its kind, *Dementia in Canada* measures how Canada is managing dementia across the country. It also provides insight into some of the methods deployed to track and manage dementia.

Mark Keese, head of the skills and employability division at the OECD, then gave a presentation about how the future of skills needs is changing. Mark also discussed the need to improve learning opportunities for older workers as the skills landscape evolves. Skills based training is key to retaining older workers and reducing the cost of maintaining and growing workforces.

Mark identified a number of factors that are driving changes in skills needs, many of which were accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. He summed up these factors as the three D's: Digitalization, Demographic Changes, and Decarbonization. The evolution of technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) has required workers to improve their digital skills. People are living and working longer, increasing the need for more opportunities to improve skill sets overall. In addition, as the world ages, older populations have demonstrated unique consumption patterns that are fulfilled by specific services and products. Finally, the Green Transition is ushering in a new era of green economies that utilize particular skills for reducing net carbon emissions.

The OECD is tracking declining and rising skills needs across 150 different dimensions through their Skills and Jobs Database. They are finding that there is a shortage of the most in demand, cognitive based skills across OECD countries (i.e. deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, digital and STEM skills, etc.). There is declining demand for physical skills (i.e. manual dexterity, stamina, and food processing, etc.). To fill in skills gap, Mark discussed the importance of keeping workers, particularly older workers, up to speed with digital learning opportunities to ensure their skills keep pace with the evolution of the workforce.

Following Mark's presentation, members of the Collaborative engaged in a brief discussion on the future of skills. Below are main takeaways from that discussion:

- The Great Resignation has provided an opportunity for “The Great Return” in that many job seekers have tuned out of job seeking entirely, meaning that employers will have to turn to retirees or mature workers in order to fill labor gaps. A focus on skills training for older workers is now essential.

- Employers, managers, and leadership must understand that not all workers have had the opportunity to learn new skills, especially if newer and in demand skills are only 1-2 years old. At the same time, not all workers have access to opportunities to learn new in demand skills.
- Oftentimes, employers repeatedly select the same individuals for professional development opportunities as others may be less inclined to openly express interest. Creating spaces for employees to explore what is available, such as through coaching or mentoring services, can help.
- Soft skills remain important despite the increased prevalence of AI and automation. There is still strong demand for human connection, and many cognitive skills, such as decision making or problem solving, cannot be done via automation or AI.

The LLEL Collaborative will hold its final meeting of 2022 on December 14 at AARP's headquarters in Washington, D.C.