

Manifesto on e-Skills Training in Europe

Compiled by Telecentre Europe, April 2009

With unemployment expected to reach 22 million by the end of the year in EU 27, there is now more than ever the need to invest in the future through skills training for job seekers and to help the most vulnerable across Europe back up the economic ladder. Employable adults throughout the EU will need to improve their competencies, particularly e-Skills.

Technology-based Community Telecentres (TCs) have become a critical channel across Europe for digital literacy and adult education for disadvantaged target groups, contributing through training and guidance to personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and enhanced employability.

Political leadership on e-skills and digital inclusion is essential, and we urge all governments to include e-Skills in every employment agenda across the EU, with dedicated resources to bring offline sectors of the population online. This effort should target the long-term unemployed, but also industrial sectors that are at risk or in decline.

Partnership towards this aim is essential, bringing together governments, NGOs and business to provide people with access to the set of skills they need to retrain, qualify for, or transition to a new job. Business and NGOs need to be more aware of the expertise and experience the other side can bring.

As Europe reequips for a more knowledge-led economy, the Telecentre Europe Network is calling for more people from disadvantaged groups, including women, seniors and people with disabilities to be brought into the workforce to ensure that in spite of the downturn, employability becomes an achievable aspiration for all.

The enclosed manifesto represents a proposed action by the Telecentre Europe Network to tackle the skills for employability deficit.

1. Accelerate progress towards a more inclusive Information Society

Progress made towards the objectives of the 2006 [Riga Ministerial Declaration on e-Inclusion](#) (ICT for an Inclusive Society) needs to be accelerated significantly if there is to be a greater impact on the lower skilled groups in our communities.

Recommendations

- Increasing political leadership on skills development
- Coordinating network of telecentres in each European country
- Professionalizing telecentre staff, and recognize outstanding achievements and excellence
- Benchmarking curriculum
- Developing new courses and new resources to target new groups who are not reached by current offers
- Awarding and recognizing outstanding achievements and excellence
- Focusing on communications infrastructure – not just broadband, but also mobile devices
- Ensure compatibility and interoperability in all curriculum and content

2. Strengthening the link between e-skills training and employability

e-skills are critical for finding or retaining a job, but e-skills alone will not ensure rapid integration into the labour market. Adapting to change and ensuring the correct matching between labour market opportunities and skills training is crucial. Additional measures, resources or links are required to strengthen the progression path from e-skills training towards employment opportunities.

Recommendations

- Frameworks and guidance for national Governments to incorporate digital skills & inclusion measures in employment assistance programmes.
- Increased networking and partnerships between labour-market-services and IT-training institutions.
- Support the development of vocational qualifications and competency based qualifications for support staff.
- Support distribution of low cost assistive technologies to advise staff and employment counselors to facilitate intervention with the digitally excluded
- Utilise resources to create on-demand training to support employability
- Invest in ongoing training through workplace training initiatives for employees to keep up to speed on skills.
- Ensure free, quality training for long term unemployed, those excluded and youth in difficulty.
- Provide and extend training to employees in industries in decline.

- Include entrepreneurship training with digital literacy training.

3. Public-Private Partnerships are fundamental

A skilled workforce is essential to creating new jobs and fuelling economic growth in Europe so it is a multi-stakeholder mission involving governments, NGOs and business to provide people with access to the set of skills they need to access, retain a job or transition to a new job. Partnerships bring together the competencies of all interested parties to ensure greater impact on the ground – but there can be challenges in making it work.

Recommendations:

- Partnership agreements between key stakeholders establishing parameters and detail on requisite expertise.
- Provide funding to encourage third sector organisations to engage with corporate sector by seed funding pilots
- Fund detailed case study development of existing best practice in corporate/Third sector partnerships

4 . Accessibility remains a serious barrier

Progress remains insufficient on strategies to increase accessibility of technologies and online services for people with disability which seriously hampers employability prospects. Governments, and employers, both public and private need to play a greater role in promoting and supporting accessibility and facilitating entry into the workplace. European commission statistics suggest that there are 55 million disabled people in Europe; changing demographics indicate that there will be an increasing proportion of people with a disability wishing to access a computer. Microsoft Forester research suggests that 70% of all users benefit from counseling their PC. Cumulatively these figures suggest a significant user group requires additional support to make best use of technology.

Recommendations:

- Raise awareness (and benefits) of appropriate services and skills offerings for disabled people.
- Support the eSkills Counseling networks across Europe to distribute advice and information on assistive technology.

- Seek solutions to reduce costs of assistive technology by incentivizing developers
- Replicate low cost and no cost training materials on assistive technology
- Support the development of national digital advice lines
- Support employability by incentivizing employers and educators

5. Women remain an underserved group in Europe

Gender based inequality affects the majority of the world's cultures and nations. A 2007 study commissioned by the World Economic Forum confirmed the close connection between the gender gap, education and skills level and national competitiveness. Expanding women's participation in the workforce is a key objective under the [European Strategy for Jobs & Growth](#) to reach an employment rate of 60% by 2010. While female employment has been the main factor in the steady growth of employment in the EU in recent years, additional measures need to be taken to facilitate women entering or returning to the workplace or extending their duration in the workplace. Digital Literacy is a core skill for women to access or retain a job and there is a clear need in particular for training of women from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Recommendations:

- Find and promote Digital Champions
- Develop training content that focuses on self confidence, linking closely to the specific needs of women

6. Towards a more inclusive Europe for seniors

Europe has a rapidly aging population that is at risk of becoming isolated with no ICT knowledge. Research (Eurostat 2006) shows that 3 out of 4 Europeans over the age of 65 have no e-skills. Moreover workforce opportunities are limited for unemployed people over 50. Lifelong learning meets a critical need on e-inclusion for seniors and for up-skilling to extend the duration in the workplace, but many older people often do not find ICT tuition that is suitable to their needs. Given the growing scale of this issue – much remains to be done.

Recommendations:

- Create and promote Digital Champions
- Strengthen the capacity of telecentres to advise on Senior needs
- Work on generational dialogue – tapping into the expertise of young people

Participating NGOs

Name & Role	Organisation Description & Program Overview
Ian Clifford, Gabi Barna - Co-Chairs Telecentre europe	Telecentre-Europe is an inclusive and vibrant network that increases the impact and effectiveness of telecentres throughout Europe by fostering knowledge sharing and learning amongst its members.
Susanne Anzboeck	Österreichische Caritas-Zentrale /Caritas Austria Caritas' mission is to help marginalized individuals improve their lives. As many as 200,000 socially disadvantaged Austrian women live in poverty and are unlikely to be able to afford a computer or learn basic technology skills. Technology training has the potential to open doors for these women and help them enter the labor market. Through the "Caritas-Microsoft Computer-Alphabet for Women" project new opportunities for women in social need, are being created in Vienna, Styria, Burgenland. The project is also supported by Microsoft and Fujitsu-Siemens. In 2009, 220 women will be trained and a new "computer-kiosk" will allow a further 2.000 individuals and job seekers to benefit from the ICT facilities.
Marja Pihnala ARGOW and Finnish Association of people with Mobility Disabilities	ARGOW, Finland Ten percent of people in Finland have a disability that hampers their everyday life and only seventeen percent are employed. The ARGOW project in Finland is succeeding in showing how creative solutions and combined resources can significantly reduce the digital divide's affect on people with disabilities. ARGOW brings together four national nongovernmental organizations that represent people with disabilities (the Finnish Association of People with Mobility Disabilities, the Finnish MS Society, Kynnysry/Threshold Association, and the Finnish Federation for the Visually Impaired). Through an innovative mobile classroom solution and a combined network of 37 community learning centers, the project aims to train 5000 people with disabilities in IT skills, reaching even the most remote areas of the country. Now in its third year, the train-the-trainers program in 2009 will provide an additional focus on disabled youth through guidance on further training, education and employment.
Augusto Lima	CITEVE, Portugal The Microsoft Unlimited Potential program has supported CITEVE, the technological arm of the textile industry, for four years in its initiative to help re-skill workers in the textile industry and those who have become unemployed due to the decline in this industry across Europe. The goal of this program is to empower individuals by providing IT skills training to help increase new employment prospects in a region where the textile industry has traditionally had a

	<p>strong presence. 2009 will see the extension of technology training and reskilling of workers in other declining industries in Portugal – namely the metal, cork, ceramics and glass industries. Supported by mobile training units – the initiative will contribute to creating economic prosperity in new regions of the country. The reskilling project supported closely by the town municipalities, regional employment agencies and the Ministry of Work and Social Solidarity indicated a successful 40% employment rate in 2008 after the first two years of training.</p>
<p>Montserrat Gines General Manager</p>	<p>Fundacion Esplai, Spain Connect Now is a national initiative in Spain driven by Fundacion Esplai that focuses on increasing digital literacy among the most disadvantaged social groups. The goal of this initiative is to improve the social inclusion of disadvantaged people and to broaden the information society to all. The program reaches beneficiaries through an existing community technology center network and the school infrastructure. The project combines two programs. The first, Conecta e-inclusion, is a program for young people, women, and immigrants who are part of the Red Conecta network which was running in 286 centers and associated networks across Spain by June 2008. The second, Young Conecta, is a program specifically for young people and is based on a service learning plan used in the high schools. Through partnerships with nongovernmental organizations, local government, and national government, and by applying a consistent methodology for delivering quality IT skills training throughout the network, Connect Now made a strong impact with over 157,000 people trained in the first three years and is on track to train a further 218,000 over the next three years. http://www.fundacionesplai.org/</p>
<p>Gabi Barna President (and founder) Education for Open Society (EOS), Romania</p>	<p>Education for Open Society (EOS), Romania EOS is a nonprofit organization that facilitates an open society and promotes sustainable development throughout Romania by enabling people to acquire entrepreneurial skills and technology training to both increase adaptability on the job market and fight digital exclusion of underserved communities. EOS has built a national network of Outreach Community Training Centers across Romania, in collaboration with Civitas, and as complement to the World Bank funded Knowledge Economy project. Although these centers do not target women specifically, they serve women disproportionately, particularly those over 35.</p>
<p>Māra Jākobsone LIKTA Board Member and Latvia@World Director</p>	<p>LIKTA's – Latvia@World project promotes the development of the Information Society in Latvia so that all citizens may benefit from IT and become full partners in the New Economy. The project, supported by the Latvian government, municipalities and other IT industry members provides basic IT skills training to those at risk of social exclusion and promotes access to public and private business services available on the Internet, accelerating the development of the Information Society.</p>

<p>Ian Clifford Business Development Manager</p>	<p>UK online centres</p> <p>The mission of UK online centres is to empower people to become skilled and confident citizens, at ease with Information and Communications Technology (ICT).</p> <p>A telecentre network of 6000 centres in England, which improve lives and life chances. UK online centres have developed myguide, a digital literacy tool for digitally excluded customers. The UK online centres team work with UK government departments and services, and with industry, as well as delivering digital literacy projects, campaigns and research. The role of the network is to engage hard-to-reach and take them on a '<i>journey</i>' from digital exclusion to digital inclusion.</p>
<p>Loreta Križinauskienė Director</p>	<p>The initiative "Langas i ateiti" (W2F – Window to the Future), registered as the association in 2002. Mission – to promote the use of internet in Lithuania and in this way stimulate the growth of the standard of living as well as the country competitiveness in Europe. Partners of W2F are government institutions and private organizations.</p> <p>W2F is involved in three fields of activities: 1) Establishment of public Internet access points (PIAPs), 2) Training society to use computers and Internet as well as encouragement to use e-services, 3) Encouragement of society to use e-services.</p> <p>Results of today: 1) 175 Public Internet Access Points established in 2002-2004 (private-public partnership). 2) In 2003 20,000 adult people trained on Internet Basics; in 2006-2008 50 000 people trained on computer literacy and e-services. 3) E-learning. 4 courses (including internet safety) have been developed and training provided for above 4 000 adults in 2008.</p>
<p>Yves Schmidt Director</p>	<p>Caritas Solidarity and Intégration in Luxembourg</p> <p>Caritas was founded in 1932 as a federation of social service organizations. Today it regroups 17 different organizations engaged in various humanitarian fields. Any individual in need, regardless of his religion, his skin colour, his political conviction, his sex, his race, his social status or his age, is the beginning and the focus of our action. Caritas is in service of the poor and weak.</p> <p>Foundation Caritas Luxembourg aims to fight poverty, exclusion, intolerance and discrimination. On the national level, the organization helps two categories of people in need: local people living in Luxembourg and asylum seekers who come to the country in order to find refuge. Caritas helps these populations through counseling, education and other support.</p>

David Banes AbilityNet	AbilityNet are the UK's largest NGO focused entirely on the bridging of the digital divide for people with a disability or limiting condition. AbilityNet deliver services directly to disabled users whilst also advising organisations and business on how to achieve diversity through technology. AbilityNet support all forms of Information and communications technology and all users regardless of need, setting or aspiration.
Juraj Suchánek Director	P-MAT , n.o. is a non-profit organization working in education in Slovakia since 1997. P-MAT works at the national level with students, teachers and adults, particularly those over 40 with no computer skills. P-MAT's project "40UP" helps individuals overcome barriers to enable them to use IT in their professional lives. P-MAT also works to make connections between basic skills training efforts and labor offices in hopes of increasing employability of citizens throughout Slovakia.
Wilma Borgt	Computerwijk makes it possible for neighbours to "click" and learn to use a pc. By growing the digital knowledge of local residents helped by local residents, we stimulate self-confidence and the chance for personal growth, education and employment in a socially disadvantaged community.
Pawel Makowiecki, President and Founder	The Responsible Business Institute is an association of professionals working in area of Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Entrepreneurship in Poland, including projects involving mobile telephony and basic IT skills education. Between 2005 and 2008, RBI managed the "Community Computer Education Centers" project, comprised of 7 telecentres engaging youth volunteers in Digital Literacy training for seniors supported by the Microsoft Unlimited Potential program and others. This project continues engaging 120+ volunteer trainers and training 6500+ seniors every year.
Siobhan Long Assistive Technology Lead	Enable Ireland The Enable Ireland continues to make strides each year on accessibility in a country where almost 70% of those with disability are unemployed. In 2007 the first ever national assistive technology training center in the country was launched by Enable Ireland with the endorsement of the Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment. In 2009, Enable Ireland will continue to offer assistive technology training to 700 people per year and benefit 3500 others. The center, which acts as a hub for training around the country, has helped scale the reach of assistive technology as well as promoting accessibility awareness among potential employers. The partnership has been recognized by a number of CSR awards over the last few years and most recently was

	<p>identified by Business in the Community (BITC) as a case study of outstanding practice. Enable Ireland was also nominated in 2008 as a finalist by the EU e-inclusion program for their accessibility work.</p>
<p>Luisa Toeschi Director</p>	<p>Associazione degli Interessi Metropolitan (AIM) – Internet Saloon, Italy</p> <p>In Italy and across Europe, there is a large population of aging citizens, and organizations are working to combat the digital divide that can result when older citizens lack IT skills and knowledge. In Italy this issue is of particular concern where less than 5% of seniors access the internet, compared to 15% in UK. To address this issue, AIM’s Internet Saloons in Milan, Sondrio, Catania and Pavia give seniors an opportunity to actively participate in the information society by providing basic IT skills training to get started. When surveyed, past program participants indicated that training in IT skills enhanced their online capabilities to make daily living easier, enabling them to do things such as shop and bank online. A further 6,500 people will receive training in 2009. Building on its success to date, the Internet Saloon is also extending training offerings to people seeking employment, women and other underserved groups.</p>