

# Continuously widening ICT skills gap acts as an opportunity for the creation of a diverse workforce

## Good practices exist but sustainability and scaling remain a challenge

*Brussels, London, Bonn 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019* – **By 2025, the overall demand of ICT specialists across six European countries will increase to up to 1.67 million workers. The six European countries assessed are today facing a shortage of 477,000 ICT specialists at different skills levels. This could increase up to 1.26 million in 2020 and even further beyond<sup>i</sup>. Current education and training systems will not manage to cope with this demand. This represents opportunities to create and scale more inclusive pathways for underrepresented groups and a truly diverse workforce.**

Consensus exists that action is needed to overcome continuously rising ICT skills gaps, which can be observed in the vast majority of European countries. Referring to skills shortages, Prof. Dr. Bruno Lanvin, INSEAD and co-editor of The Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2018 report on 'Diversity for Competitiveness' expressed the view that *"large ICT skills shortages will affect future economic growth. It is an area of huge untapped potential for creating a diverse workforce through specific inclusive ICT training programmes and at the same time help closing the skills gap"*. Low-skilled school leavers, workers with outdated skills but also individuals with diverse backgrounds and women present enormous potential to alter and help close the skills gap.

Inclusive training programmes, such as the ones assessed and identified as Good Practice Showcases in the diversITY project ([www.eskills4diversity.com](http://www.eskills4diversity.com)) already make a difference today. However, there are "too little and too few". They need to become larger in scale and sustainable in operation. This is a key message of the final report from the diversITY project. The project run by empirica ([www.empirica.com](http://www.empirica.com)) with the support of J.P. Morgan as part of its 'New Skills at Work' programme released its results at the 'Inclusive Opportunities for ICT' conference which was attended by more than 100 experts from Europe and beyond.

As part of its efforts to identify and analyse effective training programs for professions in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector with a focus on diverse target groups, over 400 training programmes were assessed by empirica. 22 training programmes were selected as Good Practice Showcases demonstrating how best to design and deliver inclusive ICT training. One lesson learned is that industry needs to become actively involved in all phases of training programme development and delivery to make these a success. Moreover, there is a need to better integrate ICT skills training in existing educational streams. Due to fast paced developments in ICT industry, education and training need to adapt more quickly.

Many of the identified inclusive ICT training programmes developed interesting approaches and promising concepts. Unfortunately some of these programmes struggle to continue due to difficulties in funding. Thus, sustainability should be a top priority in designing inclusive ICT training. The key to sustainability lies within strong collaboration of industry, policy and providers, to establish the necessary structures. These structures are of financial, bureaucratic and practical nature. Hang Ho, Head Europe, Middle East and Africa and Latin America, JPMorgan Chase Foundation concluded that *"given the size of the challenge, there is a need for scaling successful inclusive initiatives as well as supporting innovative, ambitious and evidence-backed training schemes that have potential for scale, which can generate sufficient visibility to reach large shares of diverse groups of people underrepresented in the workforce"*.

J.P. Morgan continues to be active in this endeavour. Together with ALL DIGITAL, it announced the new project Digital SkillShift at the conference to be delivered in collaboration with partners in Italy, France and Germany. Working with employers, it will develop a learning programme that will help unemployed workers learn digital skills and digital attitudes to access digital jobs.

The diversITY project results including a policy brief, a practitioner brief and an online repository of case studies of inclusive ICT training programmes in 7 countries can be accessed at [www.eskills4diversity.com](http://www.eskills4diversity.com).

## About the project

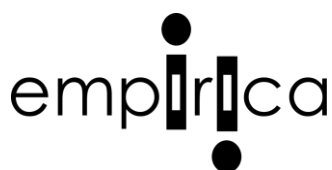
The conference is part of the diversITy project ([www.eskills4diversity.com](http://www.eskills4diversity.com)) run by empirica ([www.empirica.com](http://www.empirica.com)) with the support of J.P. Morgan.

The project has carried out an assessment of effective e-skills and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training programs supporting access to the labour market for diverse populations. The aim was to gain practical insight into the effectiveness of different types of ICT training initiatives to prepare and place jobseekers into meaningful tech jobs, with a focus on promoting inclusive access to diverse populations. It identified and analysed ICT training programs that aim to prepare and place jobseekers into meaningful tech jobs, with focus on diverse target groups, including women, youth at risk of social exclusion or from difficult socio-economic backgrounds, migrants or unemployed adults changing careers. The geographic focus is on Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, Poland and South Africa.

# **NEW SKILLS AT WORK**

J.P.Morgan

The diversITy project is part of the J.P. Morgan New Skills at Work initiative that aims to identify strategies and support solutions that help improve labour market infrastructure and develop the skilled workforce globally. This \$250 million five-year global initiative, first launched in December 2013, brings together leading policymakers, academics, business leaders, educators, training providers and nonprofits with the goal of connecting labour market policy with practice, supply with demand and employers with the workforce. To learn more about the 'New Skills At Work' initiative, please visit the link: <https://www.jpmorgan.com/corporate/Corporate-Responsibility/new-skills-at-work.htm>.



empirica Gesellschaft für Kommunikations- und Technologieforschung mbH (<https://www.empirica.com>) is an independent research and consulting company with a strong international orientation. Since 1988, empirica has been working for numerous clients in five business areas: eSkills & Work, Energy, Research & Innovation, Digital Health & Care, Inclusive Society. We conceptualise, analyse, moderate and provide food-for-thought. Through scientifically based data collection and evaluation in dialogue with decision-makers and stakeholders from politics, business, science and society, we shape options for action for the future.

## Contact

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<sup>i</sup> NOTE: The 'supply gap' calculation and forecast are considering graduates from tertiary and vocational education and training as input and no 'lateral entries' coming from industry related activities. The latter are likely to reduce the supply gap