



cmec

Council of
Ministers
of Education,
Canada

Conseil des
ministres
de l'Éducation
(Canada)

OECD Skills Summit 2018

June 28–29, 2018

Porto, Portugal

Report of the Canadian Delegation

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Canadian delegation	3
Key discussion points	4
Key outcomes.....	6
Conclusion.....	7

Introduction

On June 28–29, 2018, Portugal hosted the OECD Skills Summit 2018 in Porto. Under the theme of Skills for a Digital World, the Skills Summit 2018 convened ministers responsible for skills-relevant portfolios, including education, higher education, vocational education and training, employment, science and innovation, economic development, and the digital agenda.¹

Tiago Brandao Rodrigues, Minister of Education of Portugal, and Angel Gurría, OECD's Secretary-General, opened the summit, underscoring the need for countries to ensure that as they move towards increased digitalization within their education systems, they limit any societal divides that digitalization may create. With fourteen per cent of jobs across OECD countries at risk of being displaced and disrupted by digitalization, students need to be equipped with the skills to navigate the digitized and globalized world. As individuals will require novel skill sets and regular retraining, Minister Rodrigues emphasized the importance of calling upon educators to help develop retraining and upskilling programs.

The summit fostered discussions on how countries are ensuring that citizens have the skills to participate fully and effectively in a digital world and on how governments are redesigning their policies and institutions to be more responsive to the challenges and opportunities of a digital world, including initiatives, experiences, and future plans for addressing these challenges.

Canadian delegation

The Honourable Allan Hawkins, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, Newfoundland and Labrador, was nominated as head of the Canadian delegation. The other members of the delegation were:

CMEC

- Genevieve Dooling, Deputy Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, Newfoundland and Labrador
- Antonella Manca-Mangoff, Director, International, CMEC Secretariat

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)

- James Clarkson, Acting Director General, Economic Policy
- Claudia Thériault, Policy Analyst

¹ Of note, the United States and Germany were not in attendance, and Kazakhstan was the only participating Asian country.

Key discussion points

The summit centered on three topics related to the central theme of Skills for a Digital World, meant to divide the discussions into three main focus areas:

1. Risks and opportunities in a digital world: The changing landscape of skills needs – Understand
2. Rethinking education and lifelong-learning policies – Design
3. Towards better skills policies for tomorrow’s world – Implement

Each session started with OECD presentations that provided context for the discussions, and remarks from the respective Portuguese Chairs: the Portuguese Minister of Economy (Session 1); the Portuguese Secretary of State for Science, Technology and Higher Education (Session 2); and the Portuguese Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security (Session 3).

Ministers discussed how digitalization is transforming the way people work, learn, connect with each other, and live. The discussions focused on the impact of digitalization on workplaces, which is necessitating workers in digital environments to perform more tasks that require increasingly advanced ICT skills. Ministers shared their experiences and initiatives on how they are working to ensure that citizens are equipped with the skills they need to participate effectively in an increasingly digitalized world. They had the opportunity to consider how institutional policies and processes should be redesigned to be more responsive to the challenges and opportunities of a digitized world.

Andreas Schleicher, Director of the OECD Education and Skills Directorate, spoke about how the world of work has undergone important changes that have major implications for the skills workers require. For example, since 2005, the use of computers and smartphones in work environments has surged by 20 per cent (Eurofound, 2017), and it is estimated that nearly half of the labour force will require retraining to account for the need for digital skills. Even for workers who do not use ICTs directly, their work environments have almost certainly been affected, as tasks are becoming increasingly automated.

Manuela Geleng, Acting Director of Social Affairs and Employment at the European Commission, noted that, during the first OECD Skills Summit, held in Norway in 2016, the European Union (EU) adopted the OECD Skills Strategy, a framework with 10 actions to help governments provide the right training, skills, and support to EU citizens. She delivered a presentation on the agenda, stressing the importance of supporting lifelong learning, particularly since approximately 40 percent of Europeans do not have basic digital skills. This lack of basic digital knowledge will lead to what is known as a digital divide.² In order to align the EU’s next long-term budget (2021–27) to meet increasing digital challenges, Ms. Geleng

² An economic and social inequality with regard to access to, use of, or impact of information and communication technologies.

noted the creation of the Digital Europe programme,³ an initiative that will support and reinforce Europe's strategic digital capacities.

Gabriela Ramos, OECD Chief of Staff, G20 Sherpa and Special Counsellor to the Secretary-General, delivered a presentation entitled Inclusive Growth in the Digital Age. Referencing OECD data, and a recent OECD report entitled "A Broken Social Elevator? How to Promote Social Mobility" (June, 2018), she highlighted certain facts, such as how inequality in societies continues to increase and how digitalization is evolving within this context; how there is a growing productivity disparity among firms; how social mobility is limited; and how there is a growing digital gender gap.

Andrew W. Wyckoff, Director of the OECD's Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation, and responsible for leading the OECD Going Digital project, presented some key features of digital transformation and how it is impacting the labour market. He highlighted the prevalence of online connectivity, how big data will lead to significant changes, and how digital transformation is affecting all sectors of the economy.

Through his presentation, Mr. Wyckoff explained that digital technologies create great economic potential, generating productivity gains and creating new jobs, and allow workers to spend more time on higher-cognitive skills, such as problem solving and complex communication activities. Mr. Wyckoff also pointed out that by changing the nature of jobs, digitalization is changing the types of skills and mix of aptitudes required to be successful in the labour market. Many summit participants stated that skills shortages and mismatches are widespread, and relevant training and qualifications are essential to respond to these changes.

Ministers also underscored the importance of early childhood education with an aim toward building self-esteem and confidence in children from a young age. They also noted the importance of lifelong learning, especially for populations with an aging workforce.

Canada's strength in integrating collaboration and critical and creative thinking in education was underscored by the OECD's Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, Andrea Schleicher. Although, he also noted that there is improvement to be made in incorporating respect, empathy, and resiliency into students' skill sets.

In his role as head of the Canadian delegation, Minister Hawkins shared a number of key developments across provincial and territorial education systems. Acknowledging the role of technology, he emphasized that one of its key roles in K–12 education is to shift the focus towards the learner, ensuring that education systems are helping students build competencies and enabling them to create and share knowledge. Technology is recognized as playing an integral role in creating student-centred, personalized, and authentic learning environments, and technology should continue to be used as part of the learning environment. He spoke of CMEC's work on Global Competencies and how education systems should equip students with

³ The program will receive an investment of €9.2 billion.

skills that are adaptable and transferable, and that prepare them to face unforeseen challenges. He also stressed the need for students to be engaged in democratic citizenship, and be critical media consumers.

Minister Hawkins spoke of the significant changes taking place in his own province of Newfoundland and Labrador. On July 25, 2017, the Premier's Task Force released its report entitled, "Now is the Time: The Next Chapter in Education in Newfoundland and Labrador", which outlines 82 recommendations to improve educational outcomes in the province. The recommendations focused on improvements in early learning, mathematics, reading/literacy, inclusive education, student mental health and wellness, multicultural education, co-operative education, Indigenous education, and teacher education and professional development.

Finally, at the conclusion of the meeting, Minister Hawkins highlighted how Canada's ministers of education are taking into account the growing research on the capacity of the Global Competencies to make the necessary changes that will promote deeper learning and result in measurable benefits. Therefore, it is critical for all students to develop these key competencies, particularly when considering their contribution to educational attainment, relationships, and employment, health, and well-being outcomes. He also reiterated the importance of encouraging entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behavior among students as skills they will need to navigate the labour market.

Key outcomes

Ministers attending the summit were able to engage candidly on both the current state of skills in their countries and the plans they are developing to address the challenges around skills that will arise given an increasingly digitalized future. Ministers agreed to pursue strong skills policies within their own countries.

The OECD Skills Summit 2018 was an opportunity for Canada to share some key policies that our governments are implementing and emphasized Canada's leadership and expertise on Global Competencies. The summit provided a platform to highlight Canada's commitment to promoting deeper learning and to ensuring measurable benefits for multiple areas of life, for all students and society as a whole.

Ministers called on the OECD to build on its work to develop a deeper understanding of the economic and social impacts of digitalization and to provide policy advice to countries on how to ensure that citizens have the skills required to fully and effectively participate in a digital economy and world.

Conclusion

The OECD's Skills Summit provided an important platform for ministers responsible for education, labour, and economic development to meet and discuss critical issues facing their countries. It was also an opportunity to share recent policies, practices, and tools that have been implemented and that can be adopted by other countries in order to improve their respective systems.

Ministers found the discussions to be useful and productive, as the main topic of technology also included its links with other sectors and its impact on these fields. Ministers reinforced the need for a whole-government approach to these issues, but also for the need to consult the community and local and pan-Canadian stakeholders as they work towards these developments.

The OECD Skills Summit 2018 provided a valuable opportunity for ministers to share innovative policies, promote best practices, and create connections.