



Policy Recommendations – Cyprus

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Policy Level:

National

Policy Issue:

Improving the ICT skills of Cypriot youth

Recommendations:

Information and Communications Technology skills and knowledge, along with Media and Information Literacy, contribute greatly for the enhancement of democratic and modern societies as citizens or communities acquire the tools and skills necessary to have their voices heard, develop critical thinking skills and digital competencies. Improvement of ICT skills should be promoted in formal and non-formal education and training environments especially for youth considering the demanding job market needs and consequently high level of youth unemployment in all of Europe, including Cyprus.

Rationale:

What:

21st century has been shaped by the spread of the digital where the job market needs have been redefined. Yet, the use of digital technologies and the skills young people need to develop are not a priority when it comes to education in Cyprus. Policy change and initiatives are necessary in order to align the ICT skills of Cypriot youth with the needs of the job market at national and EU level.

Why:

Youth unemployment is one of the most pressing issues facing Europe while at the same time companies report a lack of skilled ICT professionals. By 2020, it is estimated that there will be 825,000 ICT-related unfilled vacancies, while almost all sectors have started requiring at least basic digital skills. Therefore, ICT skills are more relevant and necessary than ever and consequently this paradox can only be addressed by improving the digital skills of youth.

Who:

Relevant public bodies such as Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA), Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, Ministry of Communications and Works, Ministry of Education and Culture, the Digital Champion of Cyprus as well as youth organizations and non-governmental organizations working on education and ICT should be involved in the implementation of activities.

Where:

Activities for improving or developing ICT skills could be implemented in all education settings (formal and non-formal) for children, youth and even adults.

How:

The following activities are recommended based on the current analysis of the digital agenda in Cyprus:

1. Awareness-raising activities on the importance of ICT skills especially for unemployed youth
2. Developing more multi-stakeholder initiatives on Digital Literacy and e-Skills such as establishing training and internship programs to strengthen entrepreneurship and ICT skills of the youth as required by the job market.
3. Introducing ICT skills into the school curricula at all levels, including the advancement of teachers' digital skills.
4. Setting up mentorship programs for young people as part of social corporate responsibility for motivating the youth to improve their digital literacy skills and in turn increasing their employability.