

Recommendations for upskilling and reskilling 2021

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The COVID-19 crisis has unveiled the importance of digital literacy across all levels. Enabling digital skills of the population should be the priority for upskilling and reskilling.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Latvia (AmCham) recognizes Latvia's continued endeavors in upskilling and reskilling of its workforce. In order to increase digital literacy and prepare workforce for the new way of working, we call for immediate action to carry out coordinated efforts for the benefit of citizens.

We propose to consider the following recommendations:

- **Boost digital literacy**

Foster digital skills embracing a holistic approach to digital literacy at various levels of competence. Digital literacy encompasses much more than basic or advanced digital skills. It includes data management and analysis, media literacy, online safety, problem solving, cooperation etc. Although the overall level of digital skills are gradually improving in the society, according to the [DESI](#) Index, Latvia lags behind the majority of the EU economies. Digital skills initiatives should be included in a wide range of educational activities across all groups of people, i.e. education, life-long learning, requalification.

- **Learn from the best**

Focus on creating meaningful digital skills curriculums that can be applied and practiced immediately. Investing in qualitative curriculums should be a priority for upskilling and reskilling. We suggest to consistently and purposefully learn from international best practices and use qualitative and interactive online content as much as possible. Recent example of the State Employment Agency offering the Coursera platform for building skills from top international institutions is a great example that should be followed, irrespectively of which agency is responsible for carrying out a certain upskilling and reskilling program. As part of training process, developing a standardized training curriculum for educators would ensure better program quality and outcome. Training programs should be designed in a way that increase learning efficiency that isn't limited to the content itself, but also include training methods, unlimited accessibility and takes into account newest trends towards the way how people learn. We call on increased collaboration with companies offering training and upskilling opportunities, including through internationally recognized certification-based training. Our members stand ready to contribute in recommending the program content or becoming educators themselves. It is of utmost importance to ensure that digital reskilling and upskilling programs are followed by mentored sessions for practical application of acquired knowledge.

- **Improve governance and culture of cooperation**

Understanding that the development of human capital is a complex process requiring much expertise and inter-agency coordination, we suggest that the governance is realized by a particular agency who develops an overall strategy of the development of human capital in close coordination with other ministries and agencies, namely, within the National Employment Council or State Employment Agency of Latvia. The agency should oversee the implementation of strategy in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders from both public and private sector. Identifying the most appropriate authority is not an easy task, but is critical to engage and align various stakeholders to work towards a common goal.

We suggest to introduce concrete KPIs to measure the improvement of digital literacy not only by measuring the number of people who have attended the programs, but also by the quality and applicability of the programs as well as career growth opportunities. The assessment in the European Commission's DESI Index is one of the goals to consider when developing the national strategy.

AmCham Latvia

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Based on the results of a recent [survey](#) of our members, a very small number of respondents have used the state-subsidized upskilling programs for their employees. When asked about the reasons, members said they have quality concerns, lack information about available programs and red tape. Those who have used the state programs, rated the impact of training as low. At the same time the majority of the same respondents regularly invest internal resources in upskilling of their employees.

Never before investing in upskilling has been as important as now when we navigate through the pandemic. As an organization representing industry leaders from a variety of sectors, we stand ready to engage in dialogue with the stakeholders and offer practical recommendations to facilitate the development of Latvia's human capital and to attract high-value investments.

AmCham speaks on behalf of around 150 leading U.S. and international companies in Latvia. AmCham is committed to fostering trade, investment, partnership and friendship between the U.S. and Latvia and it serves as a business, knowledge, networking and policy forum for its members and partners. AmCham's actions are grounded in four core values: integrity, responsibility, cooperation and excellence. More information: www.amcham.lv

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