FUTURE TALENT COUNCIL | NATIONAL Skills COUNCIL

Future Talent Forum Malta - SkillScape Global

Future Ready, People First

WHAT'S INSIDE?

A summary of the ideas, discussions, and outcomes from the Future Talent Forum Malta - SkillScape Global, held September 16-17, 2026 in Valletta. Bringing together 450 registered delegates from business, education, and government, the two-day forum focused on translating global insight and national ambition into scalable workforce and education innovations that can withstand pressure, adapt to changing conditions, and expand opportunity for all.

Achieving impact at scale

450

registered delegates from business, education, and government

Around the world, governments, education systems, and employers are setting ambitious goals for the AI age. The harder question is what happens next.

How do we turn ambition into implementation? How do we build workforce and education systems that can withstand pressure, adapt as conditions change, and create human opportunity at scale? What we build now must work for everyone, and reach everyone.

Those questions were at the heart of the Future Talent Forum Malta - SkillScape Global.

Across two days in Valletta, 450 registered delegates from business, education, and government came together not simply to discuss the future, but to examine what is already working, what can be scaled, and what successful transformation requires in practice.

Malta is a particularly fitting place for that conversation.

Here, we see a local ecosystem operating at the highest global level. One where policy, education, and business come together across traditional silos, reducing the distance between conversation and decision. Here, ambition becomes implementation, and ideas are tested, adapted, refined, and scaled.

This report captures many of the ideas, discussions, and outcomes that emerged in Malta. More importantly, we hope it helps carry them forward – into new pilots, partnerships, policies, programs, and practical action.

Thank you to everyone who contributed, challenged, shared, and participated.

> **The conversations began in Valletta. What happens next is up to all of us.**





Daniel Kjellsson
Director-General, Future Talent Council



Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando
Executive Chairman, National Skills Council Malta

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National AI Strategies & Mapping the “Human Stack”

Mark Patterson
Executive Director, Magnet at Toronto Metropolitan University



SESSION SUMMARY

The primary bottleneck in national AI strategy is no longer tool availability, but organizational capacity to absorb technology and redesign workflows around human judgment. While massive capital flows into AI compute, public upskilling investments fail when employer operating models cannot integrate trained workers into new operational realities. Uncritical adoption risks 'cognitive offloading' and dependence on foreign LLM monopolies, making it essential for institutions to intentionally reintroduce cognitive friction, build vendor-agnostic data architectures, and shift public funding toward workplace adoption rather than isolated skill training.

> **As AI becomes more capable, who becomes more capable with it? Innovation without adoption and organizational use is just potential.**
>
> – Mark Patterson

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01

Organizational Absorption > Individual Training

The benefits of workforce training are limited when organisations do not adapt their workflows to make use of newly acquired skills

02

Cognitive & Data Sovereignty

Over-reliance on centralized frontier models risks cognitive surrender and loss of national data autonomy.

03

Intentional Friction Preserves Capability

True learning requires struggle; systems must actively test and strain human judgment alongside AI co-pilots.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01

Vendor-Agnostic Sandboxes

Build institutional data infrastructures that protect data privacy while enabling safe experimentation across multiple LLMs.

02

Organizational Readiness Grants

Shift public skills funding to support workplace redesign and technology adoption alongside worker training.

03

Red-Teaming Workflows

Implement internal 'judgment gyms' where employees routinely audit, challenge, and stress-test AI outputs rather than accepting raw generations.

Building 21st Century Skills for Future-Ready Workforce Systems

El Iza Mohamedou
Head of the Centre for Skills, OECD



SESSION SUMMARY

Preparing workforces for twin green and digital transitions requires replacing static qualification systems with granular, competency-based recognition that values transferable human capabilities. OECD metrics reveal widespread structural qualification mismatches that depress productivity, proving that economic resilience relies on continuous adult learning infrastructure rather than initial tertiary degrees alone. National strategies must bridge systemic siloes between education ministries, enterprise policies, and labor markets by establishing dynamic skill-tracking systems that accredit experiential learning and lower barriers for vulnerable worker populations.

> **Skill mismatches harm individual career progression and drag down overall economic productivity across entire OECD nations.**
>
> — El Iza Mohamedou

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
Transferable Competencies Drive Resilience
Durable human capabilities such as critical thinking and adaptability outweigh narrow technical qualifications over a career lifecycle.

02
Structural Adult Learning Infrastructure
Continuous adult upskilling must be treated as a primary economic lever rather than a secondary welfare program.

03
Policy Alignment Across Siloes
Education, labor, and economic development strategies must share unified metrics and real-time skill taxonomy data.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
Dynamic Competency Mapping
Implement modular, micro-credentialed learning frameworks aligned with international OECD skill taxonomies.

02
Adult Learning Subsidies
Create targeted financial incentives and paid learning leave for mid-career workers vulnerable to automation.

03
Skills Audit Systems
Deploy national skill audits across local SMBs to identify and correct active qualification mismatches.

The Generation the Strategy Is Built For

Neil Camenzuli
University of Malta

Rachel Deguara
Institute for Education

Yatharth Sardhara
IDEA College

Jacob Scerri
Knights College

Amy Ann Vella
MCAST

Danielle Solar FACILITATOR
Executive Director, FTC



SESSION SUMMARY

Youth leadership is not a symbolic sounding board but a rigorous pressure test of national policy against ground realities. Higher education students across Malta challenged traditional employer assumptions, calling for a shift from rigid degree credentials toward authentic AI workflow integration, accredited non-formal skills, and structural upskilling within working hours. Addressing brain drain and workforce stagnation requires employers to offer clear career scalability, mutual intergenerational mentorship (spanning workers aged 18 to 65+), and authentic autonomy rather than outdated desk-time monitoring.

> **This stage is not for symbolic youth representation. It is a direct reflection of global metrics and frameworks by the people expected to lead the future.**
>
> – Danielle Solar

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01

Competency & Output Over Desk Time

Next-gen talent expects evaluation based on problem-solving, critical judgment, and AI-assisted efficiency rather than logged hours.

02

Institutionalized Working-Hour Learning

Upskilling cannot be an after-hours burden; employers must embed continuous professional development directly into paid work time.

03

Elevating Core Economic Sectors

High-value sectors like hospitality, education, and creative arts require accredited, scalable career pathways to retain local talent in Malta.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01

Work-Integrated Placements

Mandate structured, client-facing micro-placements across higher education programs to bridge academic training with real-world execution.

02

Non-Formal Skill Validation

Formalize national mechanisms to accredit self-taught digital capabilities, community leadership, and artistic problem-solving.

03

Intergenerational Mentorship

Establish reverse-mentorship programs in organizations to pair digital-native perspectives with senior operational experience.

Beyond Units of Productivity: Human Flourishing, AI & the Future Company

Luke McKeever
CEO, Thomas International

Adrian Furnham
Professor, BI Norwegian Business School



SESSION SUMMARY

Maximizing organizational performance in the AI age requires moving beyond transactional productivity metrics toward human flourishing, psychological safety, and intrinsic motivation. While automated tools can handle computational tasks, sustainable competitive advantage originates in human judgment, ethical reasoning, empathy, and creative risk-taking—qualities that deteriorate under high burnout and algorithmic surveillance. Leaders must redesign organizational cultures to measure employee engagement, trust, and well-being as primary leading indicators of long-term commercial capability.

> **If you treat human beings purely as units of productivity, you destroy the very creativity and discretionary effort that drives innovation.**
>
> – Adrian Furnham

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
Human Capacity > Algorithmic Efficiency
Unchecked performance tracking erodes discretionary effort, trust, and creative problem-solving.

02
Psychological Safety Drives Innovation
Teams require high trust and ethical leeway to experiment with AI without fear of punitive monitoring.

03
Intrinsic Motivation as Commercial Infrastructure
Purpose, autonomy, and mastery are the foundational drivers of sustainable organizational performance.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
Flourishing Metrics
Integrate psychological safety and employee well-being indicators into core executive scorecards alongside financial KPIs.

02
Trust-Based AI Policies
software with output-driven evaluation frameworks that encourage responsible tool usage.

03
Leadership Capability Building
Train senior management in empathetic leadership and psychological safety management for hybrid, tech-enabled teams.

Who Gets to Design the Future?

Monika Bielskyte
Founder, Protopia Futures; Former Futurist-in-Residence, Nike (2025-2026)



SESSION SUMMARY

Conventional futuristic narratives often default to techno-dystopian tropes or corporate homogeneity, systematically excluding marginalized communities and non-Western perspectives from the architectural blueprint of tomorrow. Prototyping inclusive futures requires 'worldbuilding' methodologies that prioritize pluriversal human experiences, ecological harmony, and universal accessibility over speculative capital accumulation. True innovation demands that diverse populations are active co-designers of technological systems, ensuring that AI models and urban infrastructure reflect pluralist values rather than reinforcing historical biases.

> **The future is not a single destination designed by tech elites in Silicon Valley; it is a pluriverse that must be co-created by everyone.**
>
> — Monika Bielskyte

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
Pluriverse > Homogeneous Tech Tropes
Futures must be designed around pluralistic human experiences rather than monolithic corporate visions.

02
Inclusion as Design Architecture
Accessibility, neurodiversity, and cultural heritage must serve as core structural constraints from project inception.

03
Prototyping Protopias
Focus on incremental, actionable improvements ('protopias') that actively elevate human capability today rather than distant utopias.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
Inclusive Worldbuilding Frameworks
Adopt participatory design methodologies that involve diverse demographic groups in urban and technological planning.

02
Pluralist AI Training Datasets
Incentivize local and regional dataset creation to prevent cultural erasure and algorithmic bias in deployed AI systems.

03
Community Co-Design Mandates
Require civic technology projects to establish mandatory community co-creation boards before securing public development funds.

BREAKOUT SESSION

The New Employer–Employee Contract

Tim Ackerman
Managing Partner, WP Management Solutions AG

Noel Debono
President, FHRD

Joanne Grima
CEO, Institute for Education

Ediana Guillaumier
Senior Manager, People Consulting & Learning, EY

Danielle Solar FACILITATOR
Executive Director, Future Talent Council



SESSION SUMMARY

The traditional employer-employee contract—built on static job descriptions, fixed hours, and after-hours self-upskilling—is fundamentally outdated in an AI-driven economy. As AI automates entry-level tasks, organizations face an 'entry-level paradox' that requires redesigning junior roles around critical judgment, prompt engineering, and adaptability rather than routine execution. To solve retention challenges and bridge trust gaps, employers must treat upskilling as paid working-hour infrastructure, implement work-integrated micro-placements, and evaluate talent based on output and human problem-solving rather than physical desk time.

> **If AI replaces the routine starting line of a career, we must redesign entry-level roles so young professionals build the judgment needed to manage AI.**
>
> – Tim Ackerman

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
Upskilling as Paid Work Infrastructure
Continuous learning must be built directly into job design and paid working hours rather than pushed to after-hours study.

02
Redesigning the Entry-Level Starting Line
Organizations must restructure junior positions to build critical judgment and scenario planning alongside AI co-pilots.

03
Trust & Retention Through Work Placements
Embedding work-integrated micro-placements transforms short-term intern friction into a high-loyalty talent pipeline.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
Working-Hour Learning Allocations
Establish formal organizational agreements guaranteeing dedicated weekly hours for structured upskilling.

02
Output-Based Evaluation Models
with competency-driven performance scorecards centered on problem-solving quality.

03
Corporate Micro-Placement Programs
Partner with higher education institutions to offer structured, client-facing micro-placements for mid-career and entry-level talent.

BREAKOUT SESSION

Building 21st Century Skills for Future-Ready Workforce Systems

Harini Annadanam
Head of Product AI, Mentimeter

Ryan Mark Camilleri
CEO, European College of Innovation

Tania Lennon
Executive Director, Strategic Talent Lab, IMD

El Iza Mohamedou
Head of the Centre for Skills, OECD

Mark Patterson
Executive Director, Magnet at Toronto Metropolitan University



SESSION SUMMARY

Operationalizing 21st-century workforce systems requires embedding dynamic, modular skill frameworks directly into national qualifications and enterprise upskilling programs. The consensus highlighted that while technical tools rapidly obsolete, transversal human capabilities—such as systems thinking, adaptability, and ethical reasoning—provide lifelong career resilience. Success depends on breaking institutional siloes between national skills councils, educational institutions, and private sector employers to create transparent, real-time skill verification systems that recognize both formal and non-formal learning.

> **Transversal capabilities are not 'soft' skills; they are the durable foundation that enables workers to navigate constant technological shifts.**
>
> – Tania Lennon

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
Transversal Capabilities Enable Lifelong Resilience
Core human competencies must be explicitly taught, measured, and accredited alongside technical tools.

02
Dynamic Qualifications Ecosystems
National qualification bodies must adopt agile, modular frameworks capable of updating standards in real time.

03
Shared Data Standards for Skills
Governments and enterprise HR platforms require interoperable taxonomy standards to verify capability across sectors.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
Modular Micro-Credentialing
Develop national micro-credential standards aligned with international frameworks to certify short-form skill acquisitions.

02
Transversal Skill Curricula
Embed explicit instruction in critical reasoning, systems thinking, and digital ethics into all vocational and tertiary programs.

03
Interoperable HR Taxonomies
Adopt standardized skill taxonomies across public employment services and corporate HR management software.

BREAKOUT SESSION

Who Gets to Design the Future?

Monika Bielskyte
Founder, Protopia Futures; Former Futurist-in-Residence, Nike (2025-2026)

Ruth Debrincat
Senior Director Policy & Technical Affairs, National Skills Council Malta

Julian Phillips
AI philosopher and author; FTC Impact Advisory Cabinet



SESSION SUMMARY

Digital citizenship in the age of AI requires establishing universal access to technology, critical media literacy, and democratic participation in technology governance. The panel emphasized that without intentional public policy, algorithmic bias and concentrated tech ownership threaten civic agency, exacerbate digital poverty, and disenfranchise vulnerable populations. Ensuring an inclusive future demands that governments and civic institutions actively include diverse populations in technology policy formulation, treat digital connectivity as a fundamental public right, and integrate digital ethics into lifelong education.

> **Digital literacy is no longer just a workforce skill; it is a fundamental prerequisite for democratic citizenship in an AI-driven society.**
>
> — Ruth DeBrincat

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
Digital Access as a Civic Right
Universal connectivity and hardware access are essential prerequisites for civic participation and economic inclusion.

02
Democratizing Technology Governance
Public policy must involve community stakeholders in setting ethical guardrails and deployment standards for AI systems.

03
Civic Media Literacy
Education systems must equip citizens of all ages to critically evaluate algorithmic content, bias, and automated decision-making.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
Universal Digital Inclusion Grants
Expand public infrastructure funding to guarantee high-speed internet and device access for underrepresented households.

02
Civic AI Advisory Boards
Establish public community advisory panels to review the societal impact of civic AI deployments before implementation.

03
National Digital Ethics Curricula
Integrate critical digital citizenship and media literacy modules into primary, secondary, and adult learning programs.

BREAKOUT SESSION

AI Capability Frameworks

John Fischetti
Chair, FTC Center for Education Transformation

Elena Magrini
Head of Global Research, Lightcast



SESSION SUMMARY

As artificial intelligence transitions from predictive tools to agentic systems capable of autonomous execution, organizations must move beyond treating jobs as static task lists and define the distinct boundaries of human value. Rather than measuring AI adoption solely by IT roles, institutions must recognize that technology is reshaping task workflows across all occupations. While execution is increasingly automated, uniquely human capability concentrates at the bookends of the workflow: human judgment and critical inquiry at the start to frame the problem, and contextual validation and ethical responsibility at the finish. Because the vast majority of those needing adaptation are already in the active workforce, education systems and employers must shift from traditional sorting assessments toward teaching diagnostic reasoning, adaptability, and the communication of experiential capability.

> **The biggest question that companies are grappling with right now is understanding where to draw the line between what is human and what can be given to AI.**
>
> — Elena Magrini

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01

Jobs Are More Than Tasks

Work is a complex synthesis of tasks, skills, and human decisions; automation of routine execution elevates the necessity of human oversight and context.

02

Workforce Adaptation Is an Immediate Need

Reskilling strategies must focus heavily on the current, active labor market rather than relying solely on early-career graduate pipelines.

03

Shift to Assessment 'As' Learning

Educational frameworks must move away from static degree classifications toward authentic, experiential demonstrations of communication, judgment, and reasoning.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01

Workflow Boundary Audits

Implement organizational reviews to map where AI handles execution while explicitly reserving problem-framing, ethics, and final validation for human judgment.

02

Mid-Career Reskilling Pathways

Create targeted upskilling programs for existing, mid-career employees to build AI fluency and critical diagnostic capabilities inside current roles.

03

Experiential Skill Portfolios

Transition university and corporate evaluation systems toward portfolio-based, real-world case demonstrations that capture transversal capabilities.

BREAKOUT SESSION

Beyond Units of Productivity

Matthew Costa
CEO, NDSF, Malta's Sovereign Wealth Fund

Adrian Furnham
Professor, BI Norwegian Business School

Christina Lewis
Chief People Officer, C40 Cities

Luke McKeever
CEO, Thomas International



SESSION SUMMARY

Expanding on the morning plenary, this session examined practical operational strategies for embedding human flourishing and psychological safety into corporate operating models. Panelists demonstrated that organizations prioritizing employee mental health, autonomy, and values-driven leadership consistently outperform peers in retention, innovation, and change adoption. The transition requires HR leaders to redesign performance management systems away from punitive surveillance metrics toward holistic scorecards that evaluate discretionary effort, trust, and long-term organizational health.

> **When employees feel psychologically safe, they stop spending energy on self-preservation and redirect it toward innovation and collaboration.**
>
> — Christina Lewis

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
Psychological Safety Drives Change Readiness
Employees in high-trust environments adapt faster to technological disruption and organizational restructuring.

02
Redesigning Performance Management
Traditional efficiency tracking must be replaced by holistic evaluations of discretionary effort, leadership, and teamwork.

03
Leadership Responsibility for Well-Being
Executive capability scorecards must hold managers accountable for team burnout rates and psychological safety.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
Holistic HR Scorecards
Implement balanced performance management frameworks that weight team well-being and psychological safety alongside output.

02
Managerial Well-Being Training
Mandate empathetic leadership and burnout prevention training for all line managers and team leads.

03
Employee Autonomy Frameworks
Establish clear operational guidelines that grant workers autonomy over workflow execution and tool utilization.

BREAKOUT SESSION

Different Journeys, Shared Belongings

Nadia Abdilla
Equity Coordinator, Equity Office, University of Malta

Harini Annadanam
Head of Product AI, Mentimeter

Rachael Blackburn
Head of Culture, APS Bank

Andrew Jones
President, Brunel University London

Danielle Solar FACILITATOR
Executive Director, Future Talent Council



SESSION SUMMARY

Technological acceleration and market volatility threaten to widen global socioeconomic divides unless intentionally countered by inclusive design, equity frameworks, and cross-border collaboration. Panelists challenged the assumption that tech innovation automatically creates universal benefit, highlighting systemic barriers facing marginalized groups, non-formal learners, and international talent. Achieving shared belonging requires higher education, corporate leadership, and tech designers to move past diversity checkboxes, build human-centric digital products, protect global talent corridors, and embed lived equity into institutional architecture.

> **Companies have a core responsibility to build AI systems that are easy to use and hard to abuse.**
>
> — Harini Annadanam

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
Testing the Progress Narrative
Technological acceleration widens economic divides unless active structural guardrails enforce equitable access.

02
Lived Equity Over Compliance Checklists
Diversity and inclusion initiatives must move from surface-level quotas to redesigning underlying institutional systems.

03
Human-Centric Digital Product Design
Software and AI tools must be architected to democratize voice, lower digital literacy barriers, and foster genuine connection.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
Universal Design Standards
Mandate accessibility and inclusive design principles across all public and enterprise software procurement.

02
Equity-Centred System Audits
Conduct structural equity audits of hiring, promotion, and academic admission frameworks to eliminate hidden barriers.

03
Global Talent Corridor Policies
Establish institutional partnerships between universities and employers to support international talent mobility and integration.

Avoiding the Transformation Trap

John Fischetti
Chair, FTC Center for Education Transformation
Emeritus Professor, University of Newcastle, Australia
Co-author, The Future of Schooling in a GenAI World



SESSION SUMMARY

Organizations frequently fall into the 'transformation trap' by investing heavily in new technologies while leaving underlying cultural, structural, and pedagogical models unchanged. Real transformation requires aligning technology adoption with systemic human readiness, clear strategic vision, and continuous institutional reflection. Education and enterprise leaders must resist superficial digital upgrades, focusing instead on deep cultural shifts that empower educators and workers to use technology as an accelerator for human capability and meaningful outcome delivery.

> **Buying new technology without changing your underlying culture and operating model isn't transformation; it's just expensive decoration.**
>
> – John Fischetti

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01

Cultural Shift > Technology Acquisition

Tools fail to deliver value if underlying institutional culture and workflows remain rigid.

02

Avoiding Superficial Digital Upgrades

Successful implementation requires restructuring roles, incentives, and evaluation metrics before rolling out software.

03

Empowering the Frontline

Transformation succeeds when frontline workers and educators are given agency to shape how technology is applied.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01

Transformation Readiness Audits

Evaluate organizational culture, workflow flexibility, and staff readiness prior to major IT infrastructure investments.

02

Human-Centric Change Management

Co-design technology implementation plans with frontline staff to ensure tools solve operational friction.

03

Long-Term Value Impact Metrics

Measure digital transformation success by long-term human capability outcomes rather than initial software adoption rates.

When the Future Refuses to Follow the Plan

Julian Phillips
Author, AI Philosopher & AI-Human Evangelist



SESSION SUMMARY

Traditional long-term workforce planning fails in volatile environments where technological and macroeconomic disruptions refuse to follow linear forecasts. Building resilient organizations requires replacing rigid 5-year plans with dynamic scenario testing, modular institutional structures, and high organizational adaptability. Leaders must cultivate 'futures literacy' across their management teams, training staff to identify weak signals, pivot operational models rapidly, and build buffer capacity that absorbs sudden market shifts.

> **Stop relying on static five-year plans for a world changing every five months. Build adaptable systems that thrive on uncertainty.**
>
> — Julian Phillips

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
Dynamic Adaptability › Static Planning

Institutional resilience depends on flexible operating models rather than rigid multi-year strategic documents.

02
Cultivating Organizational Futures Literacy

Management teams must be trained to continuously scan for weak signals and run scenario planning exercises.

03
Building Modular Buffer Capacity

Systems need structural redundancy and cross-trained personnel to absorb unforeseen economic shocks.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
Continuous Scenario Planning

Embed quarterly scenario-testing workshops into executive decision-making processes.

02
Agile Organizational Design

Restructure rigid corporate hierarchies into cross-functional, agile teams capable of rapid reprioritization.

03
Futures Literacy Workshops

Roll out futures literacy and risk navigation training across senior and mid-level management pipelines.

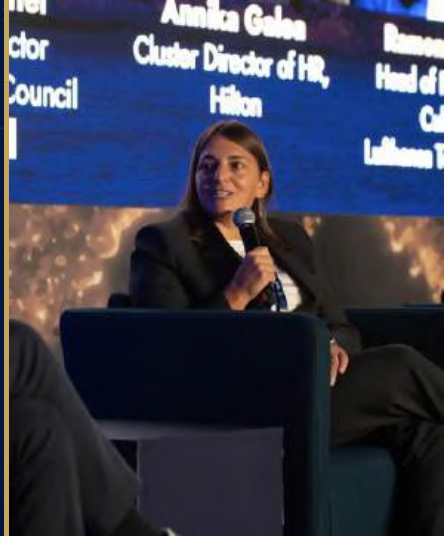
CHRO Voices: The New Rules of Talent Leadership

Ramona Galea
Head of People and Culture, Lufthansa Technik Malta

Annika Galea
Cluster Human Resources Director, Hilton

Christina Lewis
Chief People Officer, C40 Cities

Emir Cetinel FACILITATOR
Senior Director, Future Talent Council



SESSION SUMMARY

Chief Human Resources Officers from leading enterprises debated the operational realities of leading talent through unprecedented technological and cultural transitions. The panel emphasized that HR must evolve from a administrative compliance function into a strategic driver of organizational transformation and workplace culture. Retaining top talent in competitive markets requires HR leaders to champion flexible working contracts, implement personalized career development pathways, foster psychological safety, and negotiate new transparent relationships with next-generation workers.

> **HR is no longer about enforcing rules; it is about designing environments where people can perform, adapt, and belong.**
>
> — Ramona Galea

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
HR as a Strategic Transformation Driver
People leaders must sit at the core of executive strategy to align talent design with digital transformation.

02
Personalized Career Pathways
Rigid talent ladders must be replaced by flexible, lattice-style career models tailored to individual development goals.

03
Culture as the Ultimate Retention Tool
Competitive compensation is baseline; long-term retention is driven by values alignment, autonomy, and psychological safety.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
Strategic HR Board Integration
Ensure senior HR leadership actively participates in technology procurement and organizational redesign committees.

02
Flexible Work-Contract Design
Develop modernized employment contracts that accommodate hybrid arrangements, gig flexibility, and continuous learning.

03
Talent Retention Analytics
Deploy continuous sentiment tracking and stay-interview frameworks to proactively identify and resolve retention risks.

From Policy to Practice: Achieving Impact at Scale

Kenneth Brincat
CEO, Malta Digital Innovation Authority

Matthew Costa
CEO, NDSF, Malta's Sovereign Wealth Fund

El Iza Mohamedou
Head of the Centre for Skills, OECD

Gretchen Neisler
Vice Provost for Global Engagement, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Matthew Vella
Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Education and Sport

John Fischetti
Chair, FTC Center for Education Transformation



SESSION SUMMARY

Translating national skills strategies into measurable economic impact requires alignment between government funding levers, educational delivery, and enterprise execution. Panelists examined implementation mechanics, demonstrating that successful policy scaling relies on clear accountability metrics, public-private co-investment, and removing bureaucratic friction for SMBs. Scaling impact across Malta demands establishing integrated governance structures that monitor real-world skill utilization, fund workplace adoption alongside training, and ensure policies remain responsive to market feedback.

> "A strategy on paper is worth nothing if a small business owner cannot easily access the resources to upskill their workforce."
>
> — Kenneth Brincat

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
Removing Friction for Policy Access
Public upskilling grants and funding mechanisms must feature streamlined application processes for SMBs.

02
Co-Investment Models Drive Commitment
Shared financial investment between government and employers ensures upskilling programs address genuine business needs.

03
Measuring Real-World Skill Utilization
Policy success metrics must track job placement, productivity improvements, and wage growth rather than course completions.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
One-Stop SMB Skills Portals
Launch simplified digital portals for small businesses to access upskilling grants, apprenticeships, and advisory support.

02
Public-Private Co-Funding Frameworks
Establish matching-fund programs where government subsidies pair with private sector capital for industry upskilling.

03
Longitudinal Policy Impact Studies
Implement tracking systems to measure the multi-year economic impact of National Skills Strategy initiatives.

BREAKOUT SESSION

Where Partnership Becomes Progress

Gretchen Neisler
Vice Provost for Global Engagement, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

El Iza Mohamedou
Head of the Centre for Skills, OECD

Paul Preston
Chief Strategy Officer, Keyin College

Emir Cetinel FACILITATOR
Senior Director, Future Talent Council



SESSION SUMMARY

Effective international and cross-sector partnerships are essential for scaling workforce solutions, sharing research, and building global talent mobility corridors. Panelists highlighted that successful collaborations require moving beyond superficial memorandums of understanding to build deeply integrated, long-term operational partnerships with shared risk and governance. International case studies demonstrated how universities, governments, and industry multinationals can co-create regional innovation hubs that accelerate talent development and economic growth.

> **Real partnership is not about signing an MoU and taking a photo; it is about sharing risk, funding, and daily execution.**
>
> — Gretchen Neisler

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01
Deep Operational Partnerships > MoUs
Sustainable collaboration demands shared financial commitments, co-located staff, and joint governance.

02
Building Regional Innovation Ecosystems
Higher education and industry must co-design research and training centers tailored to regional economic strengths.

03
Facilitating Global Talent Mobility
Cross-border partnerships help standardize skill recognitions and establish legal corridors for international talent exchange.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01
Joint Innovation Hub Creation
Establish physical or virtual co-innovation centers co-funded by higher education and industry partners.

02
Inter-Institutional Governance Boards
Structure formal oversight committees with equal representation from academic, corporate, and civic leaders.

03
Cross-Border Mobility Agreements
Develop bilateral agreements that streamline academic credit transfer and professional qualification recognition.

Stop Predicting the Future. Start Preparing for It.

Elena Magrini
Head of Global Research, Lightcast



SESSION SUMMARY

Economist Elena Magrini delivered a data-driven closing keynote urging leaders to abandon speculative long-term forecasting and focus on building baseline institutional preparation today. Analyzing labor market trends across Europe, she demonstrated that structural skill shortages are best addressed by investing in high-quality foundational education, expanding adult vocational training, and improving labor market matching. Practical preparation requires immediate, scalable intervention in core competencies rather than waiting for definitive clarity on future job titles.

> **We don't need a crystal ball to know that critical thinking, digital literacy, and adaptability are needed today. Stop predicting; start preparing.**
>
> — Elena Magrini

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01

Foundational Capability Over Speculative Forecasts

Investing in robust core competencies provides better long-term protection against volatility than predicting specific job titles.

02

Expanding Adult Vocational Access

Mid-career retraining infrastructure must be scaled to allow workers to continuously adapt to market shifts.

03

Data-Driven Labor Matching

Public employment services require real-time labor market data to efficiently match job seekers with active vacancy demands.

OUTCOMES & IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

01

Core Competency Funding Priority

Direct public education and training subsidies toward foundational digital, mathematical, and critical reasoning skills.

02

Rapid Mid-Career Reskilling Pathways

Develop 12-week intensive vocational conversion bootcamps aligned with immediate regional labor shortages.

03

Real-Time Labor Market Dashboards

Deploy public digital dashboards tracking open job requirements and skill demands across national sectors.