



**Skills Canada BC**

**Report to the Board**

**World Skills 2019 Competition in Kazan, Russia  
and  
WorldSkills 2019 Youth Conference**

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## Schedule of Events

1. Travelled to Russia – Skills Canada national office supported registration and arrangements for all Canadian delegates to the event. Worked with staff to complete all the required submissions – they handled Visa arrangements, hotels and delegate packages. The delegate package included hotel, breakfast and lunch, and travel to and from the event site daily. We individually arranged for flights to and from Kazan.
2. Canadian Delegation – there were roughly 120 Canadians attending the World Skills event including competitors, trainers, member delegates, National board members, experts and parents of competitors. Canada had a booth at the event as did many other countries.
3. Events – the delegates attended the opening and closing ceremonies and the Canada night reception.
4. Opening Ceremony – 3 hours wonderful show – amazing technology, stories and spectacle – Canadian delegates all sat together and were very impressed with the presentation.
5. Skills Conference – Thanks to the advocacy work of Abigail and Elaine – Abigail and I were part of the conference presenters and facilitators. That ensured we had free entrance to the conference. Here are some of my notes and thoughts from the conference.

## WorldSkills 2019 Conference Program

### a. Day 1 – Friday August 23, 2019

- i. Keynote speaker Nassim Nicholas Taleb – excellent speaker – spoke about the need for more practical skills education recommending hands on work experience prior to formal education. Consider reading his multi volume essay the Incerto – the books include The Black Swan, Fooled by Randomness and Antifragile. He spoke at length about new technology being developed in business by entrepreneurs which would later move to a formal education setting and the importance to learning through trial and error.
- ii. Some key points of note: Russia is adopting WorldSkills standards establishing 100 training centres; Russia is also starting a project to engage employers to support education programs and working with secondary students to promote career development.

## Day 1 - The future of work through the prism of youth workshop – notes:

- i. Focus on human versus economics to raise all worlds youth. A survey was conducted of 19 World Skills members youth (1000-1500) in each country – full report will be available soon to understand how youth feel about their future.
- ii. Youth indicated they are receiving poor advice for career preparation – there is a need for more career education counseling and support for trades and technology career focus.
- iii. There is a need for soft skill development and a need for exploration programs to help youth try a variety of skills.
- iv. Employers criticize the education system for lack of soft skills. There is a need to build transition programs for youth from school to work.
- v. Suggestions included maximizing Skills Competitors as speakers talking to youth about their choices and experiences – in school presentations.
- vi. An OECD study will be available in December 2019 about the disconnect between school and work.
- vii. Recommendations included the need for government policies to support technological change and to support solutions; employers need to take on responsibility to support youth development; youth need to be ready to learn and invest in their skill development/a learning attitude.
- viii. Solutions discussed: employers creat a volunteer network available to teachers for in school presentations; skills competitors visit schools and talk with students – interaction of role models in the classroom; develop teacher and parent hubs to connect with employers to help raise skills need awareness; use technology to build collaborations and networks – financially effective; web design competition to create a collaborations app; more career advice needed face to face not online; skills organizations are opportunities to bring together stakeholders for collaboration and maximize the competitions and competitors.

## Day 1 – Making Work Meaningful workshop – notes:

- i. Abigail provided a keynote presentation on the need to support all youth with a focus on indigenous populations – example of skills shortages and a growing indigenous population in Canada – consider ways to engage indigenous populations and others who are not actively participating in skills development.
- ii. This workshop was interactive and notes of the group work are to be made available to the conference participants soon.

- iii. This workshop reinforced that many educators around the world face similar struggles in skilled trades training – funding, people’s perceptions of trades and shortages of skilled labour.

## Day 2 of WorldSkills 2019 Conference

- a. Keynote: Astronaut Scott Kelly and Cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev – amazing stories about what it takes to be an astronaut. I have some slides for our files. They both spoke at length about the value of lifelong learning and practical skills needed in their work.
- b. Workshop – Designing Skills pathways for local challenges – notes:
  - i. Keynote – Kelly Betts – A Canadian Example (10 minutes) profiling Canada, Skills Canada, the red seal program, the South Island Partnership – I have some slides for out files.
  - ii. The workshop was a group activity by region – I helped to facilitate the session – notes from the organizers will be shared to conference participants soon.

## Workshop – Cooperation practices to train agile skilled young people – notes:

- a. I helped to facilitate the group discussions – these were organized by region and were very interesting to hear what is happening around the world – notes will be made available to conference participants soon.
  - 1. Global apprenticeship network – connect to share more information and ideas – Kathleen Elsie.
  - 2. India – new Act the includes “Optional Trades” providing diversification and implementation of sector counsels.
  - 3. Cost Rica – AI is a focus as a solution for future jobs worth youth to help job creation and change of jobs.
  - 4. A variety of different European solutions including a focus on apprenticeship training models; apprenticeship support alliance – online training programs see GAN website.
  - 5. Africa – has big challenges but are working hard to collaborate

## Workshop – Lightning Talks

- i. Abigail Fulton participated on a panel of 4 and discussed the value of Indigenous skills and the importance of incorporating their knowledge into the future of skills development particularly in the area of sustainability.

## Ongoing Opportunities

- i. Follow up discussions were had with Shaun Thorson regarding future participation with the World Skills Conferences and he felt that there would likely be continued interest on the part of the organizers and he would have more information in the late fall.
- ii. I would recommend that we have more of a presence at the Canada booth in Shanghai. I think it is a great place to network and promote Canada as a destination.

## Skills Competitions and BC Competitors – Day 3

- a. Toured the Competition site and checked in with the 4 BC Competitors and their Trainers. There are some recommendations for improving the BC representative experience for future years.
- b. The facilities and organization were amazing, well organized and inspiring.

## Canada Night Celebrations – Day 4

- a. All the Canadians gathered together last day of the event to congratulate and celebrate the competitors achievements and efforts – great time for networking and providing support to the BC Team members, their families and their trainers

## Closing Ceremony

Was equally amazing as the opening ceremony – unfortunately it poured rain at some points – it was an open air facility. Canada was awarded 1 silver medal in heavy equipment maintenance and several Medallions of Excellence. 3 of the 4 BC competitors were awarded Medallions of Excellence for scoring 700 points and above in the scoring system.

## Overall Impressions

Overall the event and experience was amazing the people were very friendly and the event was very well organized.

It was amazing to see the resources invested by the Russian government to deliver World Skills. Clearly the role of skills is growing across the world and any opportunity to increase Canadian involvement would be a good thing. Media coverage of the events across Europe was extensive (and likely the same would be true in Asia) however there was very little attention paid by North American media, which is a shame.

On a positive, the conference presentations and ceremonies were being followed online by the Industry Training Authority.

## Focus on the Competitors

BC's four Team Canada members performed exceptionally well under the intense pressure of competing in a WorldSkills competition.

Three of the four competitors had trainers accompany them to the competition. These competitors were very happy to have their trainers with them.

The trainers felt that Skills Canada could have been more accommodating towards helping them attend the WorldSkills competition. The BC trainers were upset because they had to arrange their own travel visas and were left to find their own accommodation. It would have been better to have the trainers staying in the same hotel as the rest of the Canadian delegates.

This year was the first year that Skills Canada made it mandatory for first and second place competitors to compete in a final competition to earn their spots on Team Canada.

It has been thought by the Skills Canada organization that the reason Canada had only won one medal in Abu Dhabi was because it hadn't done a good job obtaining highly motivated competitors.

The logic behind this was to try and weed out competitors who were not committed to doing their best to prepare for the WorldSkills competition.

But, despite these added efforts Canada won only one medal in Kazan 2019 (in Heavy Duty Mechanics).