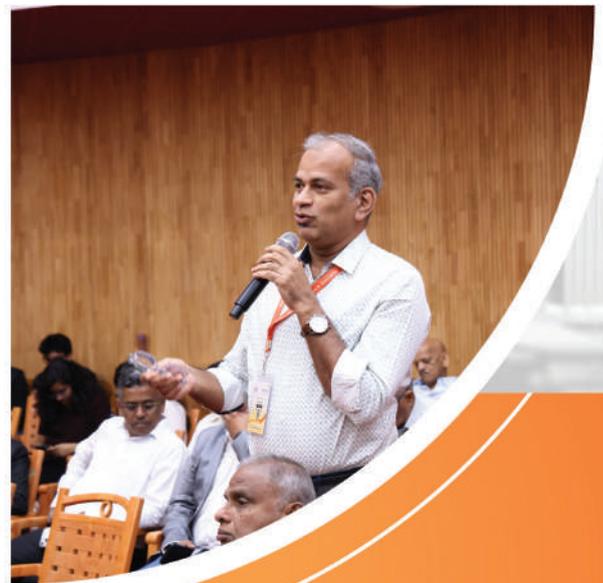# SkillVention 2026
AI Powered Future Skills

FROM DIALOGUE TO POLICY: INSIGHTS FROM SKILLVENTION 2026

19th – 20th Feb, 2026

DBSM, Bangalore

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Introduction

SkillVention 2026 marked a significant milestone for Don Bosco Tech Society, celebrating two decades of transformative work in youth skilling and livelihood creation across India. Convened under the theme "AI-Powered Future Skills," the event brought together leaders from industry, government, CSR, academia, and the development sector to reflect on the changing landscape of work and the evolving role of skilling institutions in preparing young people for the future.

SkillVention 2026 also saw strong participation from across the Don Bosco Tech ecosystem, with 176 registered guests representing the National Office, state teams, and training centres, along with Salesian technical heads from various provinces. The panelists brought diverse industry perspectives spanning hospitality, aviation, defence, CSR, manufacturing, and the broader development sector, enriching the discussions with insights on emerging workforce needs and future skills. In addition to the panel dialogues, the event featured an Innovation Expo showcasing emerging ideas and technologies within the skilling ecosystem, along with a Job Fair that brought together employers, schools, and technical institutions, creating opportunities for young people to connect with potential career pathways.

In a rapidly transforming world shaped by artificial intelligence and changing employer expectations, the discussions at SkillVention explored how skilling ecosystems must adapt to remain inclusive, responsive and future-ready. While technological disruption formed an important backdrop, the conversations repeatedly emphasized that the heart of effective skilling lies in human development, dignity of work and the nurturing of confidence, creativity, and aspiration among young people.

This report compiles and synthesizes insights from five curated panel dialogues conducted during SkillVention 2026. It is designed both for external dissemination to government institutions, CSR leaders, NGOs and knowledge platforms and for internal strategic reflection within Don Bosco Tech's leadership, provincial teams, and programme governance structures.

About This Report – Methodology

The insights presented in this report draw upon different sources from SkillVention 2026. These include interactions, iterations and panel discussions, as well as session documentation compiled during the event.

In addition, the report incorporates personal observation notes to capture key ideas, comments and thematic threads emerging during the conversations.

The analysis was conducted using a structured interpretive approach that included:

- Thematic coding of discussion points across panels
- Cross-panel corroboration of recurring ideas and insights
- Translation of the discussions into strategic reflections and recommendations aligned with Vision 2031

This approach allows the report to move beyond session summaries and instead present a consolidated understanding of emerging trends, challenges and opportunities within India's skilling ecosystem.

Panels Covered

1. Pioneers' Dialogue: From Intent to Impact
2. Policy and National Skilling Perspective
3. CSR & Partnership Perspectives
4. Industry & Employer Dialogue
5. Work Integrated Learning Pathways (WILP) and Its Future

Together, these discussions offer a multi-stakeholder view of the future of skilling, bringing together perspectives from policymakers, corporate partners, training institutions, and founding leaders who have shaped the journey of Don Bosco Tech.

The reflections captured in this report highlight a central message emerging from SkillVention 2026: while technology will continue to redefine the nature of work, the future of skilling must remain anchored in human values, inclusive opportunity, and the empowerment of young people to build meaningful livelihoods.

SkillVention Panel Discussion Theme:

Panel of Pioneers

Panel Members
- Ms. Manisha Bhattacharya – MD – Corporate Citizenship, Accenture India
- Fr. Furtado Adolph – Founding Member, Don Bosco Tech
- Mr P.M. Sriraj - Area Director – HR (South), The Leela Hotels & Resorts
- Mr. Devi Prasad Mahapatra – Former Communications Manager, Don Bosco Tech now at International Rice Research Institute

Moderator
- Ms. Anita Sharma – Senior Development Professional

Date and Time
February 19, 2026, 12 noon - 1 pm

Introduction

The discussion explored the origins, guiding values, and institutional evolution of a mission that has transformed lakhs of young lives over two decades. The panel highlighted how Don Bosco Tech's approach to skilling emerged not merely as a training initiative but as a values-driven movement centered on dignity, accompaniment, and holistic youth development. From its early experiments in vocational training to its present scale across multiple states, the organization has consistently balanced operational growth with fidelity to Salesian pedagogy. Key themes included the importance of seeing youth not as labour but as individuals with potential, building trust with industry partners, nurturing creativity and confidence among trainees, and ensuring that skilling programs remain rooted in community realities. Looking ahead, the discussion emphasized the need to reimagine skilling for the AI era while safeguarding the core values that define the Salesian mission.

Salient Points

1. Origins of a Mission: The Early Years

Don Bosco Tech's early initiatives were driven by a commitment to reach economically vulnerable youth who lacked access to formal education and employment pathways. From the beginning, the focus was not limited to vocational training alone but extended to life skills, character formation, and confidence building. The aim was to create dignified pathways to employment while nurturing responsible citizens.

2. The Salesian Charism in Skilling

A defining element of Don Bosco Tech's model is its grounding in Salesian pedagogy. The charism of Don Bosco emphasizes accompaniment — walking alongside young people and recognizing their potential. Training centres therefore function not merely as classrooms but as spaces of mentorship, belonging, and encouragement.

3. Creativity and Confidence: Building the Whole Person

Ms. Manisha Bhattacharya highlighted that creativity must be fostered alongside technical training. Creativity encourages problem-solving, adaptability, and innovation. When young people recognize their potential and are encouraged to express ideas, they develop the confidence necessary to navigate evolving industries.

4. Trust-Based Partnerships with Industry

The growth of Don Bosco Tech has been supported by strong partnerships with industry. These relationships have been built gradually through credibility, delivery, and consistent engagement with employer needs. By aligning training with industry expectations while maintaining its value-driven mission, the organization has built trust across sectors.

5. Scaling Impact While Preserving Identity

Over two decades the organization has expanded across multiple states and sectors. Scaling operations requires professional systems, governance structures, and data frameworks. Yet growth must remain anchored in the core mission of youth accompaniment and holistic development.

6. Preparing for the Future of Work

The panel acknowledged that emerging sectors such as AI-enabled services, digital technologies, and green jobs will shape future employment landscapes. Curriculum innovation, trainer upskilling, and industry collaboration will therefore be essential.

7. Institutional Learning Across Two Decades

The journey of Don Bosco Tech reflects continuous learning and adaptation. Feedback from trainees, trainers, employers, and communities has informed program design and strengthened delivery models over time.

8. The Role of Community and Local Context

Engaging parents, educators, and local stakeholders is essential in shaping youth aspirations. Community engagement ensures training programs remain contextualized and inclusive.

9. Values for the Next Generation

Certain values remain non-negotiable: the dignity of every young person, mentorship and accompaniment, integrity in partnerships, commitment to holistic development, and growing attention to the mental health and emotional well-being of youth, recognizing that employability must be supported by confidence, resilience, and supportive learning environments.

10. Reimagining the Mission for the AI Era

As technology evolves, skilling institutions must integrate digital tools and AI-enabled learning while preserving the relational foundation of education.

11. The Multiplier Effect: Democratising Opportunity in the AI Era

Technology can act as a multiplier for skilling impact. AI and digital tools can democratize access to learning for youth across geographies.

Executive Summary:

The Pioneers' Dialogue at SkillVention 2026 reflected on Don Bosco Tech's two-decade journey of transforming youth through values-driven skilling rooted in dignity, accompaniment, and holistic development. The panel highlighted the importance of nurturing confidence, creativity, and trust-based industry partnerships while remaining grounded in community realities. Looking ahead, the discussion emphasized reimagining skilling for the AI era while safeguarding the core Salesian values that define the mission.

Key insights include:

- Skilling must remain rooted in dignity and holistic youth development.
- Salesian accompaniment distinguishes Don Bosco Tech's training approach.
- Creativity and confidence are essential alongside technical skills.
- AI and digital tools should democratize opportunity while enhancing training delivery.
- Critical thinking and creative thinking must be cultivated in youth.
- Greater participation of women must be encouraged.
- Social media and digital communities can channel the energy of young people constructively.
- Youth must be guided toward realistic career expectations aligned with evolving industries.

SkillVention Panel Discussion Theme:

Policy and National Skilling Perspective National Skilling Priorities, AI and Digitalisation, Alignment with Viksit Bharat

Panel Members
- Ms. Annett Baessler – Deputy Consul General of Germany
- Mr. Ratan Kumar – Lead, Skills Development (CSR), BOSCH
- Mr. George Varghese – Manager, Future Skills, NASSCOM

Moderator
- Mr. Amarr Prabhu – Principal, Don Bosco ITI Kurla

Date and Time
February 20, 2026 – 10 am - 11.30 am

Introduction

The discussion examined the evolving relationship between Artificial Intelligence (AI), vocational education, manufacturing growth, global mobility, and human-centered development. While AI is reshaping job markets and skill requirements, the deeper challenge lies in preparing youth for adaptability, resilience, and ethical citizenship.

India stands at a demographic and technological inflection point. With one of the world's youngest populations and rapid technological transformation driven by AI and automation, vocational education must respond decisively. The challenge is not whether AI will influence skilling systems, but how institutions, industry, and policymakers can ensure youth remain employable, future-ready and grounded in values.

Salient Points

1. AI and the Transformation of Work

AI now intersects across manufacturing, banking, healthcare, logistics, and education. Entry-level repetitive roles are increasingly automated, yet AI simultaneously creates demand for analytical thinking, adaptability, and hybrid domain-digital skills. Vocational training must evolve from preparing youth for static jobs to equipping them for dynamic career pathways.

2. Reimagining Entry-Level Employment

Traditional clerical and service roles face automation risks. In contrast, manufacturing, installation services, technical trades, and entrepreneurship-linked pathways present resilient opportunities. Industry 4.0 requires technicians who understand automation systems, digital tools, and data-driven processes.

3. Industry–Academia Integration

The German dual training model illustrates the importance of embedding industry into curriculum design and apprenticeships. India can adapt this principle by strengthening On-the-Job Training, upskilling trainers, and creating structured industry advisory boards.

4. Manufacturing and Industry 4.0

Modern manufacturing is deeply digital. From CNC machines to robotics, technical trades now demand digital fluency alongside domain expertise. Entrepreneurship within skilled trades also presents viable self-employment pathways.

5. Digital Platforms and Future Skills

Scalable digital platforms can democratize access to emerging technologies and professional skills. However, technology must be supported by mentoring and structured engagement, especially for rural and economically disadvantaged learners.

6. Global Mobility and Language Readiness

International employment pathways require not only technical skills but also language proficiency and global standards alignment. Vocational institutions should consider embedding language modules for mobility-focused learners.

7. Human-Centered Skilling

As technology advances, youth face anxiety, unrealistic expectations, and mental health pressures. Vocational education must integrate behavioral training, counseling, mentorship, and values education alongside technical competencies.

Executive Summary

The future of vocational education lies at the intersection of technology, manufacturing growth, global mobility, and human development. AI will shape industries, partnerships will shape systems, and values will shape societies. Don Bosco Tech's mandate is to integrate future-ready skills with human accompaniment, ensuring inclusive and ethical transformation.

Key Insights include:

- Artificial Intelligence is transforming job roles across sectors, not just IT.
- Entry-level repetitive jobs are most vulnerable to automation.
- Manufacturing, technical trades, and Industry 4.0 roles remain high-growth sectors.
- Digital literacy is now embedded within every trade.
- Soft skills and professional behavior are critical alongside domain knowledge.
- Continuous learning, unlearning, and relearning are essential for youth.
- Gig economy offers income but risks long-term stagnation without upskilling.
- Rural and under-resourced institutions require intentional partnership models.
- Language and global standards open international mobility pathways.
- Skilling must remain human-centered, integrating values and mental resilience.

SkillVention Panel Discussion Theme:

Industry & Employer Dialogue
Emerging Skill Demands, Industry Expectations, and Co-Created Curricula

Panel Members
- Mr. Naresh Jain – Head HR, Barbeque Nation (Hospitality)
- Mr. Brian Alfred D'Souza – Vice President & Head – India Talent Acquisition, 24*7.ai
- Mr. Krishna Srivatsav – Founder & CEO, Aerophile Academy
- Lt. Col. Saptarishi Gupta – Defence, Indian Army

Moderator
- Mr. Deendayal

Date and Time
February 20, 2026 – 11.30 am - 12: 30 pm

Introduction

The panel examined the widening gap between academia and industry, the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on workforce structures, the importance of emotional and intuitive intelligence, veteran integration into civilian roles and the need to move beyond qualification-based hiring toward skill and attitude-driven evaluation.

The discussion highlighted a fundamental shift: employability in the coming decade will depend less on static academic credentials and more on adaptability, digital fluency, discipline, emotional intelligence and problem-solving ability. This insight paper proposes a partnership-led model between vocational institutions and industry to co-create curricula aligned with emerging workforce realities.

Salient Points

1. From Placement to Partnership

The traditional relationship between training institutions and employers has largely been transactional — institutions focus on placements; employers focus on filling vacancies. The panel emphasized the need to shift toward career-building partnerships rather than placement-driven metrics.

The key question raised was:

Are we preparing youth for jobs, or are we preparing them for evolving careers? In a rapidly transforming labour market, static skill sets are insufficient. Institutions must move from curriculum delivery to industry-aligned co-creation.

2. AI and the Redefinition of Workforce Roles

Panelists agreed that Artificial Intelligence is not eliminating jobs indiscriminately. Rather, it is redefining the nature of work.
- AI enhances efficiency in recruitment, screening and operational systems.
- Digital tools can process large datasets, but human judgment remains critical.
- The real displacement risk lies in not knowing how to leverage AI.
- AI must be treated as a productivity partner, not a threat.
- The implication for vocational institutions is clear: digital literacy is no longer a specialized add-on - it is foundational across sectors.

3. Emotional Intelligence and Behavioral Competencies

In sectors such as hospitality and services, emotional intelligence (EQ) was identified as a core competency rather than a soft skill.
Employers emphasized:
- Ownership mindset
- Customer empathy
- Crisis handling
- Professional conduct
- Workplace discipline
- Technical skill without behavioral maturity limits long-term growth. Institutions must embed structured behavioral training within vocational programs.

4. Questioning the Status Quo: Intuitive Intelligence

The defence perspective highlighted the importance of questioning established systems. Rather than producing only coders or operators, institutions must cultivate:
- Critical thinking
- Inquisitiveness
- Risk-taking ability
- Adaptive problem-solving

The concept of intuitive intelligence was introduced as a dimension beyond IQ and EQ —

the ability to make sound decisions in uncertain environments. This aligns with Industry 4.0 realities, where complex decision-making often supersedes repetitive technical execution.

5. Skill Over Qualification

A recurring theme was the limitation of academic filters in hiring.
Employers noted:
- Degrees do not guarantee workplace readiness.
- Attitude and discipline can outweigh formal credentials.
- Structured skill demonstration (internships, apprenticeships, demo-based hiring) is more predictive than percentage cut-offs.

The panel cautioned against rigid academic eligibility thresholds that exclude capable candidates with strong practical aptitude.

6. Veteran Integration and Workforce Discipline

The defence representative emphasized that veteran hiring should not be framed as CSR-driven inclusion but as value-based recruitment.

Veterans bring:
- Discipline
- Trainability
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- High accountability

This reinforces the importance of transferable skills and structured training pathways for second-career transitions.

7. Co-Created Curricula and Industry Alignment

The panel underscored that industry must move from advisory roles to active curriculum collaboration.
Proposed approaches:
- Industry-led modules within training programs
- Structured On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Apprenticeship-based evaluation
- Regular curriculum review with sector experts
- Skills benchmarking aligned to real workplace tasks

Institutions must also conduct local socio-economic mapping to identify neighborhood-level economic opportunities rather than replicate outdated models.

8. Emerging Skill Priorities Identified

The dialogue identified several cross-sector competencies that will define employability:

- Digital fluency across trades
- AI literacy
- Emotional intelligence
- Communication and language skills
- Problem-solving ability
- Adaptability and lifelong learning
- Entrepreneurial mindset
- Risk-taking capacity
- Ethical decision-making

The gig economy and contract models were acknowledged as expanding, but long-term career progression requires continuous upskilling.

9. Strategic Directions for Vocational Institutions

Based on the panel insights, the following strategic shifts are recommended:

- Move from placement metrics to career progression tracking.
- Integrate AI literacy across all vocational domains.
- Embed structured behavioral training modules.
- Reduce overreliance on academic cut-offs in admissions and placements.
- Strengthen apprenticeship and demo-based assessment models.
- Develop veteran-to-industry transition pathways.
- Institutionalize employer advisory boards at the centre level.
- Promote intuitive intelligence and problem-solving exercises in training.

Conclusion:
The Industry & Employer Dialogue underscored that the future of skilling is not defined by technology alone but by the quality of human adaptation to technology.

- AI will shape workflows.
- Industry partnerships will shape systems.
- Human values and adaptability will shape sustainable careers.

For Don Bosco Tech, the mandate moving forward is clear: co-create with industry, prioritize employability over certification, and cultivate a workforce that is digitally fluent, emotionally intelligent, disciplined, and future-ready.

Executive Summary:

This working paper synthesizes insights from the Industry & Employer Dialogue held during SkillVention 2026.The discussion examined emerging skill demands across defence, hospitality, aviation, and technology sectors, highlighting the growing importance of adaptability, digital fluency, emotional intelligence, and co-created curricula.

Key insights include:

- Artificial Intelligence will not replace jobs — but the inability to leverage AI will.
- Emotional intelligence and behavioral competencies are core employability skills.
- Academic qualifications alone do not guarantee workplace readiness.
- Industry–academia partnerships must move from transactional placements to career-building collaborations.
- Apprenticeships, demo-based assessments, and on-the-job exposure are stronger predictors of success than percentage filters.
- Veteran hiring must be seen as a value proposition, not CSR-driven inclusion.
- Intuitive intelligence, risk-taking ability, and critical thinking are essential for Industry 4.0.

The report recommends a strategic shift toward partnership-led skilling models aligned with Vision 2031, emphasizing employability, adaptability, and human-centered development

SkillVention 2026 – CSR & Partnership Perspectives

Sustainable CSR Models, Impact Measurement, and Collaborative Ecosystems

Panel Members
- Mr. Gopal Devanahalli – President APAC, Wadhwani Foundation
- Ms. Lakshmi Nambiar – Global Strategist – CSR, Cognizant
- Ms. Sqn Ldr (Retd.) Shipra Sharma – IBM

Moderator
- Mr. Sawmyadeep Ghosh – Yuvipep

Date and Time
February 20, 2026 – 12:30 pm - 1.30 pm

Introduction

This panel at SkillVention 2026, examined CSR models, impact measurement, and multi-stakeholder collaboration in the skilling ecosystem. As India moves toward a digitally enabled economy, CSR must shift from compliance-driven philanthropy to strategic, long-term capacity building. The discussion identifies critical challenges including low completion rates in online skilling, the risk of an AI-driven digital divide, faculty motivation gaps, partnership friction between corporates and NGOs and limited structured career counseling at the school level. It emphasizes ecosystem-based engagement involving corporates, government, NGOs, educators and communities, supported by contextualized program design, transparent reporting, train-the trainer investments, AI-enabled yet human-centered delivery, and clear exit strategies. Impact must be measured not only through participation metrics but through transformation indicators such as employability readiness, wage progression, aspiration shifts, and long-term career mobility. Ultimately CSR is seen as a strategic nation-building instrument that bridges the talent gap, democratizes access to emerging technologies, and strengthens inclusive workforce development aligned with India's long-term growth vision.

Salient Points

1. Introduction: From Charity to Strategic Social Investment

India's CSR ecosystem has evolved from philanthropic engagement to structured, measurable, and policy-aligned impact.CSR initiatives in skilling must now move beyond pilot projects toward sustainable ecosystem-building models.

2. Beyond Content Delivery: The Completion Challenge

Online learning access does not automatically ensure outcomes. Completion rates remain low without mentoring, aspiration-building exposure, and community engagement. CSR models must combine digital access with human facilitation.

3. Measuring Impact: Rethinking CSR Metrics

Impact measurement must move beyond enrollment and certification numbers toward transformation indicators such as skill growth, confidence development, wage progression, retention, and aspirational shifts.

4. AI Integration and the Digital Divide

While AI enables scale, it risks widening socio-economic gaps. CSR must democratize AI through multilingual content, faculty upskilling, and hybrid delivery models that reach rural and remote communities.

5. Faculty Motivation and Train-the-Trainer Imperatives

Sustainable impact requires strengthening institutional capacity. Faculty upskilling, performance incentives and structured facilitation models are critical to ensuring effective curriculum delivery.

6. Ecosystem-Based CSR: Partnership Over Isolation

Long-term CSR success depends on alignment between corporates, NGOs, government bodies, and communities. Transparent reporting frameworks, shared goals, and defined exit strategies reduce friction and ensure continuity.

7. Career Counseling and Early Intervention

Structured career guidance at school level is essential to diversify aspirations beyond traditional roles. Digital tools must be complemented by trained counselors to guide informed decision-making.

8. Future Workforce Preparedness in the AI Era

CSR programs must anticipate technological disruption by focusing on AI literacy, cybersecurity awareness, entrepreneurial mindset, adaptability, and lifelong learning competencies.

9. Rural and Remote Realities

Contextualized implementation is necessary across India's diverse socio-economic landscape.Programs must address parental engagement, gender barriers, and digital access challenges before scaling AI curricula.

10. Governance, Transparency, and Sustainability

Mutually agreed impact frameworks, compliance clarity, reporting transparency, and contingency planning are essential for maintaining sustainable corporate–NGO partnerships.

Executive Summary

This panel insight synthesizes insights from the CSR & Partnership Perspectives panel at SkillVention 2026. The discussion emphasized the transition of CSR from charity to strategic nation-building.

Key Insights Include:

• Digital access alone does not guarantee completion or impact.
• CSR metrics must measure transformation, not just participation.
• AI integration must prevent widening the digital divide.
• Faculty development is essential for long-term sustainability.
• Ecosystem partnerships reduce friction and improve accountability.

• Career counseling must begin early to diversify aspiration pathways.
• Exit strategies are critical in long-term CSR engagement.
• Future skilling must prioritize adaptability and lifelong learning.

Sustainable CSR impact emerges when corporate expertise, community engagement and policy alignment converge within a transparent and accountable framework.

SkillVention Panel Discussion Theme:

Work Integrated Learning Pathways (WILP) and Its Future

Industry Integration, Living Wages, and Parallel Vocational Mobility

Panel Members
  • Mr. Amit Gupta – Founder, Director & CEO, Funfirst Global Skillers Pvt. Ltd.
  • Ms. Sakshi Arora – Team Lead, STEP Foundation

Moderator
  • Mr. Pius Prasad – Talent Tribe International

Date and Time
February 20, 2026 – 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Introduction

The session examined structural gaps between vocational education and industry expectations, the aspirational crisis facing vocational pathways, the impact of the gig economy, faculty readiness, migration challenges, and the urgent need to shift from minimum-wage employment to living-wage career mobility. The discussion positions WILP not as a supplementary model but as a parallel and dignified career pathway aligned with national development and demographic dividend goals.

Salient Points

1. Introduction: The Aspirational Gap in Vocational Education

India's demographic dividend presents both opportunity and risk. Despite large-scale skilling initiatives, vocational education continues to face learner mobilization challenges, industry misalignment, and limited long-term wage progression. The core issue is not employability alone but aspiration, dignity, and visible career mobility.

2. Minimum Wage vs. Living Wage Mobility
Vocational education must move beyond survival wages toward economic dignity. While gig economy roles offer immediate income, structured WILP models enable long-term growth, vertical mobility, and transition from blue-collar roles to supervisory and white-collar pathways.

3. Work Integrated Learning as Structural Reform

Effective WILP requires defined learning objectives, departmental rotations, industry participation in curriculum design, and safeguards against repetitive labor models that limit transferable skill development.

4. Migration and Cultural Realities

Youth migration for employment involves psychological and socio-cultural challenges including food patterns, isolation, and limited mentoring. Pre-migration counseling, alumni support and soft-skills induction are critical for retention.

5. Faculty as the Core Enabler

Faculty immersion in industry, continuous upskilling, exposure to emerging technologies and value-based training frameworks are essential to ensure curriculum relevance and learner aspiration.

6. Infrastructure and Industry Ownership

Modern infrastructure and OEM partnerships increase aspirational value. Industry must shift from transactional hiring to ownership-based partnerships in skill ecosystem development.

7. The Gig Economy Disruption

Immediate income opportunities in the gig economy challenge structured skilling programs. WILP must demonstrate long-term wage progression and career growth to remain relevant.

8. Repositioning Vocational Education

Vocational education must be repositioned as a parallel and dignified pathway, not a secondary option. Global models demonstrate the effectiveness of dual systems integrated with industry.

9. AI and Skill Enrichment

Embedding AI literacy, predictive maintenance, digital diagnostics, and automation awareness within vocational curricula will future-proof skill pathways and enhance living-wage opportunities.

Executive Summary

This report shares significant insights from the WILP panel at SkillVention 2026. The discussion highlighted structural challenges in vocational education including learner mobilization, gig economy disruption, migration barriers, faculty readiness, and the minimum-wage trap.

Key insights include:

- Transition from minimum wages to living-wage mobility is essential.
- Work Integrated Learning ensures structured skill progression.
- Migration requires psychosocial preparation and alumni mentoring.
- Faculty immersion strengthens curriculum relevance.
- Infrastructure quality influences learner aspiration.
- Vocational education must be positioned as a parallel career pathway.
- AI integration can enrich traditional trades and enhance wage outcomes.

WILP emerges as a structural necessity for India's demographic dividend, requiring collaboration among industry, training institutions, government, and communities to create aspirational, dignified, and future-ready career pathways.

Strategic Partnerships Formalized at SkillVention 2026

SkillVention 2026 also served as a platform to strengthen Don Bosco Tech's industry and global partnerships, reinforcing the organization's commitment to building future-ready skilling pathways for youth. During the convention, three strategic Memoranda of Understanding were formalized with partners representing key dimensions of the skilling ecosystem — industry-led training and assessment, emerging technology training and employment pathways and international internship opportunities.

Don Bosco Tech – NASSCOM / SSC

Don Bosco Tech entered into a partnership with the IT–ITeS Sector Skills Council of NASSCOM, which will serve as a training and assessment partner for digital skills development. Through this collaboration, trainees and faculty will gain access to the FutureSkills Prime platform, industry-aligned courses in emerging technologies, certification opportunities, faculty development programs and career connect initiatives, strengthening alignment between training programs and the needs of the technology workforce.

Don Bosco Tech – Aerophile Academy

A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed with Aerophile Academy Pvt. Ltd. to introduce DGCA-certified drone pilot training programs. Aerophile Academy will serve as a specialized training partner while also supporting employment pathways for certified candidates. The collaboration aims to prepare youth for opportunities in the rapidly expanding drone technology sector.

Don Bosco Tech – Arvedi Group (Italy)

Don Bosco Tech also formalized a collaboration with the Arvedi Group of Italy to create international internship pathways for students from Don Bosco technical institutes. The partnership will enable selected candidates to undertake internships within Arvedi's industrial facilities in Italy and other European locations, providing global industrial exposure and potential employment opportunities.

Cross-Panel Learnings and Policy Reflections

AI as a Workforce Multiplier: Artificial intelligence is not only a disruptor but also a multiplier of human capability, democratizing access to knowledge and productivity tools; however, skilling systems must ensure that youth are trained to use AI responsibly, creatively, and critically rather than merely consume technology.

Strengthening Foundational Human Capabilities: Employability in the AI era will increasingly depend on critical thinking, creativity, communication, and adaptability, highlighting the need for training models that integrate technical learning with broader cognitive and life skills.

Digital Platforms and Social Media as Learning Channels: Young people already inhabit digital spaces; therefore, skilling institutions must leverage social media and digital platforms as channels for learning, mentoring, and career awareness, turning everyday digital engagement into productive learning ecosystems.

Expanding Access and Participation: Future skilling strategies must actively expand participation among women and underserved communities, ensuring that technological transitions do not deepen existing inequalities but instead broaden access to opportunity. Aligning Expectations with Labour Market Realities: Both trainees and institutions must cultivate realistic expectations about career progression, emphasizing continuous learning, gradual skill-building, and adaptability as key elements of sustainable livelihood pathways.

Conclusion: From Dialogue to Policy and Practice

The conversations at SkillVention 2026 demonstrate that the future of workforce development requires a dynamic policy and practice cycle, where insights from the field inform programme design, partnerships shape implementation, and evidence feeds back into policy refinement. This continuous learning loop allows skilling systems to remain responsive to rapid technological change while safeguarding inclusivity and quality.

For Don Bosco Tech Society, the discussions reaffirm the importance of integrating industry engagement, innovation in training delivery, and the Salesian tradition of accompaniment in shaping programmes that respond to both economic transformation and the aspirations of young people.

As India advances toward a digitally enabled economy, the central lesson emerging from these dialogues is clear: technology may transform the nature of work, but sustainable progress will depend on how effectively institutions empower young people with skills, values, and opportunities to participate meaningfully in the future workforce.

SkillVention 2026
Panel Insights

SkillVention 2026
AI Powered Future Skills