



## **WSIS Forum 2018 OUTCOME DOCUMENT**

### **Template for Submission of Executive Summaries for**

### **Thematic/Country Workshop/ Action Line Facilitation Meetings/ Interactive Sessions/ High Level Dialogues/Publication Releases/Briefings**

**Deadline: Thursday 22 March, 2018**

**Exception: For sessions on Friday 23 March, please send at the latest 2 hours after the session**

*Please note that the WSIS Forum 2018 Outcome Document will be released on the **23<sup>rd</sup> of March** (the last day of the Forum)*

**1) Title of your session**

Building ICT skills for social entrepreneurs

**2) Name of Organization/s organizing the session.**

ITU

**3) Relevance with the WSIS Action Lines – please specify the Action lines C1 to C11**

Action Line C4

**4) Main outcomes highlighting the following:**

**I. Debated Issues**

This year the focus was on social entrepreneurship under the theme “**Building skills for social entrepreneurs.**” The session was attended by around 50 participants. It focused on how capacity building using ICTs supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal Number 4 (SDG 4) on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030, and specifically target 4.4 which aims at an increase in the percentage number of youths and adults who have relevant skills including technical vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. ICTs are used by entrepreneurs to develop innovative techniques aimed at solving social, cultural and environmental problems. These social entrepreneurs as they are currently called, create businesses aimed at generating a positive return to society, rather than profit. To achieve this, they require specific ICT skills to be able to generate appropriate innovations and remain relevant in their field.



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The session was conducted in the form of a panel discussion and was moderated by ITU.

The panel consisted of 5 speakers from: the International Labor Organization (ILO), three social enterprises (WeRobotics, Horyou, and Empowerment lab), and the Government of Mexico. The panelists looked at how capacity building promotes social entrepreneurship and what skills are required to create ICT solutions aimed at generating returns to society rather than profit.

In his contribution, the representative from ILO highlighted the role of the social and solidarity economy in the achievement of the SDGs. He informed participants that there are over 200 million individuals who need work but cannot be absorbed in the employment market. Unemployment rates and the social deficit continue to grow across the world. ILO is therefore committed to support productive and sustainable enterprises that are working towards providing solutions to improve livelihoods. These enterprises have an advantage over other enterprises to provide much needed innovations while creating employment opportunities. The presentation highlighted the need to investigate the skills requirements for these social enterprises as well as realignments of the education sector to include entrepreneurship training from early stages of education.

The presentation made by the representative of the government of Mexico covered initiatives that have been put in place by the Mexican government to support entrepreneurs and develop skills in the digital era. These initiatives include communication, services and digital participation schemes based on the needs of users, public blockchain initiatives, innovative models for public procurement, as well as digital inclusion programmes aimed at promoting digital skills and computer use among students and teachers of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade public schools in selected states within Mexico.

The representative from We Robotics shared their experiences in using robotics to create solutions for developing countries. This social enterprise uses a network of flying labs to build robotics capacity in countries they operate in. These labs contribute to creating new jobs and build local markets. The enterprise identifies local needs and adapts robotics solutions to address the needs, followed by technical training of locals on how to use robotics hardware and software to implement the identified solution. The skills are piloted through short projects, followed by business incubation programmes.

The representative from Horyou, a global social network for entrepreneurs, shared how through their network they have been able to bring together like minded people,



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provided an opportunity for extended market reach and enabled their members to turn their ideas to actual projects or businesses through knowledge exchange.

The representative of Empowerment Lab, a social enterprise from Ukraine that teaches girls to express themselves and develop their creativity through technology, presented a case study of their project called “Code in Creativity”. Through this project, girls are introduced to programming and taught coding skills as well as the use of creative digital software. The programme also supports development of soft skills such as nurturing vision, resilience, stress management and creativity.

#### **Key achievements highlighted in this session are:**

- Increase in the use of ICTs to provide solutions to social problems
- Introduction of robotics training to local communities in developing countries
- Creation of new jobs and markets for small entrepreneurs
- Increase in the number of girls trained in programming
- Increased access to required information by social entrepreneurs

#### **Challenges highlighted are:**

- Lack of pre-requisite skills in social entrepreneurship
- Illiteracy as an impediment to learning of new skills.
- Limited internet penetration and IT infrastructure
- Lack of economic power to access ICTs

## **II. Quotes**

“Once trained you have the know-how but do you have the do-how?” Sonja Betschart, WeRobotics

## **III. Main Outcomes of the Session highlighting**

- Main conclusions reached during the discussion
  - The development of ICT skills is critical to support innovation and entrepreneurship.
  - An overhaul of education policies is needed to include ICT and entrepreneurial training in school curriculum from primary school level.
  - Education processes have to be re-organized with the role of peer-to-peer training emphasized.



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- Access to the Internet and social media is critical to the success of small enterprises today, therefore accessibility costs have to be reduced as much as possible and quality ensured.
- For social enterprises to thrive, they need employees with both technical and soft skills.
- The use of technical solutions that are adapted and aimed at addressing local needs of communities improves uptake and learning.
- Introducing technical skills, such as programming and coding, to girls at an early age increases chances of them innovating ICT solutions in the future and establishing new enterprises, reducing the gap between the number of women and men in ICT-related occupations or businesses.

#### IV. Main linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals

**SDG 1**, Focus of the action line C4 includes development of domestic policies to ensure that ICTs are fully integrated in education and training at all levels, including in curriculum development, teacher training, institutional administration and management, in support of the concept of lifelong learning. Creation of policy frameworks requires stakeholder engagement, analysis and interpretation of data for targeted policy interventions which can be achieved through skills development programmes.

**SDG 2**, With the emergence of e-agriculture and the growing need for the knowledge in the use of ICT's, capacity building interventions focused at development and promotion of programmes to eradicate illiteracy using ICTs at national, regional and international levels, will contribute to knowledge growth and inclusion. It also focuses on building the capacity to use ICT tools to increase crop production, adopt modern farming methods, predict weather patterns, and in the process work towards eliminating hunger and creating food security.

**SDG 3**, To support research and strengthen capacity of developing countries for early warning, risk reduction and management of national global health risks, activities include design of specific training programmes in the use of ICTs in order to meet the educational needs of information professionals, such as archivists, librarians, museum professionals, scientists, teachers, journalists, postal workers and other relevant professional groups which focuses not only on new methods and techniques for the development and provision of information and communication services, but also on relevant management skills to ensure the best use of technologies.



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**SDG 4**, Action line C4 focuses on development and promotion of programmes to eradicate illiteracy using ICTs at national, regional and international levels, with the aim of increasing the number of people with relevant ICT skills and to facilitate employment and entrepreneurship in the ICT sector.

**SDG 5**, Work on removing the gender barriers to ICT education and training and promoting equal training opportunities in ICT-related fields for women and girls, is part of the action line, with early intervention programmes in science and technology targeting young girls with the aim of increasing the number of women in ICT careers as well as promotion the exchange of best practices on the integration of gender perspectives in ICT education.

**SDG 6**, Development of distance learning, training and other forms of education and training as part of capacity building programmes, is part of the capacity building initiatives that supports countries interventions giving special attention to developing countries and especially LDCs in different levels of human resources development.

**SDG 12**, Raising awareness on sustainable consumption and production in today's era requires the use of technology. The action line therefore impacts on this SDG by enhancing technological capacity of countries through training and development initiatives that target ICT's and related areas, as well as building a more inclusive information society.

**SDG 13**, Action line C4 promotes creation by governments, in cooperation with other stakeholders, of programmes for capacity building with an emphasis on building a critical mass of qualified and skilled ICT professionals and experts.

**SDG 14**, Empowering communities in ICT use and promoting the production of useful and socially meaningful content is a capacity building intervention that can increase scientific knowledge and promote innovation and research.

**SDG 16**, The C4 action line focuses on promotion of international and regional cooperation in the field of capacity building, including country programmes developed by the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies.

**SDG 17**, Capacity building initiatives contributes to the SDG through the design and implementation of regional and international cooperation activities to enhance the capacity, notably, of leaders and operational staff in developing countries and LDCs, to apply ICTs effectively in the whole range of educational activities. Also through the launch of pilot projects to design new forms of ICT-based networking, linking education, training and research institutions between and among developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition.



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**V. Emerging Trends related to WSIS Action Lines identified during the meeting**

- The need to take technology to those who need it, and teach them how to use it continues to be a priority in many parts of the world
- Social enterprises have a unique value proposition that should be leveraged on to build skills while addressing social problems
- Approaches to skills development should be diversified to respond to identified needs

**VI. Suggestions for Thematic Aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2017**

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