Session Outcome Document

Summary of Session: The use of digital tools that facilitate effective intergenerational relationships

Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development

16th March 2023

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2023/Agenda/Session/220

Key Issues discussed (5-8 bullet points)

• Need to re-imagine the intergenerational relations due to demographic change and the emergence of ageing societies around the world, especially in light of the fact that by 2050 one out of five persons will be older than the age of 65.

• Contributing to reduction of youth unemployment and the integration of the young people into the job market and their successful start of their career in enterprises and organisations.

• Mechanisms to achieve mutually beneficial collaboration in developing digital competence for the benefit of young and senior employees between generations to achieve healthy and active ageing for different communities.

• The entrenched digital divide continues to prevent millions of people (old and young) from participation in the job market for younger people to enter the job market and for senior people who want to work past retirement to re-enter the job market.

• Solutions need to be developed in regard to social computing applications for learning, working, communicating, and information exchange in addition to socializing and development of social networks to support personal development and economic engagement.

• Ways and means to mitigate existing disparities (physical and/or competences) through the use of digital tools in promoting intergenerational partnerships at the workplace for mutual support and learning.

• Increasing promotion and use of workplace intergenerational collaboration through effective use of ISO 25550:2022 General Requirements and Guidelines for Inclusive Workforce.

• The challenges of youth employment around the world.
Towards WSIS+20 and WSIS beyond 2025, please share your views on the emerging trends, challenges, achievements, and opportunities in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines to date (5-8 bullets)

The rapid digitalization of major urban centres will be useful to cope with the fact that ca 70% of the world population (estimated to be 8.5 billion) will be residing in large urban centers by 2050. Digital tools will be part of the everyday experiences for all especially in the urban territory and the rural areas connected to these urban centres for transactions and for the delivery of public services and private goods alike. Without sufficient mastery of the digital literacy and competence, today’s youth will not be able to engage in better rewarded work in the future. Therefore, the digital divide in many countries will produce a “poverty trap” in the coming decade when artificial intelligence will replace many of the more routine type of work which do not require human sensitivity (relational intelligence) and judgment (critical thinking).

The age 65 and older generation will increasingly be participating in the labour market for various reasons, such as financial insecurity or desire for meaningful work. This trend has continued for the last 20 years and is projected to increase significantly. Yet, evidence based on existing research, labour force participation is shown to be very much affected by the educational level and gender of the older job seekers.

The following WSIS Action Lines can be better achieved due to collaborative intergenerational relations. Different generations may bring different “assets” to the interaction through mutual learning and through a coaching relationship. This relationship needs to be facilitated within the work organization as well as in the community at large. The action lines can be achieved through purposeful digital and social tools that are made available to promote effective intergenerational collaborations are:

- WSIS Action Line 3 Access to Information and Knowledge.
- WSIS Action Line 4 Capacity Building
- WSIS Action Line 5 Building Capacity and Confidence in Using ICTs
- WSIS Action Line 7, E-Learning, E-Health, E-Employment

Tangible outcomes (such as key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, and commitments (3-5 bullet points)

The audience supported continued deliberation within the context of WSIS on this topic. Future discussion on the impact of deepening deployment of digital tools in the society and the arrival of generative AI such ChatGPA could shed more light on how social relations will be affected by such technological advancement and need to be “co-designed” to reflect the needs and aspirations of different generations in different contexts.

Some key questions will be explored in future debates include:
• Could digital tools enhance intergenerational collaboration at the workplace and communities? If so, how?

• What are the necessary conditions to support such digitally based intergenerational collaboration and working together in the workplace and in the communities?

• Is the workplace the right social setting for natural experimentation of meaningful and innovative intergenerational collaboration?

Actionable plan (2-5 points)

• Liaise with other like-minded interest groups within WSIS to expend engagement of WSIS community to this emerging work item in view of the demographic reversal where people of age 65 and over will outnumber younger persons of age 15 and below by 2050. To get the intergenerational relations right will lay the foundation for maintaining social cohesion and economic sustainability. Both demands will take human ingenuity beyond AI substitution and its vulnerability to falsehood and untruth due to its self-referential looping, as researchers have already found out.

• Reach out to the larger scientific and technology communities outside of WSIS for conversation and partnerships in order to advance policy and research insights and discussions. These conversations can also broaden the participation in the WSIS process from the other communities of interest.

Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2024 (WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event) (one paragraph)

• In view of the pending demographic disruption by 2050, it is important to discuss how future digital development needs to address the following quadruple challenges or deficits simultaneously through intergenerational collaboration. They are: economic, social, environmental and governance. Intergenerational partnerships will bring experiences, lived knowledge and critical reflection to bear and help the younger generations avoid opportunistic traps and short-term oriented life styles. Such partnerships are essential in co-creating the algorithm with a framework structure that can be self-correcting and self-critical. For AI to be a powerful support to the human endeavour rather than replacement, AI needs to reflect the total learning of human history and offer critical analysis of the data it reviewed with rigor that meets scientific requirements.
In this line of thinking, intergenerational collaboration is more than interactions between different age groups. It is about collaboration between the elder groups who have knowledge and wisdom that acquired over time with the early generations of ChatGPA and other first generation AIs. It is hoped that the narcissistic tendency of the early Metaverse can be corrected.

The thematic aspects of our topic of intergenerational collaborations through digital social tools needs to be kept and broadened and question should be added: how can intergenerational collaboration be achieved so that AI 4.0 can be a true helper in complex systemic problem solving,