



Session 297 Title:

Fit for Each Other? Multi-Generational Cooperation with Generative AI

Date and Time: 30th May, 2024. 16.00-16.45

Location: Room K1, ITU Monbrillant Building at the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event
v. 12

Registration

All participants and delegates coming physically to the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event must complete the registration form available at:

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/Registration>. The e-confirmation will be the sole document provided for visa support.

Framing the theme

This session is part of the CSEND-WSIS Series on “ICTs and Intergenerational Partnerships for a Sustainable Future” (IIPSF) initiated in 2023. IIPSF 2024 will explore the impact of an extended life course on established societal roles and norms and how digitalisation and generative AI can generate beneficial multi-generational co-existence and interaction. The scope of this session will focus on the multigenerational workplace. According to sociologists, the workplace can contain up to 8 different generations of workers.

Related to this central theme, there are two sub-questions for discussion:

1. How does the quality of multigenerational interactions affect the well-being and performance at the workplace- employees, employers and owners of enterprises?
2. How do digital technology and generative AI contribute to a more constructive and purposeful multigenerational collaboration and communication within an organisation?

These two questions will be discussed from different perspectives representing different fields namely, psychology, economics and socio-technology.

Agenda

After a brief introduction by the chair, each speaker will have 3 minutes to introduce his/her view on both questions followed by a round of interaction between panel members. The audience will be invited to join the debate subsequently.

Chair

Prof Raymond SANER, University of Basle and Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND)

Speakers:

Dr Vitalija GAUCAITE, Chief (ret.), Population Unit, UNECE

A demographic and social policy perspective

Prof Bettina Borisch, professor of Public Health at the Institute of Global Health, Medical Faculty, University of Geneva

A public health perspective

Dr Alejandro Bonilla-Garcia, President, Executive Committee, Greycells and Chair, the UN NGO Committee on Ageing – Geneva.

A social security and social protection perspective

Discussant

Prof Lichia Saner-Yiu, President, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND), Geneva.

Format

This session will take place in a hybrid format. The recording of the session will be available on the WSIS 2024 website. An outcome report will be prepared and submitted to the WSIS secretariat.

Organiser:

The Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND)

www.csend.org

Background Notes

Demographic changes need to be addressed in all countries. Taking Geneva for example, by 2040, forecasts indicate that 40% of the population will be aged 65 or above. This new composition of the population will change dramatically all aspects of the city life from administration to mobility and the portfolio of public services including private leisure time. The same trends can be reasonably expected for all other major cities should peace prevail and no major natural disasters occur. To adapt to the demographic changes, ICT technologies may play an essential role from maintaining social connectivity to productivity enhancement despite ageing and possibly shrinking workforce.

Changing roles and norms

With longevity, it is increasingly common to have a larger family structure spanning four-generations. Whereas the grand-parent generation often enjoys good health and remains active, they also take up an extended caring role by looking after their grandparents and their grandchildren. In addition, they tend to form the main stay of volunteers for different activities of public interests. The extended “adulthood” (from the age 20 to 65) and older age (age 65-80) generate additional demands on the age group of 50-75 and change the definition of life stages, i.e, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, seniorship How do these generations interact and communicate within the known role configurations of child-adult-parent-grandparent paradigm?

Longevity also challenges the stereotypical image of ageing and the available role portfolio for the older person group aged 60 and above in different communities. What stereotypical images are still prevalent in our society about ageing and inter-generational care? How do these stereotypes impact the quality of life of the older persons, especially in the late stage of their work life and early stage of post retirement? How do these stereotypes effect the

intergenerational communication? To what extent these stereotypes are embedded in the algorithms of commonly used APPs, platforms and other decision-making AI tools?

Surging of silver economy

The surging silver economy, driven by an aging global population, presents vast economic opportunities. The extended life cycles has also catalysed a wave of innovation and investment opportunities. As the elderly demographic share grows, so does the demand for products and services tailored to their needs, attracting silver angels and investors keen on supporting ventures that address this expanding market segment.

The "Silver Angel" investors, who specifically target the extended demographic share of today's society, are increasingly important. They fund innovations and services that cater to older adults and at the same time are reported to fund young start-up ventures hence spanning several generations with their investment activities. Many of the Silver Angers are of retired generation who provide not only capital and mostly mentoring and coaching to the younger entrepreneurs based on their expertise, industry connections, and strategic guidance to help start-ups reach the next stage of business development.

Changing workplace, work practices and job requirements

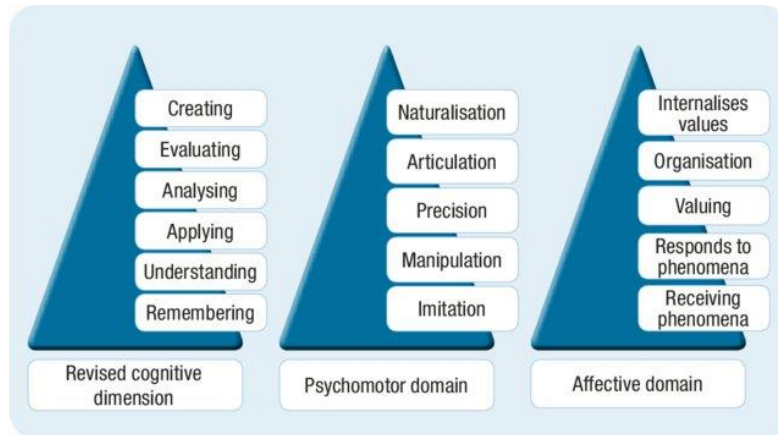
According to a recent survey in Switzerland, almost 25% of the pensioned people continue to work on a contractual basis. Besides being physically able and active, the seniors bring to a workplace plenty of skills and insights which require time to hone and to master.

These skills could be both affective and cognitive on a higher level of functioning according to Bloom's taxonomy¹. Cognitively, these skills tend to be related to the cognitive processes of analysing, evaluating and creating - capabilities complemented by accumulated experiences and complex mental maps. Affectively, these high end skills or processes are valuing, organising and characterising. High performance in different life circumstances are based on the appropriate and effective use of these cognitive and affective capacities, especially when pre-programmed responses and memory based tasks are increasingly automated and digitalised. Details of these skills/mental processes are illustrated in the three pyramids below.

These higher levels of learning acquisition, both cognitive and affective, are well suited for the future world of work where digitalisation and generative AI are integral parts of the production, services and business models regardless of the sectors and types of work. They form the core competences of a production system. This digital transformation will affect 60% of the known jobs and change the way society is organised. These impacts will be similar to that of the adoption of steam engine that kicked off the first wave of industrialisation thereby changing the landscape of the rural, pre-industrial societies.

1

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloom%27s_taxonomy#:~:text=Bloom's%20taxonomy%20is%20a%20set,cognitive%2C%20affective%20and%20psychomotor%20domains.



https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337007046_Cedefop_2017_Defining_writing_and_applying_learning_outcomes_a_European_handbook_Luxembourg_Publications_Office/figures?lo=1

Forms and modalities of lifelong learning

The labour market continues to adjust itself to the new demands of the economy and society. AI and Machine Learning hasten a massive drive to upskill and reskill through formal and informal education, off- and on-the-job training and structured and unstructured learning. Lifelong learning is no longer “nice to do” but instead necessary to ensure employability, prosperity and sustainability. Effective multigenerational interactions and teamwork in this regard could contribute to this society-wide skill upgrading driven by the competence demands of digitalisation and AI.

Competence in learning-to-learn can vary greatly among individuals within the workforce. Laggards exist in all age groups and lifelong learning is a must. While educational attainment, occupation, and training and development opportunities contribute to such variation, generational differences are also observed. Younger generations, such as Millennials and Generation Z, who have grown up in the digital age may be more accustomed to continuous learning and leveraging online resources for self-directed learning. However, older generations are also capable of developing learning-to-learn competence with the right support and opportunities.

Outlook

When these aforementioned higher-level skills and processes combined with the digital technology become the main stay of modern living and work, multigenerational interactions can contribute greatly to this lifelong learning effort in matching the work, knowledge, cognitive and affective skill sets in a digital environment to achieve greater productivity, job satisfaction and actualisation of individual potential.

