

EVENT REPORT

Let's Talk! Online 2020: Africa Chapter

Rethink the roles in society

Reinforce social dialogue for change

Regain a better world

27 November 2020 – 7 December 2020

Executive Summary

Between 27 November and 7 December 2020, 37 individuals from 12 different countries representing governments, trade unions, businesses and employers' organisations and civil society met online to explore new ways of working together to drive sustainable development. Let's Talk! is an exclusive and highly creative, global think-tank with the purpose of developing solutions, via social dialogue, to some of today's most pressing sustainability challenges, including poverty, inequalities, social unrest and unsustainable economic growth. The Forum explored ways in which social dialogue can be used as a tool to drive positive change and promote decent work and inclusive growth.

The outcomes of Let's Talk! include six initiatives in which the participants of the Forum can continue to embark on joint efforts to drive change at an organisational, local, regional and international level. The initiatives and recommendations summarised in this report serve to provide inspiration and suggestions for next steps. This report is a documentation of the discussions during the Forum and not an official declaration. All readers are encouraged to engage in future initiatives and projects related to the outcomes of the Forum.

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Introduction

Let's Talk! is inspired by Global Deal, a multi-stakeholder partnership aiming to promote sustainable development through social dialogue and sound industrial relations. Effective social dialogue plays a key role in contributing to thriving labour markets with high employment levels, income equalities, competitiveness and the resilience and adaptability to unexpected developments. Social dialogue can also contribute to the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development by providing the opportunity for different actors in society to participate in decision-making processes.

Let's Talk! is no ordinary event – it is an exclusive and highly creative, global think-tank with the purpose of developing practical real-life solutions to sustainability challenges of today. Let's Talk! Gives the participants the right tools and platforms to enable these solutions. High level individuals from governments, trade unions, businesses and employers' organisations and civil society meet and discuss new innovative ways of working together for positive change. Collaboration is essential for achieving effective, equitable and mutually beneficial outcomes for governments, employers, workers and the wider society – thereby regaining a better world.

Between 27 November and 7 December 2020, the Let's Talk! Online 2020: Africa Chapter engaged 37 high-level individuals from 12 different countries: Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria, Norway, Somalia, South Africa, Sweden, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Let's Talk! Online 2020: Africa Chapter coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic which impacted how the forum was conducted. It was originally set to be a 48-hour forum in Johannesburg in April 2020, but due to the pandemic was moved online, opening up the forum to participants from more countries. The pandemic also served as a backdrop to the societal issues discussed during the forum, such as digitalisation.

*Social dialogue: Defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as, to include all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. Social dialogue takes many different forms.

A global think tank spanning 11 days

Let's Talk! takes place in an interactive workshop setting where a group of highly experienced and influential individuals come together to explore ways of transforming society. Participants work informally in online and offline sessions filled with engaging discussions and solution-oriented workshops in a space that has been designed to fit the theme of the Forum.

Four tentative focus areas were identified to frame the discussions during the 2020 Forum:

1. Digitalisation
2. Diversity and Inclusion
3. Education and Skills
4. Youth Employment

The participants were divided into work streams under the focus areas based on their pre-submitted fields of interests and their location. Each work stream was engaged in co-creating an initiative aimed at addressing societal challenges through the use of social dialogue. The work streams were given opportunities to receive and give feedback on each other's initiatives. Sessions such as the "Interlinked Café" and the "Hive Mind" allowed participants to exchange ideas, best practices and ultimately leverage the collective knowledge and experience present in the sessions to develop and refine the individual projects.

The end-product are project ideas to tackle some of the most pressing societal issues of our time, in the shape of concrete initiatives supported by multiple stakeholders. Equally valuable are the insights, new perspectives and collaborative approach to sustainability challenges that the participants bring back to their respective organisation, creating potential ripple-effects of change that stretch well beyond the Forum. Decisions on place and time for follow ups after the forum where the development created in the sessions can be continued is of great importance.

Six initiatives were developed by the work streams under the umbrella of four focus areas. The recommendations summarised in this report provide inspiration and possible next steps for organisations, individuals and stakeholders. These initiatives and recommendations can be viewed as examples of possible ways social dialogue can be used as a tool for positive change. Not every participant necessarily supported every aspect of the initiatives. This report, therefore, is a documentation of the discussions during the Forum and not an official declaration. All readers are encouraged to engage in future initiatives and projects related to the outcomes of the Forum.

Let's Talk! Online 2020: Africa Chapter

The following are summaries of the areas discussed and the objectives of each initiative.

Digitalisation

Understanding Digitalisation in (Southern) Africa and curating case specific skills training towards an inclusive digital economy

It is estimated that 41% of all work activities in South Africa are susceptible to automation. Young people and those with low digital skills are at the highest risk, however, new technological developments are also affecting high-skilled jobs. Digitalisation requires new skills and ownership models to prevent growing inequalities and access to training, internet, decent working conditions and protection.

This initiative's objectives are to improve the access to the means of digitalisation, including both the resources and the skills, and to stimulate investments in Southern Africa by building partnerships around the development of digital infrastructure.

The first two steps of the plan centre around understanding the current digitalisation situation in Southern Africa. Step one focuses on "Mapping digital saturation" to understand the scale of digitalisation and the full ecosystem: the existing level of digitalisation within interesting communities to engage with based on partnerships. Step two is to map the "Aptitude and Existing skills" of stakeholders by mapping the target audiences' baseline skills, needs and access to technologies.

With the understanding of the full ecosystem and needs, the next steps are to curate a training solution that matches the different needs and delivers digital skills training programmes to private sector employees/ workers and ensures that these skills are transferable. It is anticipated that a pilot will be a one to three month programme. Potential partners include governments and developmental organizations, training providers and local communities whereby these digital skills trainings are provided to end users.

The task force plans to start executing this plan in quarter one 2021 by mapping digital 'saturation' and understanding what baseline within the network of partners.

Participants:

Ingala Miles, ASSAABLOY SA Pty Ltd, Occupational Health Nurse
Majubere Mofolo-Mugandani, Baasotho Enterprises Development Corporation, Project Manager
Muzi Mhlana, TUCOSWA, Deputy secretary
Samantha Smith, ITUC, Director, Just Transition Centre
Thoko Matshe, The Olof Palme International Center, Local Coordinator Southern Africa
Warwick Vlantis, African Coding Network, Lead / Co-founder
Zakhona Mvelase, Harvard Kennedy School, MPA student

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Manual for Workplace

Gender inequality has severe individual and societal losses, and significant gender gaps in education, economic empowerment and political participation reside in the region. There is currently an inability for Kenyan workplaces to identify and address diversity and inclusion in the workplace due partially to lack of information and processes in the private sector.

The focus of the initiative is to address this issue by developing a manual that identifies and addresses diversity and inclusion in the workplace in Kenya. The goal is to improve the knowledge and skills linked to the ability to identify and address diversity in order to become more inclusive and compliant. The objective is to lead to improved decent workplaces that both embrace and address diversity and inclusivity, as well as enhance access to equal opportunities and quality services for excluded groups in Kenya by 2022.

The initiative is further broken down into three intermediate objectives, the first being improved knowledge and understanding of diversity and inclusivity and amplified benefits. This is followed by enhanced diversity and inclusivity standards in the workplace, as well as a reference framework for developing policies and programmes on diversity and inclusion in the different workplaces. The initiative takes on a multi-stakeholder and multi-lateral approach to social dialogue while also riding on existing diversity and inclusion reference materials, tools and programmes.

Key partners include development partners, ILO, FKE, COTU, PWDs, MOL, ForumCiv, Hivos and SWP. The taskforce plans to begin a stakeholder consultative forum as well as have technical working committee meetings in quarter one 2021. These steps will be followed by a pilot test and a finalisation process of the manual. The initiative group anticipates that the Diversity and Inclusion Manual will be launched in quarter four 2021 and that the platform will be adopted by the Ministry of Labour, the Federation of Kenyan Press and the central trade unions.

Participants:

Daniel Mwaura, Beyond Intent East Africa, Director and Partner

Damaris Muhika, Central Organization of Trade Unions, Project Officer

Damaryce Ndira, Kenya Airways Plc, Brand Manager

Isaac Kiema

Jackson Obare, ForumCiv, Regional Manager

Margaret Ndirangu, SKF Kenya Limited, Customer Service & Operations Manager

Moses Opiyo, Global Tea & Commodities Limited, Group Human Resource Manager

Diversity assessment: D&I in Zimbabwe

Equality helps expand economic growth, promote social development and establish stable and just societies. It is pivotal for the well-being and social development of families, communities and nations. Inequality and discrimination stifle opportunities, deteriorates economic progress and increase social tension. Inequalities can be identified within income disparities, gender, minority groups, and people in urban and rural areas. Social inclusion refers to the efforts to improve conditions for individuals or groups to take part in society. Striving for social inclusion involves identifying and remedying the underlying causes and structures that create exclusion.

The initiative focuses on establishing a local platform for diversity and inclusion for local social partners in Zimbabwe where communication, consultation and call for action is ensured. The platform will focus on employees. The initiative would bring together key stakeholders and give them a platform to share key learnings, best practices and initiatives. Key partners include business organizations, NGOs and the government who may be acting within this domestic area. The platform would also produce an inclusion report outlining what has and has not worked.

The initiative is broken down into four steps. Step one is creating an inclusion platform that is recognized by the law, followed by a scan of the environment which will identify potential partners and collaborators. Step three and four include setting up a project secretariat and outreach programmes for lobbying and advocacy. The taskforce plans to begin conducting a diversity assessment in quarter one 2021.

Participants:

Maligwa Joshua, City of Mutare, Town Clerk

Noel Israel Mushangwe, Gokwe Town Council, Senior Housing, Health & Community Services Officer

Paradzai Munyede, Rushinga Rural District Council, Chief Executive Officer

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Shingirirai Tanaka Chikazhe, National Junior Councils Association of Zimbabwe (NJCA), Executive Director

Toindeipi Dhure, Zimbabwe Domestic and Allied Workers union, Deputy general secretary responsible for legal and education

Wellington Mapedzamombe, Invictus Securities Zimbabwe, Stockbroker & Executive Director

Debunking belief systems that stifle gender equality

Combating inequality at all levels is an essential part of promoting a good working environment, and success on this front is felt well beyond the workplace. The SDGs emphasise women's empowerment as an important goal and highlight the relevance of gender equality to address global challenges. One challenge within diversity and inclusion is that certain religious, cultural and social belief systems are not conducive to diversity and inclusion.

The initiative focuses on the social agenda and injustices Zambian women and girls face in the rural community by raising awareness to empower women and girls, as well as addressing various inherited beliefs and embedded practices. The initiative strategy is two-fold; the first is to create a community outreach programme that sensitizes women and girls to their own rights and what resources are available to them. The second part of the plan includes a process of exposing embedded traditional practices that foster gender injustices and inequalities.

Key stakeholders include traditional leaders, religious leaders, community gate keepers, Education Boards, teachers, relevant government agencies, community media houses, donor agencies, Business Houses and the community as a whole. The first step in the initiative is the creation of a concept note, which will include a wider consultation of issues and papers on the subject. This will be followed by a stakeholder mapping, which will identify who to engage with. The initiative will be launched through a radio or multimedia campaign that will engage the community. Further, it will include a visual arts roundtable, discussions with various key stakeholders and, of course, engagement with the children themselves.

Participants:

Chisakula Kaputu, Sustainable Energy & Environment LTD, Energy Consultant & Sustainability Practitioner

Clara Kalaba, Local Authority , Socio Economic Planner

Mutumboi Mundia, Securities and Exchange Commission, Director- Market Supervision and Development

Mweembe Sikaulu, Zambia Airports Corporation Limited, Communications and Brand Manager

Phyllis Mwalilino Tiller, Octagon Financial Services Limited, Managing Director

Regina Mtonga, Asikana Network, Director/Co-founder

Education and Skills

Learning for Life! Best Teacher of the Year Award in Ethiopia

Skills development and lifelong learning are fundamental enablers of decent work, productivity and sustainability that can raise the value and output of labour, empower the lives of workers and enrich societies. Despite heavy investments in training and skills-development, sub-Saharan Africa has the least skilled workforce in the world. Within education and skills there are several identified challenges, including limited capacity of teachers and instructors, lack of respect for teachers, quality of education and universal life-long learning, limited resources, compromised education quality and staff shortages.

The initiative focuses on compromised education- the quality of education and pedagogical education by increasing social awareness through a Best Teacher of the Year award at a pilot school at the university level in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In parallel to the awarding ceremony at the end of the academic year, a series of social media campaigns and discussions centring around teachers' role in society, including teachers' issues, values and incomes, will be launched. Potential partners of the initiative include the Swedish Embassy, UNESCO and IE- International Education for All, as well as civil society and unions.

In order for the initiative to succeed, the taskforce has broken down the launch into several steps, while focusing first on very small schools and departments. The first step includes discussing the initiative with officials and administrations, as well as setting up a committee to outline criteria. This is followed by creating a questionnaire and brochure to include in the announcement of the initiative. The pilot will focus on one university and will later be extended to include more Ethiopian universities.

Participants:

Bezawit Tekle, Debreberhan University, Architect/ Assistant lecturer

Getachew Bekele, Addis Ababa University, Dr./Assoc. Professor

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Measho B. Gebreyohans, Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions/CETU/, Head,
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Solomon Kassa, Ethiopian Music sectors Association Union, Former Deputy President
Representative in the US

Youth Employment

Somali Vocational Education Academy

Young people are three times as likely to be unemployed compared to adults. This creates a generation of young workers faced with a dangerous mix of high unemployment, increased inactivity and hazardous work in developing countries. By 2030, it is estimated that one fifth of the global work force and about one third of the global youth work force will come from the African region. It is estimated that 12 million youth enter the workforce each year, while only 3 million formal jobs are created.

The initiative focuses on creating an ecosystem around a vocational academy that would be aligned with the potentials of Somalia's economic growth as well as answering challenges such as lack of decent jobs and the issues arising from the insecurity surrounding youth unemployment. The academy would provide a solution to the mismatch in terms of skills and lack of mentorship programmes. The initiative focuses on youths between the ages of 18 and 35 in Somalia, and the initiative academy will specialise in fishing and textiles.

The first step of the initiative plan is to set up a social dialogue platform that will enable the taskforce to get a more specific understanding of what the needs are. These needs will then steer the content of the academy. The second step of the plan is to create mentorship programmes with the different stakeholders, including private companies, public organizations, universities and ministries. The goal of the mentorship programme is to provide youths with mentorship opportunities and guidance to help them reach their goals. Further, the taskforce plans to create an incubation programme with seed capital for entrepreneurs. The overarching training content featured in the academy will be based on research.

Key partners include the Swedish government, the Global Deal Initiative, the Federation of Somalian Trade Union, the Tripartite Council and the federal member states. Other key stakeholders include youth programmes within the mosques, youth activists, universities, civil organizations, think tanks and industry companies.

Participants:

Ayaan Khalif, iRise Hub, Project Manager

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About the organisers

Let's Talk! 2020: Africa Chapter is organised the [Swedish Institute](#) (SI) and the [Swedish Trade Union Confederation](#) (LO) in collaboration with the [Global Deal](#).

The theme Let's Talk! is inspired by the [Global Deal](#) partnership.

[Enact Sustainable Strategies AB](#) was commissioned by the organisers to support in the development and implementation of the Let's Talk! 2020.

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Appendix 1: Participants List

Name	Organisation	Title	Country
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Omar faruk Osman Nur	Federation of Somali Trade Unions	General Secretary	Somalia
Paradzai Munyede	Rushinga Rural District Council	Chief Executive Officer	Zimbabwe
Phyllis Mwalilino Tiller	Octagon Financial Services Limited	Managing Director	Zambia
Regina Mtonga	Asikana Network	Director/Co-founder	Zambia
Samantha Smith	ITUC	Director, Just Transition Centre	Norway
Shannon Lovgren	ICLD	Program Manager	Sweden

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Shingirirai Tanaka Chikazhe	National Junior Councils Association of Zimbabwe (NJCA)	Executive Director	Zimbabwe
Solomon Kassa	Ethiopian Music sectors Association Union	Former Deputy President Representative in the US	Ethiopia
Thoko Matshe	The Olof Palme International Center	Local Coordinator Southern Africa	South Africa
Toindeipi Dhure	Zimbabwe Domestic and Allied Workers union	Deputy general secretary responsible for legal & education	Zimbabwe
Wacheke Michuki	Sida	Human Rights & Democracy Programme Manager	Somalia
Wellington Mapedzamombe	Invictus Securities Zimbabwe	Stockbroker & Executive Director	Zimbabwe
Zakhona Mvelase	Harvard Kennedy School	MPA student	South Africa

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