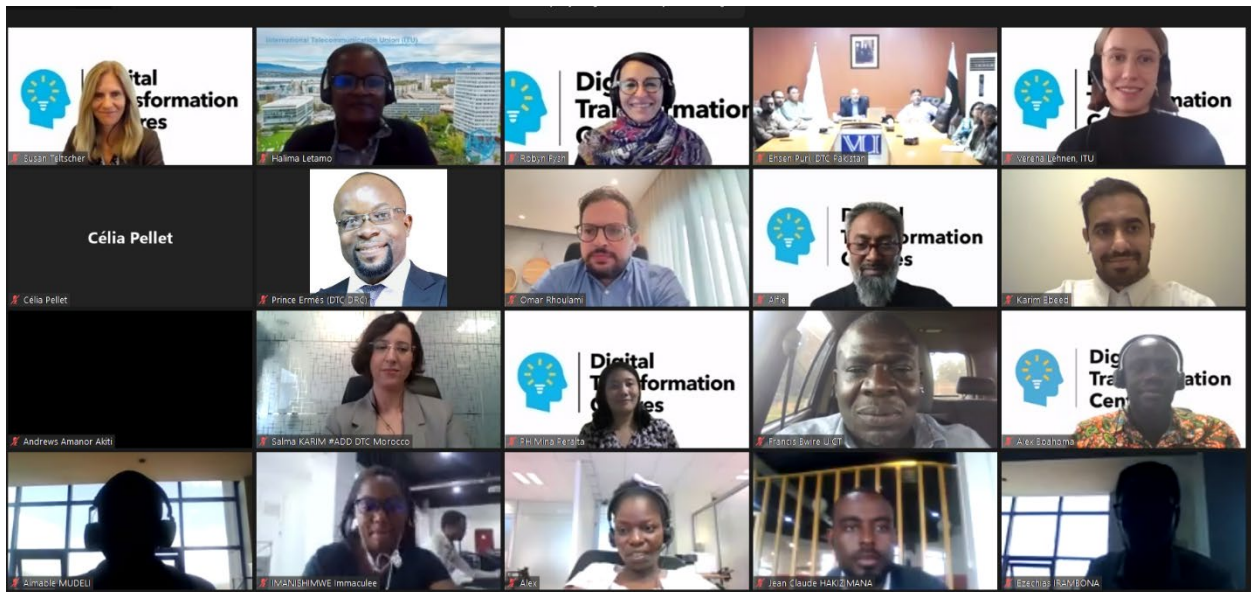




Digital Transformation Centres Initiative Annual Virtual Meeting

1st of November 2022

FINAL REPORT



INTRODUCTION

The Annual Virtual Meeting of the Digital Transformation Centres (DTCs) Initiative took place on the 1st of November 2022. It was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in partnership with Cisco. The meeting was attended by 37 participants ITU, CISCO and representative of all the 13 DTCS.

The virtual meeting was organized as part of the required annual activities of the DCTI. The objective of the meeting was to provide updates on the implementation of the DTCI main activities by ITU and CISCO, to discuss initiatives on measuring impact including exchange of information on impact stories, make follow-up on the agreed actions from the on-boarding workshop and share experiences on overcoming challenges.

Further information, including agenda, the presentation slides and photos are available at <https://academy.itu.int/itu-d/projects-activities/digital-transformation-centres-initiative/dtc-virtual-global-meetings>

Opening remarks

The Annual Virtual Meeting of the DTCs was officially opened by Ms Susan Teltscher, Head, Capacity and Skills Development Division, ITU. Ms Teltscher took the opportunity to thank the participants from both DTCs and partner organizations for joining the meeting, which aims at exchanging on the current achievements of the DTCs as well as on challenges and how ITU can support in responding to them. In addition, Ms Teltscher emphasized the two major ITU conferences that took place this year: The World Telecommunication Development Conference in June in Kigali and the ITU Plenipotentiary in October in Bucharest. During both events, representatives of the ITU membership and government highlighted the importance of digital skills development. The DTCl has been mentioned as a key development mechanism to overcome the digital divide and is thus highly recognized for its purpose to close the digital skills gap in developing countries, especially in underserved communities.

Mr Alfie Hamid, Senior Manager Global Partnerships, Cisco Corporate Affairs then addressed the participants by pointing out the importance of the DTC Initiative. He highlighted the recent achievements of the Cisco Academy, celebrating its 25 years, counting 15 million students from 180 countries with 3 million students last year. He stressed that the Cisco Academy reached people who are usually forgotten, and those who do not think that digital skills are important. Therefore, the work of the DTCl is ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital revolution.

Update on the DTCl objectives

After the opening of the event, Ms Halima Letamo, Senior Capacity and Skills Development Officer, ITU, gave an update on the DTCl partnerships by stressing the three current major achievements of the ITU team in strengthening the Initiative. First, a resource mobilization strategy has been completed and the work of reaching out to 45 potential partners and donors has started. Concerning the support by these donors, a one-page snapshot has been prepared for each DTC. Moreover, a content gap analysis has been conducted to identify potential areas of intervention for the DTCs. Third, concerning the network of the programme, this global virtual meeting has been organized to provide an opportunity for the DTCs and partners to network and exchange on the actions of the DTCs. In addition, missions for ITU staff are planned to provide on-the-ground support to the work of the centres.

Further to these three major achievements, Ms Letamo presented on leveraging Cisco and ITU partnerships. HP live content will be prepared to be used for the trainings and an orientation session will be planned to provide the DTCs with input on how to integrate the content into their activities. Another useful tool by a partner of the initiative to be considered is the ILO service tracker, which helps to follow up on trainees as well as it serves to measure the impact of training activities. The tracker will be soon available for the DTCs. Moreover, discussions with the Digital Skills Foundation have resulted in a number of free licences for the DTCs, and discussions with the World Food Programme are ongoing concerning the outline of a collaboration with the DTCs. Additional potential partnerships with Microsoft and UNCDF are currently being discussed and progress on the collaboration will be shared with the DTCs soon.

Update on the DTCl implementation

Following the update on the DTCl objectives, Ms Robyn Fysh, Senior Project Manager, ITU gave the participants an update on the DTCl implementation and therefore on the reported activities of the DTCs in the first six months of the year 2022. From January to June, 45,126 course participants were counted, 43 percent of whom were women. Compared to the percentage of female course participants in the entire programme of 59 percent, the percentage of female course participants decreased slightly this year. Ms Fysh stressed that this development should be considered when planning next year's course activities. Concerning the collaboration in 2023, DTCs were reminded to submit their training plans as they serve as a key tool in guiding DTCl planning and support. Moreover, the evaluation of the second part of 2022 will be conducted after the collection of all training reports beginning of 2023. Ms Fysh emphasized the great achievements of the first half of the year illustrated by the presented figures.

Update on the Cisco Skills for All programme

During this session, the Cisco NetAcad Manager Mr Omar Rhoulami together with his colleague Mr Karim Ebeed gave an update on the Cisco Skills for All programme. A new platform has been established to appeal to a broader audience, offering primarily self-paced courses. A new tool of the platform is the 'Instructor Guided Learner Experience' including simplified access for academy instructors to create online courses and to monitor student progress as well as new engaging content aiming at integrating students interactively. All courses are available in English and Spanish and soon they will be also available in Portuguese, French, Arabic and Ukrainian. Mr Hamid added to the presented information that all DTCs are invited to create courses on the new platform accessible through the NetAcad Login.

Discussion

Following the presentations held by ITU and Cisco, the participants had the opportunity to ask questions and raise their concerns.

DTC Rwanda asked if access to the HP course content needs a special requirement. ITU responded to the question that the only requirement needed is to issue the URLs in order to identify participants from the DTCs that are using the HP content. She also mentioned that it is already possible to use the HP content without the URLs as long as the respective participants and courses are tracked.

Further, concerning the HP content, DTC Pakistan raised the concern that the HP tool is not providing an instructor-led interface to track the participants. ITU referred to the upcoming organisation session which will provide input on the administrative questions as well as on the topic of integration of the HP content to the training eco-system under the aspect that HP courses are designed as purely self-paced.

Brainstorming on training needs of DTC target audiences

As an introduction to the interactive part of the virtual meeting, Ms Fysh presented the results of the conducted training gap analysis. The analysis focused on investigating which training content is needed beyond the offered ones for each operational context of the DTCs. Based on the feedback of the DTCs, the analysis concentrates on rural areas and the use of mobile phones. In total six areas have been identified as potentially interesting for further content development: Digital collaboration, creating digital materials, digital commerce, digital marketing and advertising, digital communication and digital literacy. Ms Fysh invited the DTCs to discuss the presented topics and to identify additional topics that have come up since the interviews have been conducted.

Subsequently, participants had the opportunity to interact with each other while separated into 3 breakout groups. The participants were asked to brainstorm on training needs guided by two main questions:

- 1. Do you think what you are delivering as a DTC serves the demand of your target audience as a DTC?*
- 2. If not what other recognized and certified basic digital skills training courses could address this demand?*

The DTCs of group 1 expressed concerns regarding the target groups in rural and underserved areas in terms of language barriers and the required technical devices to participate in courses. The DTC Rwanda is asking for more courses accessible through mobile phones as well as how to use mobile phones, as training participants from rural areas are lacking technical equipment such as laptops. Cisco responded to this concern that the new Skills for All platform can be accessed via smartphones or tablets and that colleagues will provide assistance to solve this issue of accessibility.

The DTCs of Group 2 identified the training need for lower levels of digital literacy as well as the demand for courses translated into local languages. Further course topics that have been mentioned during the discussion are the use of smartphones, the use of Microsoft programmes like Excel and to focus on the digital transformation of different employment sectors.

The third discussion group stressed the importance of developing course content that helps people who already have basic digital skills to reach the next level, for example, to be able to work from home and thus use Microsoft Teams tools. This could be particularly beneficial for disadvantaged groups such as young people or single mothers.

Measuring the impact of training interventions

The next session was dedicated to exchange on impact measuring methods of training interventions. Mr Alex Kojo Boahoma, National Project Manager in Ghana, ITU gave a presentation on a pilot project of the DTC in Ghana. A mixed-methods design has been used comprising quantitative pre- and post-assessment surveys and qualitative focus group discussions to research the impact of digital skills training on the beneficiary's ability to seize employment and enterprise opportunities, as well as improved well-being. A randomized sample of 450 training beneficiaries across the country has been concluded. The final evaluation report will be published in 2023.

DTCs overcoming challenges/success stories

Following the presentation on impact measurement methods, DTCs had the possibility to share success stories of their work.

First, ADD, Morocco gave an update on the training activities on their national learning platform called Digital Academy of Morocco. The platform is currently in a pilot phase and is targeting three different groups: The private sector, the central and local administrations as well as the larger public of all ages. The platform is offering more than 173 courses, 11 different learning paths and more than 1200 hours of training collaborating with big partners like Microsoft. The DTC Morocco presented different challenges that there are facing in their activities and how they are responding to them. The DTC in Morocco is reporting that reaching out to private actors on the field has been challenging due to a limited communications budget. Another issue that the DTC identified is that people in the country tend to prefer face-to-face training and are not familiar with online formats especially when it comes to integrating self-paced courses into their working agenda. Moreover, target groups are hesitant to register for courses because they are thinking that courses are not offered for free. The DTC was further reporting on several ongoing actions in order to tackle the identified challenges in advertising their offer. For example, they are collaborating with partners to scale the communication channels or complementing the online offer with face-to-face interventions in schools or vocational training centres.

Further, VU, Pakistan shared their successful training project of delivering training for underserved communities through TV broadcasting. Their training content has been translated into local languages and courses are taking place in one of the seven different training centres or online. The representative of the DTC stressed that 2632 participants have been trained successfully from April to September this year.

At the end of the session, RISA, Rwanda, gave an overview of recent developments in the delivery of training with the aim of increasing the number of female training participants. In order to achieve this goal, the DTC has been collaborating with secondary schools, and partners in digital inclusion. Moreover, the DTC conducted trainings with digital ambassadors in mobilizing more women for their training offer. The result of their efforts is illustrated by the current figures of their course participants with 47.9% women in the current training cohort of November 2022.

Summary and closing

Final remarks were delivered by Ms Susan Teltscher, Head, Capacity and Digital Skills Development, ITU. In her remarks, Ms Teltscher thanked all the DTCs and partners for their active participation and contributions. The feedback received during the meeting was well noted and is crucial for exploring further on training needs identified by the DTCs. Therefore, Ms Teltscher emphasized the importance of exchanging among the DTCs on success stories, challenges, and different impact measurement methodologies. The ITU and Cisco team is available for any questions or support and will continue to engage partners to support the training activities in the different countries of the initiative. A physical workshop for the DTCs will be planned for the second quarter of 2023.

Annex 1: List of participants

Name	Title	Institution	Country
DTCs			
Mr Lucas Yao	DTC Project Manager	Ecole Multinationale Supérieure des Postes d'Abidjan	Côte d'Ivoire
Mr Richard Muragijimana	Digital Literacy Officer	Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)	Rwanda
Mr Brian Nawa	Senior Change Management Officer	SMART Zambia Institute	Zambia
Ms Mina Lyn Peralta	Project Development Officer	Department of Information and Communication Technology (DITC)	Philippines
Ms Aliaa Mehrez	Business development manager	Netacad	Kenya
Mr Juan Abel Juzman			
Mr Innocent Asiimwe	Divison Manager	Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)	Rwanda
Mr Andrews Amanor Akiti			
Ms Abena Nyamesem	Senior Manager, Sustainability and Partnership	Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC)	Ghana
Mr Immaculee IMANISHIMWE	Digital Literacy training officer	Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)	Rwanda
Mr Jean Claude HAKIZIMANA	Digital Literacy Training Officer	Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)	Rwanda
Ms Aimable MUDELI	Digital Literacy Training Officer	Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)	Rwanda
Mr Ezechias IRAMBONA	Digital Literacy Training Officer	Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)	Rwanda
Mr Nelson Manuel Nuñez Gil	Director of Training	Community Technology Centers	Dominican Republic
Ms. Tsendeniya Namrud	Head, Digital Capacity Building and Public Engagement Unit	Ministry of Innovation and Technology	Ethiopia
Mr Lemuel Dom			
Mr Bill Tomon	Manager ICT Services	PNG University of Technology	Papua New Guinea
Mr Ehsen Puri	Director ICT	Virtual University of Pakistan	Pakistan
Mr Herman Kunsei	Academic, Department of Electrical and Communication Engineering	PNG University of Technology	Papua New Guinea
Ms Salma Karim	Head of Human Capital & Innovation Department	ADD	Morocco

Mr. Prince Ermès CUBAKA BIGABWA	ICT Expert	Secretariat National pour le Renforcement des Capacités (SENAREC)	Democratic Republic of Congo
Mr Francis Bwire	Head of Business Development	Uganda Institute of Information and Communications Technology (UICT)	Uganda
Partners			
Mr Alfie Hamid	Global Partnerships Manager	Cisco	South Africa
Mr Omar Rhoulami	Cisco NetAcad Manager	Cisco	Morocco
Mr. Karim Ebeed		Cisco	Morocco
ITU			
Ms Susan Teltscher	Head, Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms Halima Letamo	Senior Training and Development Officer, (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms Guiomar Levi-Setti	Capacity and Digital Skills Development Officer (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms. Robyn Fysh	Senior Project Manager, (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms Sylvie Raposo	Capacity Development Administrative Coordinator (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms Célia Pellet	Capacity and Digital Skills Development Officer (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms Verena Lehnen	Capacity and Digital Skills Development Intern (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Mr Sean Sharidz Doral	Programme Officer	ITU	Thailand
Mr Rodrigo Robles	Programme Officer	ITU	Brazil
Mr Emmanuel Niyikora	Programme Officer	ITU	Senegal
Mr Alex Kojo Boahoma	National Project Manager	ITU	Ghana
Ms Eli Dadoza	Administrative Assistant	ITU	Ghana