

10th Meeting of the UNCTAD Advisory Group on: "Innovation Knowledge for
Inclusive and Sustainable Development:
Transferring Knowledge through Technology"

Concept Note

Through the Internet revolution, people are producing vast amounts of data in myriad ways and continuously through platforms including the web, tablets, mobile devices and wearables. In eLearning, one of the trends for development is ubiquitous access to Knowledge at any time, on as many devices of different specifications and in short bursts (ex. using TED talk). Even in developing countries, where home PC penetration is low and wired connectivity is not highly developed, the use of tablets and smartphones has opened up access to a new target audience through content and tailor made training material (Mobile learning environment). These new developments and the multiplicity in access methods provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of changes in human well-being, and to get real time feedback on how well policy responses are working¹. At the same time, new systems need to be implemented to enable better access, analysis and understanding of this new data.

According to the ADP Big Data in HR², connected devices, including smartphones now join the new mix of data sources presented to HR practitioners that can help them to engage more knowledge for strategic management, training planning and performance reporting. This will improve their ability to use and share their knowledge in an understandable manner. Presently, multinational companies like Google and Nestlé have developed solutions to use Big Data and analytics to improve innovation and capacity building.

During Online EDUCA, Berlin 2014³, e-Learning institutions, academies and training institutions talked about the creation of learning communities. Historically, in 1999, CERN⁴ created a group of experts around the world to learn from each other and develop new physics theory. In 2004, they moved to the concept of e-Learning 2.0, where students become contributors. In 2005, some

¹ UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL PULSE, initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General on big data (www.unglobalpulse.org)

² Big data in HR, Automatic Data Processing (ADP) in the business of your success 2014 (<http://bit.ly/bigdataADP>)

³ EDUCA : Online Educa Berlin, international conference on technology-supported learning and training (www.online-educa.com)

⁴ CERN : the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (www.cern.ch)

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institutions like MIT⁵ started talking about Open Education Resources, where students could select and follow a module or a course of their choice. In 2008, the concept moved to the creation of MOOCs (massive online open courses, where big universities developed curriculum to attract students all over the world). In 2010, the academia started talking about Personal Learning Environments, and finally in 2013 the concept moved to LPSS or Learning and Performance Support System, wherein a student can develop his own learning programme. Today, Institutions such as IMD⁶ and EPFL⁷ will participate in the 10th Advisory Group to share their knowledge in this area and their insights into the future of learning.

In the UN environment, training and e-Learning entities have adopted and set-up new platforms and training processes in relation to the development of academies and training institutions. The Advisory Group has been designed to identify best practices and solutions that are relevant for UN agencies and can be implemented in UNCTAD. This advisory group is a good opportunity to showcase and have a discussion between agencies on their projects in this area.

The combination of UN Agencies, private sector players and academies will be an asset for the UN agencies to see and look at solutions for development in the areas of Big Data and Analytics, capacity building, and knowledge sharing.

Questions that should be addressed include the following:

- How can we leverage big data for knowledge development?
- How does big data and analytics fit into Capacity Building within the context of UN entities and other International Institutions?
- How can Big Data help to setup and contribute to E-learning and career path development?
- Can Big Data reveal insights on change in human well-being, real time trends on population behaviour or perceptions related to sustainable development issues?
- Where should United Nations Agencies focus on regarding Big Data/Analytics, HR and career planning?
- Will Big Data create a new rift or new opportunity for Developing Countries?
- Is Big Data the next quantum leap?

⁵ MIT : Massachusetts Institute of Technology (web.mit.edu)

⁶ IMD : International Institute for Management Development in Lausanne (www.imd.org)

⁷ EPFL : Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (www.epfl.ch)