



COMMONWEALTH
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ORGANISATION

REPORT
of the
Commonwealth
Human Resources
& ICT Forum'21

DATE: 5 MAY 2021

*Understanding the new digital normal:
Fostering organisational readiness in the 21st century*





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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) convened the 11th Commonwealth Human Resources and ICT Forum on 5 May 2021. This was the first virtual meeting of the series and, it generated widespread interest with 251 delegates, from 45 countries, participating through the Zoom Webinar online platform. The forum was streamed via Facebook Live and has since received 195 views to date.

The Forum was structured around 4 sessions that addressed the future of work in the Commonwealth, integrated approaches to capacity building for operational effectiveness, innovative ICT platforms and technologies, and constructing a roadmap for operational effectiveness. It considered the ICT trends for work and looked to the future to determine the imperatives for human resource management and organisational readiness. The Forum also addressed the challenges and opportunities presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to individuals and organisations in the work environment.

Participants expressed their satisfaction with the organisation and conduct of the Forum, its content and quality of presenters.

1.1 Introduction

The realm of human resource management is not immune from the transforming impact of the rapid pace of technological Innovation. Recognising the phenomenal changes in the work environment, precipitated by the revolution in information and communications technologies (ICT), the CTO instituted the Commonwealth Human Resources and ICT Forum in 2005. With the theme: *Understanding the New Digital Normal: Fostering Organisational Readiness in the 21st Century*, the 2021 Forum was open to human resource (HR) practitioners, Heads of organisations, ICT stakeholders and professionals involved in capacity building and organisational change.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives were to:

- Review recent trends for the Human Resources management.
- Provide insight into the challenges facing HR practitioners.
- Review and understand the scope of available ICT and innovative solutions.
- Present new approaches to capacity building.
- Assist participants in developing a Roadmap to achieve organisational readiness.

1.3 Participants

There were **251** participants from **42** Commonwealth states (countries and overseas territories) and three non-Commonwealth countries.

Countries represented: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Botswana, Cameroon, Canada, Cook Islands, Dominica, Eswatini, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Gibraltar, Grenada, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Maldives, Mauritius, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Helena, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, St. Kitts and Nevis, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, Vanuatu and Zambia.



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2. OPENING SESSION

2.1 Welcome

Master of Ceremonies Mr. Robert Hayman, Manager, Events, ICT Development Department, Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), welcomed delegates to the 11th Commonwealth Human Resources and ICT Forum and first virtual edition.

A special welcome was extended to Honourable Ahmed Afzal Ibrahim, Minister of State for Communication, Science & Technology, Maldives, Members of the Diplomatic Corps other VIPs, CTO members and other international delegates.



Mr. Robert Hayman, Manager, Events, CTO

2.2 Opening Remarks

Ms. Bernadette Lewis was appointed to the position of Secretary General in August 2020 and is the first female Secretary General of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation. A national of Trinidad and Tobago, Ms. Lewis was also the first female Secretary General of the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) a role that she held for over a decade.

Secretary General Lewis extended a warm welcome to delegates on behalf of the Chairman and members of the CTO and thanked them for attending the Forum.



Ms. Bernadette Lewis, Secretary General, CTO

She noted that the rapid pace of technological innovation is facilitating real-time interactive multi-media communication and moved the world into the age of the fourth industrial revolution. The ICT revolution is changing the world, dismantling the traditional frameworks that govern how people live and work.

The Secretary General noted that her recent experiences reflected the theme of the Forum. Technology had changed the way the CTO works – that she and CTO staff were working remotely from home and had never physically met. Innovative ICT platforms and technologies were being adopted to ensure staff could continue performing their duties. Online training was arranged, and the means were instituted to re-enforce the learnings with members of staff. This was an integrated approach to capacity building for operational effectiveness.

The SG and the HR Manager have spent time re-thinking Work and the HR Function and this has included speaking to and encouraging members of staff, when the isolation of lockdown restrictions took its toll, and COVID fears for family members and friends abroad arose.

Click [HERE](#) to view opening remarks

2.3 Keynote Address: How Technology is Changing the Public Service

Headline: The interplay between technology, communications and human resources in the public service.

Mr. Rupert McNeil was appointed Government Chief People Officer on 1 January 2016, joining the Civil Service from Lloyds Banking Group, where he was the Group HR Director.

As Government Chief People Officer, Mr. McNeil is responsible for delivery of the Civil Service People Strategy. He provides leadership on the full range of people issues including talent, capability, inclusion, capacity, leadership, pay, performance, employee relations, culture, and behaviours.

There have been universal changes to working practices throughout the UK public sector, from health, education, to the judiciary, services are now automated. The benefits have led to greater efficiency and effectiveness. The UK prison system, in particular prison management, has been transformed through computerisation.

System automation in the UK has increased access to data and driven superior data analysis. The UK government endeavours to cultivate a culture that empowers citizens to uphold ethical and behavioural standards that protect data. The UK government must secure organisational data whilst ensuring adequate and purposeful evaluation of that data.

When a government organisation develops national operational strategies and plans, a review of the technological base of the country is needed. The rise of mobile technologies and applications have removed technological barriers, although the UK government continues to deal with legacy systems. When outlining a government's organisational purpose, the strategic relationship with other institutions must be understood. The public sector thrives on collaboration. High-level objectives, known as the strategic pillars, define activities and initiatives. Government organisations must deploy various schemes and services to realise service excellence in achieving the strategic vision. When COVID-19 hit the UK, operating models shifted dramatically to accommodate the changes.



Mr. Rupert McNeil, Chief People Officer and Non-executive Director Civil Service HR, The Cabinet Office, Government of the United Kingdom.



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At the intersection of human resources and technology is the people enabler which is unique, because unlike money or data, or hardware or software, the people enabler creates the most influence. It is important to recognise that every person working for the government is a citizen and should be as fulfilled and kept as safe as possible.

The UK government must reflect its citizenry, the UK civil service has set the objective of being the most inclusive organisation in the UK. Diversity within the workforce should reach across all levels of government from senior roles to entry level. There must always be a gender balance in government. The UK government has 18 women working as Permanent Secretaries, these are the most senior roles within UK government. This takes the UK government to an almost all time high and close to 50%.

The UK government must equally ensure more senior roles are occupied by people with disabilities, or people from ethnic minority groups, as statistics for these people are less encouraging and more must be done. The government must focus attention to ensure that it is getting the right levels of representation, this is an important priority.

KEY POINTS:

- The world has changed forever because of the COVID pandemic, underlining ICTs as a key enabler of organisational effectiveness.
- The COVID pandemic created a unique situation that calls for organisations to review and rethink operational function.
- The corporate critical enablers for an effective operating model are money, data, technology, and people and their interdependence.
- While the benefits of technology are immense, the downside to it is cyber threats.
- Organisations must automate their processes, whilst automation is perceived to be a threat to the workforce, it must be seen as a massively empowering opportunity.

Click [HERE](#) to view Mr. Rupert McNeil's presentation

3. THE FUTURE OF WORK IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Headline: How the HR function can support employees as technology is increasingly adopted in the workplace.

Mr. Usman Mamman is the Head of the Human Capital Department of the Nigerian Communications Commission.

He is a seasoned economist and well-grounded in Telecommunication with over 30 years' experience spanning banking, telecommunication licensing and Human Resources Management.

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Chair: Mr. Usman Mamman, Head, Human Capital, Nigerian Communications Commission

3.1 Rethinking Work and the HR Function

Headline: Considering the new normal and what this setting means for HR practitioners.

Mr. Blanchard is a mentor and coach to growth-minded leaders and business owners. As Founder & Managing Director of the Caribbean Institute of Leadership & Coaching (CILC), he works with corporate leaders and business owners helping them to grow themselves and their organisations.

There are four approaches that HR professionals need to observe to rethink the HR function: the changes in the technological space, the changes in the medical space because of COVID, the transgenerational nature of the workforce, and changes in societal structure. These approaches have implications for organisational leadership, culture, engagement, and operating models. These external factors change the way of working or the way that work is viewed or performed.



Mr. Ian Blanchard, Founder & Managing Director, Caribbean Institute of Leadership & Coaching, Barbados

The COVID pandemic has caused changes to working practices, the most meaningful change being employees from the public, private and third sector are no longer required to be in an office. HR Leaders must help other managers understand that this type of model is going to continue in the future and ensure they review the way they engage employees.



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HR Managers must rethink the leadership model. They must understand the need to facilitate the achievement of corporate goals and to be a consultant and a partner to managers within the organisation. HR Managers must have a place in the boardroom with the Executive Management. They need to support managers, leaders, and supervisors in managing their people.

HR practitioners are required to generate relevant HR data analytics that support human capital development. They must justify financial spending, endorse employee needs and behaviour, and defend investment in education, training, salaries and employee benefits, for instance, for long-term organisational productivity. They must find data to support their processes i.e., training budgets.

There is a need for changes in leadership and workforce engagement to ensure that organisations build capacity. Employee engagement is important, it has been proven that engaged employees perform at a better but it is something many organisations rarely measure.

The foundation for any capacity building or training programme starts with self-awareness. Training on its own will not be as effective without coaching and mentoring and the application of that training to projects and special assignments.

Better online infrastructure is needed across organisations. Information flow must change, from local corporations downloading information, to creating their own content for others. There must be more thought given to creating local content as there are people with relevant skill sets in every country. These people who are skilled in the adaptation of ICTs, must be encouraged to create video course content on relevant ICT subjects in the local language for use by local people.

The small percentage of people with ICT skills in Small Island Developing states, such as Tonga, should be encouraged through government incentives to make ICT training available for the local population. This gives skilled local professionals or the government, depending on the local arrangement, the capacity to earn income. This would build capacity across organisations, and the country. The Caribbean Institute of Leadership & Coaching (CILC) have developed relevant local platforms for training in Barbados.

KEY POINTS:

- HR Managers must be able to contribute to the conversation around business growth, be a HR strategic partner, not just below their level but across the organisation.
- Commonwealth nations should have people who are not just theoretically inclined but are practically skilled in ICTs.
- Countries must create compelling content that is attractive to the international market.
- Commonwealth countries must facilitate content development within their school systems to create “information type products”, to enable countries make more of a global impact. This will result in better utilisation of in-country bandwidth.
- Organisations must rethink their approaches to staffing and employee protection.
- It is important to apply common principles to build individual skillsets when addressing capacity development in organisations.
- Coaching and mentoring and the application of training through projects and special assignments are necessary for building skillsets.
- HR practitioners needs to think about changing and rethinking their function, in terms of their leadership, employee engagement, how they they support the executive management, and how they build human capacity within the organisation.

Click [HERE](#) to view Mr. Ian Blanchard's presentation



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3.2. Panel Discussion: The Future of Work in the Commonwealth

Headline: Implications for organisational leadership, culture, engagement, and operating models.

Mr. Rohan McCalla is the Director, Human Resources & Administration at the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR), Jamaica. Before joining the OUR, he worked as Chief Records Officer at the Financial Services Commission (FSC). He is Senior Adjunct Lecturer in mixed methods research at the University of the West Indies, Mona.



Mr. Rohan McCalla, Director, Human Resources & Administration Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR), Jamaica

HR Professionals have a responsibility to help others to understand how to navigate this current situation. Small steps must be taken by HR practitioners to engage people and to ensure that employees understand that they are supported. Showing gratitude and awareness, are simple steps that can be taken to motivate staff.

There is a positive correlation between employee engagement and productivity. When employee engagement increases, productivity and other factors increase. Employee engagement relates to how workers are employed, how involved they are, how enthusiastic they are about their work, how empowered they are and how committed they are to their work and workplaces.

There must be a shift in mindset, a change in how performance is observed and assessment is conducted. HR Professionals need to think about performance management and how feedback may be given back in a structured way. They must learn to give on the spot, on demand, feedback to their employees.

Employee engagement is important for productivity. The importance of building strong relationships in organisations is vital. Employee engagement is strengthened by employees fostering good relationships internally and across organisations with external stakeholders.

HR Managers can influence the language the executive management use by briefing Directors and Chief Executive Officers on HR issues and their impact on the financial health of the organisation in advance of Board meetings. At the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR), Jamaica there is a subcommittee of the Board where they discuss and review HR matters.

Creating an employee-centric work environment can be applied to the principles and practices of talent acquisition. The type of interviews that are set and the questions asked at interviews will, demonstrate whether the organisation has an employee-centric approach. Values-based interviews can be rewarding and telling for employee engagement. These questions help HR Professionals prepare for the employee that they are taking on and will allow HR Professionals to understand the needs of the employee going forward and their work-life circumstances.



There needs to be discussions between stakeholders on what people will need to be prepared for the future of work. An assessment must take place, analysing needs, total costs, and the timeframe for change. This is also a challenge for the education system, bandwidth is essential to ensure the availability of facilities. Young people tend to misuse a lot of the technologies, Jamaica has a scheme called Tablets in schools and what the schools found, was that the tablets were being used, but for the wrong things. HR Practitioners have a role to help employees as well as children, know what is expected of them.

KEY POINTS:

- HR professionals should foster employee engagement in this era of increasing digital work.
- HR professionals need to actively advance and improve employee engagement.
- HR professionals must contribute to the deliberations to the executive leadership.
- HR practitioners can promote digital literacy and the importance of education.
- Values based interview techniques highlight the worth of employee engagement.
- HR Professionals have a responsibility to ensure all staff are supported in this new era of remote working.
- Employees, manager, leaders must learn to express gratitude to improve employee engagement.

Click [HERE](#) to view Mr. Rohan McCalla's presentation



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Dr. Lia Maka is the Chief Executive Officer of the Public Service Commission, of the Kingdom of Tonga. Dr. Maka has led the implementation of major Public Service Reform Programs, most notably: the implementation of the new Remuneration Structure and new Performance Management System.

Tonga is still one of the very few countries in the world that has not recorded any COVID-19 cases. However, closures of international borders last year, in neighbouring countries that provided direct travel routes to Tonga (Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Samoa), led to Tonga's borders also being closed. There was a temporary national lockdown, with stay-at-home curfews in government operations and that has been ongoing.



Dr. Lia Maka, Chief Executive Officer, Public Service Commission, The Kingdom of Tonga

While emerging HR technologies are becoming popular, technologies such as virtual assistance in Human Capital Management (HCM), Artificial Intelligence, internal talent marketplace, employee productivity and monitoring, diversity, equity, and inclusion matters, blockchain and augmented reality and virtual reality applications, are not commonplace in Tonga. Tonga is still at the doorway of this digital space.

Local people should create local digital Tongan government should incentivise and engage employees to understand ICTs and to develop their capabilities at the same time. This will engender ownership, shifting the work dynamics and work modality to what Tonga hopes to achieve in the digital space.

KEY POINTS:

- Tonga, an island state lacks digital readiness.
- COVID-19 is compelling Small Island States to change their operating models.
- There is a need to review legislation to include and endorse digital working.
- Investment in infrastructure, connectivity and bandwidth must be encouraged.
- COVID-19 has catapulted the Tongan government and galvanised Tongans to look at using difference operating models.
- To be digitally ready, small island developing states such as Tonga, need to invest in software and supporting infrastructure, ensure reliable connectivity, develop government guidelines and policies for the use of these technologies, provide adequate ICT training, align technology responsive legislations and employment laws.

Click [HERE](#) to view Dr. Lia Maka's presentation



The Chair of the session requested the CTO's Capacity Development and Training (CDT) Division provide awareness, as well as, training, and interventions for the future of work. CTO must challenge itself in this area, regardless of the level of ICT adoption in countries, there are innovative things that can be delivered across all Commonwealth nations. The CTO should establish and deliver innovative approaches to training, development, and other interventions for Commonwealth countries.

Secretary General Bernadette Lewis stated CTO is committed to provide support to members to ensure that skills are developed at a local level, and intellectual capacity leveraged Commonwealth countries. Indigenous skills and talents must be capitalised upon, to create content that is relevant and relatable in local environments.



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4. INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO CAPACITY BUILDING FOR OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Headline: Integrated approaches to capacity building for operational effectiveness

Mr. Juma K. Kandie is a distinguished HR professional with extensive leadership and management experience, gained in the last 28 years, spanning across ICT, Development, Academia and Finance sectors. He has been part of the leadership team at Communications Authority of Kenya for the last 18 years, responsible for the Human Capital and Administration function

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Chair: **Mr. Juma Kandie**, Director of Human Capital and Administration, Communications Authority Kenya (CA)

4.1. Rethinking Capacity Building in the 21st Century

Headline: Ineffectiveness of current training practices demands integrated approaches to capacity building.

Mr. Bevil Wooding is Director, Caribbean Affairs with the American Registry of Internet Numbers (ARIN) and is the Facilitator of the Caribbean Network Operators Group (CaribNOG). He is also one of the Caribbean's leading voices promoting the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for development in the region.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the focus on capacity development requirements at the national level. The crisis has highlighted the need for technology, but also the issues of inequitable access, inadequate infrastructure, and policies that impede national development goals. There is a need to redesign and update capacity development programmes. When reconfiguring capacity development the current context must be considered in developing the skills, knowledge and mentality for sustainable development. There must be measures at the national level to close the gaps exposed by the pandemic.



Mr. **Bevil Wooding**, Director of Caribbean Affairs American Registry for Internet Numbers (ARIN) and Facilitator, Caribbean Network Operators' Group (CaribNOG)

Training and capacity development are imperative to ensure the continuity of government systems, or private sector organisations. Digital transformation is no longer optional. It is an imperative that needs to be accelerated and that will require HR interventions that focus on local capacity development to address local challenges.

A sustainable value chain must be developed with enabling infrastructure, where digital skills and training are identified and executed. This will lead to local content development that will drive an increase in home-grown software, hardware, and supporting services. The protection of indigineous intellectual property, and access opportunities for new markets are also part of a value chain that HR practitioners build and invest in within organisations.

The enabler for accelerating this kind of capacity development is leadership - HR practitioners must influence leadership in the boardroom. Secondly, the right technical infrastructure must be developed, building the infrastructure with the right technical inputs. Thirdly, establishing partnerships that allow capacity building that might not be available within organisations. Fourthly, the issue of affordable and equitable access of technology and technical skills. Lastly, community empowerment and digital literacy are essential to growth of the digital marketplace.

KEY POINTS:

- Digital skills development must meet current and future development needs.
- Capacity development investment must be aligned with identified development needs.
- The HR partnership across other institutional tiers or hierarchy become important because capacity development investment must be linked to having the correct appropriately trained HR within organisations and institutions.
- HR Practitioners must justify the investment need to the investment return at the board level.
- HR Practitioners must develop new language skills in communicating the important issues, engaging with their counterparts at the board room or decision-making levels.
- There needs to be a shift at local level from consuming content to producing it.
- Companies need to be concerned about technical security building local capacity to address it.

Click [HERE](#) to view Mr. Bevil Wooding's presentation



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4.2. Panel Discussion: Integrated Approaches to Capacity Building for Operational Effectiveness

Headline: Evaluation of traditional methods for training and new approaches that lead to greater operational effectiveness.

Ms. Lara Pace is the Head of Capacity Building Practice at Protection Group International, joining in 2020. Ms. Pace has been working internationally in the ICTs and Cyberspace arenas for the last 12 years. She has in-depth experience and knowledge of the Commonwealth and the cyber capacities of the member states.



Ms. Lara Pace, Head of Capacity Building Practice, Protection Group International

A clear national strategic vision informed by national risks, current maturity that views the capacity and capability of each nation is fundamental. National cybersecurity capacity development programmes aim to reduce digital risk at all levels and ensure ample investment of both money and resources. Achieving a strategic vision requires an increase in capability for securing infrastructure, ensuring information sharing, an active incident response and enforcement of standards. Investments must be made to enhance capability of the criminal justice system and the education sector for operational effectiveness.

Nations must design a roadmap to build capacity, defining the priorities in the portfolio of the jurisdiction. The priorities are informed by the level of risk a nation is willing to tolerate.

Establishing workforce roles and functions is dependent on level of risk. To ensure staff retention, career development paths must be drawn, to allow staff to see how their training will be applied, how it will improve their prospects for promotion, contribute to skills growth and ensure adequate remuneration.

Workforce frameworks are beneficial because highly trained individuals often move into the private sector after completing advanced specialised training, so harnessing the potential in staff at all levels is key. HR departments should be transparent in the trajectory of career paths for staff especially in the area of cybersecurity. This will improve employee engagement and retention.

The HR function must foster digital skills to ensure there is cyber resilience, with adequate investment in cyber skills. There are many qualifications to be gained in cybersecurity.

HR department data security is vital, there must be cybersecurity considerations to protect the data.

It is important to measure the return on the investment in cybersecurity capacity building interventions. With this understanding HR Managers would be better able to make the case to the executive management for the allocate of funds for additional capacity building.

KEY POINTS:

- Workforce frameworks are helpful in building career paths and establishing talent pools.
- Nations must build a sustainable workforce that can address digital risk.
- Training can be either self-training, local training, or other means but there must be a level of sustainability.
- Once the critical protection points are established, then effort must be made to understand the associated risks, the process is a constant review of methodologies.

Click [HERE](#) to view Ms. Lara Pace's presentation

Ms. Hannah Ashiokai Akrong joined Vodafone Ghana in April, 2016 as Director of Human Resources. She started her career in Marketing with Multimedia Broadcasting Company, Ghana and went on to Ernst & Young, where she worked in a consulting capacity with the HR Advisory team. She has also worked at Medtronic, a world leader in medical device technology and Honeywell USA.

During the pandemic, a hybrid approach to e-learning and training became popular. Vodafone Ghana experienced a sharp rise in e-learning and since March of 2020, 98% of employees worked remotely, this resulted in training being delivered remotely.

Vodafone Ghana has created bite-sized training videos within their training portfolio that have been impactful. An integrated approach to learning works well, this means there must be a focus on making connections among the concepts that are being taught through a variety of means. The information, and experiences received in the classroom or via online learning, or by a hybrid approach, should be practicable to complex workplace issues.



Ms. Ashiokai Akrong, Director, Human Resource
Vodafone Ghana



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There are different ways to ensure an integrated approach to learning. These include gamification, integrated roleplaying, and facilitated learning and represent a move away from the traditional teacher pupil (lecture) method. These approaches are explained hereunder.

1. Gamification training sets training in a real-world context and applies gaming processes to a non-gaming workplace context. Training is interactive and can increase engagement.
2. Integrated roleplaying poses real examples that participants are facing and seeks to resolve the issues. Learners can apply knowledge to practice.
3. The facilitated learning model allows learning between participants, allowing participants to share problems so that they can learn from each other, different ways of addressing problems.

Last year, Vodafone Ghana identified 14 digital skills as core to the digital future of the Telco. These included artificial intelligence, robotics, cybersecurity, social media, fintech and Marketing. The 14 core areas have courses that are available to employees on the Vodafone university learning platform, where employees can access modules at their own pace. Vodafone has reported that employees are making good use of the system.

Ensuring the use of data and analytics behind HR practitioner presentations is crucial, there must be analysis for the innovations that need board level approval to support the initiative. Questions relating to the value for the organisation, in terms of cost saving, enhancing employee experience, the financial impact. Vodafone Ghana has an HR analytics team, some of the matrix that are measured, are employment cost, advantage of service revenue, also measure of finance control, in the field setting versus the more corporate sessions.

KEY POINTS:

- There has been a sharp rise in e-learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- E-learning will result in significant cost savings and can reduce operational time for training delivery.
- Pooling training resources is beneficial for integrated learning.
- Technology allows trainers to keep up with the trends and innovations, so that they can continually provide value to organisations and ultimately improve the employee experience.

Click [HERE](#) to view Ms. Ashiokai Akrong's presentation

5. CREATIVE HR: INNOVATIVE ICT PLATFORMS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Mr. Zakhele Kganakga, is the Human Resources Executive, at Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) a role he has held since 2017. He provides strategic direction ensuring the Authority's business strategy aligns with the people strategy.

He is an experienced human resources executive with a strong blend of strategic, tactical, and operational experience across the Public & Private Sector.

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Chair: Mr. Zakhele Kganakga, Human Resources Executive, Independent Communications Authority of South Africa

5.1. Case Study: OneHR

Headline: A case study on OneHR, the United Nations, Global Centre for Human Resources Services

Mr. Bart Willemsen joined UNICEF's HR management team in New York, which is responsible for HR policy, administrative law, and social benefits. In 2020, he transferred to Bonn, to start his current role as Chief, Compensation and Classification Section of the Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance, in the UN Secretariat. He is responsible for the OneHR Centre and the UN's local salary survey process in almost 170 countries.

The OneHR Centre was established to pool all HR disciplines within one organisation as an integrated system that can offer a whole range of services to all UN agencies.

The focus areas are job classification and background verification. The job classification system essentially sets the responsibilities and duties to a particular grade, that are assured within the system and at the same level are paid the same. This ensures standardisation across all UN bodies.

The job verification system is a similar initiative that can review the qualifications, professional experience, and the prior conduct of applicants, both criminal conduct but also professional misconduct. Requests for verification are through a customised interface to OneHR.



Mr. Bart Willemsen, Chief, Compensation & Classification Section, United Nations



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The UN has several databases that are used for the OneHR system, namely. The Interpol database, the United Nations Security Council Sanctions list (relations to terrorist organisations), and an internal UN sexual misconduct database which is populated with confirmed cases of sexual misconduct.

The UN system has been established to harmonise and provide a service to UN agencies. However, there are several international organisations and agencies that are closely related to various UN organisations, that could benefit from the verification system.

The UN is comprised of more than 30 agencies with many different practices, mandates, budgets, priorities and cultures but they all must conduct similar functions in HR. The agreement of the agencies for the development of the OneHR system was a victory.

KEY POINTS:

- International data protection laws remain a challenge for the OneHR system.
- Should an employee move across UN organisations the initial background verification data is kept on file, so there is no need to repeat the same checks, and this improves efficiency, although supplementary checks maybe needed.
- OneHR is developing the idea of using generic job descriptions so that all jobs can be classified once, that can be replicated universally and modified to include description on the mandate of the requesting UN organisation.
- The verification is detailed to ensure that the information presented by candidates is truthful.
- The OneHR databases developed are specific, they focus on HR processes. There is potential in the future to review to see if additional services can be offered.
- Streamlining management reform by using the same standards for activities and working together across all UN bodies has resulted in economies of scale.

Click [HERE](#) to view Mr. Bart Willemsen's presentation

5.2. Case Study: ICT Applications and the Future Learning

Headline: Current e-learning platforms and the spectrum of design choices available

Ms. Janet Stewart is recognised among Canada's leading experts in designing, building, and deploying online learning solutions to meet the training and education needs of organisations. Ms. Stewart is the Chief Executive Officer of WeLoveLearning.

WeLoveLearning is an e-learning service provider, based in Canada that designs, builds, and deploys training for clients across the world. The organisation is a specialist in designing training for online learning classrooms.

E-learning is a spectrum of different design choices and no one size fits all. Available training design choices include:

- Virtual Instructor-led Training sessions
- Self-directed online Training
- e-tools - e.g. like word-clouds to capture knowledge during training sessions, QR Codes for making training interactive.
- Learning Management System - an online space where organisations can organise their digital learning resources.
- Augmented reality - training can be embedded on training equipment in factories or offices using sticker QR codes.
- Digital training manuals - manuals are embedded with links, codes, additional training tools to enhance the user experience.
- Virtual reality.

The costs of e-learning solutions can vary substantially. Short-term programmes such as those that embed training in factory or offices equipment using sticker codes can cost about two thousand dollars.

Delivering a solution that converts a 50-page policy document to an interactive manual and developing an associated course to supplement the manual would be costlier.

Developing and delivering more complex certificate programmes with multiple self-directed courses will be even more expensive.



Ms. Janet Stewart, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, WeLoveLearning Canada



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The self-directed training has a higher cost initially, but once it has been added to a Learning Management System there are no recurring costs. Unless there is a need to update the material at some point, the investment has already been paid for.

KEY POINTS:

- Great instructional design makes for a great course.
- Developing e-learning content must be interactive and suit the target audience.
- E-learning is often more beneficial because it allows for more than one training expert to be involved.
- When developing relevant effective training it is important to identify the learner and the required training and desired learning outcomes.
- The Virtual Instructor Led Training and self-directed training offer opportunities to level the playing as it gives the opportunity to learn more, and be accessible to more people, regardless of their geography or socio-economic status.

Click [HERE](#) to view Ms. Janet Stewart's presentation

6. ROADMAP FOR ORGANISATIONAL READINESS

6.1. Creating a Roadmap for Organisational Readiness

Headline: Delivering practical guidance on how to create a roadmap for organisational readiness.

Dr. Jackie Jeffrey is a Senior Lecturer in Practice within Middlesex University Business School where she has taught HR, Professional Development and Leadership programmes for over 20 years.

Dr. Jeffrey broadened her educational practices after developing an interest in neuroscience during her professional doctorate and now facilitates local and international placement experiences for herself, students and community partners in Europe, West, East and South Africa.



Dr. Jackie Jeffrey, Senior Lecturer, Middlesex University, United Kingdom

Things are not going to return to what it was before so nations, organisations, and individuals must all be ready.

HR practitioners understood the threat of the pandemic in the first weeks of the pandemic spreading but it was not until the impending restrictions at the national level became apparent, that HR Practitioners started to implement new workforce measures. It is important to look at actions that must be taken for organisational readiness.

Organisational readiness comes from understanding the current state and the relationship between people, processes, systems and performance management within an organisation

The importance of the role of mindsets should be considered. There are fixed, growth and benefit mindsets, all of which are included within an organisation. A fixed mindset is one that holds on to the way things were always traditionally done. A growth mindset recognises that talents and abilities can be developed. The benefit mindset seeks to fulfil its potential in a way that contributes to the wellbeing of others and society as whole.

It is also necessary to consider who you have, what you have and the culture when fostering organisational readiness.

For HR Practitioners, mapping the organisational landscape is important for identifying where an organisation is, where it needs go and what needs to be done to achieve the goals. HR must provide the support to enable management to build their plans.

HR practitioners must learn the language of business and they need to be exemplars in knowledge and digital practice. They must make effective use of data which is essential for guiding the process and for determining the level of success.



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KEY POINTS:

- The COVID pandemic has taught us that working habits have changed for good.
- HR practitioners must conduct an organisational readiness review to prepare for the digital evolution.
- It is essential to put HR theory into practice at organisational level. How to be ready needs people to review not just their own habits but also their organisation's culture.
- It is important for HR Practitioners to focus on the mindsets of people and the culture, when building organisational readiness.
- HR managers must make use of data for decision-making and measuring the impact of their interventions.
- Fostering organisational readiness it cannot be achieved at once as there will be resistance that must be overcome to create organisational readiness for the future. The process is a one that is continuous, measured, evaluated, and reviewed periodically.

Click [HERE](#) to view Dr. Jackie Jeffery's presentation

6.2. Lessons for the Programme for Development Training

Ms. Kekwaletswe thanked the speakers and the participants for sharing their insights.

The CTO is committed to ensuring that the capacity building activities and programmes make an impact both at organisational and national level. CTO will no longer provide capacity building just for the sake of doing it. The new approach is for learning to be applied to practical situations and to have a measurable impact on development.

In terms of lessons learnt for the programme for Development and Training (PDT), there are several factors that the CTO will be considering going forward.

Firstly, CTO will assist organisations transform digitally and that is through the provision of digital skills training at affordable prices and ensuring that learning content is easily accessible across all platforms.

For CTO to remain relevant in the 21st century, CTO must integrate technology into the learning and development strategies, processes, and practices.

Thirdly, there is need for us to rethink measurement and evaluation of learning, because learning delivery methods and how people learn has changed immensely.

Click [HERE](#) to view Ms. Letang Kekwaletswe's presentation



Ms. Letang Kekwaletswe
Manager, Capacity Development and Training, CTO



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8. NEXT STEPS

Through the Programme for Development and Training programme the CTO will address the skills gaps that exist while at the same time promoting capacity building for development. CTO will ensure that members can access learning content easily and that learning solutions are more engaging and interactive.

The Commonwealth HR & ICT Forum is an annual event and CTO will hold the next forum in 2022 and will report on the progress made in developing capacity-building programmes that have a measurable impact on development.

7. CONCLUSION

The CTO is aware that HR landscape has changed significantly, demanding new skills sets and competencies. As organisations endeavour to build capacity and competencies, it is important not to neglect our own development. HR Practitioners must empower themselves and up skill so that they are better placed to help their organisation navigate through the challenges.

There is now a generation that was born in the era of technology and how they learn is different from how older generations did. There has been an explosion in social media applications and platforms and CTO will make provision for individuals to access learning content from these platforms.

Today's tools allow for learners to dip in and out of content and it is possible for a learner to acquire a skill without necessarily having to complete a course. How organisations continue to measure and evaluate learning under the circumstances must be considered at future forums.

This Forum prepared HR practitioners to respond appropriately to the phenomenal changes in the ICT industry and in the world and assisted with the development of a Roadmap for organisational readiness. It is hoped participants learnt much that can be transferred and applied in their work environments.

9. APPENDICES

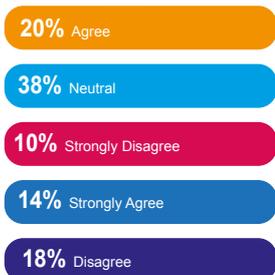
9.1. Appendix 1: What Participants Said

During the forum delegates were invited to complete a short poll, the results of which are presented below:

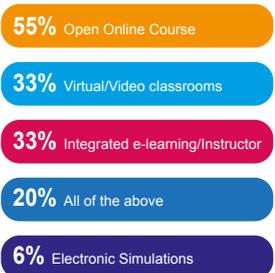
Q1. My HR department is adapting and responding appropriately to keep employees, engaged, empowered and productive in this period of uncertainty.



Q2. Return on investment (ROI) on capacity building programmes is measured in my organisation



Q3. My organisation has introduced the following to enhance capacity building:



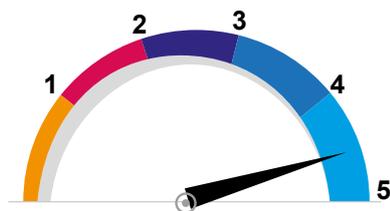
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9.2. Appendix 2: Feedback Dashboards

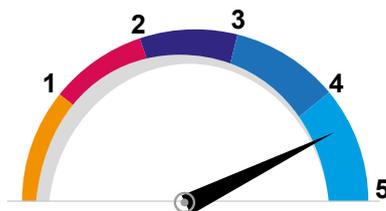
Participants rated the following aspects of the HR&ICT Forum
1 (Poor) – 5 (Excellent).

Overall Event Rating



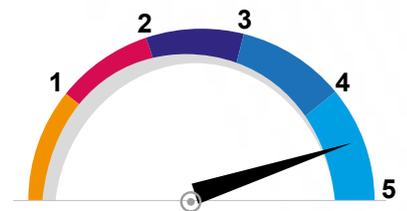
Average rating 4.40

Relevance of Event Topics



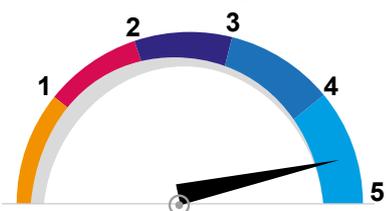
Average rating 4.37

Quality of the presentations



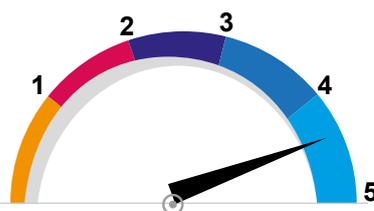
Average rating 4.41

Presenters Topic Knowledge



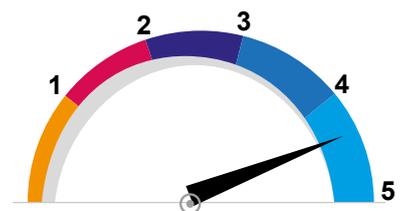
Average rating 4.46

Event Objectives Achievement



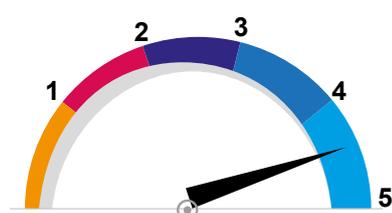
Average rating 4.25

Event Expectations



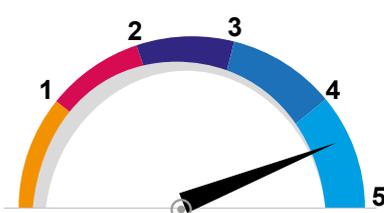
Average rating 4.20

Value of Forum



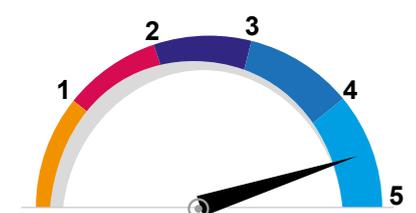
Average rating 4.30

Communication & Information Provided by CTO Prior to Event



Average rating 4.30

Control & Execution of the Event



Average rating 4.37

9.3. Appendix 3: Final Words From Participants

The forum was...

- *Great and focused presentations that met my expectations and needs.*
- *The presentations were excellent and addressed the needs of the dynamic ICT Sector.*
- *An insightful event that allows HR practitioners to share relevant knowledge and practices.*
- *An excellent event bringing together practitioners who create value in different ways. It is great to see how others are leveraging digital technology to deliver effective solutions for delivering training and information.*
- *Timely and encouraged HR Practitioners to have a heightened alertness to the changes taking place in the environment.*
- *A well-executed event, very informative and I will share and apply the content learnt at my Ministry. I loved the fact that the presenters were able to give diverse perspectives based on the topics discussed.*
- *Very instructive, and the presenters were knowledgeable in the subject they presented. I enjoyed every bit of the sessions.*
- *Was an excellent meeting, very knowledgeable and experienced presenters, a wealth of knowledge was gained.*
- *Commend the Secretariat for hosting this meeting virtually.*
- *Well done CTO on hosting an excellent event!*



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9.4. Appendix 4: Listing Participant Organisations

Country Name	Organisations
Antigua and Barbuda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government of Antigua and Barbuda
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asian Development Bank National Communication Authority (NCA)
Bahamas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government of the Bahamas Department of Transformation and Digitization
Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Communication for Development Network G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar Islamic University of Technology, Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering
Barbados	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) Caribbean Institute of Leadership & Coaching (CILC)
Botswana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) Botswana Fibre Network (BoFiNet)
Cameroon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications Telecommunication Regulatory Board
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WeLoveLearning Canada Inc
Cook Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)
Cyprus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, Office of the Permanent Secretary
Dominica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and Communication Technology Unit, Government of Dominica
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM)
Fiji	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Communication Telecom Fiji Limited
Gambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gambia Cellular Company Ltd (GamCel) Gambia Telecommunications Company Ltd (GamTel) Ministry of Information & Communication Infrastructure United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Gambia Rule of Law (ROL) Project
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accra Digital Centre

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airtel Ghana Ltd • CTI FM Online Radio • GBfoods Africa • Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC) • Ministry of Communications & Digitalisation • National Communications Authority (NCA) • National Information Technology Agency (NITA) • Vodafone Ghana • National Telecommunications Commission (NTC)
Gibraltar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gibraltar Regulatory Authority (GRA)
Grenada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of ICT
Jamaica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GeoTechVision • Office of the Utilities Regulator (OUR)
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Authority
Lesotho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesotho National Broadcasting Services • Sekho Technologies
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of E-Government, Ministry of Information, Communication Technology • Doctors without borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) • Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) • Malawi Telecommunications Limited • Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
Maldives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Communication, Science & Technology
Mauritius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) • Airport Terminal Operations Ltd
Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glisten International Academy • Modular Integrated Services Ltd • National Agency for the Great Green Wall • National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) • Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC)
Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of IT and Telecom • World Bank, Pakistan
Papua New Guinea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Information and Communications Technology Authority (NICTA)



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Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East African Communications Organisation (EACO) • RwandAir Ltd
Saint Helena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Saint Helena Island
Saint Kitts and Nevis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Technology
Samoa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cable & Wireless Seychelles
Sierra Leone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Telecommunications Commission (NATCOM)
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA)
Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign Ministry, Government of Sri Lanka
St. Kitts and Nevis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Technology, Ministry of Justice, Legal Affairs and Communications
Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zurich Virtual Reality (VR) & Augmented Reality (AR) Meetup Group
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majura Law Chambers • Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA)
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt Song app
Tonga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Service Commission, Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries • Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs • Ministry of Health • Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation • Ministry of Sport and Community Development (MSCD) • Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal • Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT) • Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT) • Office of the Prime Minister
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uganda Communications Commission (UCC)
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Office • Ghana High Commission, UK • Jamaican High Commission, UK • Protection Group International (PGI) • Sierra Leone High Commission, UK • Sri Lanka High Commission, UK
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Registry for Internet Numbers (ARIN)
Vanuatu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), Government of Vanuatu
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) • Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency (ZCSA)
International organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) • Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) • United Nations OneHR • United Nations