ETNO Executive Summary

1st Round Table

Deep Dive on Digital Upskilling Best Practices to increase gender diversity in the telecom workforce

Digital Upskilling For All! - VS/2020/0173

etno — European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association

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Digital Upskilling for All!

Executive Summary: Deep Dive on Digital Upskilling Best Practices to increase gender diversity in the telecom workforce.

On 25 February, the social partners from the EU telecom sector, ETNO and UNI Europa, organized a virtual round table conference: *Deep Dive on Digital Upskilling Best Practices* to increase gender diversity of telecom workforce.

The meeting was part of a joint ETNO-UNI Europa social dialogue Project funded with the financial support of the EU commission. 52 representatives from 24 companies/organizations participated in the full day event and were joined by Mercer Consulting, who helped with the preparation of the digital round table. The meeting was translated simultaneously from English into 4 languages (French, Portuguese, Polish and Spanish) by Oluseyi.

The aim of the meeting was to discuss the best practices identified throughout the first phase of the project and create recommended pathways for the digital upskilling and inclusion of the diversity group within the workforce of the European Telecoms sector. According to researches [1], 37% of European Union workers have insufficient digital skills – evidence points that the gap is widening.

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[1] The EU Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, Russell Reynolds research, The 100-Year LifeSurvey.

Skills requirements in the Telecoms sector are rapidly changing due to constant technological innovation and market developments. The number of vacancies for highly skilled ICT roles is increasing exponentially and the sector cannot meet this demand by recruiting from the traditional ICT talent pool alone. In order to bridge this skills gap, Telecommunication companies are seeking to upskill their existing workforce.

This virtual event gathered experts from the sector to share identified best practices that promote gender diversity along the employee journey in a company. Only 12% of executives in leading telecom companies are female and the DESI 2020 report that shows that only 1 out of 6 ICT specialists are women. [2]

The full day event started with an introduction and welcome from Lise Fuhr, Director General of ETNO, who introduced the project as well as highlighted the need for the industry's commitment to upskilling and training the ICT workforce in the telco sector with a specific focus on improving gender balance across all levels by working with social partners.

Next up was the presentation by Lucye Provera and Lea Lonstead, Mercer, on digital upskilling from the gender inclusion perspective. Sharing results from Mercer's global 2020 "When Women

Thrive, Let's Get Real about Equality" survey, Mercer examined the current state of gender representation in the technology industry and the best practices around improving gender diversity, using an evidence-based approach. An interactive poll asked to participants what methods of upskilling were currently in use by the companies. The results revealed that the majority of the organizations are working with a Build model – focusing on internal talent development.
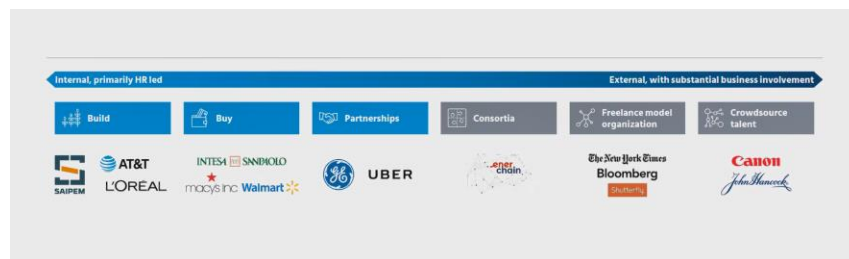
Mercer highlighted key building blocks (drivers) of an effective gender upskilling strategy:

- Review HR processes**:** de-bias HR processes such as recruiting, performance management and pay;
- Share expertise: activate mentorship programs with mentors both men and women and include this goal in their performance management process;
- Reinforce networking: promote women as role-models and professional networking groups, both internally and externally;
- Build the future: define target of % women in succession plan for creative and innovative ICT roles (not only for role of execution);
- Make accessible: require a high number of female participants (such as 50%) in development/innovative/talent program;
- Back to work facilitation: propose technical upskilling/updating with flexible format aimed at women after long period out of work (e.g. maternity leave);
- Make women feel welcome: adapt physical office environments and build consistent flexible work policy (not-discriminatory).

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[2] The EU The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)

The round table then proceeded to examine the five best practices identified for the Digital Upskilling to increase gender Diversity. Presentations were delivered by:

Torkild Holmboe-Hay, Consultant at the Danish trade union 3F, who presented on the Hilfr Collective Agreement Online Platform (link to video)

Kathryn Cullen, Programme Director at Technology Ireland Software Skillnet, who presented on their Women Reboot's program (link to cvideo)

Armand Leblois, Regional Manager Corporate Affairs Europe North, South UK and Ireland, who presented on Cisco's Network Academy (link to video)

Aniela Unguresan, co-founder of the EDGE Certified Foundation, and Samira Tavares Kruth Verdade, Quality & Methodology Coordinator, Operations- Quality & Certifications, Capgemini Brazil, who led a joint presentation on Capgemini: Young Women In Tech Program (link to video)

Vidya Krishan, Chief Learning Officer & Global Head of Learning & Development, who presented on Ericsson: Design Your Future Program (link to video)

Upon the completion of the Best Practice, Mercer facilitated a benchmark of current Best Practices in the Telecom sector, examining where the companies are on their "digital upskilling" journey.

During the discussion, industry presentations by Deutsche Telekom, BT and TIM followed. BT presented how they are supporting female employees progress in their roles by creating a 12 month global program. Deutsche Telekom described their Explorer Journey focused on three areas including Data Analytics, Digital Marketing and Software Development.

TIM added to the discussion by stating: "In TIM we are currently developing our "Women Project" whose goals are to reduce Gender Gap in the time frame of our next Strategic Plan acting on Gender Bias and on Women Empowerment. Our women colleagues are 32% of our people and our major focus is to boost the presence of STEM women both improving recruiting from the external and reskilling women actually working on other jobs to give them the opportunity to get the challenge to move to more technical jobs like telco technician."

Birte Dedden, representing UNI Europa, asked the participants about how Social Partners are involved in the upskilling program development, if they are consulted to identify the required skills or merely informed. Carol Scheffer added that involvement in the unions is critical and she described an apprenticeship program through which she was working closely with a telecommunications company and suggested that this was a good area for unions to be involved. Within BT, there is a program called "Code first Girls" to bring young women to learn to code and have initial work experiences in technology. Unions are heavily involved in the program development as well as the board that monitors success. Within A1 Telekom Austria, unions are involved at a local level. In Austria there is an apprenticeship program which is being modernized with heavy involvement from the works council and unions in the design. Also at TIM, there is a requirement to sign an agreement and become involved in the development of their upskilling programs launched in 2021 as the training adjusted the work time of employee to allow for training courses.

Conclusions

Gregory Gillet from ETNO closed the conference by summarising the main points discussed:

- Digital empowerment starts with inclusion and diversity;
- It is critical for organizations to first work on inclusion (change company culture) and engagement;
- Diversity and Inclusion need to be part of the business strategy;
- Digital diversity should not be taken for granted;
- It is necessary for companies to tap into the a vast reservoir of experience and talent by nurturing professional & technical skills;
- Organizations should align digital upskilling to market opportunities;
- Digital upskilling and diversity change should be seen as a journey of transformation;
- The notion of intrapreneur should be encouraged (internal mobility, learning culture, engagement);
- Telecommunications organizations need to develop more multi-stakeholders' partnerships with education system, authorities, social partners and civil society.

"We have met our objective to identify pathways, areas of improvement for the implementation of digital upskilling for genders. Other roadblock will be further discussed at the final conference," Gregory Gillet closed.

The next steps for the DUFA! Project include the next round table conference on June 3rd focusing on Age Diversity and a final conference closing out the two year project in fall 2021. More information about the project, including video highlights from the first round table can be found on the ETNO.eu website).

In conclusion, we would like to give a special thanks to the following for their contribution and participation in this event:

- European Commission
- ETNO / UNI Europa – European Social partners & experts
- Mercer
- The interpretation team & technical team of Oluseyi