



GENEVA
TRIALOGUE
on knowledge and the SDGs

CAMPUS BIOTECH GENEVA 15 NOVEMBER 2016

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DE GENÈVE

KEY MESSAGES

INSPIRATIONAL REPORT

"SDGs are a political manifesto calling for a global ENGAGEMENT by citizens, governments, businesses and organizations"

CHALLENGES:

- Community engagement opportunities in the digital world are not accessible and acceptable to everyone.
- Stakeholders, decision-makers and scholars often miss non-competitive spaces and skills to partner, communicate and openly share their intellectual assets.
- Good practices can become values, knowledge can become transformational. They won't if knowledge remains trapped in publications.

TRIPARTITE ACTION COULD INCLUDE:

- Developing a common understanding of **digital literacy** and executing training projects to enhance it ;
- Working together in **removing barriers** to knowledge (including gender, language, standards, local relevance, cost of device and service) and ensuring an inclusive, just and fair access to ICT;
- Further **connecting research** with policy-making, education with jobs, programming with system thinking.

CHALLENGES:

- Knowledge has to be localized to be relevant.
- There is still much resistance to bottom-up approaches and feedback from the field.
- System thinking capacity lacks at various levels of decision-making, policy-making or project management.

"We must act at the right SCALE"

TRIPARTITE ACTION COULD INCLUDE:

- Focusing on **cities** as a close point of contact between citizens and policy-makers and a key scale to achieve the SDGs;
- Allowing an **ecosystemic growth** of SDGs-related initiatives;
- Finding new ways to **scale up the dissemination** of good practices as well as knowledge delivered by universities, taking full advantage of digital tools;



CHALLENGES:

The SDGs are a complex set of integrated and interrelated metrics and sometimes hardly readable, particularly by the private sector.

Institutions that are supposed to have the truth are not trusted anymore, and need to embrace uncertainty together with other stakeholders.

Data is flooding and so is algorithmic power to go through it and identify patterns. There is lots of uncertainty on whether this will make people contributors of their own life or dilute accountability for decisions.

Quality data is often missing for policy-makers to make good decisions, scholars to produce quality science, and business to do well whilst doing good.

TRIPARTITE ACTION COULD INCLUDE:

- Exploring the potential of **data-driven** and **user-driven** knowledge creation and sharing;
- Collaboratively developing **standards** for digitally-supported knowledge creation and education;
- Helping decision-makers **turn data into valuable information**, using AI and other techniques blended with human decision-making;
- Building upon global **consultations** and turning them into calls for action.

CHALLENGES:

Structural conditions in academia, the industry and IOs lead to competition for resources and don’t encourage sharing of knowledge and partnerships.



TRIPARTITE ACTION COULD INCLUDE:

- Mainstreaming **curricula** based upon hands-on experience and inter-personal skills **towards a culture of sharing** and sustainability;
- Exploring **alternative funding** mechanisms for science, e.g., disconnecting monetary value and publication of scientific knowledge;
- Encouraging academia and the private sector to **be more outspoken** on global issues;
- Acknowledging different actors have **different expectations** and incentives to share and fostering convergence.

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> "Nobody wants publications anymore: **LEARNING opportunities have expended far beyond the traditional academic channels**"

CHALLENGES:

- Feedback mechanisms are unsufficiently embedded in communication and learning.
- Development partners need to envision themselves as temporary learning facilitators, using knowledge as a currency for capacity building.
- NGO-led and industry-led initiatives do not talk to each other for historical reasons such as industrial accidents.
- Organizations tend to talk themselves to death in quest of perfect solutions.
- Corporate Social Responsibility is not sufficiently embedded in corporate indicators (yearly review, bonus packages).

TRIPARTITE ACTION COULD INCLUDE:

- Developing common indicators for **sustainability integration** in economic activities;
- Capturing (or rather, creating communities around) **citizen knowledge**;
- Developing **standards** to ensure interoperability of content and institutional memory;
- **Coordinating** fragmented action around hubs, fora, and other mechanisms and develop **non-competitive** spaces;
- Scaling up knowledge-driven data mining and make sound use of **Big Data** to push knowledge wherever relevant.

CHALLENGES:

- There is a tension between quality and impact of knowledge.
- The dominant paradigm in education is still that the North knows and the South learns, thereby maintaining dependency.
- The dominant paradigm in communication is still publications and silo-thinking.
- Traditional top-down teaching and curriculum definition is increasingly disrupted by digital technology.

> "Good knowledge is about QUALITY - but also implementation, monitoring, targeting, and setup"

TRIPARTITE ACTION COULD INCLUDE:

- Moving beyond **trust** and embracing an attitude of healthy suspicion towards all knowledge productions and producers;
- Finding ways to enhance the impact and **recognition** of valuable information and overcome status-based biases;
- Turning field and academic experts into effective communicators and **facilitators**;
- Reframing narratives and solutions to include **'hooks'**: cartography, infography, interactivity;
- When delivering development aid, engaging in multistakeholder **partnerships** at any relevant scale with local academia, producers, and businesses;
- Addressing the crucial questions of **content curation** and **editorial authority.**

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> **Before bread, the last thing people stop buying during emergencies is cell phone credit to COMMUNICATE**

CHALLENGES:

- Although technology lowered the cost of data collection and public outreach, the poverty gap could widen if the amount of digital skills needed grows.
- Telecommunications do not solve social or political problems by themselves. They can even trigger political backfire.

TRIPARTITE ACTION COULD INCLUDE:

- Working with governments and businesses for a smooth development of ITC and social networking, with **nurturing reflective citizens** as an ultimate shared objective;
- Embracing a collaborative approach to ensure scaling, **ownership** and relevance;
- Engaging in **counter-messaging** on social networks as an alternative discourse to populism and radicalization;
- **Focusing on people** who access information rather than on information itself.

