LEARNING FROM THE CAPITALISATION PROCESS OF WEHUBIT PARTNER PROJECTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND THE WORLD OF WORK TO CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Call for proposals #4

Digitalisation is changing the way current jobs are being carried out, it will lead to new career pathways and create jobs in the digital economy.

Eventhough digitalisation holds a great potential for citizens and societies, not everyone has access nor the ability to grasp these opportunities. These limitations can be referred to as the «digital divide». Education, training and the world of work play a key role in overcoming the digital divide and ensuring that everyone in our society can safely participate in and contribute to this digital transformation.

Wehubit supported **five digital social innovations that aimed to close the digital divide***, each with their own specificities and focuses.* **Find out more about them.**

The learning sheet of each project provides information about the objective(s) and approach of the project, its results and what one can learn from its experience.

In this transversal paper, we identify the many crosscutting synergies between the five projects, how they approached the digital divide and how they dealt with several challenges. We highlight the similarities in strategies and lessons learned.

Morroco

By *efe Maroc* الـتربية من أجل الـتشغيل l'éducation pour l'emploi *+EFE Europe*

October 2020 – June 2023

Learning sheet

Uganda

By *eifl KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES*

January 2020 – June 2023

Learning sheet

Palestine

By *MERCY CORPS*

July 2021 – March 2023

Learning sheet

Burkina Faso

By *Terre des hommes Helping children worldwide.* *WakatLab*

June 2020 – May 2023

Learning sheet

Rwanda

By *vvob education for development* *REB RWANDA BASIC EDUCATION BOARD*

July 2020 – June 2022

Learning sheet

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Digital divide and digital skills: key messages from the projects

Drawing on research (mainly UNESCO, European Commission, International Telecommunication Union and World Bank), limited access to and lack of digital infrastructure as well as skills gaps are two key factors contributing to the digital divide.

Digital tools and infrastructures

Three projects created opportunities for young people and/or vulnerable groups (women, migrants, low-income households) to access digital tools and infrastructure.

- Digital skills @ your local library, through libraries and mobile bootcamps
- RESOLAB, through FabLabs
- Scratch 2050, through learning trajectories for teachers and coding classes for learners.

Skills gaps

Skills gaps were addressed by all five projects at different levels.

Beyond the indicators of the project and the intended outcomes of their innovative approaches, all projects triggered a **demonstrated change in soft skills and attitudes**: users (the teaching and the learning sides) gained self-confidence and are more aware of existing economic and social opportunities.

Regarding digital skills, several definitions and frameworks of reference exist for initiatives promoting these skills. Wehubit Call for proposals suggested the following **typology of digital skills and initiatives**. Not all five projects targetedthe same level and intended use of these digital skills:

1 **Basic digital and mobile literacy:** initiatives that promote digital skills development to enable people to fully participate and engage in society and fulfil personal needs in the digital age.

- Digital skills @ your local library
- Scratc²h 2050

2 Initiatives that promote **basic/intermediate digital skills** development that enable people to have better educational outcomes (on both teaching and learning side) and smoothen the transition to the world of work.

- Digital skills @ your local library
- RESOLAB
- Scratc²h 2050

3 **Digital skills for employement in the digital economy:** initiatives that promote advanced digital skills development to participate as a technical expert in the digital economy.

◆ Take IT forward;
◆ PAL Tech Growth.

Digital divide and digital skills: lessons learned and good practices

There are a number of barriers and challenges for the scaling-up of such initiatives, some being an integral part of the digital divide. In the learning sheets of each project, you will find concrete solutions and good practices implemented by the five Wehubit projects regarding :

🔷 **Inadequate or limited digital skills by teachers or trainers and the need to build capacities.**

This challenge relates primarily to the projects focusing on either 'basic digital and mobile literacy' or 'digital literacy for education, training and the world of work', where the target groups are large and diverse – as opposed to projects focusing on digital skills for employment, that target a specific group.

Wehubit projects that aim to support **digital and 21st-century skills among broad communities** (primary school pupils, young people from a geographical area, vulnerable populations…) need to find adequate teachers or trainers.

Not only do they need to be able to support and empower learners along their learning path, but they also have to master the right digital skills themselves, which is not often the case, especially in more rural areas. Projects had to **build the capacity of trainers and teachers** as key and start activity. They also had to deal with important aspects such as motivation, turnover, continuous learning etc.

◆ Digital skills @ your local library;
◆ RESOLAB;
◆ Scratc²h 2050

🔷 **Gender barriers**

All Wehubit projects specifically target women and girls. However, this **didn't ensure their equal representation** among users. The main reasons to explain this issue are 1. the heavy **stereotype** that Tech and ICT are not suitable for girls 2. the **lack of role models** in this area and 3. the **gender digital divide** (i.e. women and girls have less access to technology and internet than men and boys).

Projects had to be proactive in attracting girls and maintaining their presence along the learning trajectory. The following projects developed strategies to do so:

◆ Scratc²h 2050
◆ PAL Tech Growth
◆ Take IT Forward

🔹 **Social and cultural norms, values and attitudes towards digital, which can result in limited commitment of the target group, be it from teachers or learners side**

Opportunities that "digital" (digital tools for learning and working, digital jobs...) can offer in terms of socio-economic empowerment are not always perceived and understood among users and their environment (families, communities, societies). **Raising awareness and shifting mindsets** (for example, of authorities) have either been a strong component of scaling-up projects or of a key start activity: that projects needed to "attract" these target groups.

- ◆ PAL Tech Growth

- ◆ Take IT Forward

- ◆ RESOLAB

- ◆ Scratc²h 2050

🔹 **Limited finances**

How can organisations sustain their social innovation closing the digital divide after the end of the Wehubit grant? Despite the usual search for more funding, some Wehubit projects developed an original approach to sustainability.

- ◆ Digital skills @ your local library;

- ◆ Take IT Forward.