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Plenary 3 Session report

Session title:	New Digitalization Era and the Future of Work: Challenges and Opportunities
Session type:	Plenary
Date:	October, 21st 2020
Time:	8:30 a.m.
Language(s):	Spanish - English - French
Participants (number of people connected)	441 (Zoom, 9:55 hrs)

Name of the moderator:

Marisol Fernández Alonso, Director of Social Investment at Nacional Monte de Piedad, I.A.P., Mexico

Name of the panelists/commentators:

1. Soledad Aragón Martínez, Secretary of Labor and Employment Promotion, Mexico.

2. Oihane Agirregoitia, Councillor of the Area of Citizen and International Participation of Bilbao, Spain.

3. Baudouin Kola, National Director of CeRES, Togo.

4. Audrey Tang, Digital Minister, Taiwan.

5. Enrique Peñaranda, Digitalization Project Leader Sparkassen Foundation, Mexico.

6. Beatrice Alain, Executive Director of the Chantier de l'économie sociale, Canada.

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Introduction: Tomas Damerau, Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion. The issue of new digitalization is really crucial, today we are forced to participate in this forum virtually from remote places.

These new technologies present challenges and opportunities that should shape the future of work; however, the word future should not disorient us, not only is it not a distant future, but the form it takes will depend on the actions and decisions we take today.

Moderator: Marisol Fernández Alonso
In the virtual context of the GSEF2020, talking about digitalization is really relevant.

Round 1
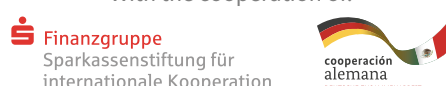• What are the opportunities offered by digitalization for the future of work?
• What is the role of the government in terms of strategies and public policies to promote digital inclusion?

Round 2
• What are the good practices of the SSE in the creation and maintenance of decent

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work, in a context of digitalization?

• **Soledad Aragón Martínez**

- Digitalization is closely related to the working conditions that a large part of the world's workers have had to assume as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The pandemic has accelerated the process of digitalization in various productive activities.
- There is a tendency to put great emphasis on the future that digitalization will bring, which leaves aside the fact that this process began several years ago and will be of long duration.
- For decades the labor markets, the skills and competences of the workers have adapted, which allows to gather important lessons.
- Change at unprecedented speed is a feature of the current era.
- Before imagining future scenarios, we must look at the past. It is usual that some analyses propose the total destruction of employment or the projection of ideal worlds in which digitalization will solve all problems. Some examples, such as the installation of ATMs, have shown that complementation processes and the creation of multiple direct and indirect jobs are carried out.
- **"Work today and in the immediate and long-term future can benefit in many ways from digitalization"** for example the possibilities of teleworking - beyond issues to be addressed such as its regulation, workloads at home, the proper balance between family life and work life - provides new possibilities globally. Once the pandemic is over, it will allow organizations to complement their face-to-face work with teleworking, resulting in benefits such as fewer people in the workplace, shorter travel times for workers, less use of fuel and increased productivity.
- "Digitalization has allowed great advances in training and online education". One of the conclusions of the 2019 report of the World Commission on the Future of Work is that to open doors and create opportunities for human development, workers must have the right to lifelong learning to take advantage of new technologies and job opportunities and for "workers to be agents of change and not just unagency spectators subject to changes in the labor market.
- "Digitalization is democratizing knowledge" which leads thousands of people around the world to innovate and start new businesses, through self-employment or in family businesses or from the SSE.

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- "The opportunities provided by the Internet, social networks, today's cell phone applications have allowed the emergence of new and innovative businesses with little investment and without the need for commercial premises or large production plants".

- Digitalization also brings with it challenges related to technological transformation that negatively affect the lives of thousands of workers.

- Governments must assume that not all the population faces digitalization with the same tools and under the same conditions in terms of knowledge and skills, as well as in terms of access to infrastructure and equipment; there is a great inequality that if not addressed will cause thousands of people to be excluded from the benefits of digitalization.

- One of the main challenges of digitalization is to close the knowledge and skill gaps and to make it an inclusive digitalization that does not generate more inequality.

- The Mexico City government addresses this issue by reaching out to various sectors of the population, especially the most vulnerable.

- "The actions taken by governments must always be centered on the people, otherwise the socio-economic gaps will widen with the negative consequences this entails for well-being and social peace. Only with inclusive social contracts, technological developments and economic growth will represent prosperity for all people without any kind of exclusión".

• **Oihane Agirregoitia**
1st Round

- We are in a moment of transcendent change with a world and a society scourged by the consequences of the COVID.

- The pandemic has shown that the cities -which were already the protagonists of the changes and opportunities- although they are now suffering the consequences, are the ones that have to provide leadership to overcome the situation from an inter-institutional collaboration and coordination that guarantees an inclusive future.

- Economic recovery, employment generation by guaranteeing public services and social cohesion in a context of reduced income and budgetary constraints are challenges to be faced.

- Digitalization and digital transformation are processes that must be consolidated

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in a sensible, sustainable and respectful way with people in the face of changing needs.

- The case of Bilbao implies a technology driven urban governance focused on improving the quality of life of citizens, stimulating the economy and protecting the environment. Digitalization will improve and optimize work processes, highlighting the improvement in efficiency through the automatization of low value-added tasks, better use of talent, creation of ecosystems and promotion of the paradigm of collaboration instead of competition, possibility of customizing products and services, intelligent and hybrid work environments mixing the virtual and the physical.

- Teleworking has allowed the Bilbao City Council to enable more than 1,500 people to work from home in computer and physical security conditions.

- Changes in organizational, leadership and team relationship models have accelerated with organizations more oriented to results than to processes.

- Beyond talking about the loss of jobs, it is necessary to see in digitalization the opportunity to take advantage of the new jobs that are going to be created.

- Digitalization imposes the challenge of being inclusive and without generating gaps..

2nd Round

- The proliferation of remote work, the flexibilization of work models and the new hiring models mean that the key lies in people's talent, not in their proximity or place of residence; this increase job opportunities.

- Organizations are committed to having development teams with diverse experiences, which reduces discrimination and is a relevant factor within corporate responsibility. Training, capacity building, the creation of infrastructure for a good connection, as well as social responsibility and ethics in its broadest sense are the key.

- The transformation of the human resources management model will have a key role, it will have to focus on the management of people to guarantee and ensure the quality of work within organizations.

- Bilbao City Council has a budget for SSE formulas, which was extended thanks to a political consensus that recognizes this model as a better option for bearing the consequences of the COVID-19 and guarantees greater stability in employment.

• Baudouin Kola

1st Round

- Today, a large proportion of Africans are in their twenties and by 2050, 30% of the world's population will be African.

- Togo is a developing country with problems of migration, which is caused by the fact that young people do not have jobs, so they prefer to go and look for a better life in another country.

- The National Commission for Youth Employment in Togo is a structure that helps the government to reflect on the strategy in this area. It has organized events and activities, both in person and online, including one held virtually during the pandemic, which allowed it to reach many young people in the country, whom it will accompany with very concrete projects.

- In Africa, digitalization is an opportunity to increase education, employment, training and the generation of human relations in both urban and rural areas.

- To respond to this new era of digitalization, the government will have to strive to improve digital facilities and expand them throughout the country.

2nd Round

- It is necessary to have greater participation and impact at the decision-making level through the involvement of different sectors and actors. Nothing will be changed if there are no actors in the decision-making instances. We can be privileged partners, but we need to be sure that we can have an impact and produce change.

- In Africa, for many years, NGOs have been working hard and their work will now have to focus on being real change agents and participating in decision making.

• Audrey Tang

1st Round

- The most important thing today in this new digital era is intergenerational solidarity. Younger people understand very well the notion of universal connectivity and digital collaboration, whereas older generations can think about how to make these new ideas viable and how to integrate them with existing social norms instead of making a disruption of social norms to achieve innovation.

- They promote the incorporation of people under 35 in government functions to share a different vision, but there must be greater collaboration and intergenerational solidarity.
- Better skills and abilities are good for individual careers and create a stronger community and ensure inclusion and more accessible education for community development.
- Young people can learn many skills by working with older people.
- Taiwan has a national strategy to explain digitalization in four components: 1) Infrastructure development, 2) Innovation, 3) Governance, and 4) Inclusion.
- Digitalization has brought great amounts of innovation to Taiwan, teaching them how to transcend the barriers of time by being able to contact people from all over the world and reach out to people who were previously limited by physical or mental disabilities and who can now use technology to be integrated into a large-scale economy.
- In addition to these opportunities there are challenges to be overcome in the development, use, governance and improvement of algorithms and codes. The platforms must be aligned and compatible for the work, they must be supervised and controlled by the workers.
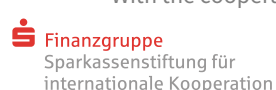
2nd Round
- There must be good practices beyond the freedom of work and the alignment of values.
- All community members participating in the co-governance must ensure that they are stakeholders.
- In economies based on a digital platform, regulations and requirements have to be changed so that everyone involved can participate even if they do not have the qualifications required by the system.
- There is a need for a type of software that can include the developers of society in general, and with this, access to these open platforms will be guaranteed.

• Enrique Peñaranda
1st Round
- The SSE is an organizational model that puts the person and the work at the center, so the contribution they make to local, regional and national development is key.

- Everything related to work is a vertebral element, the future of work in a framework of digitalization and technology has to be a constant process of reflection and, above all, of action.

- Not everyone will have the same opportunities in the face of the social differences that exist in the world. In developed countries, more than 80% of families have a computer, while in developing countries the figure drops to 36% and in the 44 least developed countries it is only 10%. Add to this the problems of digital infrastructure and illiteracy, and the problem becomes even more pronounced.

- It is necessary to work in a coordinated way in order to give these populations the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of digitalization.

- Digitalization is a great universe of opportunities and its use will depend on the degree of planning that is done. This process has five elements: 1) the education and training of people; 2) the strengthening of innovation; 3) the generation of the necessary infrastructure; 4) the creation of a legal system that frames the work in this context of digitalization; and 5) ethics and supervision.

- Putting people at the center, their education is a key element, it must have permanent training, development of skills for a digital world, critical spirit and creativity for the use of information to make decisions.

- In terms of innovation, it is important to understand that digitalization for the vast majority of people is not a matter of creating technological tools, but rather a matter of knowing how to use them so that through them more elements of value can be created towards the person and the organizations of the SSE.

- In an increasingly digitalized world, it is necessary that societies also invest in education on humanist, history or sociology issues, which will ensure the creation of values and the creation of technology in favor of the person and their societies, and not against them and their interests.

2nd Round

- For better practices, there are four points to focus on:

1) Good practice in training and education. There is a constant dialogue with organizations to better focus on training needs to meet both present and future;

2) Production chains and market. SSE organizations use digitalization to strengthen their productive chains and reach new markets and have the necessary elements to generate a value offer.

3) Strategic alliances between organizations for digitalization that will boost the support and solidarity in terms of productivity and efficiency that will generate much stronger SSE organizations.

4) Production of understanding. We are in an era where digitalization is creating an enormous amount of information that has to be used by organizations to understand their local environment and to understand how the gaps that exist in economic, social, educational and other areas can be reduced. Digitalization has an enormous potential in SSE organizations to transform information into an understanding of what their contribution to a more just and prosperous society can be.

- The best practice is long term planning, there is no time late to start a concrete planning of how organizations should face the challenge of digitalization and it should take different edges based on the four points above.

• **Beatrice Alain**

1st Round

- Digitalization gives many opportunities in the future of work as it allows access to much information that is useful for decision making and improving the welfare of all.

- A big problem with digitalization is that it can increase economic inequality, both at the level of individuals and between countries.

- Currently the ownership of technology and information is in the hands of large companies, which allows them to have a greater capacity for the development of goods and services and therefore enjoy the economic benefits obtained.

- In Quebec many of the data are generated by public services such as health, they must be provided through digital platforms respecting confidential information.

- We must find the right way to commercialize research, many are privatized, but they must be for the public good.

- Globally, there is now a great polarization in terms of technological progress and its economic impact.

- Another problem is that now that there is more data not everything important can be quantified and not all basic capabilities should be automatized, we need to analyze the bias that exists and the impact that has been generated.

- The government must analyze the conditions of data use and the impact of

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decisions through digitized processes, the inequality that has been generated, women's work in the area of care, and the vulnerability of Afro-descendent communities, among others.

- The greater availability of data does not mean that the information is complete; it is very important to integrate all actors from the field.

- SE has gone through many mobilizations of different actors in the field with different knowledge and from different areas, but it is also necessary to involve them in the decision-making process at the national level, especially those participants who are not so close. Everyone should participate in the discussion of the development and operation of new technologies, and be the owners of processes.

- The inclusion is very important, for example the connectivity and the access to Internet in Quebec is a topic of great relevance, there are areas without access what makes difficult the models of work and education from home.

- In Quebec there are many business models that are supported by the local government and municipalities, for example cooperatives that help provide better internet service. There is also training to reduce the technological gap.

2nd Round

- SE has a great deal of experience in combining financial viability with social inclusion in many areas and sectors and with many types of resources, and in integrating different types of actors. An example is a cooperative that competes with Uber in Quebec that integrates consumers and drivers and makes technological improvements to its platform.

- Regarding digital improvements, the challenge for the SE ecosystem is how to ensure that larger projects are funded and have the necessary technological knowledge. Also, to identify potential projects that can access digital tools and subsidies.

- To know if the cooperatives that are the base of the SE in Quebec can have access to financing.

- The SE has the experience to integrate people who are far away and in different economic sectors and who can make decisions together and take advantage of the benefits.

- Integrating people despite technological and space limitations is important for them to enter the labor market with acceptable and decent conditions.

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- In Quebec, we have seen experiences on the part of SE that make people work together in a very innovative way with few available resources.
- We must take advantage of the experience that exists in the SE on collective responsibility and collective management to make better use of the information for the benefit of the communities.
- It is important to make initiatives to generate laws that allow greater confidence in the transfer of data and that the protection is made from cooperative models, that there is co-responsibility and co-ownership of the data can allow to analyze the cost and social impact.

Key questions asked by the audience and answers from the panelists
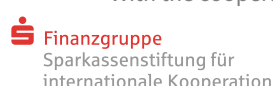**There was no time to answer questions; however, the moderator read out the following:**
• What is the strategy for the inclusion of migrants to work in Bilbao?
• What would be the mechanisms that could be used to generate intergenerational links for the use of technologies?
• What is the role of social programs or public interventions to promote the SSE and what would be their real impact on people's lives?
• How to deal with digital exclusion, are there other examples of self-managed telecommunications in the SSE?
• How could we classify digitalization: use value or harmful use value?

Conclusions, guiding question: How to transform the present and build a better future from the SSE?
• **Oihane Agirregoitia**
- It is important to highlight three key concepts that must be worked on in an aligned and interconnected manner: 1) smart cities; 2) digital equity strategies; and 3) digital principles and commitments.
- In Bilbao we are working on building strategies and urban organizations that are digitally enabled, focused on citizenship. Likewise, we are working hard to create an ecosystem for the benefit of citizens that is based on technology and that allows for greater effective integration and the reduction of talent gaps.
- There are global challenges they have to face such as population growth, urban

concentration, social rejuvenation, improving and increasing the quality of public services, sustainability, health, among others.

- The principles that mark the actions of Bilbao for the development of an intelligent city are: 1) the people are in the center of any action; 2) the security must be contemplated from the design, an inclusive design; 3) the privacy; 4) the inclusion; 5) the transparency; 6) the sustainability, and 7) digitalization from the maximum responsibility.

- Bilbao, in this case as a local administration, is committed to strengthening SSE policies so that the recovery from the health and economic crisis is digital, balanced and inclusive.

• Baudouin Kola

- Workers' cooperatives in Africa, particularly in Togo, have programs to address the negative effects of the digital age on both the workplace and the environment.

• In Togo they want to close the digital gap and in that sense the SE organizations can act so that this happens and that the transformation is done with respect to the people and their traditions.

• Audrey Tang

- To ensure that workers understand and feel empowered by aligning values with work, it is important that the education system shift its focus from digital literacy to building skills and competencies.

- The next generations must be producers of open data sources and digital media, understanding that the ethics and impact of their work on society will be necessary.

- There is an opportunity for society to make use of information in a responsible and sustainable way for a better future.

• "A liberal democracy is not just about uploading three bits of information every four years, but about ensuring digital democracy and digital solidarity and respecting, above all, the good quality of life and the good quality of the jobs that are generated."

• Enrique Peñaranda

• "The goal is not digitalization; digitalization is only an instrument to achieve

the goals that a model like the SSE seeks"
- The elements for SSE organizations to take advantage of the great opportunity that digitalization means are cultural, training and value creation elements.
- Organizations must invest in understanding what digitization and technologies are; understand what the real opportunities of digitization are; and do long-term planning.
- Employees must be trained in new ways of working; the most efficient organizations have understood this.
- Value generation, SSE organizations can be the first precursors of technology.
- There are two levels of technology: 1) at the user level, and 2) at the technology creation level.
- Data ownership is an opportunity but you have to think about where to stipulate data ownership.
- For SSE to take advantage of digitization it is important to demonstrate the positive impact it can have.
- From a technical and operational point of view it is important that good practices are open to other organizations and that the infrastructure created is also made available to other organizations.
- The success is in generating the concept of open innovation where there is no property of innovation, innovation is put at the service of different organizations.
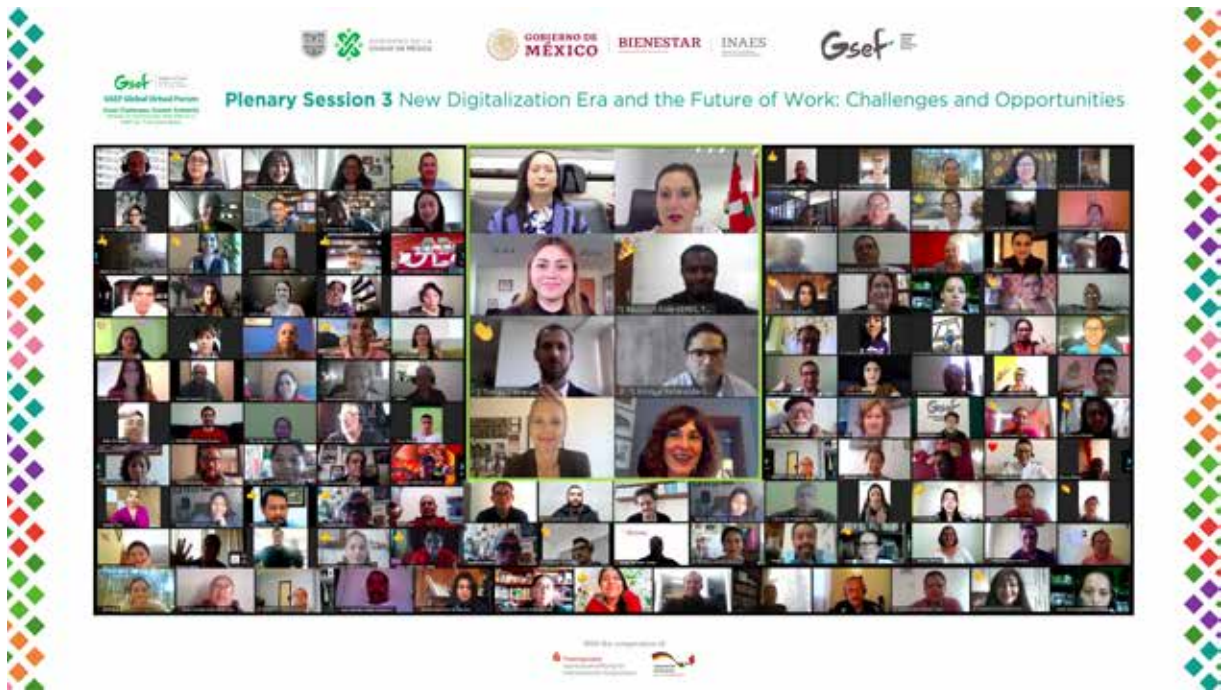
• Beatrice Alain
- In Quebec, six areas have been identified where SE can contribute to a better model of pandemic and post-pandemic management.
- Governments and communities are working hard to manage the current problem and to develop a better future.
- There is a consensus in Quebec that SE has a role to play.
- The digital transformation of work is an element to be built.
- The pandemic has shown us that certain jobs that were not valued before, such as those related to health care and caring for people, must be highly valued.
- The digital services accessible in Quebec are not sufficient, especially in small communities.
- There is much that can be done to generate jobs, but not in the traditional way that governments have done it, but to really achieve the promotion of projects

that seek the good of the community and that support SE through collective initiatives.