

## P2P Event: Digital Transition for Civil Society Organisations

October 31 - November 1, 2023

Skopje, MK

### Major Findings, Recommendations, and Ideas for Additional P2P Events and Capacity Building Events in 2024

The findings of discussions underlined the need for ongoing education, ethical guidelines, transparent practices, and collaboration between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), governments, and donors to ensure a responsible and inclusive digital transition within CSOs. These initiatives aim to harness technology's potential while mitigating its potential risks, especially for marginalised groups.

The participants explored and discussed the integration of digital tools, Artificial intelligence (AI), and the broader digital transition within CSOs. Their deliberations highlighted several crucial findings:

#### Group Discussions I: AI and Digital Tools in CSOs' Operations

- Relevant Tools: Identified several beneficial tools such as ChatGPT, BARD, COPY.AI, ASANA, and Grammarly, among others, for project management, content creation, and data analysis.
- Keeping Up with Developments: Emphasized continuous learning, workshops, people-to-people exchanges, and networking as vital to staying abreast of the latest advancements.
- Support from Donors: Stressed the need for a dedicated budget line for digital infrastructure, cross-sectoral collaborations, and capacity building (staff and/or experts). Advocated for donors to prioritize impact over mere delivery.

#### Group Discussions II: Advocacy for Responsible Use of Digital Tools and AI

- Advocacy Topics: Highlighted the need for legislation concerning data protection, cybercrime, and the rights of vulnerable groups. Advocated for engagement with legislative bodies, ombudsman offices, and educational institutions.
- Ethical Considerations: Emphasized adherence to existing international standards (e.g., ISO 42001, ISO 270001) and the formulation of a Code of Ethics to guide CSOs' responsible use of technology.
- Transparency and Accountability: Advocated for transparent algorithms, General Data protection Regulation's compliance, regular newsletters, and feedback mechanisms to ensure accountability.

#### Group Discussions III: Empowering CSOs with Digital Skills

- Staff Training: Emphasized the importance of continuous training, creating a culture of accountable AI usage, and establishing basic operational procedures for CSOs' digital transition.
- Utilizing IT Experts: Discussed avenues like hackathons, volunteering, and partnerships with IT professionals, students, and open-source communities to harness IT expertise.
- Affordable Tools and Training: Explored accessible and sustainable tools like CiviCRM, Google Forms, and RTools, and also highlighted numerous training platforms such as Coursera, Udemy, and YouTube tutorials.

#### Cross-Cutting Themes



1. **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** Advocated for strategies to prevent already marginalised groups from falling behind, emphasizing infrastructure development, inclusive platforms, and tailored support.
2. **Advocacy for Legislation:** Stressed the need to advocate for legislative changes to house digital transformations in public services.

## **II - Recommendations**

### **A. Embracing Digital Tools**

As CSOs highlighted various useful tools like ChatGPT, COPY.AI, and ASANA, emphasizing their roles in project management, content creation, and data analysis, it would be crucial to dig deeper into practical demonstrations at P2P events, to showcase how these tools can be effectively integrated into different CSO operations.

### **B. Continuous Learning and Capacity Building**

Prioritizing continuous education, workshops, peer-to-peer exchanges, and people-to-people (P2P) events will assist CSOs in adapting to rising digital landscapes.

Future Capacity-Building events could focus on hosting training sessions or webinars on specific tools and technologies, inviting experts for detailed insights.

### **C. Funding and Support**

CSOs' representatives at the event stressed the importance of dedicated budget allocation and cross-sector collaborations for successful digital transitions. Further P2P events should involve representatives from donor agencies and IT/Digital experts. This would help them to understand how to effectively allocate available funding for digital initiatives improving CSOs' transition and keeping up with the need for constant changes and improvement of operations.

### **D. Ethical Use and Transparency**

The discussion underscored the significance of adhering to ethical standards and maintaining transparency in AI and digital tool usage. Additional P2P Events could involve expert panels discussing ethical frameworks and establishing guidelines for responsible technology use within CSOs.

## **III - Ideas for Additional P2P Events and Capacity Building Events in 2024**

By expanding on the identified findings and planning targeted additional meetings, CSOs can develop a comprehensive roadmap for embracing digital transformation responsibly, fostering collaboration, and ensuring inclusivity within their operations. Here are some examples of potential events:

1. **Expert Panels on Ethical AI Use:** Host discussions with ethicists, legal experts, and industry professionals to develop a code of ethics specifically tailored for CSOs' digital operations.
2. **Tool Demonstrations and Case Studies:** Organise sessions where CSOs can share their successful implementations of digital tools, demonstrating their impact on various projects.
3. **Government and Donor Engagement:** Arrange meetings inviting government representatives and donor agencies to understand their perspectives and align digital initiatives with their objectives.
4. **Inclusive Technology Solutions:** Create specialised sessions addressing strategies for making technology more accessible for marginalised groups, involving community leaders and activists.
5. **Cybersecurity and Data Privacy Workshops:** Invite cybersecurity experts to conduct workshops on safeguarding data and ensuring privacy compliance in CSOs' digital operations.



6. **Hackathons and Collaboration Events:** Plan collaborative events where CSOs, tech experts, and volunteers work together to develop tech solutions addressing specific CSO challenges.
7. **Policy Advocacy Roundtables:** Engage in focused discussions on drafting policy proposals advocating for better legislative frameworks supporting digital integration in civil society.
8. **Training Workshops on Open Source Tools:** Offer hands-on training sessions or webinars focusing on utilizing open-source software effectively within CSOs.
9. **Measuring Impact and Evaluation:** Organize sessions to discuss metrics and methodologies for evaluating the impact of digital transitions within CSOs, facilitating shared learning.
10. **Community of Practice Building:** Establish regular meetups or online forums where CSOs can share experiences, best practices, and challenges faced during their digital transformation journeys.

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