

DIGITAL FUTURES

The 2018 Innovators Forum

06 March 2018

Outcome

Building on the success and impact of the 2017 Innovators Forum, the International Civil Society Centre facilitated its second Forum on 27 – 28 February 2018 in Berlin. A group of 30 innovators and digital experts from international civil society organisations (ICSOs) and other organisations attended the meeting.

Challenges and Opportunities for Digital Innovation in the CSO Sector

Under the title, *Digital Futures* the participants shared experiences on current projects of digitalisation and discussed the potential of *Big Data* and *Blockchain Technology* in the much needed digital transformation of the civil society sector. Participants agreed that the CSO sector has not yet captured the potential of these technologies and stand to lose impact and power, should we not succeed to incorporate these into our works streams within a foreseeable future.

During the second day of the meeting, participants split up into four groups developing one concrete project each on how to use Big Data or Blockchain technology in the work of CSOs:

- Roadmap for data-driven advocacy partnerships: *Primary goal*: Developing a “blueprint” for multi-stakeholder data collaborations with a focus on evidence-driven advocacy for the universal leave no one behind agenda. *Key target*: Support the Centre’s *Leave No One Behind* project through the development of a roadmap for a successful project data management at global and national level. *Long-term prospect*: Relate the developed “blueprint” to a virtual database for actors seeking to establish a data coalition, offering them direct support in terms of linking them to relevant data inventories, potential coalition partners, experts and supporting tools.
- Big Data for Impact measurement: Aiming to improve the basis for decision making in the area of advocacy against child marriage, this group seeks to develop a tool that uses Big Data to understand how attitudes change as a result of various interventions. The idea is to involve a number of perspectives and to have an MVP by December 2018.
- Plan Omega: In order for the third sector to have a stake in the expansion of blockchain technologies, this group wants to establish a CSO blockchain. The blockchain would be open and available for anyone within civil society to use, and collectively the project would explore how the blockchain could enhance efforts to protect and expand civic space. In a timeframe of six weeks, the group will map the landscape of relevant CSO actors and technological experts to gauge the viability of building the CSO blockchain. Based on these findings, the group will present the project concept to the CEOs of the largest international civil society organisations at *Vision Works* in mid-April.



- Cryptocurrency and CSO transaction costs: Aiming to explore the potential of using an existing or new cryptocurrency for the CSO sector exclusively, this group will seek to answer the question: “Could the use of a cryptocurrency help reduce transaction costs for CSOs?” Through a mapping of current transactions costs within ICsOs, as well as the potential costs if working with a cryptocurrency and a mapping of how the alternative model might work, the group will try to have a first answer to this question by 12 April 2018. All further steps will depend on the outcome of this first exercise.

Next Steps

The four project groups have set up timelines and decided on project leads to take these discussions forward after the Forum. The Centre will follow up with all groups and report back to the larger group on how they develop. The outcome from the Innovators Forum will furthermore create the foundation for discussions around digitalisation at this year’s global CEOs and Chairs meeting, [Vision Works](#), taking place outside London on 17-19 April 2018.

