

Event Report

The Swedish Institute Sustainability Forum 2017: Let's Talk!

Rethink the roles in society

Reinforce social dialogue for change

Regain a better world

Inspired by the Global Deal Initiative

19 November 2017 – 22 November 2017

Organised by



In collaboration with



*In collaboration with the United Nations Global Compact on Decent Work, Health, and Human Rights

Executive Summary

Globalisation is transforming the way society operates. The benefits of a shrinking world with more integrated economies and a global labour market give rise to many opportunities. However, it also brings about a wide array of societal challenges associated with poverty, inequalities, social unrest and unsustainable economic growth.

Effective social dialogue can play a crucial role in contributing to positive labour markets regarding employment levels, wage dispersion, income equality, competitiveness and the resilience and adaptability to unexpected shocks and catastrophes. Social dialogues can also promote the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development by allowing different actors to share their viewpoints and participate in decision-making processes.

On 20-22 November 2017, the Swedish Institute Sustainability Forum 2017: Let's Talk! took place at Runö, Sweden. The Forum is a creative 48-hour think-tank on Social Dialogue. 100 participants representing 39 countries from businesses, trade unions, government and civil society gathered during the Forum to explore possible ways to use social dialogue as a tool for positive change and to develop tangible solutions on issues relating to Decent work, Employment, Equality, Inclusion & Diversity and Governance & Anti-corruption.

In the context of the Forum, sustainability is seen as both a pivotal societal need and an indispensable necessity for all segments of society: living on the same planet, we have a common need for global sustainable development. As citizens, we need each other – businesses, trade unions and government – to contribute positively to a local as well as a global level, and with a short- and a long-term perspective.

The theme Let's Talk! is inspired by the Global Deal Initiative with the intention of enhancing social dialogue to enable all people to benefit from globalisation. The Prime Minister of Sweden, Stefan Löfven held a keynote speech during the Forum addressing the importance of social dialogues in today's global society.

The outcomes of the Forum include 15 initiatives in which individuals who participated can continue to embark on joint efforts on an organisational, local, regional and international level.

The initiatives and recommendations summarised in this report provide inspiration and possible next steps for organisations, individuals and stakeholders. These initiatives and recommendations can be viewed as indications of a range of possible ways social dialogues can be used as a tool for positive change. Not every participant necessarily supported every suggestion. This report is, therefore, a documentation of the discussions during the Forum and not an official declaration. All readers are encouraged to encourage to engage in future initiatives and projects related to the outcomes of the Forum.

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Introduction

The Swedish Institute Sustainability Forum – is no ordinary event, it is a highly creative 48-hour global think-tank with a selected sustainability theme serving the dual purpose to develop applicable real-life solutions that help companies effectively deal with some of the key sustainability challenges of the 21st century, and to help society to be more resilient in meeting known and unknown challenges.

Held annually in the tranquil outskirts of Stockholm, Sweden, the true spirit of the Forum provides an inspiring space outside of the ordinary office cubicle, whereby influential people from around the world get to cross paths. High-level individuals from different sectors gather to share experiences and discuss possible new solutions for current global sustainability challenges in an informal and creative atmosphere.

The theme Let's Talk! is inspired by the Global Deal Initiative with the intention of enhancing social dialogue to enable all people to benefit from globalisation.

In 2017, 100 participants representing 39 countries from businesses, trade unions, government and civil society gathered during the Forum to explore possible ways to use social dialogue as a tool for positive change and to develop tangible ways forward.

Let's Talk!

Rethink roles in society. Reinforce social dialogue for change. Regain a better world.

The benefits of a shrinking world with more integrated economies and a global labour market give rise to many opportunities. However, it also brings about a wide array of societal challenges associated with poverty, inequalities, social unrest and unsustainable economic growth. In the context of the Forum, sustainability is seen as both a pivotal societal need and an integral necessity for all segments of society: living on the same planet, we have a common need for global sustainable development. As citizens, we need each other – businesses, trade unions and government – to contribute positively to a local as well as a global level, and with a short- and a long-term perspective.

Effective social dialogue can play a crucial role in contributing to positive labour markets regarding employment levels, wage dispersion, income equality, competitiveness and the resilience and adaptability to unexpected shocks and catastrophes.

The UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is a starting point for understanding how social dialogue can contribute to Good Health and Well Being (SDG 3), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), and Partnerships (SDG 17) by allowing different actors to share their viewpoints and participate in decision-making processes. It is important to acknowledge that globalisation is a complicated subject area, inextricably linked with other issues.



Figure 1: Focus areas of the Swedish Institute Sustainability Forum 2017: Let's Talk!

4 Focus Areas, 15 Initiatives

The overarching theme of 'Let's Talk!', focuses on how social dialogue can be an efficient tool in contributing to positive social change. Four tentative focus areas have been identified to frame the discussions during the Forum: Decent work, Employment, Equality, Inclusion & Diversity, Governance & Anti-corruption.

The outcomes of the Forum include 15 initiatives in which individuals can continue to embark on joint efforts on organisational, local, regional and/or international level.

Framing the discussions

Unlike other forums or symposia, there is no agenda and no dedicated speakers. Instead, a working timeline guides the interactive processes that are built into creative physical spaces tailored to the theme. Participants work informally in full days with engaging discussions, working groups and solutions-oriented workshops. The true spirit of the Forum provides an inspiring space outside of the ordinary office cubicle, where influential people from around the world get to cross paths. In combination, the Forum hopes to

remove all barriers for dialogue, allowing free and out-of-the-box thinking where everyone is given the floor to speak freely in open-minded dialogues.

In preparations leading up to the Forum days, a funnel methodology is used to identify a narrower scope for the theme. This funnel methodology includes engagements with relevant stakeholders and experts. These stakeholders play an important role in shaping the content. Collaborators and partners endorse and work closely to develop content and actively pursue development possibilities for the outcomes of the Forum.

The Forum is primarily structured into the following elements.

Discovery and Preparations:

A funnel methodology is used to identify a narrower scope for the theme. In the processes leading up to the Forum, collaborators, relevant stakeholders and experts have been engaged to determine a list of tentative focus areas and tasks. This process was complemented with desk research and participants' active engagement and inputs. Four focus areas: Decent Work; Employment; Equality, Inclusion & Diversity; Governance & Anti-Corruption, have been identified to frame the discussions of the Forum.

Exploration and Development:

Brief exploration sessions on the theme and focus areas were conducted through pre-defined tasks on action canvas; each taskforce works on generating new ideas and producing solutions. In more practical terms, the work took place through a series of workshops in smaller groups linked by joint sessions where achievements are shared among all Forum participants. The format provides opportunities to share experience and ideas with the other participants.

Refinement, Connection and Commitment:

The outlines of the initiatives were further refined, polished and structured by each taskforce. In doing so, each taskforce attempted to concretise the outcomes with the objectives to promote the initiatives on an organisational, local, regional and/or international scale. Communication packages and short video clips were developed by each taskforce to find ways to connect and gather commitment for the next steps from everyone attending Forum and from other relevant stakeholders and partners after the Forum.

Realisation:

As a result of the Forum, 15 initiatives were developed by the various taskforces under the umbrella of four focus areas. The aim is to promote these initiatives on an international scale as well as nationally and regionally.

The initiatives and recommendations summarised in this report provide inspiration and possible next steps for organisations, individuals and stakeholders. These initiatives and recommendations can be viewed as indications of a range of possible ways social dialogues can be used as a tool for positive change. Not every participant necessarily supported every suggestion. This report is, therefore, a documentation of the discussions during the Forum and not an official declaration. All readers are encouraged to encourage to engage in future initiatives and projects related to the outcomes of the Forum.

The followings are summaries of the areas discussed and the objectives of each initiative.

Decent Work

Let's Talk about Fair Wages

There is a distinct lack of consensus between business, governments, trade unions and other labour organisations as to what the payment of a living wage means. However, much can be done to ensure that workers get paid a living wage. The absence of a living wage is of importance as it can lead to excessive working hours, hazardous working conditions, an increase of child labour, inequality, social unrest, growing the informal sector, reduced tax income, and decreased productivity and efficiency. In South Asia, the informal sector is prevalent. For example, in India, the informal sector provides 90% of total employment.

The initiative aims to raise awareness of the precarious situations of informal agricultural workers and to tell their stories to global buyers, retailers and end consumers. Through three main activities: 1. Conduct research, supplier training, and communications campaign to raise awareness of workers' rights in the agricultural supply chains. 2. To support informal workers to organise and collectively bargain for better working conditions and higher wages. 3. Encourage companies to conduct impact assessments by meaningfully consulting with smallholder farmers and workers directly. For this initiative take off, it is pivotal to work with local partners and empower workers to be change agents.

Our Health is Our Wealth

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all is a complicated matter and requires engagement from all stakeholders. Health is intrinsically linked to poverty alleviation, social and economic development, education, equality and inclusion. Access to clean water, clean air, healthy and nutritious food, and affordable quality healthcare are underlying drivers for long-term health and well-being, as is the opportunity to live in health-promoting communities – in cities, schools and workplaces. Unhealthy societies lead to negative impacts on labour productivity, economic growth and increased employee turnover. It improves health care expenses, and thus deprives the resources needed to support development initiatives, making health and well-being a priority amongst stakeholders.

The challenges in Zambia is in securing decent work and health for all. The initiative aims to raise awareness on health is wealth, and to engage with stakeholders for improved productivity through fair wages and healthy communities. The goal is to engage and collaborates with multiple stakeholders because health is everyone's business.

Rightingit

The right of workers and employers to organise in establish their independent organisations is the fundamental prerequisite for collective bargaining and social dialogue. The principles of freedom of association are at the core of the employment and industrial relations. Nevertheless, these fundamental rights are still being denied to millions around the world. In certain parts of the world, specifically the Middle East, South East Asia and China, categories of workers are denied the right of association as workers' and employers' organisations are illegally suspended, or their internal affairs are subject to interference. When freedom of association and collective bargaining is not being respected, it can have negative impacts on sufficient workers representation, working time, occupational health and safety, fair wages, secure employment, public image and reputation.

The Rightingit initiative aims to reinforce Freedom of Association as a Human Right, through social dialogue.to raise awareness, by doing a campaign to advance freedom of association as a human right. The focus is to raise awareness, advocacy and to engage with stakeholders. The initiative will aim at developing an interactive app (#Righting it!) with some modules of global character. The content can be modified to local context and actions should be adapted to local needs and settings. The hashtag #Rightingit! will be used in social media to promote the initiative.

Fair Farming Action

There are 2.9 billion workers on our planet but only 60% of them have some formal contract of employment, and more than 50% of those are in dangerous work environments. The informal economy comprises 50-75 % of all non-agricultural employment in developing countries. It is withering formal work and formal business and depriving both workers and our economy of the benefits of decent work. Although it is hard to generalise, working in the informal sector often means poor employment conditions and is associated with increasing poverty. Challenges of informal employment include lack of protection in the event of non-payment of wages, compulsory overtime or extra shifts, lay-offs without notice or compensation, unsafe working conditions, and the absence of social benefits such as pensions, sick pay and health insurance.

Fair Farming Action aims to raise awareness of the precarious situation of informal agricultural workers in South Asia. By leveraging the influence of global buyers, retailers and end consumers, Fair Farming Action aims to elevate the voice of agricultural workers and to promote corporate respect for their rights.

Equality, Inclusion & Diversity

TACK: Think – Act – Change – Keep-up

Between 1995 and 2015, the global female labour force participation rate decreased from 52.4 to 49.6 %. The corresponding figures for men are 79.9 and 76.1%. In addition to being underrepresented in the global workforce, women receive unequal pay for equal work, and they continue to be targets of physical and sexual abuse. Furthermore, women are also underrepresented in power and decision-making roles.

Sometimes behaviour that is not acceptable from the gender equality perspective is not noticed because it “has always been the custom” in that workplace or the community. TACK tool is applicable and adjustable in all societies who want to make a change. The tool aims to help workplaces (or communities) to identify and make unacceptable behaviour visible to make a positive difference.

Let's Talk Money

Gender inequality is a significant impediment to economic growth and productivity potential, resulting in a negative impact on social development and the overall stability of the society. Within the informal sector, there are still many women who are unpaid family workers. For equal access to decent work, gender inequality represents a significant challenge as it leads to, e.g. insecure employment status, unsafe working conditions, excessive working hours and unequal pay for equal work.

In Asia, a large part of women still does not have ownership about how to use their own money. This initiative is a financial literacy programme targeting the informal sector of approximately 5000 women in India by the end of 2019. Modules and presentations will be rolled out to educate and empower women from urban and rural areas to be financially literate, learn how to manage and budget their funds.

Trash2

The promise of jobs and prosperity, among other factors, pulls people to cities. 50 % of the global population already lives in cities, and by 2050, this number is expected to go up to two-thirds of the worldwide population. In cities, two of the most pressing problems facing the world today come together: poverty and environmental degradation. Poor air and water quality, insufficient water availability, waste-disposal issues, and high energy consumption are exacerbated by increased population density and demands on urban environments.

Waste management is a major problem in many countries. People move to the cities for jobs; however, due to limited opportunities, a number ends up working as waste pickers. The working conditions in the dumps put them at much risk and vulnerable to human rights violations.

The vision for Trash2 is to ensure sustainable livelihoods for waste pickers; this initiative aims to tackle urban waste management as well as to protect the workers' rights of these waste pickers. Pilot projects are being planned in small communities in Lahore and Manila. Findings from these pilots will be presented to entrepreneurs who can make an income generating business from waste and to include the pickers within their mainstream supply chain.

shareك mobile application

Social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon not limited to material deprivation; but also, health, poverty, diversity and democratic rights. Intimately connected with social inclusion is equality. Specific groups are disproportionately affected by such disparities, including migrants, women, children, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, and indigenous peoples. Social exclusion therefore negatively affects areas such as economic opportunities, productivity, poverty alleviation, working conditions and social stability.

An app which promotes good citizenship, it encourages everyone to get involved for a better tomorrow. During the Forum, the taskforce developed a prototype of the mobile application which helps to share of opinions to promote peace and prosperity in the MENA region.

We the People: Building National Identity for Social Inclusion

On the global level, income inequalities remain on the top of the agenda both in developing and developed countries. For instance, inequality has increased with 62 of the world's wealthiest people owning as much wealth as half of the world's population in 2015. Significant disparities remain in access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and sanitation.

The objective of We the People is to ensure that there is a National Identity for all Citizens which gives them the opportunity and access to all that every country in Africa has to offer home and abroad. By engaging the togetherness of all citizens; Build the capacity of women, youths, and men on social inclusion, build skilled workforce for sustainable development and being responsible citizens; Ensure that CEOs of Public and Private Institutions understand the worth of social inclusion and create the enabling environment to affect it at all levels; and Get all citizens to be involved in policy processes, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Employment

Jobs4Future

Unemployment is a key driver for people into entering vulnerable and hazardous forms of employment. It is estimated that over 600 million new jobs need to be created by 2030, to keep pace with the growth of the global working age population. This presents a key challenge for all stakeholders of ensuring decent work while creating more jobs globally. High unemployment causes a decrease in tax revenues, increase in spending on unemployment insurances as well as decreased demand for most products and services. Also, mass unemployment creates political instability and social unrest, potentially eroding workers' rights.

Jobs4Future aims at identifying real job demands for the future, regarding the unaccomplished needs of companies and recognising care work people as a source of employment while remunerating and professionalising it. The initiative hopes to organise tripartite meetings to sensitise about future of work, inspired in the Global Deal Initiative; create a platform with research, exchange of information, awareness about employment 4.0, including care work; and include an interchange with Sweden about care policies.

Volunteer for Social Change Programme

With global competition increasing, demographic change unfolding and rapid technological change intensifying, skill mismatch and education are on top of the global agenda. Skill mismatch hampers economic growth and productivity. Furthermore, it can lead to weakened labour market prospects and decreased the quality of work for those disadvantaged in the labour market. Employers tend to focus on the most highly qualified employees, and governments target low-skilled. Medium-level skilled workers are at a disadvantage in the labour market. The need to develop skills and manage transitions between jobs will increase with growing demand for services, sustainability targets, changing technologies and the trend towards longer working lives. In response to the crisis, social dialogue helps to bring about measures to keep people in work and invest in skills, for instance by combining short-time work and training.

As a high number of youths in Liberia and Tanzania are unemployed, this programme aims to ignite a spirit of volunteerism in high school and university students and to provide short-term skills training which is critical for volunteering exercises. The key stakeholders include high school, universities, and technology companies.

RWIYEMEZAMIRIMO: Online Information Support on Youth Entrepreneurship

There is approximately 71 million unemployed youth worldwide. Young people, often in emerging and developing countries, live in extreme or moderate poverty despite having a job. In fact, 156 million or 37.7 % of working youth are in extreme or moderate poverty (compared to 26 % of working adults).

Rwanda, like most African countries, consists of a very young population: 39% of the population is aged between 14-35 years old. Of that, 22% are inactive today. Given the relatively small size of the labour market, it is paramount that we foster an entrepreneurial culture to create more jobs.

With the objectives to help overcome the information gap for young people who want to become entrepreneurs. The RWIYEMEZAMIRIMO's approach is to put in place an online platform where we will engage professional volunteers to provide information and answer questions related to entrepreneurship and resources. In the long term, we plan to scale by engaging other partners like Government and other key stakeholders.

Governance & Anti-Corruption

Ukrainian Red-Hand Movement

Corruption negatively impacts state capacity, social inclusion, and management of natural resources. In many societies, corruption is recognised to be one of the most significant challenges in achieving sustainable development. The damage corruption causes on economies and institutions is well documented, and it mainly affects poor communities. Anti-corruption is essential to the rule of law and peace-building.

The struggle against corruption goes far beyond compliance. Trust deficit that exists between institutions and individuals is worsening. The widespread perception that institutions—both public and private—are not acting in the interests of the people they serve pervades the thinking of communities across the globe. Fidelity to rebuilding trust is an essential element in the success of businesses, governments, and societies around the world.

Ukrainian Red-Hand Movement aims to raise public awareness for transforming behaviour to support transparent legal framework, to achieve better governance through social dialogue in Ukraine. The approach of this initiative is to raise awareness of students about corruption in Ukraine; Support transparent legal framework and Reinforce social dialogue.

G-Clean

On a societal level, corruption can have impacts in a multitude of ways: it costs people their freedom, health or money, and in worst cases it costs lives. By its very nature, corruption is usually hidden from the public, making it difficult to assess absolute levels of corruption in countries or territories by hard empirical data. However, corruption tends to happen in societies with weak legal and governmental systems.

Corruption is prevalent in Kenya. However, there is an increasing number of youths that are educated and thus more accountable and transparent. G-Clean a campaign that hopes to develop mindsets of children and a new generation of Kenyans who are corruption free. The campaign would like to call upon the governments, private sectors, civil societies and all citizens to take action in supporting a clean generation.

#It's Me

Despite years of well-phrased commitments, we live in a world where a large proportion of the global population lives outside the protection of the law, and in countries that lack sufficiently accountable and transparent political institutions. This reality is especially apparent for the 1.5 billion people living in conflict- and post-conflict countries.

Accountability (and transparency) is central to prevent governance failures and corruption, and ensure that financial and non-financial resources are efficiently used. Accountability and transparency also help to fight fraud and improve efficiency within both the public and the private sector. Transparency and accountability are critical to restoring trust and turning back the tide of corruption. Transparency is moreover the first step to drive meaningful change for people affected on the ground.

#It's Me is an awareness-raising movement with the vision of a world free of corruption and bad governance. It is envisioned that an informed and vibrant society will result in a functional and accountable society in Ethiopia. To create a nation that is accountable and transparent, and it has to start with oneself. Support #It's Me movement on social media.

About the organisers

The Swedish Institute Sustainability Forum 2017: Let's Talk! is co-organised by the [Swedish Institute](#) and the [Swedish Trade Union Confederation](#) (LO) in collaboration with the [Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), and the [Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees](#) (TCO) and the [United Nations Global Compact](#)*.

The theme Let's Talk! is inspired by the [Global Deal](#) Initiative.

[Enact Sustainable Strategies AB](#) is commissioned by the organisers to support the development and implementation of the Swedish Institute Sustainability Forum.

**In collaboration with the United Nations Global Compact on Decent Work, Health, and Human Rights.*

Contact

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Appendix 1: Participants List

Participant	Organisation	Country
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Divya Rajagopal Sarkar	The Economic Times	India
Do Thi Thuy Hang	Giaohangnhanh	Vietnam
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Let's Talk!

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Swedish Institute Sustainability Forum

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