



# INNOVATIVE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS TO PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE: THE ROLE OF FOUNDATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES

A WEBINAR SERIES ON HOW TO HARNESS FOUNDATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR ACCELERATING POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE 2030 UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

## OVERVIEW

As the 2023 implementation progress review of the 2030 United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Strategy Framework has shown, decisive action is needed if the Sustainable Development Goals are still to be achieved. To accelerate positive change, the Pact for the Future endorsed in September 2024 by the UN General Assembly calls for honing five critical skills across the UN system: innovation, data, digital transformation, future foresight and insights from behavioural science (the UN Quintet of Change; for more information go to <https://un-two-zero.network/>).

The innovation sparks initiative facilitated by the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILO) seeks to promote the Quintet of Change by providing a safe space for experimentation with **innovative capacity development solutions that accelerate social development**. As part of this *innovation sparks initiative*, the ITC-ILO Turin School of Development hosts a **webinar series on the nexus between foundational technologies and social justice**, looking through a human-centred lens to explore how to **harness these technologies for learning and capacity development**. As the ongoing debate on the impact of Artificial Intelligence on the future of learning shows, decision makers are often unprepared to act fast when technological breakthroughs occur. The webinar series is meant to address this blind spot, providing a dialogue forum to ‘think slow’ about foundational technologies today and act fast when a technological breakthrough will be reached in the near future.

Each webinar explores the opportunities and risks of a given foundational technology for learning and capacity development. The series will kick off in December 2024 with a webinar on harnessing neurotechnology for learning and capacity development. Consecutive events in the first Quarter 2025 will explore quantum engineering technology and biotechnology.

## WEBINAR 1: NEURO-TECHNOLOGIES AND THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

DECEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 – 13.00-14.30 CET

The term “neurotechnology” encompasses an array of **devices and systems that interact with the central nervous system** through electrical, magnetic, optogenetic and other means. Some of them primarily serve to understand the brain’s functioning while others may consist of methods aimed at directly intervening in mental processes with the purpose of restoring lost functions and enhancing cognitive capabilities. Neurotechnology is a multidisciplinary field encompassing a wide range of techniques and applications, including **Brain Computer Interfaces** to establish a direct communication pathway between the brain and an external device, **Neurostimulation and Neuromodulation** to modulate neural activity, either to restore function or enhance cognitive and sensory abilities, **Neural Prosthetics** to restore lost sensory or motor functions by interfacing prosthetic devices directly with the nervous system and **Neuropharmacology and Neuromodulators** to influence brain function and neural circuits through drugs and chemical compounds. Each of these strands of neurotechnology holds potential to transform human interaction with technology, raising new opportunities and challenges for the design of learning and capacity development interventions, and might call for a tailored neuro-technological policy, legal and regulatory frameworks, including to address issues around privacy, consent and identity.

The webinar will bring together learning and capacity development experts from ITCILO together with engineers and lawyers to shed light from three different perspectives on the impact of neurotechnology on the future of learning. The dialogue event deliberately brings together dissenting voices as the goal is not consensus but to raise awareness about imminent futures of learning and capacity building.

## REGISTRATION

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