



Write Pilot views on the landscape of information and communication technologies capacity-building programs and initiatives within and outside the UN.

Capacity building is a broad term and is underpinned by whole of society approach: properly coordinated, interdisciplinary, evidence-based and complementary. One aspect of it is human resource development.

Educational institutions are no doubt having to bear the brunt of supplying the market with cybersecurity professionals who are equipped with the right technical knowledge, skills, competencies and aptitudes to help countries become cyber resilient. Alternatively, the demands of the industry in my region are constantly at odds with what universities provide; creating a mismatch between workforce supply and industry demand.

Against this backdrop, the UK-Gulf Women in cybersecurity fellows took it upon themselves in 2021, 2022 to survey the GCC to assess the shortages of cybersecurity skills in the market. Their findings denote that the absence of defined roles and levels of cybersecurity expertise in the region is the number one challenge to cyber resilience. They also found that Leadership, governance and communication skills are just as important as the technical skills and that 25% of the cybersecurity workforce is comprised of women.

This gap in workforce-industry supply can be bridged through greater awareness and understanding, including through development of country-specific, context-oriented workforce frameworks that are articulated against industry priorities as well as university and vocational training provisions. The result will aid a country to identify and map its needs by sector across all levels of education and training.

With this understanding, it is my plea that greater academic support be provided to universities through better collaboration between and among academic centers of excellence, including with industry, for the development of up-to-date, contextually-relevant curricula that is powered by practical, hands-on training and education.

To build market-ready professionals, educational institutions must have access to appropriate accreditation schemes so as to build justifiable trust in the delivery of professional services, and in parallel, aid individual career growth in line with international standards and whole-of society approach.