

UNITED NATIONS
INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM SECRETARIAT



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AT THE IGF

Existing practices



YOUTH IGF INITIATIVES AND OTHER CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

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Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AT THE IGF

YOUTH IGF INITIATIVES AND OTHER CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT YOUTH-FOCUSED PROGRAMMES

2020/21



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DISCLAIMERS

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INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

The Internet Governance Forum is a global multistakeholder platform that facilitates the discussion of public policy issues pertaining to the Internet governance¹. The IGF was one of the most important outcomes of the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that mandated the United Nations Secretary-General to formally convene the Forum on 18 July 2006.

In the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 16 December 2015, (70/125) 'Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society'², the existing mandate of the IGF as set out in paragraphs 72 to 78 of the Tunis Agenda was extended for another 10 years.

Institutionally, the IGF is supported by the IGF Secretariat, administered by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), while the programme of the annual IGF meeting is developed by the Multistakeholder Advisory Group.

So far, fifteen annual meetings of the IGF were hosted by various governments. The IGF 2021 will be hosted by the Government of Poland; IGF 2022 by the Government of Ethiopia and the IGF 2023 by the Government of Ethiopia.

¹ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/about>

² https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/ares70d125_en.pdf

NATIONAL, REGIONAL, SUBREGIONAL AND YOUTH IGF INITIATIVES

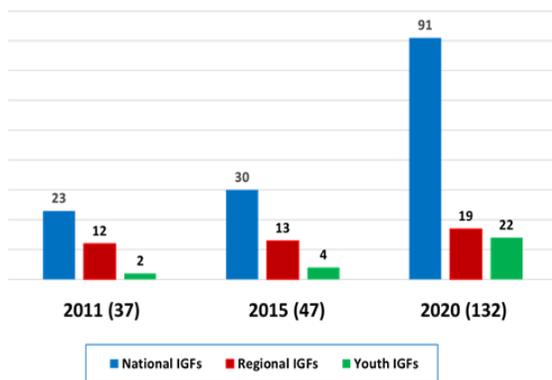


WHO ARE THE NRIs?

National, regional, subregional and youth IGF initiatives (NRIs) are IGF-like processes established at levels of countries and regions. They are formally recognized by the IGF Secretariat. The IGF 2021 annual process began with over 135 recognized NRIs.

Since the IGF was convened, multistakeholder communities of some countries and regions felt inspired by the IGF concept and decided to apply the same set of principles and procedures in their local environments. These are known as the national, regional and sub-regional IGF initiatives (NRIs). Among the NRIs, many oriented their IGF-like processes toward young people – the youth IGFs.

Youth IGFs are specifically organized forums that discuss the issues pertaining to the Internet arena from the youth's point of view. As described in this publication, there are different organizational models of the youth IGFs, ranging from those integrated in the national or (sub)regional IGFs to those led by an independent multistakeholder committee.



Overall, since 2006 until the present moment, these processes resulted in over 130 countries and regions having established their national, regional, sub-regional or youth IGF initiatives (NRIs). The IGF saw a rapid, evolutionary growth³ of the NRIs across its three phased mandated extension. Since 2015 when the IGF’s mandate was extended for 10 years, the number of recognised NRIs has almost tripled. At the end of the IGF 2020

cycle, the number of national IGFs was 91; while 19 IGFs were recognised on a sub-regional and regional levels. 22 independently organised Youth IGFs were recognised. A number of national and/or (sub)regional IGFs facilitated integrated programmes for youth, which do not amount to the mentioned number of Youth IGF initiatives.

The NRIs are autonomous national and/or regional multistakeholder platforms that facilitate discussions on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet. The overall planning of the annual programme is facilitated by the multistakeholder organising team in an open, consultative and bottom-up manner across its respected community. All stakeholders act on equal footing while engaging in dialogues on Internet governance matters.

YOUTH IGF INITIATIVES ARE INDEPENDANTLY ESTABLISHED OR INTEGRATED INTO NATIONAL AND REGIONAL IGF INITITIVES.

The IGF Secretariat supports stakeholders in their bottom-up requests to establish the IGF-like process for a particular community. The Secretariat is entrusted by the NRIs to conduct the formal recognition process and lists initiative son its website, after concluding the process through which it confirms that a particular NRI follows a set of IGF’s baseline principles and procedures. Namely, that the NRIs runs its process in an open, inclusive, transparent, bottom-up, multistakeholder and non-commercial framework. These principles and related procedure are explained in more detail in the NRIs Toolkit⁴, available in six official languages of the UN.

The NRIs organise their annual meetings where different experts, leaders and those with interest in Internet governance engage in informed exchanges on local issues, good practices and action-oriented ideas forward. The multistakeholder organising committees produce

³ The IGF Secretariat conducts the retroactive recognition, which reflect the total number of the NRIs historically. These numbers are the existing records during the IGF relevant annual meeting.

⁴⁴ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/nris-toolkit-how-to-start-your-igf-initiative>

annual reports which are submitted to the IGF Secretariat to confirm the recognition status for the next year and inform the broader community about their meeting's outcomes and outputs. Some of the NRIs also run intersessional activities, such for example are capacity development trainings and webinars for their communities, or particular strategies for stakeholder engagement.

Acknowledgements

The second edition of this publication is a result of several rounds of public consultations that the IGF Secretariat conducted in 2020, building on the work done in 2017. The consultations were initiated through the Youth @ IGF mailing list⁵, as well as the NRIs mailing list, with many of the NRIs having disseminated this call to other communities of interest. Members of many initiatives reflected by this publication actively liaised with the IGF Secretariat, participated in gathering practices, and helped develop this publication.

Members that actively contributed to this publication were⁶: Abakar Oumar Massar, Abdeldjalil Bachar Bong, Abdul Awal, Adam Ahmat Doungous, Adebunmi Akinbo, Adeel Sadiq, Ajeovi Kouami, Ali Hussain, Anriette Esterhuysen, Barrack Otieno, Daniel Macias, David Krystof, David Vyorst, David Ng, Eileen Cejas, Elisson Diones, Fotjon Kosta, Jenna Fung, Imran Ahmed Shah, Irvin Meza, Israel Rosas, Jennifer Chung, John Tucker, June Okal, Khoulood Dawahi, Lianna Galstyan, Linda Patino, Lorena Jaime Palasi, Louise Marie Hurel, Maheeshwara Kirindigoda, Makane Faye, Marilyn Cade, Martin Fischer, Mary Uduma, Michael Oghia, Mohammad Abdul Awal Haolader, Narine Khachatryan, Nathalia Sautchuk Patricio, Nicolas Fiumarelli, Oarabile Mudongo, Oksana Prykhodko, Valeriia Dubytska, Sandra Hoferichter, Shreedeeep Rayamajhi, Sorina Teleanu, Susan Chalmers, Yannis Li, Yolanda Mlonzi, Youssouf Abdelrahim, Yulia Morenets. The editor of this publication as the IGF Secretariat's Focal Points to the NRIs, Anja Gengo.

In support of



⁵ igfyouth@intgovforum.org. Subscriptions can be made via <https://intgovforum.org/mailman/listinfo/igfyouth> intgovforum.org

⁶ Reflects the first and second edition.

Foreword

Equipping next generation of Internet governance experts and leaders

By IGF Secretariat

We are living in a time when each and every aspect of our lives is going through digital transformation, from education and work to communication and entertainment. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the power and importance of digital technologies. While the physical distancing measures associated with the pandemic has closed schools across the world, disrupted people's ability to work and forced families and friends to stay apart, the Internet has enabled many to continue their education and jobs and maintain social interaction.

However, the increase in the use of online technologies prompted by COVID-19 has exacerbated many digital policy-related issues and has starkly illustrated the widening gap between the connected and unconnected. For example, it has highlighted the importance of issues related to online security and safety, data protection and utilisation, as well as freedoms and rights on the Internet. Even before the pandemic, there was broad recognition of the need to conquer the digital divide, particularly the gender digital divide, as well as online segregation and discrimination of various marginalised groups. These problems have been around ever since the Internet entered our lives, just over 50 years ago, and the complexity and global nature of the issues clearly require the involvement of multiple generations. The youth of today will be tomorrow's Internet leaders and experts. The sooner we start with developing the capacity of today's youth, the sooner we can start to make progress, across the generations, and create an Internet that benefits all. A growing number of youth IGF initiatives and youth-focused capacity development programmes is an encouraging trend for relating the times to come to a safer, affordable and accessible Internet of benefit to all.

**“YOUTH OF TODAY
ARE TOMORROW'S
INTERNET EXPERTS
AND LEADERS”**



Introduction

This publication aims at providing a high-level overview of different organizational models of youth engagement in Internet governance.

It explains the concept of Youth IGF initiatives through practices, as well as community-led international capacity development initiatives, all recognized by the IGF Secretariat. These are explained through four described models of engagement in the first part of the publication.

The second part of the publication outlines the capacity development projects for youth run by international organizations, which have close linkages with the IGF.

Ways of youth engagement in Internet governance through the annual processes of the Internet Governance Forum are described in the third part of this publication.

The list of sources of information presented in this publication is annexed. Stakeholders are encouraged to consult those for a more in-depth insights on the mentioned practices.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AT THE IGF

Youth IGF initiatives and other youth-focused formations

Looking at existing examples of practices

While the impact of the Internet on youth has been discussed for quite some time at the annual meetings of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), where young people have attended as well, it is only relatively recently in the history of the IGF that young people have become engaged in actual working processes. There is an increasing recognition by the IGF community of the importance of engaging young people in its working processes – from understanding key issues, to planning events and actively participating. Moreover, a variety of approaches have been undertaken to include the views and voices of youth in Internet policy discussions at the IGF annual meeting and during the preparatory process.

The most visible and ongoing engagement of youth has taken place at the national, subregional, and regional levels, where **Youth IGF initiatives** focus on bringing together young people to discuss Internet governance and policy issues. Besides these types of practices, many efforts have been invested by the wider IGF community in supporting youth to attend the IGF’s annual meetings, as well as in creating various programmes at the national, regional, or international level in order to train, educate, and inform young people about Internet governance processes and substantive topics.

This document provides a high-level perspective on some of these youth-focused initiatives, and describes some of the existing practices for incorporating youth into Internet-focused discussions that have developed within the broader IGF community.

This document is a product of collaboration between the organisers and community members of various IGF National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs), supported by the IGF Secretariat’s Focal Point to the NRIs. Additionally, it is a work in progress or a “living document.”

Inputs from others engaged with youth initiatives are invited to extend and augment the examples provided by contacting the IGF Secretariat.⁷

⁷ Contact email address: igf@un.org

Who is “youth”?

The term “youth” is defined and described differently across countries and regions, taking into account cultural, social, demographic, and other aspects.

For example, the Youth Coalition on Internet Governance (YCIG) defines the age range of youth to fall between the 13 and 35. The rationale is based on consideration of the fluidity of youth as it relates to various regional, developmental, and cultural contexts.

Thus, the questions of definition and description of the term “youth” should remain with the communities.

Organizational models

As outlined in the introduction, within the IGF there are various practices on how to engage youth and integrate them into IGF processes. These are mainly recognized⁸ as IGF youth initiatives and other formations. Their essence will be reflected in this document.

Youth IGF initiatives led by youth or for youth, are expected to follow the core IGF principles – or in other words, the principles and practices of being open, transparent, inclusive, and non-commercial. They work in accordance with the bottom-up consensus process of the IGF. These criteria are closely reflected by the [IGF NRIs Toolkit](#).⁹

In principle, youth IGF initiatives are organized by organizing committees composed of at least three members coming from different stakeholder groups, or from young people with different professional backgrounds and/or interests, depending on the model implemented (see Model I and Model II). The committees are either of mixed composition, consisting of members belonging to youth as per their internal youth definition and members coming from outside of that scope, or they are completely composed of young people. It is important to note that the diversified composition of the organizing committees does not necessarily follow the standard IGF classification of the stakeholder groups. In some cases, it brings together youth with different professional interests or backgrounds, which will be illustrated in the examples below.

Other types of the youth engagement in the IGF include many substantive tracks the NRIs are organizing within their annual IGF meetings and intersessional work, as well as the Internet governance-related capacity building projects many stakeholders are conducting for youth participants (see Model IV). While the integrated youth-focused components

⁸ The IGF stakeholder group classification: government, civil society, private sector, and the technical community.

⁹ Available in six official UN languages www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/nris-toolkit-how-to-start-your-igf-initiative

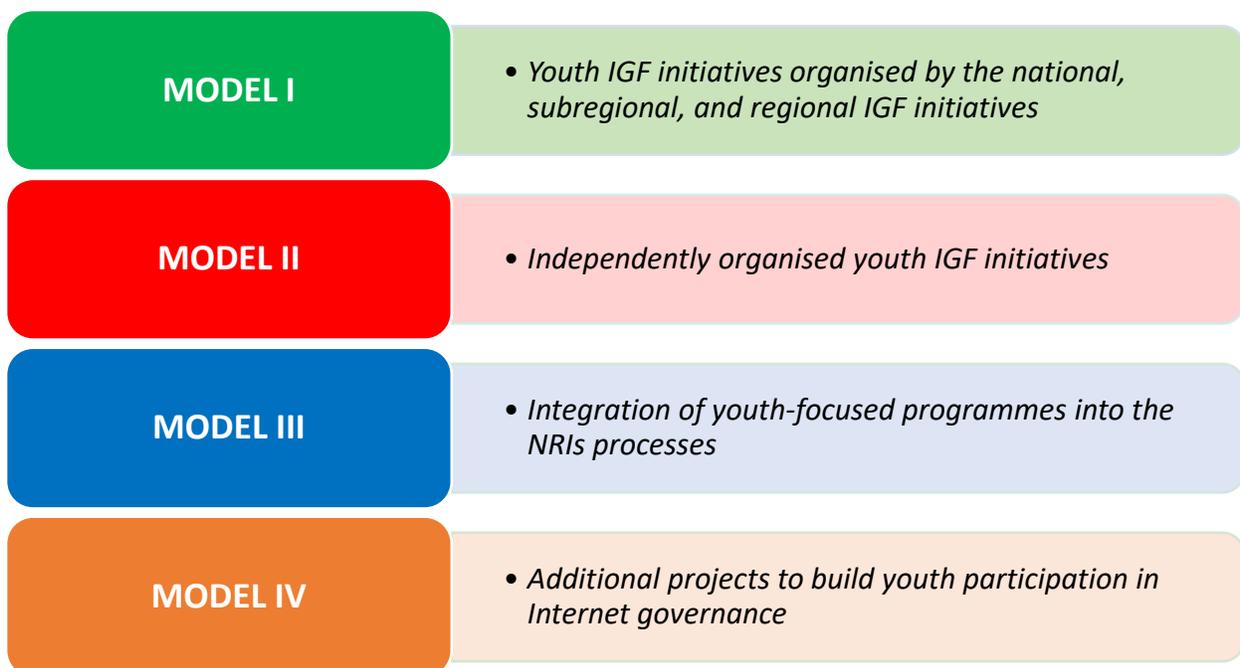
are developed by the multistakeholder organizing committees of the NRIs, the practices where youth engagement in Internet governance is led by other global initiatives or organizations are not necessarily led by the multistakeholder organizing committees and their agendas are not developed in a bottom-up manner.

PART I

LOOKING INTO EXISTING PRACTICES

Some of the key points regarding the existing practices on youth engagement are presented below in four separate sections, as per the outcomes of the several rounds of consultations with the communities.

Through rounds of open consultations, four models existing practices are identified as outlined below.



The community also highlighted other supporting programmes regarding youth engagement in the Internet governance sphere, to be recognized as valuable to many. These are reflected under the second section of this publication. Finally, through the annual IGF process, a number of efforts are invested in youth engagement, in close collaboration with the MAG, host country and other stakeholders, described in the fourth section of this publication.

Youth IGF initiatives organized by the national, regional and subregional IGF initiatives

Some of the national, subregional, and regional IGF initiatives are organizing programmes within their annual IGF meetings, specifically focused on youth. The organisers are in these cases, the NRIs' multistakeholder organizing teams. They develop specific tracks for young people, asking them to provide their reflections on the bottom-up agenda built by the wider community.



Netherlands Youth IGF, 2016

For example, the [Netherlands Youth IGF](#) is organised by the national IGF of the Netherlands. Young people are given dedicated slots to discuss the major areas of interests that the wider Netherlands IGF community has chosen, taking into account the annual meeting programme. One important element of this organizational structure is that all other stakeholders that do not necessarily fall under the definition of youth are welcome to attend these discussions and

actively participate. This is how knowledge and different perspectives are shared and capacities built in the long-term. Youth discussions are sometimes summarised in written outcomes (youth messages), which became contributions to the NRI meeting itself.

In other instances, youth simply contribute their views to the sessions of the national/regional IGF meetings, directly as active participants and speakers.

Another example of these practices is the Asia Pacific regional IGF (APrIGF). The youth group from NetMission.Asia, with support from APrIGF's Multistakeholder Steering Group (MSG), organises the [Asia Pacific regional Youth IGF Initiative](#) in parallel with the APrIGF annual meeting. With an aim of providing a unique discussion platform for youth with different backgrounds in terms of their professional interest, the organisers set up a three-to-four-day-long Internet Governance Camp. The camp's programme structure is close to the simulation of the IGF's multistakeholder approach. Participants are assigned a role of one of the four traditionally recognised groups within the Internet governance community.



Asia Pacific Youth IGF, 2017

During the camp, they are encouraged to approach specific topics, as per the bottom-up-built agenda, and provide perspectives from the positions of their assigned stakeholder groups. Participants work with experts from various Internet governance fields, and the major objectives of this camp are to have youth understand the essence of the specific, substantive issues, as well as to understand the overall IGF process – especially regarding the implementation of the core IGF principles in practice at the local/national, regional, and global levels. The outcomes of the Asia Pacific Youth IGF also feed into the APrIGF, while also extending the participation of youth participants in this regional meeting.

Independently organized Youth IGF initiatives

Some communities have established a practice of independently organizing youth IGF initiatives. The essence of these types of practices is that young people from a certain country or region engage themselves into a structure that facilitates the organisation of a multistakeholder platform for discussing Internet governance issues of relevance for them while respecting the core IGF principles.



German Youth IGF, 2016

For example, the [German Youth IGF Initiative](#) is organised by a committee composed of five young people of different ages and genders with different educational backgrounds and from different parts of the country.

They build their programme in a bottom-up manner, asking the community for input, for both topics and speakers suggestions, through a public poll. This initiative organises a one-day meeting, prior to the national German IGF. The Youth German IGF raises funds on its own and offers grants

to youth across the country to attend the meeting. The grant selection criteria are based on gender and geographical balance, educational diversity (e.g., high school, university, etc.),¹⁰ and organisational background¹¹ as well as ethnical/diversity balance. For the event, the youth IGF invites speakers from different stakeholder groups to discuss the topics of that year's agenda. In addition, they prepare positions and set agenda goals, which are summarized as "Youth Messages." The messages are submitted to the German national IGF as well as to the global IGF. Moreover, the Youth German IGF has four youth representatives seated on the steering committee of the German IGF, representing the positions and interests of youth as one stakeholder group within the national process.

¹⁰ This criterion aims to create a balance between youth pursuing an academic education and youths undergoing other types of educational paths.

¹¹ Youth engaged in any type of organization. be it a youth political party, an NGO, a youth association, etc., vis-à-vis non-organised youth.

The [Youth Latin American and the Caribbean IGF \(Youth LACIGF\)](#) has been implementing this practice since 2016. This initiative is independently organised by an organising committee composed of members that fit their definition of youth in addition to other stakeholders, while maintaining stakeholder, regional, and gender balance.

The annual programme agenda is developed on a basis of a public poll from the wider community. This process is followed by a public call to volunteers to form the commissions for: i) program agenda; (ii) communications, responsible for social media and external approaches; (iii) the open course; (iv) the translation commission, achieving a quadrilingual event

The Youth LACIGF feeds into the LACIGF by communicating the key outcomes of the meeting, as well as by participating onsite and being directly part of the discussion.



In 2019, the Youth LACIGF held their 4th annual meeting in La Paz, Bolivia.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Youth LACIGF 2020 was hosted online.

The [Youth IGF of Hong Kong](#) has a similar organizational structure. Its organizing committee is composed of members coming from three different stakeholder groups. Consultations were

organized to collect the views from the community to identify relevant issues to discuss during the forum. The initiative gathers high school students with the aim to involve them in the global discussion as digital citizens, empower them to develop a sense of belonging within digital society, and understand their rights and responsibilities with



Youth IGF of Hong Kong, 2017

mutual respect to other Internet users. Experts on Internet governance issues provide substantive training to the participants, and assign them a role of each of stakeholder group in order to understand the role of individual stakeholder groups within the IGF's multistakeholder model.

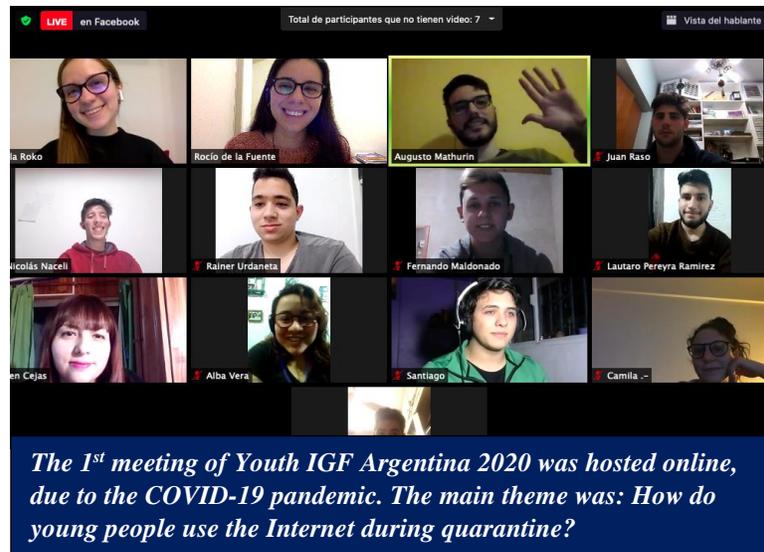
The [Youth IGF of Ukraine](#) was initiated in 2017, following the translation of the NRIs Toolkit on six UN languages. The multistakeholder organizing committee develops the agenda in a bottom-up manner through calling all stakeholders to submit Internet governance issues of priority. The initiative cooperates closely with the national Ukraine IGF for the same of fostering linkages between young people and senior experts. Also, through a consultative process, the initiative delegates representative to take active participation in the annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum. So far, four annual meetings were hosted.



Youth IGF of Ukraine, 2019

Youth Engagement at the IGF

The [Youth IGF Argentina](#) is a multistakeholder platform that supports inclusion of young people in Internet governance, through participation in the youth IGF's committee and annual meeting's sessions. The Program Committee is in charge of planning the annual event, reaching out to the speakers and inviting young participants in Argentina to attend our meetings. The organizing committee features representation from the technical community, civil society and academia, from three main provinces: Buenos Aires, Santa Fe and Entre Rios.



The [Youth IGF Turkey](#) is a national, annual forum where youth - mainly university and master's students-engage in Internet governance and digital policy topics and join discussions with subject experts and their peers. Key messages of Youth IGF Turkey have been presented at the global IGF since the first forum in 2015. The 3. Youth IGF Turkey in 2017, brought a strengthened stakeholder



Turkey Youth IGF, 2016

inclusiveness, bottom-up approach, and outreach efforts by creating a travel fund for students to attend from 13 cities - with ISOC's funding. 2018 saw the in-kind support of local municipalities, the .tr domain name management and ISOC's Turkey Chapter while co-launching the first Media Literacy Forum. In 2019, the forum was held in the capital Ankara for the first time hosted by the Middle East Technical University (METU), with academics from

the best universities in Turkey and experts presenting under the theme ‘Future of Work, Emerging Technologies and Digital Skills’. The 6. Youth IGF Turkey in 2020, hosted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, brought together some of the leading experts with undergraduate and graduate students, with a main session dedicated to the 3. Media Literacy Forum, via online interactive sessions and discussions in December 2020.

Youth IGF China (YIGFCN) was launched in 2018 as an independently organised youth Initiatives. The organising committee works closely with stakeholders from government, enterprises, organisations in the education and child protection domain to carry out the event. Inputs from the teacher, parent representatives, children and youth are most welcome and encouraged in building the agenda.

One of the characteristics of YIGFCN is the “young researchers” approach. Young researchers conduct a thematic study before the main conference. They decide the main theme of the research and conduct the investigation with support from senior trainers. This is with the aim to uphold the concept of “youth-led” and “children and youth participation”, of which youth researchers are taking the lead of the research, and more importantly cooperating with adult supporters and partners to generate better discussion outcomes. Findings of the research are presented during the main conference of

YIGFCN to further interact with various stakeholders.

Similar functionally can be observed with the model the **Youth IGF of Indonesia** applies. The four-persons composition of the multistakeholder organizing committee ensures this initiative organizes its IGF-like process in an open, bottom-up, inclusive, transparent, non-commercial and multistakeholder manner. The initiative particularly pays attention to creative and innovative ways of facilitation of discussions. For example, in addition to traditional panels and roundtable formats,



China Youth IGF, 2019



Indonesia Youth IGF, 2019

live exchanges occur after participants jointly watching a movie on the topic. In between the annual meetings, many intersessional activities are implemented. These include courses and trainings on particular Internet governance issues, as a result of a cooperating with in-country universities or office representatives of big tech companies. Outcomes of all these exchanges feed into the national forum that is supportive of the Youth Indonesia IGF and helps creating synergies between young people and senior experts and leaders.

Another example of an independently organized Youth IGF is the [India Youth IGF](#). This initiative is led by a hybrid committee, composed of young students and professionals with senior experts in Internet governance. Youth forms the steering group and the organizing committee, while the senior stakeholders are members of an advisory



Youth India IGF, 2019

committee. The programme of the annual meeting is developed in a bottom up manner, through open, public consultations. The committee experiments with the session formats, to ensure interactivity, but also opportunities for learning. Rather than traditional panel formats, the programme features many games and Q&A exchanges that showed to be more interesting to young people. On average, around 100 participants attend the meeting.

MODEL III

Integration of youth-focused programmes into the NRIs processes

While organizing their annual meetings, many of the NRIs specifically focus on ensuring youth are engaged and integrated into the preparatory process as well as into the annual meeting itself. To achieve this, the NRIs are developing tracks within their annual meetings, specifically focused on preparing youth to understand the IGF process and the relevant substantive issues. Usually, the NRIs aim to have these adjusted programmes organised as pre-events, or online before the meeting, in order to allow for youth to participate more effectively at the annual meeting.



SEEDIG Youth School, 2017

One example is the South Eastern European Dialogue on Internet Governance ([SEEDIG](#)) – the subregional IGF for Southeastern Europe. In 2017, this IGF initiative organised its first Youth School, which had both online and in-situ components. Before the annual SEEDIG meeting, the Youth School participants were involved in webinars aimed at

preparing them for participation in the SEEDIG meeting. During the SEEDIG event, a half-day-long session was held only for youth as a pre-event. This session was planned as a debate on a specific Internet governance-related case, in an attempt to prepare and encourage the youth members to actively participate in the subsequent SEEDIG discussion. An open-ended organizing team composed of members of the core SEEDIG team and other SEEDIG community members prepared the content of the school. The youth participants were selected through a public call, while bearing in mind the need to achieve diversity in terms of region, gender, and educational background, and were supported financially by SEEDIG sponsors. The purpose of the programme is to offer regional youth a space to learn, network, exchange ideas, and prepare to actively participate in SEEDIG and other Internet governance processes. Another goal is to encourage more youth to become long-term contributing members of SEEDIG and broader Internet governance



SEEDIG Youth School, 2019

and digital policy processes. An open-ended organizing team composed of members of the core SEEDIG team and other SEEDIG community members prepares the content of the school every year. The youth participants are selected each year through a public call, while bearing in mind the need to achieve diversity in terms of region, gender, and educational background. The 4. SEEDIG Youth School was held entirely online between June-September 2020 in two phases. 17 students from various countries of SEE+ were selected to continue to the second phase where they finalised the programme by preparing for and engaging in a live online debate on "The use of facial recognition technology by law enforcement".

The national [IGF of Nigeria](#) implemented the practice of organizing a set of dedicated workshops for youth as a pre-event to their annual meeting and under a unique overarching title (the latest being "Empowering the Connected Youths"). Relevant experts produce specific case studies on a topic of interest, and commit to working with the young participants throughout the day in a format that emphasizes interactive discussion. The final outcomes are summarized in the written report, developed directly by youth participants. This report is integral part of the full report for the national IGF of Nigeria, as well.



The national [IGF of Paraguay](#) regularly organises educational webinars for university students of all backgrounds, in order to build capacity and strengthen this national IGF's future by fostering new expertise and human capacity.

The European Dialogue on Internet Governance ([EuroDIG](#)), the regional IGF for Europe, has involved young people since its early days. Starting with a youth roundtable in 2010, the youth pre-event “New Media Summer School” was organised from 2011 to 2016 by various youth



YOUthDIG, 2017

organisations (a collaboration between the European Students Forum (AEGEE), Youth for Exchange and Understanding (YEU), Young European Federalists (JEF), European Youth Press (EYP), and the Young European Greens (YEG)). In 2012 when EuroDIG took place in Stockholm, Sweden, a Nordic Youth IGF conference (NYIGF) was organised as a pre-event to EuroDIG. Thirty youth between the ages of 14 and 17 from Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Finland, and Sweden formed the

Nordic Youth Delegation. Starting from the 2017 annual meeting, EuroDIG’s youth events is now called [“YOUthDIG”](#). The objective of this two-day-long track is to foster peer learning and networking among youth residing in Europe, discuss and exchange views with experienced Internet policy practitioners, and create youth messages, which are presented at EuroDIG and the IGF.

The agenda is structured along the thematic categories of the EuroDIG programme, taking into account the preferences expressed by the participants who are asked to choose the top three substantive topics among the ones included in the programme of the EuroDIG meeting – as built in a bottom-up manner by the wider community). Youth participants work closely with Internet governance experts from the field, learning and discussing potential ways to engage in Internet governance processes. Apart from this separate track, EuroDIG is undertaking great efforts to include the voice of young people in the programme as such. Young people are encouraged to join organising teams and raise their voice in each session. After earlier experiences, EuroDIG/YouthDIG determined that assigning separate youth-only sessions during the main programme ended up sidelining youth; thus, in their view, such practice was not the model to follow.

Another practical example is the work conducted by the national [IGF of Sri Lanka](#). The Sri Lanka IGF conducted a Youth IGF initiative alongside its 2017 annual meeting, where a set of focused thematic training sessions for youth took place. It was seen as a very good opportunity for youth to discuss Internet governance-related topics among themselves. This was an experimental setup for the preparations of the Youth IGF initiative, which will be organised independently by youth in 2018. Infrastructure, language issues, quality of connection, affordability, literacy, Internet safety, and entrepreneurship over the Internet were the key topics discussed in an open forum. As a result, youth participation in IGF Sri Lanka has increased through this initial engagement with youth prior to the meeting.



Sri Lanka IGF, 2017



Brazil IGF, 2016

In 2016, the national [IGF of Brazil](#) created its [youth programme](#), which engaged 50 young people from the Brazilian IGF community, in the IGF annual meeting hosted by the Government of Brazil in 2015. Prior to the IGF meeting, these participants completed a capacity building programme regarding the substantive processes of the Internet governance. A continuous investment in the programme, resulted in over a hundred young people from all parts of the world being active participants.

The [IGF-USA](#) has traditionally cooperated with a few universities in order to engage with youth and integrate them into this national IGF community. To achieve this, different approaches have been taken over several years, with inclusion of youth as speakers in sessions, or workshops, as well as youth workshops organized by youth on a topic of interest for their community. These sessions were all organized by youth and for youth, with an open invitation to everyone to attend and engage in the discussion at the IGF-USA annual session. They were usually supported by university professors from primarily three different universities. In addition, IGF-USA has a unique relationship with Elon University, which brings 15-20 young participants each year to the IGF-USA – as well as to the annual IGF – who engage both in sessions, but also in a unique role of reviewing and reporting on the various sessions, supported by three professors from Elon University. Youth from both the workshops and from Elon’s engagement have typically been given opportunities to speak during the closing “read out” of key messages, thus highlighting the inclusion of youth.



The national IGF of the Democratic Republic of the Congo ([DRC IGF](#)) collaborates with the Congolese Association of Free Software Users (ACOUL) and the Centre Africain d'Echange Culturel (CAFEC), in order to establish **Youth IGF DRC** – an initiative focused on youth. After the restitution session was organised,¹² this national IGF supported the organisation of an awareness session led by youth in many universities located in the city of Kinshasa. At that time, the organising committee of this national IGF recognised strong support from other young people to matters pertaining to Internet governance. This prompted this initiative to start organising training sessions dedicated to Internet governance using a mailing list and the mobile application, WhatsApp. Young participants actively brainstorm on substantive materials sent by this national IGF related to various topics such as Internet and critical Internet resources, who runs the Internet, who controls the Internet, who are the actors within Internet governance processes, etc. This initiative feeds into the national IGF DRC, with topics of interest that are included in the

¹² During ICANN59, by Mr. Gabriel Bombambo of ACOUL and Ms. Baudouin SCHOMBE of CAFEC.

final programme agenda. In the long-term, this methodology aims to identify relevant issues through research projects.

The national [IGF of Colombia](#) as well invests in youth engagement. Since 2013, the core multistakeholder organising team has organised a bi-monthly participation scheme through

which all stakeholders are brought together to discuss the issues of local relevance, that are addressed during the annual IGF of Colombia. Since 2016, this initiative has successfully engaged and incorporated university students into the discussion, by empowering and encouraging them to express their views on different topics. Youth have created their own discussion structures through university research groups or by being professionally involved in nonprofit organizations whose work is related to the Internet.



Colombia IGF, 2016

Particular efforts have been directed toward involving youth from remote places, based outside of Bogota as the capital city, in the IGF processes. This reciprocal support among young people has enabled more Colombians to apply for scholarships to participate in regional Internet governance fora as well. Through their participation in the Colombia IGF, youth introduced issues of their interest and have been the driving force behind initiatives in their local communities. The cooperation of these set of efforts materialized in the Colombia IGF, where youth contributions have been integrated into the workshops and sessions. Youth participants also create session reports during the event. Starting this year, the Mesa Colombiana de Gobernanza de Internet will hold a course prior to the national forum to guide new actors as well.

[Youth IGF Africa](#) is an open platform for youth facilitated by the African IGF, that supports international cooperation between established and upcoming youth IGF initiatives in Africa. It supports the creation of local empowerment and participation in IGF meetings at the national, subregional, and regional levels. The platform has merged the themes of good practice exchange between institutional supporting partners with young people, individually. Youth from many African countries – including but not limited to Chad, Sudan, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, the

DRC, Kenya, Uganda, Liberia, Mali, Tunisia, Cameroon, and Gambia – have been involved in the project so far, whose aim is to organise their first face-to-face meeting.

Additional projects to build youth participation in Internet Governance

There are practices where some stakeholders provide, together with the participation in Internet Governance events, a number of training events for youth, where the community expresses interest to get involved.



Youth IGF Movement. Meeting in Liberia, 2016

For example, the [Youth IGF Movement](#) is an incentive that allows youth to discuss Internet governance topics of interest. This global movement of young people enables youth – described to be between 15 and 35 years old – to discuss and take a lead on issues related to Internet governance in the format of local, national, or regional debates. These debates are organised by youth on a volunteer basis based on the methodology provided by the Youth IGF Movement

team, which respects the IGF's core principles. It enables the voice of young people to be heard by the Internet governance community, and to help youth take an active part in related decision-making processes.

The platform also serves as a hub to deliver capacity-building sessions to youth via train-the-trainer workshops, and to raise their awareness on a number of Information Society-related issues. It also allows for young people to meet young entrepreneurs and members of start-ups to exchange ideas about entrepreneurial challenges, and different stakeholders provide the training, nationally and internationally. The concept of the Youth IGF gatherings is based on the idea of providing an inclusive opportunity for young people from both developed countries and developing nations, particularly those facing social problems, to be able to express themselves and convey their thoughts and concerns about the Internet to the broader Internet governance community. The final messages from all meetings are communicated to decision-makers and discussion fora at different levels.¹³ It brings youth to the annual IGF meeting, conducts on-site

¹³ In 2016, 1 400 participants from 15 countries gathered around the movement.

focus sessions, and encourages broader engagement and participation in all other IGF sessions.

The [Youth SIG \(Youth Observatory\)](#) is a youth-led organisation that has been created as a result of Latin American youth engagement at the first edition of the Youth@IGF programme, organised by the Internet Society (ISOC) and the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br) during the 10th edition of the annual IGF. It aims to connect youth from various countries and regions, and by doing so, share knowledge about Internet governance-related subjects, as well as enhance youth engagement in Internet governance-related processes. The organisation is part of one of ISOC's Special Interest Groups (SIGs) – Youth SIG – and works on several fronts, among which are: (a) Hosting the two editions of the Youth LACIGF; (b) Editing and launching a book written by young authors from several countries in the LAC region in August 2017; (c) Promoting periodic campaigns on social networks; (d) Promoting digital education training initiatives in schools in some countries; and (e) Participating actively in local, regional, and international Internet governance fora by proposing, organizing, and participating in workshops and sessions. The [Youth Observatory website](#) is open to everyone wishing to contribute to its work.



Youth SIG (Youth Observatory) at the IGF 2016

The [Youth Coalition on Internet Governance \(YCIG\)](#) is one of the official Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) of the IGF. As per its own description, it is an open group for organizations and individuals, representing all stakeholder groups, willing to collaborate together in order to encourage and enrich youth participation in local, regional, and international Internet governance discussions and processes.



YCIG annual meeting at IGF 2015, Brazil

Its main objective is to advocate for the voice of children, young people, and young professionals in Internet governance fora and processes. The YCIG further aims to empower youth who want to actively participate in the IGF's intersessional activities and initiatives, such as other Dynamic Coalitions; and to support the IGF and its Secretariat in getting more young people involved on equal footing with other stakeholders in Internet governance processes. The YCIG holds regular online meetings, in-situ meetings (such as during the annual IGF), and communicate with their network through a dedicated [mailing list](#). Their engagement has resulted in many of the members of their network being appointed to leadership positions in many other Internet organisations.



A recently established network for youth in Asia Pacific region is also the [Youth4IG](#). It is a community of young people that concentrates on nurturing the future Internet governance leaders. Our 160-member strong community collectively engages in advocacy work, capacity building through regular skill building webinars, running mentorship programmes for youth; all to enhance youth participation at local, regional and global Internet governance forums.

The **European Youth IGF Project** is a European Union-funded project (2015-2017) to support international cooperation between established and upcoming youth IGF initiatives in Europe. It supported the creation of local empowerment workshops and participation in national, regional, and international IGF meetings. It merged the themes of best practice exchanges between institutional partners and individual youth empowerment, and is expected to publish its final results at the end of 2017. The participating countries were Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Turkey.

The wider IGF community also runs many **schools dedicated to Internet governance**¹⁴, as well as other educational and training activities, where inter alia many youth (in addition to others) are trained about Internet governance processes and structures.

¹⁴ A dedicated Dynamic Coalition on Schools of Internet Governance (DC-SIG) gathers all schools together <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/dynamic-coalition-on-schools-of-internet-governance-dc-sig>

Youth Engagement at the IGF

For example, the [African School on IG \(AfriSIG\)](#) is held prior to the African IGF annual meeting as a partnership between the African Union Commission (through the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency) and the Association for Progressive Communications (APC). AfriSIG is not organised exclusively for young people, but the majority of participants are young. It facilitates a leadership development



process, as well as a capacity building opportunity. After the five-day-long AfriSIG training is completed, participants are integrated into the programme of the African IGF annual meeting as speakers, rapporteurs, and moderators.

These participants play an important role in being active on social media during the African IGF. Additionally, there is always a session at AfriSIG where members of the African IGF secretariat brief participants on the event about what should they expect from the meeting. Being able to participate actively and with influence in an NRI is a core part of the AfriSIG methodology. As a result of their participation in the school, fellows become [actively involved](#) into their national initiatives, are selected for other opportunities, such as ICANN meetings or fellowships to attend IGF annual meetings.

The virtual School on Internet Governance ([VSIG](#)) is also an example of a capacity development initiative. Through a massive open online course (MOOC), participants of all ages, including youth, can network with peers from different parts of the world and learn about Internet governance through ten modules: history, actors, infrastructure, development, security, legal, economic, social and cultural issues, human rights and emergent technologies.

PART II

OTHER TYPES OF PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN THE INTERNET GOVERNANCE SPHERE

Aside from the practices and opportunities mapped above, the wider IGF community, through public consultations for developing this publication, noted other programmes that are very important for Internet governance-related capacity building programmes, including the programmes run by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and the Internet Society (ISOC). These are described below.

NextGen@ICANN Programme and the Fellowship Programme



The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (**ICANN**) initiated a [NextGen programme¹⁵](#), that funds the attendance of number of student participants in each ICANN meeting, drawn from the region that ICANN's meeting is held in. It includes a focused mentoring and coaching approach, describing the fuller Internet Governance ecosystem, as well as ICANN's core mission.

The [Fellowships Programme¹⁶](#), on the other hand, aims to support the development of the new generation of the community members. The programme priorities the fellows that are currently living in underserved and underrepresented communities around the world, with respect to diversity of gender, sector, region, experience, and expertise. Selected fellows attend the ICANN meeting, where they have an opportunity to learn about the ICANN's structure and engage with the community.

ISOC's IGF Youth Ambassadors Program

With a goal to empower young adults and build their capacity in Internet governance, the Internet Society (ISOC) runs a program called the [IGF Youth Ambassadors¹⁷](#). The program targets ISOC's members between 18 and 30 years old who demonstrate interest and expertise in Internet governance. As part of the selection process, top candidates are enrolled in an online course on essence of Internet governance, grouped into classes, each with a dedicated expert moderator to facilitate the learning process. The best students of the course are required to write a paper, the last stage in the qualification process for being selected as an IGF

¹⁵ <https://www.icann.org/public-responsibility-support/nextgen>

¹⁶ <https://www.icann.org/fellowshipprogram>

¹⁷ <https://www.internetsociety.org/policy-programs/igf-youth-ambassadors/>

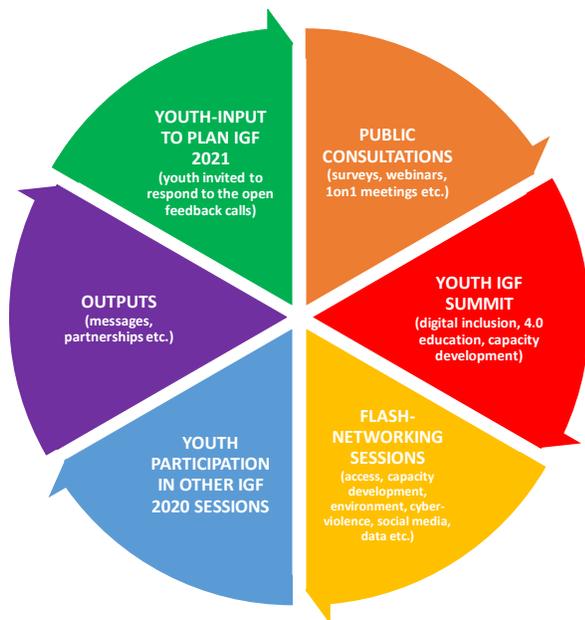
Youth Ambassador. The selected group participates in a series of webinars led by prominent subject experts on the matter. These webinars are oriented toward deepening the IGF Youth Ambassadors' knowledge and preparations for active participating at the upcoming annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum.

PART III

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN THE IGF ANNUAL PROCESSES

In efforts to fulfil the IGF’s mandate and building on the recommendations of the IGF’s Retreat in 2016¹⁸, the IGF Secretariat conducts continuous systematic efforts on engaging youth in Internet governance, including in the IGF intersessional work and the annual meeting.

For the sake of achieving the long-term sustainable mechanisms for this capacity development effort and impact the youth worldwide, the IGF Secretariat cooperates with the initiatives that also work, in their respective areas, on equipping youth with skills and knowledge on Internet governance. Close cooperative mechanisms are established with the past and future IGF’s host governments, with an aim to bridge processes and outcomes on the matter, develop a continuous engagement strategy and foster culture of active youth participation.



For example, the 2020 IGF cycle included several rounds of online consultations with youth, to understand their thematic priorities. Youth was encouraged and guided on how to actively contribute to the IGF’s intersessional work. The annual meeting included a dedicated youth summit. Over 300 young participants and those supporting youth took active participating at the Summit. Participants sent a strong message for a multistakeholder action necessary to bridge the digital divides, transform and improve traditional education systems and advance capacity in Internet governance for future leaders and experts. The

youth summit messages are annexed to this publication (Annex I).

In addition to the global summit, flash-networking sessions on substantive matters of interest were also organised. These sessions for youth were co-moderated by a youth IGF coordinator and prominent experts on subject matters. Through the flash sessions, youth was able to connect among themselves, but also to connect with institutions that delegated moderators for the sessions.

¹⁸ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/3367/711

Beyond the sessions specifically tailored for youth-to-youth exchanges, but also dialogues between youth and senior stakeholders, the IGF invests continuous efforts to engage youth in other components of its annual programme. For example, the high-level leaders track in 2020 engaged youth as speakers. Other session organisers were encouraged to send communicate open invitations to youth, through the Secretariat's established youth main=lin list, to invite youth as resource persons to contribute to their discussions.

The MAG also strongly supports youth inclusion, by, among other matters, advising that the workshop application system strengthen the diversity of session proposal by engaging young people. Session organizers are supported by having a database of young people with an interest or early expertise in Internet governance matters through an online [resource person list](#).

PART IV

CHECK-LIST: HOW TO ENGAGE?

Processes developed around the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) are open to everyone to participate free of charge. The IGF aims at establishing a framework where all stakeholders come as equals to discuss Internet governance-related issues.

If a young person is interested to learn more about Internet governance or to connect with other stakeholders to exchange ideas, there are several practical steps for this, illustrated below.

<p>NETWORK THROUGH THE IGF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Visit the IGF website ✓ Read about the intersessional work. Subscribe to dedicated mailing lists. Join the next virtual meeting and network with experts ✓ Participate in the next annual meeting of the IGF. If you can not participate in person, you can join online. <p>Onsite participation = online participation!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Listen carefully and ask questions or share ideas during IGF sessions. 	<p>CONNECT TO YOUTH IGFs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Visit the IGF website ✓ Check if there is a national, regional or youth IGF (NRIs) in your country or close proximity. ✓ Contact the NRIs. Just like the IGF, all NRIs meetings are open to everyone to participate. ✓ Take active participation at the next NRIs annual meeting. ✓ Meet the NRIs coordinators and members of the organizing committee in person, if you can and express interest to participate.
<p>PARTICIPATE IN OTHER INTERNET GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES</p> <p>There are plenty of IG-related initiatives that welcome youth's active engagement. Some are referenced in this publication, such as the Youth IGF movement, schools on Internet governance, ISOC and ICANN's programmes etc. In addition, many credible academic institutions are providing free courses on particular matters on Internet governance.</p>	<p>BE PROACTIVE! INITIATE A PROCESS</p> <p>Many young people are getting together and initiating their own processes for discussing Internet governance. That is the root of many youth IGF initiatives, described in this publication. The NRIs Toolkit¹⁹ is a good start to learn more about how to establish an NRI.</p>

¹⁹ IGF NRIs Toolkit <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/nris-toolkit-how-to-start-your-igf-initiative>

Annex I IGF 2020 YOUTH SUMMIT MESSAGES

NEXT GENERATIONS BUILDING BRIDGES TO DIGITALLY CONNECT PEOPLE



Meaningful access to the Internet has become the Sine Qua Non of human development. The COVID-19 pandemic was a life lesson to all: without the Internet, young people won't be able to adequately work, educate themselves, communicate, access information and engage in society. In times of confinement and forced physical distance, the Internet was the main tool to help us to stay connected and carry on with our lives. Inequalities in access, affordability and digital literacy became more apparent in this global crisis.



The digital divide is the side effect of digital transformation of our everyday life during the pandemic. Mobile data is the quickest way to enable most people in the world to access the Internet, but a good quality broadband Internet connection and reliable devices are essential to effectively bridge the digital divide and foster digital inclusion. It is important that markets are sensitised to ensure affordable Internet packages for all and encourage Internet Service Providers to reach underserved communities, as well as governments to set favourable/advantageous public policy frameworks to encourage community networks and alternative ways of connectivity.



People do not need to wait to be directed, but they can **direct and shape digitization**. For example, community networks have proved to be a sustainable way of connecting the unconnected through decentralised, locally owned and managed infrastructure. The national, regional and youth IGF (NRIs) could bring to the attention of decision-makers the good practices existing across the NRIs ecosystem.



In some parts of the world, women, girls, gender-diverse people, people with disabilities, elderly population, youth, people in rural and remote areas, indigenous people, refugees and migrants, are on the margins of the connected world and digital policy-related processes. It is of utmost importance that a multistakeholder effort is directed toward meaningful digital inclusion of these **vulnerable groups**.



It is essential to have **collaboration among non-government and government sectors** to set policy and legal frameworks to guarantee respect for rights online and offline in order to improve our societies.

RETHINKING FORMAL EDUCATION: 4.0 VISION FOR NEXT DIGITAL GENERATIONS



Traditional **education systems** are outdated! Effective digital education entails more than a mere basic use of computer devices and applications. Our educational systems should include courses on digital literacy, cybersafety, cybersecurity, digital innovation and coding. Teachers should be part of these continuous educational updates. Schools and academic institutions could cooperate with experts across disciplines for massive modernisation of school curricula, capacity development and for upskilling of teachers and students.



The **education systems** are poorly using the advantages of digital tools to deliver education to students, both in terms of platforms and methodologies. Online education can support the traditional onsite teaching and learning methods, to ensure students at all stages of their education have equal quality of access to education, well-balanced with healthy lifestyles, such as physical activity, good eating routine, social activities and gaining knowledge on traditional subjects.

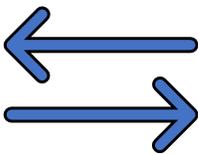
DEVELOPING CAPACITY IN INTERNET GOVERNANCE FOR NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS AND EXPERTS



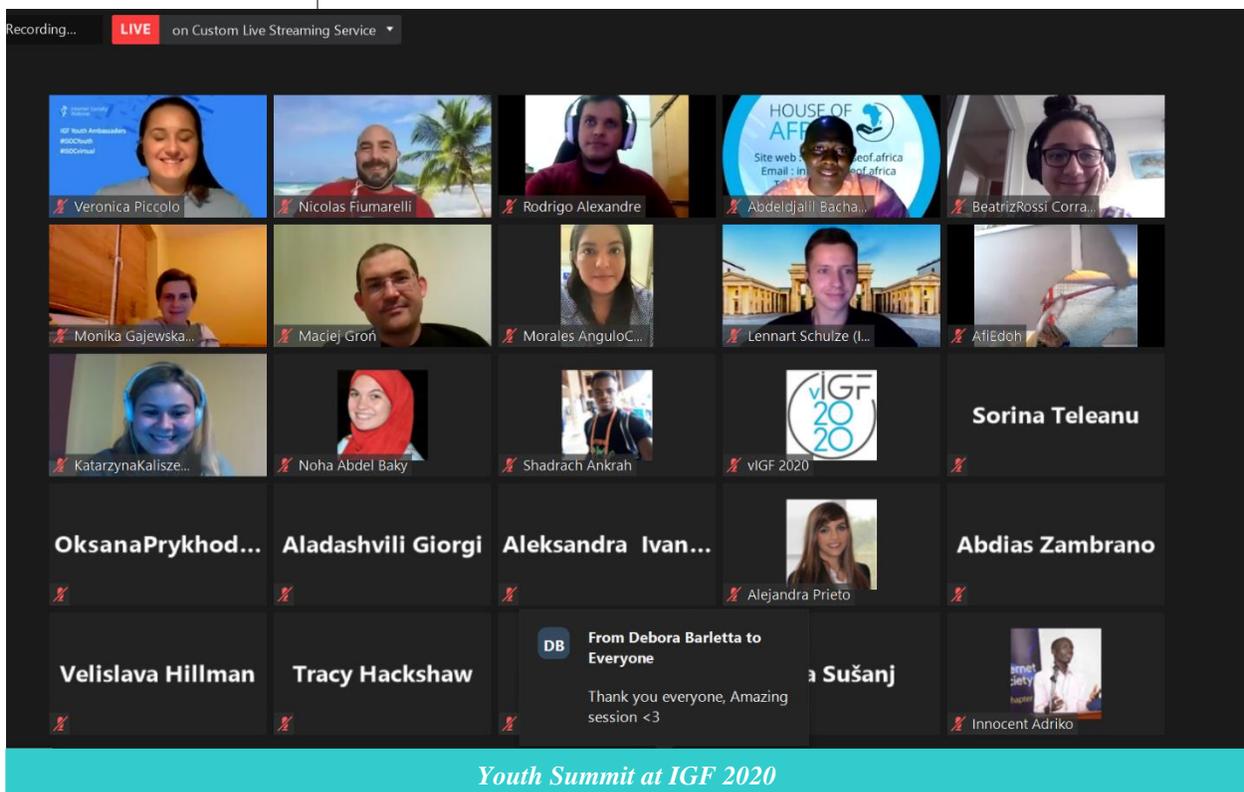
Governments, private tech companies, start-ups, think-tanks, academic and research institutions and all other stakeholders are encouraged to invest in providing **educational training and capacity building opportunities** for youths by making available and accessible open educational resources (OER) and massive online open courses (MOOCs).



National, regional and global Internet governance-related discussions and decision-making processes need to create **channels for youth participation**. Youth should not be speaking among themselves only, but also with those who can implement policies. The mechanism should be a fair and open platform that brings different stakeholders together to work for a better Internet for all people. What's more important is to embrace youth's creativity and energy with the experiences and power of all people to make positive changes in our communities collectively.



Youth need to have **representation** in the policy-making processes. We call upon the United Nations Internet Governance Forum to establish a regular communication channel between young and senior stakeholders in its deliberations.



Annex II LIST OF SOURCES

Initiative	Website
1. African School on IG (AfrisiG)	http://afrisig.org/
2. Asia Pacific Youth IGF Initiative	http://www.yigf.asia/
3. EuroDIG	https://www.eurodig.org/
4. European Youth IGF Project	-
5. German Youth IGF Initiative	http://jugend-igf-d.tumblr.com/
6. ICANN: Fellowships Programme	https://www.icann.org/fellowshipprogram
7. ICANN: NextGen programme	https://www.icann.org/public-responsibility-support/nextgen
8. IGF of Brazil	http://forumdainternet.cgi.br/en/
9. IGF of Colombia	https://www.gobernanzadeinternet.co/
10. IGF of Nigeria	http://www.nigf.org.ng/
11. IGF of Paraguay	http://foro.igf.org.py/
12. IGF of Sri Lanka	http://www.igf.lk/
13. IGF of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (IGF DRC)	http://www.fgi.cd/
14. IGF-USA	https://www.igfusa.us/
15. ISOC: IGF Ambassadors Programme	https://www.internetsociety.org/policy-programs/igf-youth-ambassadors/
16. Netherlands Youth IGF	http://nligf.nl/index.php/young_igf
17. SEEDIG	http://seedig.net/
18. Youth IGF Africa	http://afigf.org/
19. Youth Argentina IGF	https://youthigfargentina.com.ar/
20. Youth IGF Movement	http://www.youthigf.com/
21. Youth IGF of Hong Kong	http://hk.yigf.asia/
22. Youth China IGF	http://youthigf.sxl.cn/
23. Youth IGF Turkey	http://igfturkey.org/
24. Youth Indonesia IGF	http://youth.igf.id/
25. Youth India IGF	https://youthigf.in/
26. Youth Ukraine IGF	https://youth-igf-ua.org/
27. Youth Latin American and Caribbean IGF (Youth LACIGF)	http://youthlacigf.org/
28. Youth Observatory	http://objuv.org/
29. Youth4IG	https://youth4ig.asia/
30. Youth Coalition on Internet Governance (YCIG)	https://ycigweb.wordpress.com/

31. Virtual School on Internet Governance	https://www.virtualsig.org/
32. YOUthDIG (EuroDIG)	https://www.eurodig.org/index.php?id=715
33. Dynamic Coalition on Schools of Internet Governance (DC-SIG)	https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/dynamic-coalition-on-schools-of-internet-governance

youth
**INTERNET GOVERNANCE
FORUM**
engagement



IGF Internet
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