



Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum 2025

Virtual

Youth as Co-Governors: Empowering Youth for Digital Equity
and Innovation

REPORT

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Foreword

The Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum 2025 (yIGF) marked the 15th edition of this annual youth-led gathering. This year carries special meaning for our community, as it unfolds alongside the WSIS+20 Review process, a defining moment that will shape how the Internet evolves and is governed for generations to come. More than ever, our forum stands as a space where young people learn, connect, and build capacity, while amplifying their voices in shaping a more inclusive and sustainable digital future.

I'd like to extend our gratitude to the APriGF Secretariat, our supporting organization, [NetMission.Asia](#) and [DotAsia Organisation](#), local hub partners – *Southville International School and Colleges*, *SISC College of Information Technology and Engineering*, *Internet Society (Philippines Chapter)*, *Internet Society (Pakistan Islamabad Chapter)*, *Pakistan Software Export Board*, *Riphah International University*, *Government of Pakistan Ministry of Information Technology & Telecom*, and the members of the organizing committee for their unwavering support.

During this one-day virtual event, youth leaders across our region once again demonstrated the incredible power of collaboration, showcasing their potential to make a real impact in Internet governance through innovation and creativity. Our unwavering commitment to bridging generational divides and amplifying the voice of youth within the Internet Governance landscape is truly commendable.

Meaningful youth engagement thrives through "intergenerational" and "intercultural" dialogues, which spark dynamic exchanges that enrich perspectives across all age groups. I seize this opportunity to call upon every member of our community to unite their efforts, systemically include youth initiatives, and open doors for the next generation. Let the new blood be part of the movement to make the Internet a better place for everyone.

A heartfelt thank you to the United Nations Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Secretariat and the [IGF 2025 Youth Track](#) organizing team for placing their trust in us to lead and host the youth track workshop for the global Internet Governance community. This trust empowers us—the youth—alongside stakeholders from all generations and leaders across the APAC region, to stay united with the global youth community and continue shaping the future of the Internet, ensuring it is a story of inclusivity, equity, and opportunity for everyone.



Jenna Manhau Fung
Head Coordinator of Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum

About Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum (**yIGF.Asia**)

The Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum (yIGF.Asia) is one of the pioneering youth IGFs initiated in the Internet governance community. It was first initiated by a group of NetMission Ambassadors (www.netmission.asia) in 2010 in parallel with the Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum ([APrIGF](#)) and has been recognized by the [United Nations Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\)](#) since then.

Inspired by the multistakeholder model adopted by the IGF, the Asia Pacific yIGF also established the forum with the same approach, aiming to encourage more engagement in policy discussion and the decision-making process from the younger generation.



About the Organizer

[NetMission.Asia](#) is a network of passionate young leaders dedicated to engaging and empowering youth on Internet governance discourse to enhance youth mobility and create positive impacts in the Asia-Pacific and the global Internet governance community. With our flagship online academy and the Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum recognized by the United Nations IGF Secretariat, we have been pioneering capacity building and advocacy for youth in Asia Pacific since 2010. Our recently established Asia Pacific Policy Observatory monitors digital policy developments in the Asia-Pacific region and aims to democratize access to policies and regulations through youth-led reports and content, making this information more accessible to everyone while driving youth participation in policymaking.



Highlights of the Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum 2025 (yIGF)

Concluded on Saturday, October 11, 2025 virtually, more than 160 youth from across the Asia-Pacific region connected online, including participants from Local Hubs in Pakistan and the Philippines, contributing their visions for the region's digital future. Under the theme "Youth as Co-Governors: Empowering Youth for Digital Equity and Innovation," this year's program positioned youth as active collaborators in building inclusive and equitable digital futures.

Participants engaged in a full day of interactive sessions on AI governance, digital inclusion, and online safety, and co-developed the Asia Pacific Youth WSIS+20 Statement, ensuring youth perspectives were meaningfully reflected in global digital governance processes.

The following section provides a snapshot of the key milestones we accomplished during this year's Asia Pacific yIGF 2025:

Meetup with Industry Experts

The [Meetup with Industry Experts](#) is an interactive session where participants can engage in breakout discussions with professionals from various backgrounds. This time we brought together nine speakers from academia, cybersecurity, social enterprise, media, tech innovation, and international development including experts from institutions such as the China Strategic Risks Institute, GIZ, RNW Media, TezHost, etc. The session addressed systemic barriers to digital participation across the Asia-Pacific. Participants explored how AI and emerging technologies can advance or hinder inclusion, particularly for marginalized youth. Discussions centered on ethical design, multilingual access, and equitable digital literacy, calling for stronger intergenerational partnerships to move from consultation to co-creation in digital governance.

APAC Youth Leaders Dialogue

The [APAC Youth Leaders Dialogue](#) explored how intergenerational collaboration can shape inclusive and rights-respecting AI futures. It began with two expert speakers, Amisha Mittal and Dikchya Raut, who opened the conversation by grounding the discussion in governance literacy, algorithmic accountability, and digital safety. This was followed by a structured dialogue with even yIGF coordinators and youth representatives from across the region including Indonesia, Cambodia, the Pacific, Pakistan, the Philippines, India, and Hong Kong, who collectively reflected on youth engagement strategies. Building on previous initiatives such as the [Asia Pacific yIGF 3-Year Blueprint](#) and the Asia Pacific Policy Observatory's recent report on "[Asia Pacific's Digital Governance in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: A Youth-Led Analysis](#)," participants examined algorithmic accountability, bias mitigation, and digital safety, emphasizing the importance of governance literacy, ethical mentorship, and cross-sector cooperation in preparing youth for AI-driven societies.

APAC Youth WSIS+20 Statement: Live Discussion & Editing

This collaborative workshop convened youth from across the Asia-Pacific to review, discuss, and finalize the APAC Youth WSIS+20 Statement, now named the [Declaration on Meaningful Youth Participation](#). Participants worked collectively to refine the document's language, ensuring that regional perspectives on digital inclusion, rights-based governance, and youth participation were meaningfully captured. The session reflected the yIGF community's spirit of co-creation, empowering youth not just to contribute ideas, but to actively shape policy outcomes.

IGF 2025 Youth Track Workshop

Focused on “Age Verification and Social Media Regulation” under the overarching theme of “Focus on Multistakeholder Approach to Governing Digital Tech,” this interactive roundtable was hosted as part of the global [IGF 2025 Youth Track](#) and brought together youth and experts to explore global regulatory trends, from strict compliance models to rights-based safeguards on online safety. It featured two speakers, *Sølve Kuraas Karlsen (Leder Tenk, Faktisk.no)* and *Samik Kharel (Independent Journalist)*, who offered insights on disinformation ecosystems, media literacy, and governance frameworks. The discussion focused on intergenerational collaboration in ensuring information integrity on social media, tackling age verification, regulation, and regional perspectives on mis- and disinformation.

Panel Discussion

This [panel discussion](#) examined the growing tension between digital regulation, surveillance, and youth autonomy. Featuring three speakers from academia, civil society and the technical community – *Dr. Nur Adlin Hanisah Shahul Ikram (PhD in Data Privacy)*, *Dmitry Kuznetsov (Researcher at Critical Infrastructure Lab)*, and *Archit Lohani (AI Safety, Online Harms & Platform Governance Researcher)*, the discussion unpacked how governments and corporations shape online participation, highlighting the urgent need for transparent, rights-based governance that protects personal freedom and ensures equitable access to information across the Asia-Pacific region.

Contribution to the Global Digital Policy Dialogue

This year, participants took part in an interactive Idea Wall activity designed to kickstart the final discussion of the [APAC Youth WSIS+20 Statement](#). Divided into three key themes: *Youth as Stakeholders*, *Bridging the Digital Divide*, and *Equity in Innovation*, the activity became a space for open collaboration and critical reflection. Participants shared their perspectives and priorities that would later be refined in the *APAC Youth WSIS+20 Statement: Live Discussion & Editing session* during the day.

Across the three themes, youth emphasized the following:

- **Youth as Stakeholders:** Youth must be recognized as equal partners in Internet governance, not token representatives. Participants called for structured roles in policy processes, intergenerational mentorship, and direct participation in decision-making forums.
- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Connectivity alone is not enough; inclusion must encompass access to education, local language content, and opportunities for marginalized and rural communities.
- **Equity in Innovation:** Participants emphasized the need for ethical and inclusive technology design, where AI, data policies, and innovation frameworks uphold human rights, privacy, and accessibility for all.

APAC Youth WSIS+20 Statement

Building on the insights gathered from the Idea Wall, youth leaders from across the Asia-Pacific collaboratively review and finalize the APAC Youth WSIS+20 Statement, now named the ***Declaration on Meaningful Youth Participation***.

Co-moderated by youth facilitators, participants went through **six key themes** (*regional reflections and youth priorities, innovation with equity, cybersecurity & trust, youth in the digital economy, youth participation in digital governance, and universal and meaningful connectivity*), debating, refining, and strengthening its language to ensure it truly reflected regional perspectives.

The following capture the essence of the discussions that took place, culminating in the declaration below.

Asia Pacific Youth IGF 2025: Declaration on Meaningful Youth Participation

We are the generation that will live the longest with the consequences of today's digital governance decisions. Yet, we have been treated as beneficiaries, observers, or "future leaders," despite the fact that we are already building the systems, norms, and cultures that define the Internet.

As digital natives, innovators, and advocates, we want governance to be responsive and accountable to a broad range of public interests, and to the future. Decision-making closed off to young people preserves and reproduces only outdated interests. To make multistakeholder governance meaningful, youth participation must be structural, resourced, and respected, not symbolic.

We, the youth of the Asia-Pacific, united through the WSIS+20 Review process and the Asia-Pacific Youth IGF 2025, declare that meaningful youth participation is not optional but essential for a sustainable, equitable, inclusive, and accountable digital future.

This Declaration presents our collective vision, and calls to actions for embedding youth inclusion at every level of digital governance. It is both a statement of principles, and a roadmap for transformation toward a world where youth are recognized as equal partners in shaping the digital age.

Our vision for meaningful youth participation is anchored in shared principles:

- ❖ Digital inclusion and linguistic justice
- ❖ Gender equality and intersectionality
- ❖ Climate-conscious and sustainable digital infrastructure
- ❖ Accountability and transparency in all governance systems

Pillars of Meaningful Youth Participation

1. Youth as Structural Partners in Digital Governance

We call for formal mechanisms that place young people in decision-making roles within Internet governance, WSIS, and related institutions. Youth participation must go beyond symbolic or tokenistic inclusion. Existing youth efforts must be recognised, future efforts supported, and youth participation formally integrated into governance structures and systems.

- ❖ Establish Youth Advisory Councils to work alongside WSIS Action Line facilitators, the IGF, and other digital governance bodies.
- ❖ Institutionalize youth delegate roles in national, regional, and global delegations.
- ❖ Provide sustainable funding for Youth IGFs, regional initiatives, and youth-led research to ensure our contributions are continuous, not one-off.
- ❖ Introduce grants and stipends for youth-led submissions, innovation, and governance participation.

2. Innovation with Equity and Trust

We call for technology that is equitable, accountable, and rooted in human rights. Technology and digital systems are essential elements of our economies, governance, societies, and daily lives. Innovation must serve people and the planet, not the other way around. The dominance of big techs' profit-driven interests has eroded public trust in digital governance. Youth must be engaged as co-creators to reflect diverse realities of our region, democratize innovation and restore that trust.

- ❖ Establish Youth Technology Policy Labs and Regional Innovation Hubs that empower young people to co-design, test, and govern technology and digital systems — ensuring innovation is participatory, ethical, and inclusive.
- ❖ Support open-source and culturally grounded AI models that reflect local languages, Indigenous knowledge, and diverse cultural realities, enabling technology that serves all communities.
- ❖ Embed accountability, safety, and transparency across the entire technology lifecycle — from data collection and algorithm design to deployment and oversight.
- ❖ Include mandatory algorithmic transparency in public digital services to safeguard fairness, explainability, and human dignity.
- ❖ Integrate cyber hygiene and digital rights education into schools and community programs, supported by nationwide awareness campaigns that build everyday cybersecurity and digital literacy skills.
- ❖ Institutionalize youth-led audits, advisory panels to strengthen trust, transparency, and local capacity — especially for youth in rural and marginalized areas.
- ❖ Embed human rights, sustainability, and social justice in all digital innovation, ensuring technology serves people and the planet.

3. Meaningful and Equitable Connectivity and Digital Empowerment

Connectivity must translate into capability, opportunity, and dignity. True inclusion requires not just access, but the skills, networks, and fair structures that empower youth to shape the digital world.

- ❖ Recognize global connectivity as a fundamental right that should not be disrupted even in times of crisis.
- ❖ Establish independent monitoring of connectivity standards, costs, and shutdowns using user-centered metrics.
- ❖ Enable community-led and multilingual reporting mechanisms to ensure no youth or community is left offline.
- ❖ Bridge the digital skills gap by aligning education with the evolving needs of digital economy, supported by investment in digital literacy, entrepreneurial training, and multilingual education.
- ❖ Promote gender equity, linguistic diversity, and accessibility in digital employment and learning environments.
- ❖ Adopt inclusive policies ensuring equitable access for women, rural youth, and all other marginalized groups.
- ❖ Ensure transparency and fairness in digital labor markets and address exploitative practices.
- ❖ Support youth entrepreneurship and social innovation through inclusive digital finance and fair economic structures.

Our Collective Call to Action

We call upon governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations to move beyond consultation toward co-governance with youth.

- ❖ Institutionalized youth representation and participation in all Internet governance structures and systems.
- ❖ Sustained investment in youth-led research, policy development, and capacity building.
- ❖ Intergenerational collaboration that treats youth not as the “next generation” but as partners of today.

When youth are meaningfully included, governance becomes more innovative, more equitable, and more resilient. Our generation is ready, not just to participate, but to lead, co-create, and sustain the digital future for all.

The Declaration is the final version of the APAC Youth WSIS+20 Statement. It built on top of the outcomes of the [Draft 0](#) version (published on July 28, 2025) and the [Draft 1](#) version (published on October 10, 2025). For more information about APAC youth’s contribution to the WSIS+20 Review process, please visit <http://nma.asia/apac-youth-wsis-20>.

Call to Action from the Asia Pacific yIGF 2025 Organizing Committee

As youth leaders across the Asia-Pacific reflect on this year’s collective work, the Asia Pacific yIGF 2025 Organizing Committee is putting forward a three-point Call to Action shaped directly by the values, priorities, and experiences surfaced during our region-wide engagement for the WSIS+20 process.

Our Call to Action builds on the momentum of the [Joint Letter on the WSIS+20 Zero Draft](#), a landmark submission co-developed by 68 youth leaders from across 18 economies. More than 120 written inputs were received and refined through an open, collaborative editing session—an exercise that revealed not only the depth of regional youth expertise but also the clarity of our shared aspirations.

Through this process, three common themes emerged consistently and powerfully. These themes form the basis of our Call to Action, representing what APAC youth believe is essential for an inclusive, rights-based, and forward-looking digital future.

1. Recognizing youth as co-creators in Internet governance

Across the WSIS+20 Review process and associated consultations, youth repeatedly emphasized the need to be seen not merely as beneficiaries or consultees, but as active contributors shaping policy and governance. The Organizing Committee echoes the call for youth to be formally recognized as co-creators within Internet governance processes. This includes clearer stakeholder definitions that acknowledge Youth IGF initiatives alongside other NRIs, and the establishment of leadership pathways such as youth roles in delegations or a dedicated Youth Council. These measures are essential to ensuring that youth perspectives are not only heard but embedded in decision-making structures.

2. Closing the digital divide through equity, diversity, and inclusion

Youth contributors highlighted that digital inclusion must go far beyond connectivity. Gender disparities, linguistic barriers, cultural contexts, and geographic isolation continue to exclude many communities across APAC. Building on these concerns, the Organizing Committee calls for a more holistic and justice-centered approach, including targeted investments in digital literacy, support for rural and remote communities, and stronger commitments to linguistic accessibility. Ensuring equitable participation is vital for enabling all young people to fully participate in civic, educational, and economic life safely and meaningfully in ways that reflect their cultural and linguistic realities.

3. Fostering responsible, sustainable innovation for future generations

Young people across the region expressed both excitement and concern about the rapid growth of emerging technologies. Their consensus was clear: innovation must be ethical, inclusive, environmentally responsible, and grounded in the needs of future generations. In line with this, the Organizing Committee urges deeper youth participation in capacity building, research, and advocacy related to emerging technologies, as well as the adoption of frameworks to assess and minimize the environmental impacts of digital infrastructure.

These three priorities encapsulate the collective vision expressed by the Asia-Pacific youth community throughout the WSIS+20 consultation process. The outcomes and collaborative process send a clear, unified message from the region's youth: **youth are ready, capable, and committed to shaping a more just, inclusive, and sustainable digital future.** We are not only as consultees, but as co-creators.

With this Call to Action, Asia Pacific yIGF 2025 Organizing Committee encourages regional stakeholders, policymakers, and the broader Internet governance community to take these youth-driven recommendations forward and deepen collaboration with youth for ongoing dialogues to ensure that our contributions continue to shape the shared digital future.

Session Reports

In this section, you will find summaries of key sessions at the yIGF 2025. This includes the Meetup with Industry Experts, APAC Youth Leaders Dialogue, Panel Discussion, and the IGF 2025 Youth Track Workshop III.

Meetup with Industry Experts

Designing Equal Futures: Youth, AI, and the Path to Digital Inclusion

This 45-minute interactive session brought together youth advocates and industry experts from across the Asia-Pacific region, including **Athena Tong** (*China Strategic Risks Institute*), **Karlina Octaviany** (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*), **Surabhi Srivastava** (*RNW Media*), **Nadia A. Sattar** (*IT Innovation Manager, TezHost*), **Muhammad Asad Ul Rehman** (*Cybersecurity Consultant*), **Aristheo McKay Lacuna** (*National Association of Social Enterprise Educators and Administrators*), **Rex Wallen Tan** (*Princeton Assessments and Training, Inc.*), **Dr. Aris Ignacio** (*Southville International School and Colleges*), and **Julian Antonio Laspoña** (*Southville International School and Colleges*). Participants online and from the local hubs in the Philippines and Pakistan gathered to discuss how AI can either deepen or dismantle digital divides across the region.

The session opened with reflections on how access to digital tools is a form of power, but not all access is equal. Youth from rural and marginalized communities continue to face systemic barriers, from weak infrastructure to linguistic exclusion. Through breakout group discussions, participants examined how AI can promote or undermine digital inclusion, explored strategies to counter misinformation, and reimaged what meaningful youth participation in digital governance should look like.

Combating Deepfakes and AI-Driven Misinformation

Across all breakout rooms, participants identified AI-generated misinformation and deepfakes as urgent threats to trust, democracy, and public safety. Athena Tong emphasized that detection technologies alone are insufficient; public education, awareness campaigns, and fact-checking initiatives must accompany them. Participants also cited real-world incidents where misinformation triggered social unrest and temporary internet shutdowns, underscoring the need for preventive frameworks and coordinated regional responses. Karlina Octaviany added that algorithmic amplification and limited regulation of AI-driven platforms worsen the problem, particularly across borders. The discussions called for regionally adapted frameworks to regulate AI use, promote transparency in content distribution, and ensure that detection systems are linguistically inclusive, reflecting the Asia-Pacific's multilingual realities.

Building Trust, Regulation, and Accountability in the Digital Space

Speakers emphasized that restoring digital trust requires both policy and societal responses. Rex Wallen Tan and Dr. Aris Ignacio highlighted the need for accountability systems that can trace content origins and penalize those responsible for distributing manipulated or harmful

content. Karlina Octaviany and Surabhi Srivastava stressed the importance of clear legal protections against synthetic media misuse, noting that many existing laws were written before the emergence of AI-generated content. Participants collectively agreed that transparency, ethical governance, and public literacy must form the foundation of future digital policy.

Digital Literacy, Education, and Capacity Building

A recurring theme across breakout discussions was the need to strengthen digital literacy and make AI education accessible to all. Julian Antonio Laspoña emphasized the “train-the-trainers” approach, equipping educators with AI and critical thinking skills to scale learning across communities. Nadia A. Sattar and Muhammad Asad UI Rehman echoed this, advocating for free or low-cost AI programs and multilingual learning materials to address the digital divide. Participants also pointed out the importance of embedding AI literacy into school systems and community programs, ensuring that youth not only consume but critically engage with technology.

Bridging the Digital Divide and Ensuring Meaningful Access

Discussions across hubs underscored persistent inequalities in connectivity, affordability, and local language accessibility. Muhammad Asad UI Rehman noted that many talented youth remain excluded because of limited infrastructure in rural areas, while Surabhi Srivastava and participants from Nepal and Pakistan stressed that digital safeguards must work even in low-connectivity environments. Nadia A. Sattar highlighted the role of public-private partnerships and community-based training programs to empower youth in underserved regions. The collective consensus was that connectivity must evolve from basic access to meaningful participation that allows all youth to safely and equitably engage online.

Youth Empowerment and Co-Governance in Digital Policy

Across all breakout rooms, participants agreed that youth must move from symbolic inclusion to structural participation in digital policy. A/P Aristheo McKay Lacuna called for formal mechanisms such as Youth Councils within AI governance structures to institutionalize youth input, while Karlina Octaviany and Surabhi Srivastava emphasized mentorship models and intergenerational collaboration to bridge the experience gap. Participants stressed that young people should be recognized as co-creators of policy, not merely beneficiaries. As Rex Wallen Tan noted, democracy thrives when youth are politically aware, active, and empowered to hold systems accountable.

Toward Ethical and Inclusive Innovation

The discussions culminated in a shared call for ethical, inclusive, and human-centered technological innovation. Speakers reiterated that innovation must serve people first, prioritizing privacy, fairness, and sustainability. From creating localized AI datasets to designing equitable digital economies, participants envisioned a future where Asia-Pacific youth not only adapt to technological change but shape it responsibly.

[Watch the playback now!](#)

APAC Youth Leaders Dialogue

Co-Creating Safe Digital Futures Through Intergenerational Action

On 11th October 2025, youth leaders from across the Asia-Pacific region gathered for the **fifth edition** of the Asia Pacific Youth Leaders Dialogue (APAC YLD), a flagship segment of the yIGF program designed to foster ongoing dialogue, cross-regional collaboration, and intergenerational learning within the Internet governance ecosystem. The session was moderated by Jenna Fung, Ankita Rathi, and Dean Molde.

This year's dialogue centered on the theme "Co-Creating Safe Digital Futures Through Intergenerational Action," highlighting the intersection of artificial intelligence, mental health, online safety, and equitable access to digital opportunities. The session explored how intergenerational collaboration can advance inclusive and rights-respecting AI futures, grounded in regional realities and cultural diversity.

The panel featured Amisha Mittal and Dikchya Raut, followed by an open-floor dialogue with youth representatives, including Bhredipta Socarana (Indonesia yIGF), HongTholly Sonit (Cambodia yIGF), Ashutosh Maharaj (Pacific yIGF), Hina Naeem (Local Hub Islamabad), Gilbert Clause Magallanes (Philippines Local Hub), Ihita Gangavarapu (India yIGF), and Jenna (Hong Kong yIGF).

Meaningful Youth Inclusion in AI Governance

Amisha Mittal emphasized that genuine youth inclusion requires engaging young people at the earliest stages of policy and system design, not merely as consultants at the end of decision-making processes. She underscored the value of AI education and capacity-building to empower youth to contribute effectively and translate their ideas into practical impact within policies and community-driven initiatives.

Localization, Language, and Contextual Relevance

Dikchya Raut reflected on her journey since joining the Internet Governance space in 2017, noting the positive shift toward regional and youth-led initiatives. She highlighted the importance of context-aware AI systems and local-language adaptation, stressing that technologies built in the Global North must be critically examined and localized to reflect Asia-Pacific cultural and linguistic contexts. She also pointed to the need to de-stereotype access to governance spaces and empower youth from rural and non-English-speaking communities to engage confidently.

Bridging the Digital Divide through Intergenerational Collaboration

Hina Naeem noted that "youth-led doesn't mean youth alone." She emphasized the importance of mentorship between generations, combining youthful innovation with the wisdom of experience to create inclusive, sustainable solutions. This theme echoed across interventions, reinforcing that AI governance is a shared responsibility.

Cultural and Regional AI Challenges

Speakers from Cambodia and the Pacific shared that AI tools often lack linguistic inclusivity and cultural sensitivity, leaving communities underrepresented. HongTholly Sonit and Ashutosh Maharaj called for AI literacy programs, translation of safety materials, and localized datasets to promote equitable access and understanding across rural areas.

Transparency, Accountability, and Explainable AI

From the Philippines, Gilbert Clause Magallanes advocated for risk-based AI regulation, public AI impact assessments, and stronger partnerships among government, industry, and youth. He emphasized that youth watchdog groups and Explainable AI (XAI) models can help build trust and accountability in AI systems while aligning innovation with community values such as *kapwa* (shared identity).

Youth-Led Innovation and Regional Expansion

Ihita Gangavarapu called for youth-led standardization efforts and transparent AI labeling systems that detail risks and system functionalities. Meanwhile, Jenna from Hong Kong highlighted the growth of local hubs and national yIGFs as a tangible pathway to scale youth participation in governance dialogues, ensuring that every region has access to structured mentorship and leadership pipelines.

Collective Call to Action

The dialogue concluded with a collective commitment to co-create safer, fairer, and more inclusive AI ecosystems through intergenerational collaboration. Participants agreed that preparing the next generation for an AI-driven society requires governance literacy, ethical mentorship, cross-sector partnerships, and localized, culturally aware interventions that ensure no young person is left behind.

[Watch the playback now!](#)

Panel Discussion

Power, Platforms, and Participation: Reclaiming Our Digital Selves

The 2025 Asia Pacific yIGF Panel Discussion brought together Dr. Nur Adlin Hanisah Shahul Ikram, Dmitry Kuznetsov, and Archit Lohani to examine the growing tension between digital regulation, youth rights, and technological control in an increasingly surveilled online environment. The session explored how the consolidation of power among governments and tech corporations affects youth autonomy and participation in shaping the digital future.

Panelists discussed the evolving regulatory landscape across the Asia-Pacific, where governments are introducing stricter digital laws in the name of sovereignty and safety. These initiatives, while intended to protect citizens, often risk curbing personal freedom and limiting youth engagement in digital spaces. The dialogue underscored a shared concern: that youth must not only be protected online but also empowered as active co-creators of digital governance.

Balanced Protection and Regional Cooperation

Dr. Nur Adlin Hanisah Shahul Ikram emphasized the importance of achieving balance, safeguarding youth online without restricting their digital participation or access to information. She critiqued blanket social media bans for under-16 users as counterproductive, urging instead for targeted harm reduction, digital literacy education, and safer platform design. Nur also warned that rigid data localization and fragmented regional policies hinder both innovation and accountability. She called for stronger regional cooperation and harmonized digital standards to ensure that the Asia-Pacific collectively protects children's data rights while fostering transparency and inclusion.

Empowering Youth as Policy Co-Creators

Dmitry Kuznetsov cautioned that overprotective governance frameworks can unintentionally silence youth voices. He argued that true online safety must not come at the expense of participation, noting that excluding youth from policy dialogues today risks a generation unprepared for the digital challenges of tomorrow. Dmitry proposed a multi-stakeholder approach where youth are recognized as co-creators of digital policy, bridging regional and local dialogues to inform effective, rights-based governance. He also emphasized the need for harmonized standards across APAC to prevent tech giants from exploiting policy inconsistencies.

Power, Policy, and the Role of Youth

Archit Lohani explored the structural power dynamics shaping digital governance, particularly across South and Southeast Asia. He noted that both governments and platforms exercise disproportionate influence over data, algorithms, and online discourse, leaving youth marginalized from key decisions. Archit highlighted persistent online harms, such as image-based abuse, CSAM, and self-harm content, and the lack of regional coordination and research to address them. He advocated for data-driven policymaking, independent audits, and youth inclusion in shaping governance frameworks, emphasizing that youth bring unique legitimacy, innovation, and insight into digital policymaking.

Regional Youth Networks and Harmonized Governance

Discussions emphasized the need to move beyond token participation by positioning youth as genuine partners and co-creators in digital policymaking. Youth networks were seen as critical bridges between regional dialogue and local action, facilitating the translation of discussions on digital rights, innovation, and safety into practical policy outcomes.

Panelists also discussed the importance of building inclusive governance frameworks that protect without excluding. Rather than relying on restrictive verification systems, participants called for adaptive, context-sensitive approaches that balance protection with participation. Transparency, algorithmic accountability, and continuous feedback mechanisms were identified as key to ensuring policies evolve alongside the needs of young people.

AI, Surveillance, and Youth Autonomy

In closing, the panel examined how emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and surveillance systems are shaping youth autonomy across the region. Dr. Nur emphasized that AI, when developed and applied responsibly, can serve as a powerful enabler for social good, its impact ultimately determined by human intent and ethical design. Dmitry cautioned that in more restrictive political environments, surveillance technologies often threaten youth autonomy by enabling monitoring and suppression of free expression. Archit further reflected on AI's dual nature: while it drives progress in areas like health and education, it also brings new challenges, including misinformation, data misuse, and psychological risks for young users. Together, the panelists underscored the importance of independent, region-specific research and policy development to ensure that AI governance protects youth rights while fostering innovation and trust.

[Watch the playback now!](#)

IGF 2025 Youth Track Workshop

Age Verification and Social Media Regulation

IGF 2025 Youth Track Workshop III was hosted in an online format at the Asia Pacific Youth IGF (yIGF) at 10:25-11:25 UTC on 11 October 2025, focused on “*Age Verification and Social Media Regulation*” under the overarching theme “Multistakeholder Approaches to Governing Digital Tech.” Building on the discussions from the IGF Youth Summit 2025, the session further explored the [Youth Message](#) with regional experts, emphasizing intergenerational collaboration to safeguard information integrity and address the growing challenges of disinformation and misinformation on social media. Co-moderated by Herman Johansen (UN IGF Secretariat) and Bea Guevarra (Asia Pacific yIGF), the hybrid session brought together youth and senior experts to examine global regulatory trends, from compliance models to rights-based safeguards, and to discuss inclusive approaches for protecting digital rights in an evolving online ecosystem.

Speakers, Sølve Kuraas Karlsen (Leder Tenk, Skoleavdelingen til Faktisk.no) and Samik Kharel (Independent Journalist) opened the discussion by outlining how youth engagement, digital literacy, and regulatory frameworks intersect in shaping safer online environments. Both emphasized that digital governance must involve youth voices at every stage of policy design.

Participants engaged in an interactive, multistakeholder roleplay that simulated how governments, the private sector, the technical community, and civil society can work together to address challenges of misinformation, social media regulation, and age verification.

Government Perspectives: Governance, Crisis Communication, and Public Trust

Government representatives emphasized the need for regulatory frameworks that maintain public trust without encroaching on personal freedoms. They noted that misinformation during crises such as natural disasters can distort perceptions of state response. Transparent communication and ethical standards were identified as essential for countering panic and partisan manipulation. Officials also raised concerns about funding constraints and stressed the importance of supporting youth-led and community-based initiatives that can address misinformation at the grassroots.

Private Sector Concerns: Competition, Accountability, and Market Imbalances

Private sector participants underscored the uneven regulatory environment in APAC, where many foreign platforms operate without local registration or accountability. This disparity puts regional companies at a competitive disadvantage and weakens local oversight of misinformation and harmful content. Participants called for harmonized governance standards, cross-border cooperation, and mechanisms that ensure both fair competition and consumer protection.

Civil Society: Local-Language Risks and Youth-Led Interventions

Civil society groups highlighted the rapid rise of AI-generated misinformation across languages like Punjabi, Pashto, and Bahasa Indonesia, noting its influence during elections and social movements. They shared examples of scams targeting youth, including fraudulent WhatsApp messages and AI-generated voice manipulations. Grassroots efforts such as Digital Rights Foundation's Hamara Internet campaign and youth-led media literacy projects were cited as critical for expanding digital literacy, especially outside major urban centers.

Technical Community: Transparency, Capacity Building, and Shared Responsibility

The technical community stressed the urgent need for transparency from platforms regarding algorithmic operations and content curation. With deepfakes and manipulated media becoming harder to detect, participants emphasized the importance of building tools, apps, and verification mechanisms that can help users identify misleading content. Hackathons, youth-innovated solutions, and cross-generational partnerships were seen as essential for strengthening long-term digital resilience.

The session concluded with a collective call to action for **intergenerational and cross-sector collaboration** to build a safer, more transparent digital environment. Participants reaffirmed that effective governance of social media and age verification systems must protect youth rights, foster trust, and ensure that innovation remains human-centered and inclusive.

[> Click here to read the full report](#)

[Watch the playback now!](#)

Appendix 1: Program Agenda

Day 0 - October 11, 2025 (Sat)

Time (UTC)	Activity
07:00-07:10	Introduction of yIGF 2025
07:10-07:30	Idea Wall: Brainstorming for APAC Youth WSIS+20 Statement
07:30-08:15	Meetup with Industry Experts: Designing Equal Futures: Youth, AI, and the Path to Digital Inclusion
08:15-09:15	APAC Youth Leaders: Co-Creating Safe Digital Future Through Intergenerational Action
09:15-09:25	COFFEE BREAK
09:25-10:25	APAC Youth WSIS+20 Statement: Live Discussion & Editing
10:25-11:25	IGF 2025 Youth Track: Age Verification and Social Media Regulation
11:25-12:25	Panel Discussion Power, Platforms, and Participation: Reclaiming Our Digital Selves
12:25-12:45	Way Forward and Preview of APriGF Workshops

Day 1 - October 12, 2025 (Sun)

Time (UTC)	Activity
03:45-11:30	APriGF 2025 Workshops
12:15-12:45	yIGF Huddle: an informal debriefing for yIGF participants to reflect on and share their key takeaways from attending APriGF workshops.

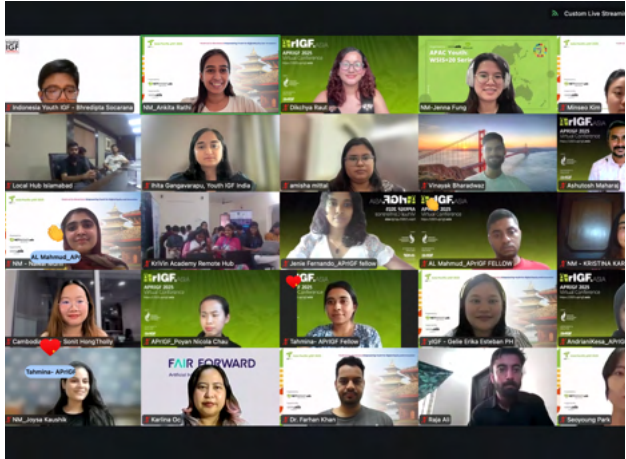
Day 2 - October 13, 2025 (Mon)

Time (UTC)	Activity
03:15-11:30	APriGF 2025 Workshops
12:15-12:45	yIGF Huddle: an informal debriefing for yIGF participants to reflect on and share their key takeaways from attending APriGF workshops.

Day 3 - October 14, 2025 (Tue)

Time (UTC)	Activity
03:15-12:15	APriGF 2025 Workshops

Appendix 2: Photo Gallery



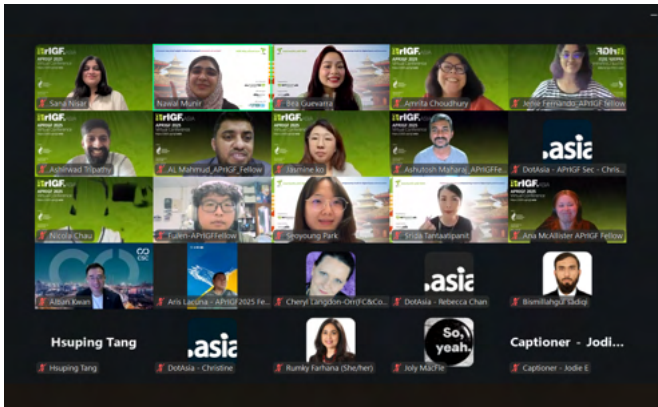
yIGF 2025 participants with the speakers from APAC Youth Leaders Dialogue.



Bea Guevarra, Co-Chair of yIGF 2025, at the APRiGF 2025 closing ceremony.



yIGF participants at the Philippine Local Hub during the Idea Wall.



Participants at the APRiGF 2024 session moderated by the NMA Ambassadors.



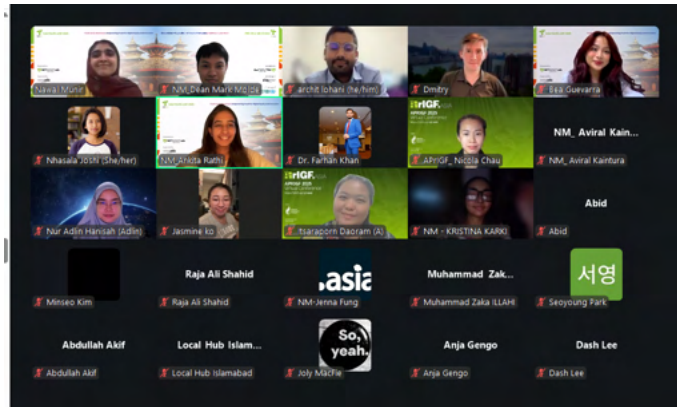
Participants at the Local Hub in Islamabad.



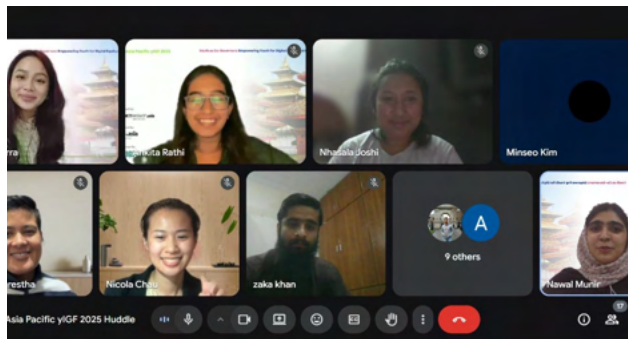
Participants at the Local Hub in the Philippines



Youth participants during yIGF 2025 Orientation.



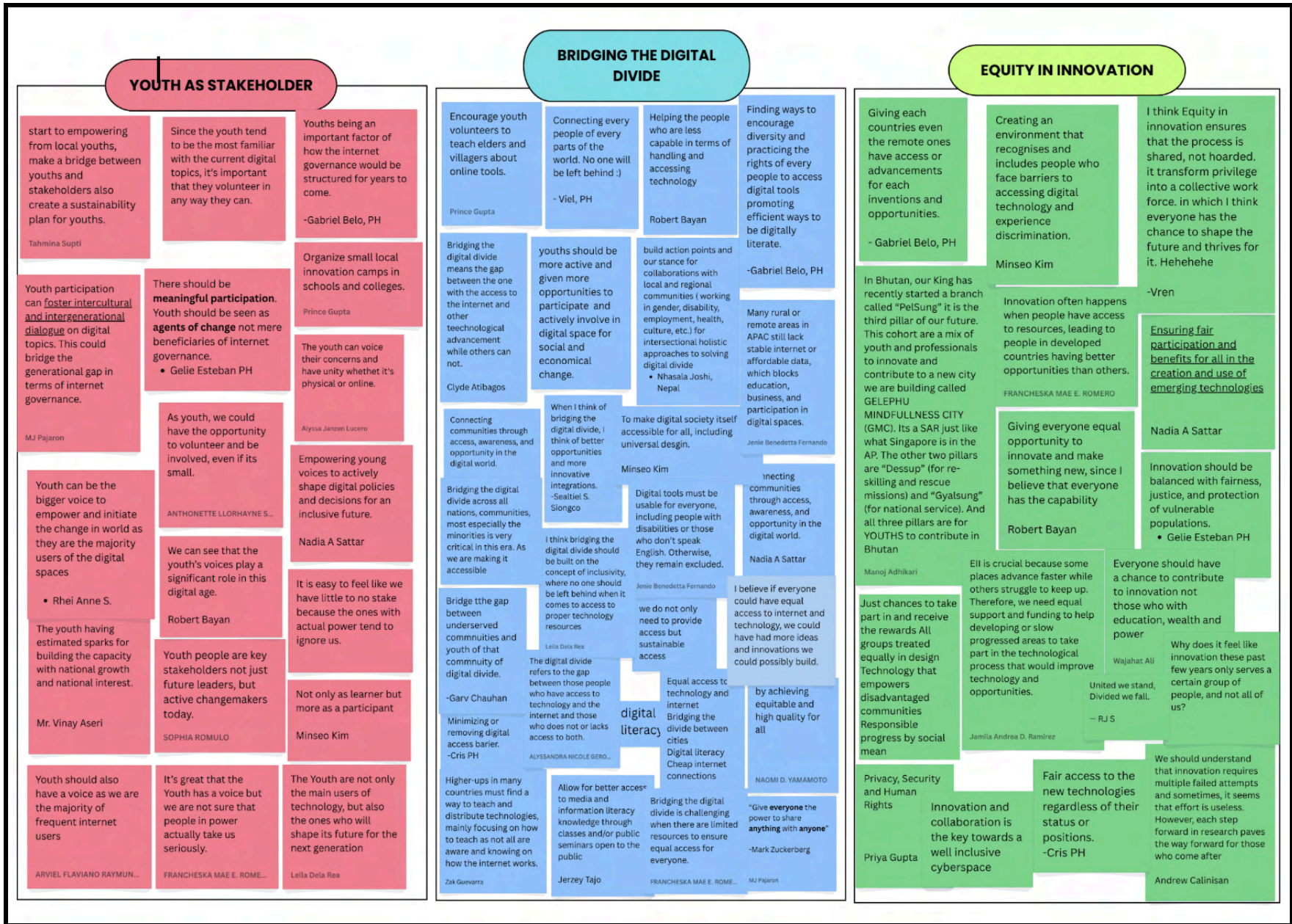
yIGF 2025 participants with the speakers from Panel Discussion.



yIGF 2025 participants in the yIGF day 1 Huddle.



yIGF 2025 participants in the yIGF Day 2 Huddle.



Participants' contributions to the Idea Wall.