

YCIG at EuroDIG2020: Youth perspectives on the way forward in IGF

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10 June 2020: The youth DC session—Youth Coalition on Internet Governance enabled its Dynamic Coalition members and partners to express and exchange views on the current state of affairs in the field of youth participation in the Internet Governance ecosystem at the pre event session hosted at EuroDIG 2020.

The session explored some of the European initiatives that have been launched to enhance youth participation in internet governance after **Youth IGF Summit** held in Berlin in 2019. And it was aimed at creating synergies and finding common topics among regional youth movements and initiatives to conduct capacity enhancement projects and much more.

Developments after Youth IGF Summit 2019

Carrying forward from the YCIG session at IGF in 2019, **Elisabeth Schauermann**, **YouthDIG/ Youth IGF Summit 2019** reflected on the first ever Youth IGF Summit at Berlin in 2019 that was supported by last year's IGF country host Germany. As a pre event to IGF 2019, it was an effective platform where youth from all over the world came together to share their messages.

While it was successful, the efforts did not just stop there. Youth participation should anchor all public policy and for this it is important to enable youth with necessary support and resources to participate in internet governance and policy making.

Further, **Nika Bakhsoliani**, Member of **Advisory Council on Youth, Council of Europe** and member of COVID-19 task force of the joint council, highlighted the importance of understanding the concept of meaningful youth participation, which entails that the youth has the necessary means, opportunities and space to participate in and influence decision making processes. Speaking of the effects of COVID-19 pandemic, Nika mentioned that the ongoing issues have been exacerbated, particularly affecting the marginalized youth and youth organisations.

National Youth IGF movements

Veronica Birindelli, Youth IGF Italy and **João Pedro Martins**, Lusophone Youth IGF, Portugal; spoke about how to start Youth IGFs in their respective countries. While Portugal worked with other Portuguese speaking countries to reach out to a larger crowd, Italy worked with grassroots organisations and went from a 3-people team to a larger community.

In addition to bringing in computer science students and tech enthusiasts, yIGF organisers also felt the need to speak to young people about the other issues like online safety, etc. that affect everyone in their own way.

They also suggested that greater synergies amongst youth IGF initiatives across the world will be helpful so they can share content, topics, support etc. Being listed as an official youth initiative on IGF's website is also helpful in gaining credibility.

Being a part of youth IGFs enables youth to better engage at IGF main events. It also facilitates collaboration and building independent youth communities also facilitates adding real messages to the global debate.

The way forward

Noha Ashraf, YCIG Steering Committee member, presented the YCIG questionnaire which saw a greater need for not only tech related topics but also cross cutting ones like interaction of human rights with technology.

Elnur Karimov, EEG Regional Engagement Director for **Youth Observatory** shared his views on Youth Observatory's (Youth SIG) growing global presence. In 2019, Youth Observatory (YouthSIG) had projects like Creative Networks which was a project competition where the winners attended IGF 2019 and Youth Atlas which highlighted engaged youth in IG from all over the world. Elnur also pointed out current engagement activities for Youth Observatory members like the [Regional Activities](#).

In short, it goes without saying that youth has a lot to offer to the Internet Governance ecosystem, from organising the first ever global Youth IGF Summit and initiating national youth IGF movements to bringing the youth perspective and coming up with solutions to such unprecedented issues such as COVID-19 pandemic, together with different stakeholders.

With COVID-19 pandemic still underway, the community strives to continue working towards enhancement of youth participation in the Internet Governance ecosystem, advance the capacity building programs and initiatives and bring the youth voice to the global discussions and processes.

Therefore, in order to create synergies between various youth movements all over the globe, we need to define the common goals for these youth initiatives/movements and deliberate upon which formats, tools and frameworks can be applied for reaching these goals. Share with us your opinion in the comments.

You may access the recording of the full YCIG session here: <https://youtu.be/R40ojvX3dGM>