

Unesco – IFIP Youth declaration

IFIP World Computer Congress 2002

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Abstract: Unesco's commitment to enhancing the participation of all in the global information society and IFIP's role in analysing and shaping future development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have inspired participants in the IFIP World Computer Congress 2002 "Information Technology for our Times: ideas, research and application in an inclusive world" (25 to 29 August 2002, Montreal, Canada) to develop declaration, having examined the theme of "Youth and Information and Communication Technologies, Policies and Challenges in the Information Age". ICTs have substantial impact on today's world and are central to bolstering the emerging global knowledge information society. Young people are at the forefront of technological innovation and development. On the other hand there is continued deterioration of the status of youth worldwide (particularly of young women and youth with disabilities), who are among the most vulnerable and affected by difficult social and economic conditions. This highlights the importance of sensitising governmental authorities, national and international institutions, the private sector and the civil society to the necessity to include the development of information and communication technology infrastructures and the ICT skills for young people as a high priority in their national ICT policies and respective agendas, as well as to take proactive measures in order to encourage the formulation of policies and regulatory frameworks determining the future of the information society.

Key words: access, culture, economics, education, ethics, information, human interaction, Lifelong Learning, open learning, social cohesion

INTRODUCTION

We, participants in the IFIP World Computer Congress 2002 “Information Technology for our Times: ideas, research and application in an inclusive world”, held from 25 to 29 August 2002, in Montreal, Canada, having examined the theme of “Youth and Information and Communication Technologies, Policies and Challenges in the Information Age”, have adopted the following declaration.

CONTEXT

- Taking into account UNESCO’s commitment to enhancing the participation of all in the global information society, and IFIP’s role in analysing and shaping future development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs);
- Noting the substantial impact of ICTs in today’s world and convinced that ICTs are central to bolstering the emerging global knowledge information society;
- Considering that, beyond their role in economic development, ICTs can contribute significantly to building new partnerships and interactions and spreading innovative lifelong learning opportunities;
- Further considering that the universal access to information and human interaction, by means of ICTs is essential for achieving goals of social cohesion, and economic and cultural empowerment;
- Recognising the need to promote digital inclusion in an environment preserving cultural diversity and heritage and promoting the respect for democratic values, human rights and tolerance;
- Realising that some young people are at the forefront of technological innovation and development;
- Being concerned about the continued deterioration of the status of youth worldwide (particularly of young women and youth with disabilities), who are among the most vulnerable and affected by difficult social and economic conditions, and who face, among others, a growing rate of functional illiteracy and unemployment, poverty and conflicts, epidemic diseases, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS pandemic, etc.;
- Highlighting the importance to sensitise governmental authorities, national and international institutions, the private sector and the civil society about the necessity to include the development of information and communication technology infrastructures and the ICT skills for young people as a high priority in their national ICT policies and respective agendas, as well as to take proactive measures in order to encourage the

formulation of policies and regulatory frameworks determining the future of the information society;

- Affirming our commitment to contribute to ensuring a youth oriented digital inclusion specifically in the fields of education, science, culture and communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We strongly recommend the following measures for empowering youth in the Information Age:

- Promote global access to information and knowledge sources of young people as a prerequisite to their competent social choice, behaviour and participation; disseminate information about issues having a practical impact on the every day life of young people.
- Improve access to education and train young people in ICT skills enabling them to enter empowered into the Information and Knowledge Society; improve network access at affordable cost, especially in underdeveloped urban, rural and remote areas, and expand information infrastructure for human development through the establishment of vocational schools at a community level, the creation of internet access points, distance learning and community multimedia centres, etc.
- Provide for the equitable expansion of the information society by promoting ethics in cyberspace through the involvement of young people in the elaboration of guidelines for the activities of information and content producers, users and service providers.
- Strengthen the capacity to generate knowledge and indigenous production of freely accessible contents, while using local languages and thus expanding the existing information accumulated in the public domain.
- Facilitate the production and dissemination of high quality free and open source software for education and training as well as scientific and cultural purposes.
- Enhance the co-ordination of youth information related programmes and resource mobilising efforts of governments, specialised agencies, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations, and invite international and national institutions and the private sector to design and implement specific funding schemes and programmes such as fellowships, competitions and contests, that would help improving the meaningful access of young people to ICTs especially in the developing countries.

- Promote through the use of ICTs, specific measures and modules for enabling disabled and handicapped youth to participate more actively in society.
- Cultivate creativity, open life-long learning opportunities for young people and promote their access to careers dealing with ICTs.
- Support the efforts of youth to foster a culture of peace, tolerance, sustainable development and quality of life by using global information and communication means.
- Commit ourselves to strive according to the spirit and letter of this declaration for the implementation of the above recommendations.

Montreal, August 29, 2002