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| **Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)**  **25th Meeting, Geneva, 2-5 June2020** | C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg |
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| Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau | |
| 2020 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SURVEY | |
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| **Summary:**  A youth engagement survey took place between February 29 to April 19, 2020. The main findings of the survey can be found in this information document.  The purpose of the survey was to consult with youth around the world on how ITU can engage with them as an international organization.  The findings of the survey will serve to support the implementation of the youth strategy. | |

1. **Five High-Level Takeaways**
2. Youth want to learn skills that are not being taught in traditional educational settings, and are interested in skills courses and internship programs focusing on developing skills to bridge this gap. This need is expressed across gender and region, although there is variation in the skills and topics youth are interested in.
3. To make engagement strategies even more inclusive and accessible, youth emphasized the importance of course and program designs that are sensitive to young people’s context (e.g., socioeconomic statuses, geographic regions, and communities) in the design and deployment of such strategies.
4. Youth are excited to share their viewpoints and perspectives on societal issues with international organizations and feel it’s important that they receive feedback on their input, creating pathways for mutual exchange and collaboration.
5. Many young people seek long-term inclusion in courses and programs and ask that they are aligned with their career goals. Youth add that organizations hosting courses and programs should provide financial support and that they connect participants with adult mentors who can offer consistent career counselling and exposure to career pathways that blend their skills and interests and allow youth to have a positive impact on society.
6. The global issues that impact young people’s lives are diverse, ranging from a lack of quality education to concerns around privacy. Other trending issues of interest include good health and well-being, environmental issues, lack of economic opportunity and employment, and gender equality and empowerment of girls.

**To view all highlights from the survey included in this document, along with tables and graphical representations of relevant data, please see the following presentation slides** [**here**](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/14A103hXpYVW_LXRyUydVNTZZWZhV0SLkc7q2FYR1Y2w/edit#slide=id.g74d1d9a178_0_43)**.**

1. **About the Survey and the Participants**

***What languages was the survey available in?***

The survey was publicly accessible [online](https://rc1useryksv9f2hrfcf5.fra1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0ky6BVECfCgvsqx?fbclid=IwAR0JkT7EfsxjUkmez9TI3UEXPX9_VKDVp4vBvJFob-MmTEGecIc_Q9p0V9Y) in [English](https://rc1useryksv9f2hrfcf5.fra1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0ky6BVECfCgvsqx?fbclid=IwAR0JkT7EfsxjUkmez9TI3UEXPX9_VKDVp4vBvJFob-MmTEGecIc_Q9p0V9Y), [French](https://rc1useryksv9f2hrfcf5.fra1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9vjRVTJDyiHTK61), and [Spanish](https://rc1useryksv9f2hrfcf5.fra1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9odAKKc29eu7HNP).

***Through what channels was the survey administered?***

Participants were informed through different means about the opportunity to participate. Administrations of ITU Member States, Regulators, and ITU-D Sector Members received an invitation to participate in the consultation. Additionally, an invitation was shared through different networks (e.g., Berkman Klein, Youth and Media, Digitally Connected), lists, and social media channels (in particular, [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/youthandmediaberkmancenter/)).

***When was the survey administered?***

Data was collected from February 29 to April 19.

***How many individuals completed the survey? How old are participants?***

A total of 1,138 participants from ages 10 to 25 completed the online survey, with an average age of 16.9. Those 26 and older who completed the survey have been excluded from the data set examined in this write-up.

***What regions of the world are participants from?***

Perspectives from 58 countries are included in the data, with the large majority (86%) from the developing world. 68% of those from the developing world are from the Americas, 27% are from Africa, and the remainder are from developing nations elsewhere. Overall, across all respondents, 60% were from the Americas, 24% were from Africa, 2% were from the Arab States, 2% were from Asia and the Pacific, and 12% were from Europe. Of the finished surveys, 34% were taken in English, 57% in Spanish, and 9% in French.

***What is the gender identification representation of participants?***

There were more girls (56%) than boys (40%), with about 4% self-identifying or preferring not to say.

***What is participants’ average self-reported socioeconomic status?***

Participants self-reported socioeconomic status is relatively high. On a scale from 1 to 9, with 9 being best off, participants averaged at 5.94.

1. **Results**
   1. **How Participants Spend their Time**

***What activities do participants engage in after school?***

Participants lead busy lives. After school, half spend their time on homework. Other frequent activities include going online (e.g., browsing websites, using social media) (44%), listening to music (44%), and watching TV (42%). Very few participants — approximately 5% — spend their time working at a job or internship after school.

***How do participants keep informed on events going on in their community/city/the world more broadly?***

Participants largely rely on online channels of communication — more specifically, social media platforms and messaging applications, such as WhatsApp. Participants’ social circle, including friends, family, and community members, also plays a key role.

***In addition to staying informed about current events, what other types of civic and political engagement, online and offline, do participants engage in?***

While many participants leverage various online and offline means to keep informed about current events, relatively few engage in other activities related to civic and political engagement; almost none took part in a peaceful march or demonstration (with the exception of some in Europe), signing an online paper or petition, or even expressing political views online. However, participants engaged in some activities more frequently than others, such as learning about people with backgrounds and experiences different from theirs and sharing content online related to societal issues.

***In what other ways do participants spend their time, particularly in the context of the digital world?***

Data reveals that just over a quarter (27%) of respondents have earned money doing or selling something online. Additional research may help shed light on the specific ways youth engage in economic activities in the digital landscape.

* 1. **Issues that Impact Participants’ Lives**

***What are the global issues that are impacting participants’ lives today?***

The issues that impact participants' lives are diverse. The four most prominent issues are good health and well-being, environmental issues, lack of economic opportunity and employment, and gender equality and empowerment of girls.

***Do these issues vary based on the regions participants live in and their gender identity?***

Gender equality and empowerment of girls was the top concern for girls, but not a significant concern for boys. Respondents in Africa also stood out for reporting a lack of economic opportunity, and poverty as major issues. While there were, overall, fewer survey takers from Asia and the Pacific, concerns around the environment and misinformation were dominant among those responses.

* 1. **Familiarity with the ITU**

***How familiar are young people with the ITU and other international organizations?***

Of the five international organizations in the survey (ITU, OECD, UNESCO, UNICEF, and WEF), participants said that they are the least familiar with the ITU. Many participants have never heard of the ITU.

***Those who know the ITU, how did they come across it?***

Most participants came across the ITU online (for example, on social media, a website).

* 1. **Youth Engagement**

***What do youth want to learn from their teachers?***

Many (89%) said they want to learn about topics beyond what their teachers are currently teaching them. Among the set of options, the most popular topic for learning was career skills (e.g., how to write a resume/CV, how to interview for a job, 52%) and personal finances (e.g., how to draft a budget and keep track of expenses, 48%), followed by survival skills (e.g., what to do in emergencies, self defense, 44%); self-care (e.g., mental health, how to manage stress, 42%); diversity, inclusion, and social equity (e.g., explore other cultures, how to include people from different cultures, address questions of accessibility, 35%); and creative arts (e.g., dance, graphic design, 35%).

***Do the skills youth want to learn and the themes they want to be more familiar with vary based on the regions participants live in and their gender identity?***

Girls, and those who did not say their gender or self-identified, reported survival skills more highly. Digital well-being skills (e.g., explore your identity online; engage with others online in positive ways) ranked very low for both boys and girls (22% for both), but highly for those who did not say their gender or who self-identified (43%). The high average focus on diversity, inclusion, and social equity was also driven very much by girls (43%), as only 25% of boys expressed interest in this.

Participants in Africa were spread out far more among the responses, but most chosen overall was digital participation skills (e.g., how to connect to the Internet; produce content online; protect digital devices, 39%), followed by digital engagement skills and digital well-being skills (both 37%), unlike other regions (although among only girls in Africa, survival skills ranked highest). In Europe and Asia and the Pacific, self-care was the most popular choice (57% and 63%, respectively).

***If an international organization wants to engage with youth, what formats should be considered?***

Respondents are excited about free school/community programs around digital skills where they may receive a certificate upon completion. Formats supporting young people in entrepreneurial activities (e.g., building their own start-ups), engaging youth through meetings and conferences, offering jobs to young people (ages 16-18,) and creating open local spaces (“youth labs”) where young people can find mentors and support, develop new skills, and share their thoughts and perspectives are also popular.

***Do preferred engagement formats vary based on the regions participants live in and their gender identity?***

The responses were consistent between girls and boys. Regional differences include many respondents in Africa finding support for youth in being entrepreneurial extremely valuable, but fewer found summer internships extremely valuable, with the opposite pattern in European.

***In addition to digital skill learning, what are other experiences youth value?***

Respondents appreciate support in the form of mentorship, financial aid, or skill cultivation. They also expressed a desire to feel valued and recognized for the skills they currently have through opportunities like youth speaker series, contests and competitions, or platforms that showcase creative content young people develop.

***How would youth like to interact with and learn from ITU staff and peers?***

Well-liked ideas include a youth council advising senior ITU members; a field task force reporting on issues that are important to youth at a local level; a youth-led ITU department; “youth analysts” who could distil insights from young people and adults through a youth lens, and the creation of a peer learning environment with focus on societal issues.

***What can the survey results tell us about the design of youth engagement programs?***

Programs need to be tailored to the region youth live in, aligned with their interests and experiences, and inclusive so that individuals from different communities and backgrounds can participate. Adjectives used are: “inclusive,” “youth-centric,” “meaningful,” “creative,” “caring,” “concrete,” and “dynamic.”

***What are other program features to be considered?***

Respondents welcome the opportunities for real-time engagement (e.g., through an online chat forum or WhatsApp messages); local events, such as town hall meetings; an ITU version of Modul UN; ITU pop-up locations; and online environments that highlight organizations offering financial support to youth

***For youth, what are the most relevant criteria when considering an engagement opportunity?***

The two by far highest ranked responses were about gaining knowledge and skills in either a field participant are interested in pursuing a career (e.g., engineering) or skills regardless of the specific field participants pursue (e.g., public speaking, creativity).

***What other criteria were perceived as relevant?***

Participants also value being able to do work that feels personally meaningful and that lets them create positive change for their community/society broadly. Additionally, participants seek internships that support them on their career pathway, through, for instance, opportunities that allow them to explore a field to see if it is right for them, increase their chances of getting a job or into a school they are interested in, or forge connections in a specific field.

***Do such criteria vary based on the region participants live in and their gender identity?***

This was a question with the strongest agreement across gender and region. Across all gender identities and regions, gaining knowledge and skills was most frequently selected as a top-3 criterion, and developing skills was second-most frequently selected. Both were selected by at least 50%-60% of participants in all subdivisions, and in Asia and the Pacific as high as 82% (89% for boys, 78% for girls). Again, across all groups of gender and region, everything else was selected at least 10-20 percentage points less frequently than those two.

* 1. **Ideal Places to Work, Dream Jobs, and Why**

***What kinds of places are generally cool to work?***

Youth want to work at reputable organizations known for their quality of work/positive impact. A key factor is for the organization to be diverse so that youth can interact with people from different communities and backgrounds. It’s important to youth that the organization provides resources and provides a purposeful design of the physical space one is working in and how that contributes to an ideal work environment. They would like to use innovation and creativity to problem solve. The work should ideally be logistically flexible. Many youth that chose to answer the open-ended question were also adamant about the importance of positive social experiences in the workplace.

***What do dream jobs look like?***

It is important for youth that the job connects to their own values, skills, and interests. Alignment with these elements is even more important than extrinsic motivations such as income, fame, or prestige. Many students identified dream jobs based on a combination of their own passions (intrinsic motivation), their family or community needs (interpersonal motivation), and the societal responsibility of the greater good.

***What other hopes and expectations do youth have?***

Youth are interested in workplaces that will develop them as professionals and that are interested in their personal growth. Youth want to have space to learn and contribute substantially to the work of others as well as take part in shared decision-making and have a voice in the organization. The vast majority of young people also expressed a strong interest in traveling and working and studying internationally.

1. **Reflections and Recommendations by Youth and Media**

***Cultivate youth’s (domain-specific and transferable) skills***

* When creating youth engagement opportunities, organizations may want to emphasize the skills youth participants will be able to gain. While participants’ focus on skills may, to a certain degree, be attributed to the age of the respondents and where they are in their life trajectory, this finding may be worth consideration moving forward. The importance of skills may impact the types of engagement formats international organizations offer.
* In developing forms of engagement with a focus on skills, such as capacity-building programs, in addition to digital skills, it may be useful to consider ways to cultivate other skills that will benefit participants across a variety of career pathways (e.g., mentorship, collaboration, creativity).

***Connect engagement to youth’s long-term goals***

* When placing young people in roles of higher visibility and/or responsibility, organizations may want to consider being explicit in how the role can be relevant for a participant’s future and the pathway options it may enable, rather than primarily focusing on what will be accomplished when youth assume that role.
* While youth will appreciate the exchange opportunity with peers, consider how to connect them with adult mentors willing and able to provide youth with consistent career counseling and exposure to careers that blend their interests, current skills, and will allow them to have a positive societal impact.

***Strengthen inclusive opportunities for engagement and peer-to-peer learning***

* Create programs that are responsive to the cultural, political, economic and social contexts that shape young people’s everyday lives. Consider ways to make engagement efforts even more inclusive and accessible to youth from different socioeconomic statuses, geographic regions, and communities.
* If invited to engage, organizations may want to find spaces where all youth (i.e., not just a selected number as part of a panel or session) can connect with each other and share their projects, skills, and ideas.

***Open pathways for bidirectional learning***

* Youth engagement should be a two-way street — if youth are invited to share and contribute their ideas and perspectives, ensure that as an organization you are able to give input and feedback and demonstrate how youth perspectives have impacted the work or specific output.

***Think longer term***

* Focus on repeated contact with the same youth, instead of just one-off events with different groups. For youth it’s crucial to have consistent partnerships that provide stability and ongoing mentorship throughout time.
* When creating youth engagement opportunities, consider designing longer term programs that are supported financially. The same goes for competitions, such as the Youth Innovation Challenges, and awards — make sure that young people with the best ideas and projects can make those a reality by connecting youth with opportunities for financial support and mentorship.

***Make youth equal partners***

* Actively engage youth in an ongoing conversation about how to best do meaningful youth engagement and embed the insights of this process in policy and practice.
* When developing content for youth, adopt a co-design approach where youth can be active co-creators, versus consumers.

***Find opportunities for youth leadership***

* Youth hold knowledge and make meaning in their own ways that are valuable for programs to include
* Create leadership opportunities for youth from marginalized populations, specifically the LGBTQ youth and those on the gender spectrum. These youth often identify gaps in programming that no one else notices, but add a different perspective, based on their unique needs and experiences.

***Bolster connections between education and career readiness***

* Youth employment has been a prevalent topic in the world of work the last couple of years. Youth programs often focus on the school-to-work transition. Other research suggests that many students feel unprepared for the workforce based on the programs that already exist. Students may need additional support connecting education to practical skills and employment.

***Collect further evidence to enhance youth agency and participation***

* Generate more high quality, youth-centred, participatory research into young people’s practices, perspectives, and attitudes globally, with a focus on contexts where evidence is lacking, and policy development is most needed.

The youth consultation was created and led by the “Youth and Media, Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society”, Harvard University. Contributors: Sandra Cortesi, Urs Gasser, Alexa Hasse, Pedro Maddens Toscano, Maya Malik, Momin Malik.

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