

ITU contribution to UN/Youth Network

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

ITU is the leading United Nations agency for information and communication technology issues, and the global focal point for governments and the private sector in developing networks and services. From broadband Internet to latest-generation wireless technologies, from aeronautical and maritime navigation to radio astronomy and satellite-based meteorology, from convergence in fixed-mobile phone, Internet access, data, voice and TV broadcasting to next-generation networks, ITU is committed to connecting the world. ITU also organizes worldwide and regional exhibitions and forums, such as ITU TELECOM WORLD, bringing together the most influential representatives of government and the telecommunications and ICT industries to exchange ideas, knowledge and technology for the benefit of the global community, and in particular the developing world.

AN ONGOING COMMITMENT TO YOUNG PEOPLE

ITU has made young people a high priority in its projects and ongoing activities for many years. As avid and creative users of ICTs, young people are often key contributors to building an inclusive Information Society and bridging the Digital Divide. This is the reason that the ITU's Telecom event has included a youth stream since 2001. Attention to young people and their ICT needs is also an essential component of ITU's digital inclusion activities, a main goal of which is to promote broadband school connectivity. By mainstreaming the youth agenda and offering projects and learning activities which provide young people with crucial ICT and life skills, ITU helps to boost their educational level, and therefore their economic potential. (For more information see www.itu.int/ITU-D/youth/)

ITU INITIATIVES WHICH SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE:

Connect A School Connect A Community Initiative

An ITU flagship initiative endorsed by the UN Secretary General during the 2009 ITU World TELECOM Youth Forum, this initiative aims to connect all primary, secondary and post-secondary schools to ICTs by 2015 (a target set by world leaders at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in 2003 in Geneva and in 2005 in Tunis). *Connect a School, Connect a Community* is a public-private partnership which not only promises to bring broadband Internet connectivity to schools in developing countries around the world, but these same connected schools are able to serve as community ICT centres for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including women and girls.

In 2010, ITU helped countries like Mauritania, Nicaragua and Tanzania to develop their National School Connectivity Plan, as well as assisting with related pilot projects.

(For more information on the modules and training materials developed within the "Connect a School" Initiative see: www.connectaschool.org/)

THE ITU TELECOM YOUTH FORUMS

Since 2001, ITU has organized a Telecom Youth Forum, alongside the ITU-TELECOM events. Traditionally, this Forum has provided young people from around the world the opportunity to participate in high level discussions, helping them understand the nature and potential of the global communications industry and encouraging many to embark upon careers as engineers, policy-makers and business people in the ICT industry.

(For more information see: www.itu.int/ITU-D/youth/itu_telecom_youth_forums.html)

YOUNG LEADERS IN ICTs' NETWORK

One of the projects developed by ITU, as a follow-up to the 2003 ITU-TELECOM Youth Forum, was a dedicated Youth Forum Alumni Network Platform, which allowed Youth Forum alumni to share their knowledge, experiences and views around ICT. Renovated and newly launched in 2011, this collaborative network will continue to facilitate a global dialogue between ITU and the Youth Forum alumni as well as between the alumni themselves.

(For more on this: www.ituyouthforumalumni.net)

BASIC COURSE ON EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Stemming from a need voiced by young people themselves, ITU developed a "Basic Course on Emergency Telecommunications", aimed specifically at youth. Providing basic knowledge of emergency situations and the role of ICTs, this course enables young people to make a positive contribution in preventing or mitigating disasters. The course is freely available in all six (6) UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).

(For more on this course: www.itu.int/ITU-D/youth/ and www.itu.int/ITU-D/youth/emergency_telecommunications/basic_course/index.html)

PROTECTING CHILDREN IN CYBERSPACE: CHILD ON-LINE PROTECTION (COP)

Well aware of young people's particular vulnerability online, ITU created a specialized initiative within ITU's more encompassing Global Cybersecurity Agenda. The global Child On-Line Protection (COP) initiative aims to tackle cybersecurity holistically, addressing legal, technical, organizational and procedural issues as well as capacity building and international cooperation. Through this initiative, ITU is taking the next steps to develop a cybersecurity strategy for youth and children everywhere.

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