Global Digital Compact for Peoples at the Margins

UP Social Innovations Lab1

This contribution builds on our work in reaching out to people and communities in isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDA). Through our work, we've identified critical digital issues that need to be addressed to align with the principles of the Global Digital Compact, which calls for an open, free, and secure digital future for all. We hope it provides valuable insights and guidance for navigating the complex digital landscape.

1. Digital infrastructure, literacy and skills development for all

Every person in our diverse communities, regardless of their socioeconomic, educational, political and cultural backgrounds, should have access to basic digital infrastructure, such as affordable and reliable internet and functional devices. Digital infrastructure for all, including people and communities at the margins, is crucial for a more inclusive digital future. This also means greater inclusivity in terms of language used in digital platforms as well as devices and services supportive of those with disabilities or who are differently abled.

Digital literacy and skills are essential for participating in the digital economy. More avenues for digital literacy education should be opened and introduced to people at a young age, especially about data privacy and protection and use of online resources. We also need to prioritize programs that teach digital skills to our youth and provide training opportunities for individuals, especially those at the margins of society and geography, to gain necessary skills.

2. Community-based innovation and entrepreneurship

We need to create an environment that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship in the digital space. This can be achieved by providing resources and support to local start-ups and innovators, with an eye of developing previously untapped markets involving people and communities in isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDA).

3. Bridging the digital gap, starting with gender and GIDA

We must work to address the gender gap in access to digital technology. We need to prioritize initiatives that empower women and girls to develop the necessary skills to succeed in the digital economy. While gender transcends geography, those women and girls in GIDA could benefit from priority programs that seek to bridge digital divides.

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4. Data privacy and security

As our communities become more digitally connected, we need to prioritize the protection of personal data and privacy. This includes establishing laws and regulations to ensure that data is used ethically.

There is widespread lack of awareness and resources to secure personal data, especially in GIDA. Even with limited connectivity, people and communities in the margins are vulnerable to online fraud, identity theft, and other malicious activities. Resources and support to educate GIDA communities about data privacy and security have to be provided.

5. Digital participation and inclusion for marginalized communities

We need to encourage participation in online forums, social media, and other digital platforms to ensure voices from people and communities in the margins are heard and considered. Marginalized communities face significant barriers to accessing and participating in digital platforms, which can limit their ability to advocate for their rights, share their stories, and engage in civic discourse.

Addressing this issue entails, in part, having initiatives that provide digital skills training and support, as well as platforms and tools that are specifically designed to facilitate the participation of marginalized communities.

Social media campaigns and online forums can be used to raise awareness about issues facing marginalized communities and to promote dialogue and discussion. Digital storytelling and multimedia projects can also be powerful tools for enabling marginalized communities to share their stories and experiences with a wider audience.

Digital participation can play a particularly important role in empowering communities to advocate for their rights and access services that are essential for their wellbeing. Digital platforms can be used to connect remote communities with healthcare providers and to facilitate access to information about agricultural practices, weather patterns, and natural disasters.

Overall, promoting digital participation for people and communities at the margins is a critical step towards creating a more inclusive and equitable digital future. By ensuring that everyone has a voice in the digital space, we can work towards a future in which everyone has equal opportunities to participate, learn, and thrive.

We must prioritize digital inclusion for marginalized communities, including indigenous communities, rural communities, and communities with disabilities. This can be achieved by providing resources and support to ensure these communities have equal access to digital infrastructure and skills development.

These communities often lack access to digital infrastructure and the skills necessary to participate in the digital economy, making them more vulnerable to economic and social exclusion.

Digital inclusion is crucial for these communities to have equal access to educational and economic opportunities. By providing resources and support to ensure these communities have equal access to digital infrastructure and skills development, we can promote greater social and economic equality.

One way to promote digital inclusion is through the development of tailored programs that address the unique needs of these communities. Programs developed in consultation with indigenous communities can help ensure that their unique cultural and linguistic needs are met. It is important to ensure that digital inclusion is done in a way that is sensitive to the unique needs and contexts of these communities, and that it does not perpetuate existing power imbalances or exacerbate inequalities.

6. Artificial Intelligence for the upliftment of GIDA

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can play a crucial role in uplifting geographically Isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDA) by providing remote access to healthcare services, monitoring crops, predicting weather patterns, and detecting natural disasters. However, it's important to ensure that AI is developed and used in a responsible and ethical manner, and doesn't perpetuate existing biases or exacerbate inequalities in GIDA.

GIDA often lack access to basic resources and services due to their geographic isolation and economic disadvantage. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to address some of these challenges by providing remote access to critical services such as healthcare, as well as improving agricultural practices through crop monitoring and weather prediction.

However, it's essential to ensure that AI is developed and used in a responsible and ethical manner. While AI can be a powerful tool for progress, it's important to note that it can also perpetuate existing biases and exacerbate inequalities. AI algorithms, for instance, may discriminate against certain groups, such as those with less access to education or those living in poverty.

To prevent such biases and ensure that AI is used for the benefit of all communities, we must take a responsible and ethical approach to AI development and implementation. This includes involving local communities in the development process, ensuring that AI is designed to meet their specific needs, and incorporating safeguards to prevent discrimination and bias. It's also crucial to provide training and education to individuals in GIDA to enable them to fully participate in the development and use of AI technology. By doing so, we can ensure that AI contributes to the upliftment of GIDA and helps bridge the digital gap for people and communities at the margins.

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At the UP Social Innovations Lab, we are committed to creating a digital future that is open, free, and secure for all. Our work in reaching out to isolated and disadvantaged communities has identified critical digital issues that need urgent attention. By prioritizing digital infrastructure, skills development, innovation, data privacy, participation, and inclusion, we can bridge the digital gap and ensure that no one is left behind. With responsible and ethical use of AI, we can

also uplift marginalized communities and make a positive impact. Let's work together to create a digital landscape that truly serves the needs of all people, especially those at the margins.	