

Volume

3

**YOUTH CREATING DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY AT THE
WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY**

Creating your Own National Youth Campaign – A practical guide

**Creating your own
National Youth
Campaign**

WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Creating your own National Youth Campaign

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www.ycdo.net

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Introduction

Welcome to the process of the World Summit on the Information Society. We hope this guide is useful in helping you lead efforts to involve youth in your country!

The United Nations will host the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva, Switzerland in December 2003. The Summit aims to explore the major advances in information and communications technologies and how these are impacting the way we learn, work, govern and play. The Summit will bring together all the world's nations to develop a global framework to deal with the challenges posed by the information society, and fully and equally take advantage of the opportunities it presents.

If there were ever an area where young people were the leaders not only of the future, but also of today, it is the emerging information society. From web development to information access, we are growing up with the latest technologies – and extending them, providing innovative solutions to global challenges. Clearly, if the World Summit on the Information Society is to effect real change, it must involve us - not just in implementation, but also in decision-making.

Every United Nations Summit takes a long time to prepare – in the case of the WSIS the process is at least two years. The hope is that by the actual Summit next December, World Leaders will sign a Declaration and an Action Plan with a series of commitments. However, it takes a lot of time to work out what needs to be included in these documents and to get everyone to agree! Already the first preparatory meeting was held in July 2002, a meeting on Content and Themes was held in September, and the Regional Meetings have been held for Europe and Africa.

Young people have been actively organizing around the process with a group called the “Youth Caucus”. All the members of the youth caucus participate within an online discussion, and some of them attend the various meetings in their region and at a global level to help present the key concerns of young people and encourage governments to take our ideas on board. It’s likely you’re already a member.

It is very important that the Youth Caucus is active on a local national level as well. There are two main reasons for this. First, while the WSIS is a global process organized by the United Nations, all the negotiations and decisions are made by national governments. Generally, decisions on what positions governments will take on different issues and what kind of commitments they are prepared to make are taken back home in the nations’ capitol well before the diplomats and senior officials go to an international meeting. The most we youth can generally do at a global level is change or rearrange a few words or sentences. Therefore, the most important and powerful place to influence the process and include youth perspectives in a substantial way is in our own countries.

Second, national youth campaigns are important because our success will not only be measured by our impact on the Summit’s policy outcomes, but our ability to create concrete projects and new initiatives. We must use the holding of a Summit as an opportunity to bring everyone together in our countries to highlight existing projects, ensure they get the support they need, and develop new collaborative initiatives... empowering youth to use their enthusiasm, energy and expertise to create digital opportunities for all.

In summary, national youth campaigns serve two vital purposes: first to have a real impact in the policy, and second to create a movement to help realize the potential of the information society nationally, with young people leading the way.

We recognize that running a national youth campaign around WSIS is not the easiest thing to do. It might involve many elements, from working with government departments, creating a national youth declaration, running a national workshop or involving youth in the government’s own delegation to the Summit. It might involve concrete projects and community service, and include the creation of an ongoing national network of youth to follow-up the Summit. There are many pieces in the puzzle to consider and plan – and it’ll require a good team, probably some funding, and a lot of communication and outreach.

But this guidebook is here to help. It provides a background on the World Summit on the Information Society, outlines the case for youth involvement, and explains how UN processes work. It then outlines the 10 steps that might be involved in your own national youth campaign with tips, strategies and resources to tap to help you get organized.

We've tried to pull together this framework based on previous practices such as the Youth Employment Summit's country networks, and national consultation and engagement processes for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In addition, it mirrors some of the work TakingITGlobal and the International Institute for Sustainable Development are coordinating in Canada for the World Summit on the Information Society. We have never run anything exactly like this before – so we are all making this up as we go. But we think the ideas in this guide are a good starting point.

While this document allows you to create what we think is a comprehensive national campaign for youth, it is fine to choose only to implement part of it in your country. Maybe there are other national projects to involve youth in the information society that you can tap into, rather than start-over with something new. Maybe you don't have the resources or the time to commit to something large. Maybe you simply have other ideas that will work better for your own situation or culture. The most important thing is that youth should adopt or adapt the framework in this guide as they want to create their very own national campaign plans to be implemented by young people themselves.

The preparatory process of a large international conference such as the WSIS can be complicated, but we also hope it is as rewarding for you participating at the national level, as we are sure it will be for your countries. Writing this guide is the first step in our partnership towards a global movement of national level activities around digital opportunities – we look forward to seeing them grow – so keep in touch!


Nick Moraitis, Terri Willard and Maja Andjelkovic

Toronto and Winnipeg, November 2002


Background

WSIS is an opportunity to discuss a global action plan around information and communications technologies. There are many important reasons why young people need to be involved – and youth have already begun to step up to the challenge.

The 1st World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) will be held in Geneva, in December 2003, organised by the United Nations. It seeks to provide a framework for governments, non-government organisations and associations, companies and others to address the following question: What values and actions do we embrace to ensure that the Information Society becomes a vehicle for democracy, justice, equality, and respect for personal and social development?

 **UNCED Youth Sourcebook**
iisd1.iisd.ca/youth/y_sbk000.htm

Previous United Nations World Summits have included the 1992 World Summit on Environment and Development (also known as the Rio Earth Summit), and the World Conference on Women in Beijing during 1995. In September 2002, the UN held the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. Each Summit has had a major impact - generating new commitments, forging partnerships, and focusing the world's attention on its vital concerns. We can expect no less of the WSIS when it comes to issues such as the digital divide, education, the media, and the new economy.

 **Official WSIS website**
www.wsis.org

In the lead-up to the Summit itself there will be a very significant process of "preparation". In three global Preparatory Committee conferences (PrepComs), each likely to involve more than 1000 people, the world community will firstly set

an agenda for the Summit and then prepare concrete projects, declarations, resolutions, and potentially international law, to be officially launched in December 2003. The WSIS PrepComs will bring forward many of the best ideas being advocated at regional WSIS meetings (such as the Pan-European meeting) as well as through other ICT forums, working groups, and consultations (e.g. United Nations ICT Taskforce, G8 Digital Opportunities Taskforce, African Information Society Initiative).

Key topics are likely to be infrastructure, access, applications, cultural diversity, ethics, training, intellectual property, freedom of expression, and the role of ICTs in education and employment.

It is expected that at the Summit in 2003, countries will agree to accept two documents. First, they will agree to a "Declaration of Principles". This is likely to be a statement that describes their vision for the information society – basically how communications technologies can help people, and what reasonable international goals might be (for example, it might be to connect everyone to the Internet by 2020). Second, they will agree to an "Action Plan" that will spell out more specifics on how they will achieve their goals. This might include things such as:

- United Nations bi-lateral development agencies promising to increase their aid budgets to help developing countries gain access to information technology,
- Support for small and medium-sized businesses developing locally relevant content and technology,
- Better education in ICTs and integration of technology in the classroom.

Timeline of the Process

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 25-30 May 2002 | African Regional Conference Bamako, Mali |
| 17-18 June 2002 | UN General Assembly Meeting for ICT for Development New York, USA |

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|---|---|
| 1-5 July 2002 | Global Preparatory Committee 1 Geneva, Switzerland |
| 16-18 September 2002 | Content and Themes Informal Meeting Geneva, Switzerland |
| 9-11 September 2002 and 23-24 October 2002 | Bishek- Moscow Conference on the Information Society Bishek and Moscow |
| 7-9 November 2002 | European Regional Conference Bucharest, Romania |
| 13-15 January 2003 | Asian Regional Conference Tokyo, Japan |
| 27-30 January 2003 | Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic |
| 17 – 28 February 2003 | Global Preparatory Committee 2 |
| Around September 2003 | Global Preparatory Committee 3 |
| 10 – 12 December 2003 | World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva) |

The Case for Youth Involvement in ICTs

“The new technologies that are changing our world are not a panacea or a magic bullet. But they are without doubt enormously powerful tools for development. They create jobs. They are transforming education, healthcare, commerce, politics and more. They can help in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and even contribute to peace and security.”

Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, November 2001

In the global information society, young people are often the leading innovators in the use and spread of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Increasingly, youth are adapting and using these technologies (including, for example, telephone, fax, radio, television, film, computers and the Internet) to meet local information and communication needs. But young people can remain an untapped resource if decision makers do not integrate their knowledge, vision and experience.

YOUTH ARE LEADERS IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

If ever there was an area where young people are leaders not just of tomorrow, but also of today, it is in the fields of information and communication technologies. From Cameroonian youth establishing net cafés, to Sri Lankan youth developing television programs, and the youth of Eastern Europe redefining political tactics through online activism - young people are at the forefront of transforming their societies through the information and communications revolution. Technology is what young people have (more than anyone else) grown up with, what they know more about than their parents, what gives them an edge. They are early adopters and adapters of technologies ranging from mobile telephones to email to instant messaging to radio and television.

With the introduction of the Internet, these young people have acquired a powerful new tool to connect and to communicate. Today, young people go online more than anyone else, they stay online longer, and they have more diverse online activities. For many young people, the Internet is

becoming a major source of education, news, and entertainment, as well as a key new domain of communication, indeed community. With the Internet, a youth's community is no longer a physical neighbourhood, but the entire world - and friends might well be on the other side of the globe. Young people are therefore coming face to face with personal experiences - challenges similar to or different from their own - that provide an imperative for action.

YOUTH ARE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Young people are traditionally considered among the most socially conscious and active segments of the population. They are concerned about environmental issues, the spread of HIV and other diseases, the lack of employment opportunities, economic inequality, and human rights. As students and young professionals, many seek to understand these issues and how their choices and actions impact on others in their community and around the world. Given their lack of access to many formal institutions in society, young people have traditionally developed their own voluntary associations to address these challenges.

Increasingly, young people are developing hybrid institutions blending the management and funding strengths of small-scale for-profit enterprises with non-profit goals and outreach abilities. By focusing on their goals, these social enterprises are flexible in their ability to create partnerships in support of social and environmental change. Many youth organisations have embraced ICTs as a possible source of income as they seek to educate and involve others in resolving critical social issues. They want to ensure that the introduction of these technologies in their communities does not further widen existing social and economic gaps. They are thus often at the forefront of linking ICTs to development goals.

YOUTH ARE A LARGE UNTAPPED RESOURCE FOR CREATING DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES

Many youth are already using technology for innovative social causes, often expanding access to information beyond those with personal access to technology. Yet, youth actions to bridge the digital divide often suffer from critical deficiencies:

- Lack of mainstream support – youth led ICT programs are rarely afforded the funding or recognition required to implement or replicate in a substantial or sustained manner.

- Lack of participation in decision making – youth are rarely involved in national, regional and international ICT policy development, meaning youth lack the framework, support and legitimacy required for sustained action, and policy implementation lacks buy-in from this key grassroots constituency.
- Lack of communication – youth effort on ICTs is fragmented, often uninformed by others practice, unconnected to a bigger picture, unable to leverage resources, and find moral and inspirational support.
- Lack of continuity – youth, by definition, is a transitory demographic. As young people gain experience and move into adulthood, they often take their valuable experiences with them, leaving others to relearn the lessons of the past.

Our challenge is to address these deficiencies, recognizing and capitalizing upon young people - a vital stakeholder in creating a more inclusive Information Society. We must find a way to make existing youth leaders in ICTS for development more effective and to rapidly involve more youth in such activities.


🔗 **Secretary
General's
Report
on
Youth**
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/library/56180.pdf>

The pool of potential talent and energy is vast. According to the UN Secretary General's report on the *Implementation of the World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, young people aged 15-24 equal more than 18% of the world population. At least 85% of these young people live in

developing nations where they are up to 40% of the population within their countries. These young people are only beginning to gain access to many forms of ICTs and to experiment with their use in a wide variety of social and cultural contexts.

If we take up the challenge of networking and engaging these young innovators, they will continue to act as development champions and focal points within their communities – leading to a more equitable, connected, and inclusive world.

Youth participation with the WSIS Youth Caucus

 **The strategic plan of the Youth Caucus** www.takingitglobal.org/documents/wsisis/youthstrategy.doc Young people have been actively participating in the WSIS process so far. The First Preparatory Committee meeting held in Geneva, July 1-5, 2002, saw the formation of the *Youth Caucus*, bringing together all the young people participating in the meeting to coordinate activities and prepare positions on procedures, and content and themes.

The Youth Caucus has developed a strategic plan to coordinate its efforts throughout the WSIS process. Since the first preparatory meeting:

- TakingITGlobal has provided full-time secretariat support for the Youth Caucus, with financial support facilitated through the Global Knowledge Partnership.
- Some members of the Youth Caucus also participated in the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the Youth Employment Summit held in Alexandria, Egypt.
- The Youth Caucus was represented at the Content and Themes Meeting in Geneva in September
- The Youth Caucus was represented by about ten young people at the European Regional Meeting in Bucharest, Romania. A panel discussion was held and youth presented their version of what they wanted to see in the final meeting declaration.

The Youth Caucus coordinates its activities and discusses the key issues through a series of online mailing lists.

- Global lists
 - <http://www.yahoogroups.com/group/wsisyouth/> is the primary mailing list for the worldwide Youth Caucus.
- Regional lists
 - <http://www.yahoogroups.com/group/wsisyouthasia/> for young people in the Asia Pacific
 - <http://www.yahoogroups.com/group/wsisyouthafrica/> for young people in Africa

- <http://www.yahogroups.com/group/wsisyouthlac/> for young people in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- <http://www.yahogroups.com/group/wsisyouthmiddleeast/> for young people in the Middle East.
- <http://www.yahogroups.com/group/wsisyoutheuropa/> for young people in Europe and North America.

The primary strategies of the Youth Caucus are:

- Develop a global outreach structure involving youth organizations and individuals active in the area of the information society at a national, regional and international level. Effectively communicate with different audiences, including through a regular newsletter, the media and formal reports.
- Produce national, regional and global youth declarations and input towards the political process, particularly drawing on outcomes of previous youth documents and consultations on information society-related topics.
- Actively participate within all the official meetings related to the WSIS, especially the preparatory meetings and regional meetings. At these meetings, ensure young people are well-prepared and mainstreamed - active within business, government and civil society processes. There should be opportunities for young people to speak within plenary sessions and their own panel discussion.
- Use the Summit itself as a showcase for youth involvement in the information society and a place for learning and the development of new partnerships. Connect with key actors/organizations in society that address information society issues such as national policy and employment practices - including NGOs, trade unions, youth sections of political parties, the business community and international organizations.
- Consider participation in the process of the World Summit on the Information Society as just one small part of a much broader and more important movement to engage youth in creating digital opportunities for all. This movement requires complementary activities including the development of a network and increased recognition and support for concrete youth-led projects.

Creating a national youth campaign in ten steps

This part will focus on guiding you through some of the activities that might be part of a national youth campaign around the WSIS, including how to mobilize young people, running an event, developing a platform and communicating with governments.

Congratulations for getting this far! You've heard about the World Summit on the Information Society, about the need for youth participation, and about the importance of organizing activities in our own countries. Now comes the big challenge – actually thinking about doing it yourself...

Is this really for you?

It is very important to make sure you really are the 'person for the job'. The task is not really very glamorous and certainly not easy – it will require a lot of work on your part, especially until you put together a team of amazing young people from your country to help out.

Some of the skills and qualities of national campaign leaders might include:

- Fluency in English, Spanish, French, and/or other languages.
- Sense of humor and diplomacy
- Ability to work in collaborative teams – particularly in a virtual context

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- Interest in ICTs and experience working with young people from a wide variety of cultures
- Experience with use of ICTs (Internet, radio, television) for development
- Experience managing content for Web sites and/or moderating online discussion boards
- Experience with international conferences and policy processes
- Educational background in political science, international development and/or sustainable development

Make sure you're not duplicating others' effort

Before you begin developing a national strategy, you should make sure no one else is doing the same thing! Chances are some other young people from your country are also involved in the Youth Caucus and are planning some activities of their own. Try and connect up all the activities in your country and work together: you'll be more effective if you form an alliance. To find out about what other youth in your country or neighboring countries are doing you can consult the listing on the Youth Creating Digital Opportunities Portal (www.ycdo.net) from early December 2003. You can also contact Nick Moraitis (nick@takingitglobal.org).

Putting together a team

One of the first and most important steps you're likely to do is put together a team of young people and youth allies in your country to work with you on the national youth campaign. Forming a team is not only important to help achieve the significant amount of work that is likely required for an effective campaign. It's also vital so that you can tap the experience, contacts and resources that come with the individuals you involve. Having a group gives you greater legitimacy because it means other people are involved that support you, believe in and agree with your positions and are helping you organize activities. In other words, the credibility and commitment of the youth campaign will be reinforced and people will simply take our campaign more seriously..

There are at least four types of people to include in a national team:

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- Young people who are leaders of, or very active within organizations, projects or businesses related to information and communications technologies. For example, young people who run telecenters in remote or underprivileged areas, youth who have their own radio programs, or youth who run popular national websites. These young people will form the core of the team and provide the expertise on information society issues.
 - You probably already know many of these young people: contact your friends and see if they know any others!
 - Try searching TakingITGlobal's member database of young people interested in ICTs for Development:
<http://ict.takingitglobal.org/other/sitesearch.html?searchonly=mem&InterestID=22>
 - Trade unions are great networks of young people active in an industry – you can find a list of unions active in the ICT industry at http://www.union-network.org/UNISite/Sectors/IBITS/ICT/EWC_links.htm; if you need help contact Yvonne O'Callaghan, Youth Coordinator of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions at yvonne.ocallaghan@icftu.org
- Young educators and leaders of student (and other youth-run) organizations who offer a perspective on the changing nature of education in the information society, and are also likely able to mobilize many other young students around the campaign.
 - You might look up TakingITGlobal's organizational database for youth organizations from your country
<http://www.takingitglobal.org/opps/orgdir.html?>
 - A good listing of student organizations is maintained by the United Nations at
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/links.htm#STUDENTS>
 - Some student and youth groups you might like to involve include local chapters of AIESEC (<http://dmoz.org/Society/Organizations/Student/AIESEC/>), and Rotaract (<http://www.rotaract.org/central/clubsearch.php3>)

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- Young people who both understand information society issues and concerns, and who have access to politicians; For example young people who participate in government consultation or representation bodies, such as the leaders of National Youth Councils. These young people will help ensure that government leaders listen to the youth perspectives.
 - There are two major “peak” bodies for National Youth Councils. The European Youth Forum lists European National Youth Councils at [http://www.youthforum-
org.ae.psiweb.com/organisation/members.html](http://www.youthforum-
org.ae.psiweb.com/organisation/members.html). The World Assembly of Youth can connect you with others (contact them at info@worldassemblyofyouth.org). Also consider connecting with youth sections of political parties who can often help you lobby the government on youth issues (search Google to find them).
- Allies of youth participation in information society issues. These might include people from government agencies involved in the WSIS process such as Departments of Education, Employment, Technology, Telecommunications, Foreign Affairs and International Development, National Commissions for UNESCO, UNDP field offices, and local and global for-profit companies and NGOs. These people will provide advice on how to operate the national campaign, connections to governments to ensure youth perspectives are heard, and perhaps financial and other support to help achieve your goals.
 - A large document listing the contact information of all the participants at Prepcom 1 – including from your country is at http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/complete_0507.pdf. This will be a very good resource in helping to identify who is responsible for WSIS in your country.
 - A listing of National Commissions for UNESCO is at <http://www.unesco.org/ncp/natcom/pages/natcom.pdf>. You might contact them to see whether they are involved and want to help out with your activities. Note that National Commissions are generally under-resourced.
 - Youth can find listings of UNDP field offices at <http://www.undp.org/toppages/discover/index.html>

- Contact your local (or regional) branch of NGOs such as the Association for Progressive Communications (<http://www.apc.org/english/about/members/index.shtml>)

Once you've put together a team, keep in touch with them online and set up a time to have a meeting. Maybe ask one of the other team members if you can use their office to host the meeting – so that it increases their commitment to the project and makes it seem less like you are 'in charge' of everything. Invite everyone around the table to introduce themselves, their work and their hopes for the WSIS process and national activities

Setting goals and developing a plan

At the first meeting, the main task is to develop a plan for the national youth WSIS process. You should explain the purpose of the meeting, provide some background on the WSIS process, and outline some of the options for a campaign that are presented in this guide. The agenda might include:

- brainstorming potential activities you hope to achieve together
- discussing any projects people are already doing which could link with the WSIS national campaign
- selection of the best activities
- commitments by individuals and groups to take the lead in organizing elements of the strategy
- identification of needs (such as funding), potential partners not represented at the meeting
- creation of a timeline for the national campaign, including a date for the next meeting of the team.

Once you have finished the meeting, you (or someone else from the meeting) will need to write a Plan for the national youth campaign. The plan will include brief information about the Summit, a listing of the key goals for the campaign, a summary of some of the activities planned, the timeline, the budget and a listing of all the main people and organizations involved. The plan should be between three and ten pages long. When you've finished writing it, create a 1 (or at most 2) page summary.

Fundraising

It is normal that implementation of your plan would require additional resources, for example to employ a young person to act as a part-time coordinator of the campaign, to hire a venue for a national workshop, or for the travel for a young person to participate in one of the Regional meetings. You may be able to obtain some of these resources as in-kind donations of time or space through your network. In other cases, you may require a financial contribution from an outside source. The important thing is that you clearly describe the importance of obtaining funds, justify why the funding is required and explain how it will be used.

You should seek a reasonable amount of funding and certainly enough to cover all your costs (If you don't get it all, at least you tried). The reality is that in some countries you will be able to raise more than within others. This depends both on the wealth of the country (and the cost of running activities) and their level of interest in the WSIS. If you want advice on your specific country situation please email Nick Moraitis (nick@takingitglobal.org).

You might submit your plan with a cover-letter requesting the funding (or part of it) to potential donors such as:

- The government department in your country responsible for youth, or the department that is responsible for the WSIS.
- The embassies of some developed countries such as Switzerland, the Netherlands or Canada. Some of these governments have mentioned that some funding might be available for national-level processes for WSIS.

Again, Nick (nick@takingitglobal.org) will be able to provide some advice on other people who might sponsor you.

However, the best source of ideas and contacts will come from within your country – especially your team and their networks.

Connecting with your government

Meeting and talking with your government is a vital part of any national youth campaign. As previously noted, it is national governments that have the power to take decisions at the United Nations. They will be submitting

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regular input to the WSIS Secretariat on the different documents being created. At the preparatory meetings in Geneva, national governments will negotiate a text for the Declaration and the Action Plan that they can all agree upon.

It is likely that your government will share the perspective of the young people in the country on most issues – and you should promote the idea that you are their partner in achieving an information society. Of course, you can use many of the arguments used in Chapter 2 of this guidebook to highlight the very important role of young people in an information society and the need for youth to be actively involved in decision-making processes.

On a minority of issues, it is likely that you will want to convince your governments of a different stance than that they are already taking. Rather than be confrontational, simply provide yourself as an expert and make the suggestion in a well-argued manner. Your goal is simply to point out how they might do it differently – after all, they may have just not been thinking of other options or maybe they didn't have all the information they needed to understand the issues.

In fact, so far it seems that few governments have allocated the 'right' people to be responsible for the WSIS. While the WSIS involves a large range of important issues that cross many government departments (education, technology, telecommunications, employment etc) some governments still have very technical people at the Dept of Communication responsible for the Summit because it is being hosted by the UN International Telecommunications Union. Therefore, your team of vibrant and knowledgeable young people can in fact play a vital and necessary role for some governments by simply explaining to their delegates and focal-points exactly what the 'information society' is all about and familiarizing them with some of the key content and themes. Of course, you should not present yourself as an expert in areas outside your own experience. 😊

Particular areas you might like to focus on helping your government understand are:

- The need for youth to be a special theme, highlighting the particular leadership of young people in the information society thus far, and outlining strategies to tap the potential of youth as a resource for its continued development.

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- The particular concerns and issues of young people in your country related to the Information Society as outlined in your national youth declaration. Preferably pick two or three “priority areas”.
- The concerns of young people at an international level, with a particular focus on educating governments on some of the broader implications of the information society that might not be of particular importance to your own country but which are important to others.

To connect with your governments, refer to the contact list for participants at the first preparatory committee meeting (http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/complete_0507.pdf.)

If you are attending a meeting of the Summit process in Geneva, also make sure your national embassy knows you’re coming – you can find a list of Permanent Missions to the UN in Geneva at: <http://www.unog.ch/genet/permis/misset.htm>

Holding a national workshop

One of the biggest activities you might like to organize is a national event for young people about the information society. The event could be large or small, dependent on the need of young people in your country and the resources and time you have available to organize it.

The event could:

- Summarize and validate youth input received through national-level consultations and e-consultations
- Develop concrete recommendations for refinements to your government’s domestic policies influencing the emergence of an equitable and sustainable information society
- Develop recommendations for your governments’ positions on the international WSIS statement of principles and action plan
- Provide an opportunity for young information society leaders to meet, share experiences, and explore potential future partnerships
- Engage your countries’ media in understanding/reporting on the WSIS process

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- Provide an opportunity for practical training or workshops on technology, media or education subjects.

Event organizing is a major project and you should not underestimate how complicated or time-consuming it will be. Begin planning well in advance. Things to consider include:

- The timing of the event – how does this event fit within your wider timeline? Is it far away in advance for you to plan and organize it properly?
- The location – where will the event be held? Is it important to have it in your nation's capitol so that politicians might attend and listen to youth perspectives? Or is there a more central city that would allow participants to travel there more easily? What kind of venue will it be held in – can you get a space donated?
- The participants – how many will you invite? If you invite many, it will be more expensive, as well as more difficult to secure agreement if you are trying to create a declaration. If you invite few, you will have a smaller impact initially but it might be easier to organize and you will have a more 'focused' experience.
- The agenda – what are the topics on the agenda to discuss? How will you determine them? How will you ensure the agenda is flexible in case some participants want to discuss other topics?
- The activities – in addition to developing policy statements, are you planning to hold workshops to help participants have practical experiences, such as learning new skills, sharing knowledge, networking and training?

You should ensure that the participants are representative of the broader national youth population with respect to age, gender, ethnicity, region, and area of expertise within the information society. In particular, encourage young women and ethnic minorities and indigenous people to participate because they have specific concerns about the information society. At the same time, you may need to make sure that your event caters to different languages, different cultural approaches, and different levels of technical literacy and understanding.

Developing a national youth declaration

One of the important tools you will create through the national youth campaign is a National Youth Declaration on the Information Society. This declaration will summarize all the thoughts and perspectives of the young people involved in the campaign related to the pressing issues, and key opportunities presented by the information revolution.

In the appendix on page 28 you will find a list of documents and declarations created by young people at a range of previous forums and events. This might provide inspiration or a basis for your own declarations.

Some areas you might consider are:

- Access and connectivity
- Producing Content
- Improving Education
- Creating Employment
- Effect on health
- Multilingualism / Diversity
- Environmental impact
- Privacy

The declaration should be developed after a range of consultations for example:

- Create a postcard-sized questionnaire to distribute in schools or with local youth organizations asking them to write "their vision of the Information Society" or asking them to number their priority issues in order.
- Organize an online consultation across an e-mail mailing list with two or three weeks of focused discussion. You could also create an online discussion group the YCDO.net website.
- Go on the radio and invite people to call-in and discuss some of the key issues.
- After consultations, you should discuss the Declaration at the National event (if you organize one) or within your team to collate and finalize all the writing.
- Once it is complete make sure it is translated into your countries' major official languages and:

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- Upload it to the initiatives area on YCDO.net
- Print it and distribute it to all the members of your team and youth organizations in your country. If you can, send a copy to everyone who participated in the consultation so they know that their thoughts are being represented and heard.
- Send it to your governments with a cover letter, and preferably arrange to meet with some officials to present the document and discuss the issues it raises and how these might be included in their own positions.

Include youth on government delegations

One important objective of any national level campaign is to encourage governments to include young people within their own official national delegations to the important preparatory meetings and the Summit itself.

Having a youth representative is important for young people because it provides a direct link to the intergovernmental decision-making process. Young people who participate within government delegations are able to access parts of the meeting that others are not, they have more direct communication and access to ministers and senior people within their own governments and other governments, and they have easier access to logistics such as phones, faxes, and computers! ☺

The United Nations General Assembly has called for young people to be regularly included on government delegations to international meetings, with resolutions beginning in 1968 and continuing to the present day. These commitments were recalled and affirmed in Agenda 21 signed at the Rio Earth Summit. More than 40 governments included youth representatives on their delegations to the last major United Nations Summit, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and even more included youth on their delegation to the Special Session on Children.

In the case of the WSIS, young people have a lot to tangibly offer government delegations. As has been noted many times in this Guide, young people are at the forefront of the information society, and would be quite regular for a young person to be 'expert' on information society issues – certainly relative to the diplomats at the UN. Youth 'experts' are often less politically-connected and more practical, meaning they may be in a position to offer less biased perspectives.

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You should encourage your government to include a young person on their delegation. If they accept the idea, you should develop a transparent process that accepts nominations or applications and has a selection committee that conducts interviews and makes a final recommendation to the government. You should develop guidelines for the Youth Delegate with a list of responsibilities and duties and make sure the delegate sticks to their commitments.

At the same time, while being on the delegation is useful, the most important thing is ongoing good relationships with the key people from your government working on the WSIS. You should be able to communicate with them both in your own country and meet informally with them at any international meetings.

Communicate effectively

Considering this is the World Summit on the *Information Society*, it seems almost too obvious to note that communications technologies and the media are very powerful and empowering tools that can support your campaign. Your two communications goals would be to:

- Ensure that you effectively communicate the importance of the World Summit on the Information Society, and your activities to everyone that might be interested.
- Ensure you create opportunities for dialogue and interactivity – it is important to allow many people to participate, including those who are not able to attend even national, let alone international events.

Some communications activities might include:

- Creating an effective “brand”. You might like to come up with a more exciting name than “National Youth Campaign for the Information Society”, something that has a better ‘ring’ to it. Your brand would also include a logo.
- Develop your own newsletter that highlights your latest activities, news from the WSIS process internationally, some of the key concerns you have, a spotlight on a concrete youth-led ICT project in your country, a calendar of upcoming events, and a listing of opportunities to get involved.

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- Upload progress reports, pictures, documents, links and other information about your activities to the YCDO.net website.
- Use the media to publicize your involvement in the WSIS process. Send out a press release and tell the media when you hold your event, launch your declaration, or participate in an international meeting. They'll be excited to hear about what young people are doing to help create an information society. Make sure they focus on some of the concrete projects your team members are doing as well as the policy process.

Connect with the global process

Your participation at a national level is vital, but it is also important that you and your team are able to participate at a global level. You should try and raise funds to help at least one of your team members attend at least one of the meetings being held in Geneva over 2003. This way, you can share the perspectives of young people from your country with youth all over the world – and at the same time highlight the positive projects youth in your country are leading with information and communications technologies.

- You should keep reading the WSISYouth mailing list because many pieces of important information about the global process come over this mailing list. To join, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wsisyouth/add/>
- Everyone who participates in a meeting at the global level needs to be a representative of an organization which is registered or “accredited” with the United Nations. The deadline for new organizations to register for accreditation for the Summit is on the 15th of December 2002. Even if you make the deadline, it will be difficult for many youth organizations because you must have been in existence for more than two years, and have accounting and many other formalities. If you do think you will fit the rules, please DO apply for accreditation. Details are at <http://geneva2003.unige.ch/MEMBERS/registration.php>
- For those young people who want to participate in the process but do not have an accredited organization, there are still some other options – such as participating in the delegation of an organization that is accredited.

- Generally youth will have to fundraise for their own participation in the international meetings and will also be responsible for their own visa applications (which can sometimes be quite complicated).

Using the Summit to grow the national movement of youth creating digital opportunities

Last, but certainly not least, a key part of your national youth campaign will be to create a legacy from the WSIS process. In essence, you'll use the WSIS process and the many opportunities it presents to support the development of concrete ICT projects led by young people in your country.

The WSIS is a good opportunity for this because:

- It will bring together young people active in the areas of ICTs to work together around the policy process, so you will get to know each other – opening opportunities for practical collaboration in the future.
- It will raise the profile of young people as leaders of the information society in your country, and connect you with many senior people at relevant government departments, UN agencies and NGOs. While this contact will also initially focus on the policy side, it will provide the opportunity for you to meet them and for them to understand the type of projects you do and the support you need.

As part of your national campaign you might like to establish a couple of small scale projects (or large ones if you are ambitious) that you want to implement that have an information society theme. Here are some examples:

- Establishing a mentor scheme for young people with computer skills to teach computer classes at schools.
- Creating a computer recycling program whereby young people donate older computers (either their own, or those they collect) to schools, other youth, or community organizations.
- Developing new software or websites for community organizations, governments or schools.
- Setting up a tele-center for young people in the region providing free or low-cost access to the Internet or computer technologies.

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- Establishing a printed newspaper or poster-paper for youth (or the general population) in their town discussing current events.
- Creating a local website or network for youth promoting organizations or projects to get involved with. You could help develop TakingITGlobal country sites (<http://local.takingitglobal.org>)

Linking with Global Youth Service Day 2003

You might consider developing a project that picks up some of the themes of the World Summit on the Information Society for Global Youth Service Day, which is late in April 2003. GYSD is a global initiative coordinated by TakingITGlobal's partner, the Global Youth Action Network. Millions of young people participate in community service activities. More information is at <http://www.gysd.net> – you can download the report and see what happened in your country in 2002, as well as find national contact details for organizers.

In the past, some national organizers have run activities to train other young people with computer skills, wire a school, train street children in radio skills, and raise funds for new technologies or a school. You can probably think of many other creative ideas! Another idea would be to run your national WSIS youth event around the same date as Global Youth Service Day.

Why link these things up? First, you can tap into the existing coalition of national youth organizations who are responsible for GYSD to help with your plans. Second, there may be some small funding available for national activities – and associating yourself with GYSD will certainly give you more credibility to raise funds yourself. Third, it will be wonderful to be able to have a day when youth all around the world work together towards building an information society through concrete projects that serve the community.

Follow-up

You should also develop a follow-up strategy for WSIS that includes a larger scale vision of projects that young people could implement on a nation-wide basis to help promote an information society in your country. With lobbying, you might be able to convince your own government to implement some of these ideas - and you might be able to attract funding and enthusiasm from major organizations participating in the WSIS. As part of the IISD/TIG/GKP Youth Creating Digital Opportunity Partnership, a young person will soon start work at the GKP Secretariat (<http://www.globalknowledge.org>) to help broker partnerships between youth-led ICT projects and proposals on the one hand, and mainstream initiatives and donors on the other.

Overall, our goal is to turn the WSIS away from being JUST WORDS – and increasing the focus on ACTION – not just after the Summit, but NOW.

Tapping into TakingITGlobal for support

TakingITGlobal is providing some secretariat and campaign support for the Youth Caucus at a global level. We are extremely enthusiastic to be able to play this role because we think young people have a lot to offer this World Summit – and a lot to gain from it. As part of our work, we are creating a series of Guidebooks like this one to help young people participate in various elements of the meeting.

If you have any questions about the WSIS process, in particular about setting up a national level process, please do not hesitate to contact Nick Moraitis (nick@takingitglobal.org) who is TakingITGlobal's project officer for WSIS and the facilitator of the Youth Caucus. At the same time, please understand that we can only help in small ways. We are still looking for funding to support our own involvement, so if funding is what you are after all we can do is give you a couple of ideas on where you might seek it yourself. And please make sure you read all the information in this document and those linked to it carefully before you send questions.

One of the most powerful things TakingITGlobal (together with our partners IISD and GKP) is providing is the Youth Creating Digital Opportunities Portal at www.ycdo.net, launching in early December 2002. This portal is a global online community of young people active around information society issues. A lot of the information, frequently asked questions, documents and practical logistical information on the WSIS is available or linked to from this website. Further, there is a large database of organizations, events, and funding opportunities on the website. Make sure you visit it, become a member and select your interest as "ICTs and Digital Opportunities".

Thank you and good luck

We really hope that you have found this guidebook useful in thinking about the development of your own national campaign around the World Summit on the Information Society. It is your dedication to the development of a inclusive and exciting information society that is at the heart of the Summit and what makes the youth participation so vibrant and productive. The important thing to remember is that your national campaign needs to be

YOUR OWN – responding to your own local needs and circumstances. We wish you the best of luck with it.

Appendix 1: Documents and Declarations

- Report of the UNESCO Youth Forum 2001
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001239/123995e.pdf>
- Youth Building Knowledge Societies Report
http://www.iisd.org/pdf/ybks_report.pdf
- Youth input into the G8 Dotforce
http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2001/networks_youth_dotforce.pdf
- ITU AFRICA 2001 Youth Forum Declaration
<http://www.itu.int/AFRICA2001/forum/youth/declaration.html>
- ICT Policy and Civil Society Policy Workshop Declaration
http://africa.rights.apc.org/workshop_dec_eng.shtml
- First Meeting of the African Development Forum
http://www.un.org/depts/eca/newweb/html/adf_panel_summary_no16.htm
- IYPF ICT Agenda Paper and/or relevant resolutions
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IYPFoundation_Discussion/files/IYPS-2001-Resolutions.doc
- Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/forum/dakar.doc>
- International Youth Parliament ICT Working Group
http://www.iyp.oxfam.org/issues/tech_solutions.asp
- Youth Employment Summit
<http://www.youthemploymentsummit.org/gkr/res/bg.ict.ta.pdf>
- World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/library/wpay.pdf>