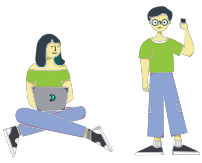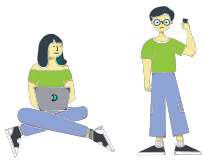# First Youth IGF Myanmar Summary Report

# Forum Highlight

This report outlines the results of the first, successful Youth IGF national event in Myanmar, held on (2~3 April, 2022). Working under very difficult conditions, the most important success was the event itself – the yIGF Myanmar volunteers overcame many challenges to hold an inspiring event that introduced important Internet Governance concepts and topics to youth across Myanmar.

**Main outcomes:**

- Youth NRI registration for UN recognition
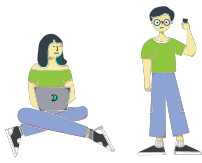- First Youth IGF Myanmar
- Summary Report

# Acknowledgement

First of all, we would like to acknowledge and give our warmest regards to **Jennifer Chung (DotAsia Organisation**) who helped us significantly in the UN recognition process. Secondly, all committee members are delighted that we were able to implement one of the goals of our initiative: **The First Youth Internet Governance Forum in Myanma**r despite a lot of hardship and challenges especially  the political turmoil and during the Covid-19 pandemic period. Thirdly, we would like to show our gratitude to **Tulip** (nick name) who supports and provides advice in our activities. We are also thankful to the **Foundation** that supported the seed fund to our forum.

We also appreciate the valuable effort of  the forum volunteers who contributed their time and efforts to successfully hold the yIGF Myanmar forum. We would like to show appreciation to the local and international speakers from the Internet governance community who shared their valuable knowledge at our first Youth Internet Governance Forum in Myanmar. Without their help, the forum could not be a success.

Although we  have contributed a lot of  effort to organize  this forum, it would not have been possible without the kind support and encouragement  of many individuals and organizations. Therefore, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of them.

We are pleased to  express our gratitude to the United Nations IGF Secretariat for supporting the website, contact email, mailing list addresses and Zoom platform to yIGF Myanmar. In addition, we are delighted to  thank NordVPN for VPN sponsorship with the help of DotAsia Organization for our network security.

**What is yIGF Myanmar?**

yIGF-Myanmar is one of the Youth Internet Governance Forums (IGFs) like IGFs from other nations which is trying to organize a specific forum that discusses the issues pertaining to the Internet arena from the youth's point of view. It has been recognized as an official IGF initiative by the United Nations IGF Secretariat on 9 March 2022 (www.intgovforum.org/en/content/youth-initiatives). yIGF Myanmar mainly focuses on Internet Governance advocacy and discussion on Internet-related issues which are needed for the local youth community in Myanmar, at the same time getting involved in regional and global Internet governance dialogues.

**Vision**

- To advocate Internet Governance for a meaningful, inclusive, trustworthy and safer Internet through yIGF Myanmar.

**Missions**

- To raise awareness of Internet Governance policies and issues among young people.
- To bridge the Internet Governance community and Myanmar youths for shaping the harmonious  Internet community.
- To encourage Myanmar youths in order to participate in the Regional and Global Internet governance dialogues and raise local internet issues.
- To empower future generations to organize  the annual Youth Internet Governance Forum in Myanmar in accordance with our core values; open, transparent, inclusive, bottom-up and steering the multi-stakeholders collaboration.

Motto : "*Get involved and Raise Your Voice for the growth of the Internet Community*"
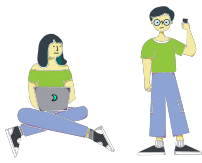
# Introduction to Organizing Committee

To align with the NRIs principles, the organizing committee is composed of various people from different stakeholder groups such as technical community, civil society, and the private sector. Having been participating in the regional and global IGF community's engagement activities despite the challenges, the committee members are experienced and highly passionate to develop an initiative of yIGF in their home country. Moreover, they also have the technical knowledge, project management skills, and experiences of Youth's empowerment.

***List of Organizing Committee Information***
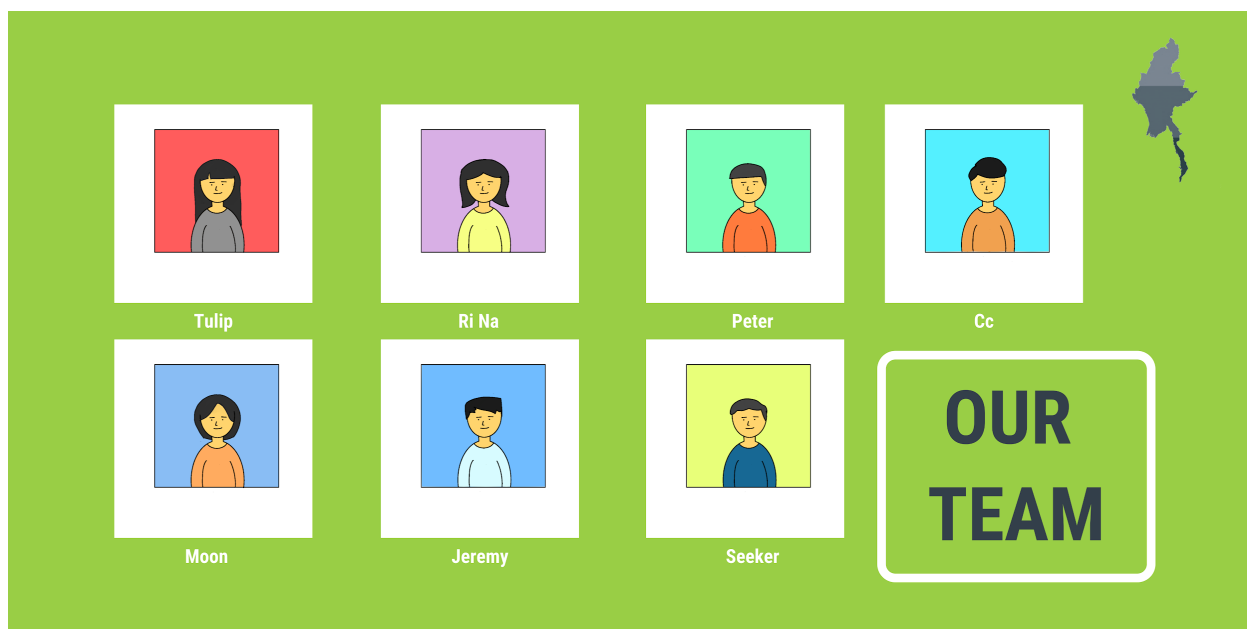


## List of Organizing Committee Member(s)' information

| *Name* | *Gender* | *Stakeholder group* |
|--------|----------|---------------------|
| CC | Male | Civil Society |
| Seeker | Male | Technical Community |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Peter | Male | Technical Community |
| Ri Na | Female | Civil Society |
| Tulip | Female | Technical Community |
| Moon | Female | Private Sector |
| Jeremy | Male | Civil Society |

**List of Forum Volunteers**

Forum volunteers are dedicated to helping the 2-day online forum activities such as facilitating some sessions, and taking note for collecting the participants' inputs.

| *Name* | *Gender* | *Regions/ States* |
|---|---|---|
| Aung | Male | Mandalay |
| Hus | Female | Yangon |
| Khattar | Female | Yangon |
| Kaung | Male | Yangon |
| Moe | Female | Yangon |
| Moe | Female | Magway |
| Mee | Female | Yangon |
| Theint | Non-binary | Ayeyawady |
| Yin | Female | Rakhine |
| Zar | Female | Kayin |

**About The First Youth Internet Governance Forum Myanmar**

**Project Goal**
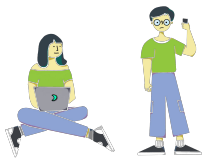
- To introduce Internet Governance to local youth
- To enhance participants' knowledge of Misinformation, Disinformation and Hate Speech, as well as the interrelation between social media and mental health.
- To deliver consolidated outputs to the Internet Governance community

## Stage I : Forum Preparation

We called the applications for the forum volunteer on our website and social media platforms on 25 February 2022. Next, we recruited forum volunteers from different regions and states. Subsequently, we opened the public consultation call in February 2022 for forum theme selection and then developed the agenda. In March, the participants' registration form was opened and we invited 30 participants from different regions and states out of 42 registries due to the limited support for the communication allowance. For the prospective speakers, we invited local and international speakers from different stakeholder groups in March 2022. Afterward, we developed and delivered the information kits for the respective stakeholders to introduce Internet Governance and a better understanding of the first youth Internet governance forum in Myanmar (yIGF Myanmar).

## Stage II : Forum Implementation

The forum was conducted according to the following agenda,

Forum Theme         : "**Youth Dialogue on Healthy Digital Lives**"
Day 1 Sub-Theme     : 'Mis/Disinformation and Hate Speech
Day 2 Sub-Theme     : 'Social Media and Mental Health
Date                : 2nd and 3rd, April, 2022
Start Time          : 10:00 AM (Myanmar Standard Time)/ 3:30 AM (UTC)
End Time            : 12:30 AM (Myanmar Standard Time)/ 6:00 AM (UTC)
Venue               : Zoom Virtual Platform
Duration            : 2 hours and 30 mins
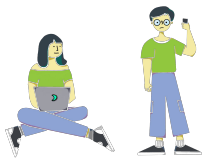
On 2nd and 3rd April, 2022, we organized the first virtual yIGF Myanmar in which 15 participants out of 30 joined. And, two observers attended the first yIGF Myanmar whereas 5 local and 5 international guest speakers shared and discussed Internet governance related topics referencing Myanmar's current situations. For security reasons, we could only host our forum without live streams.
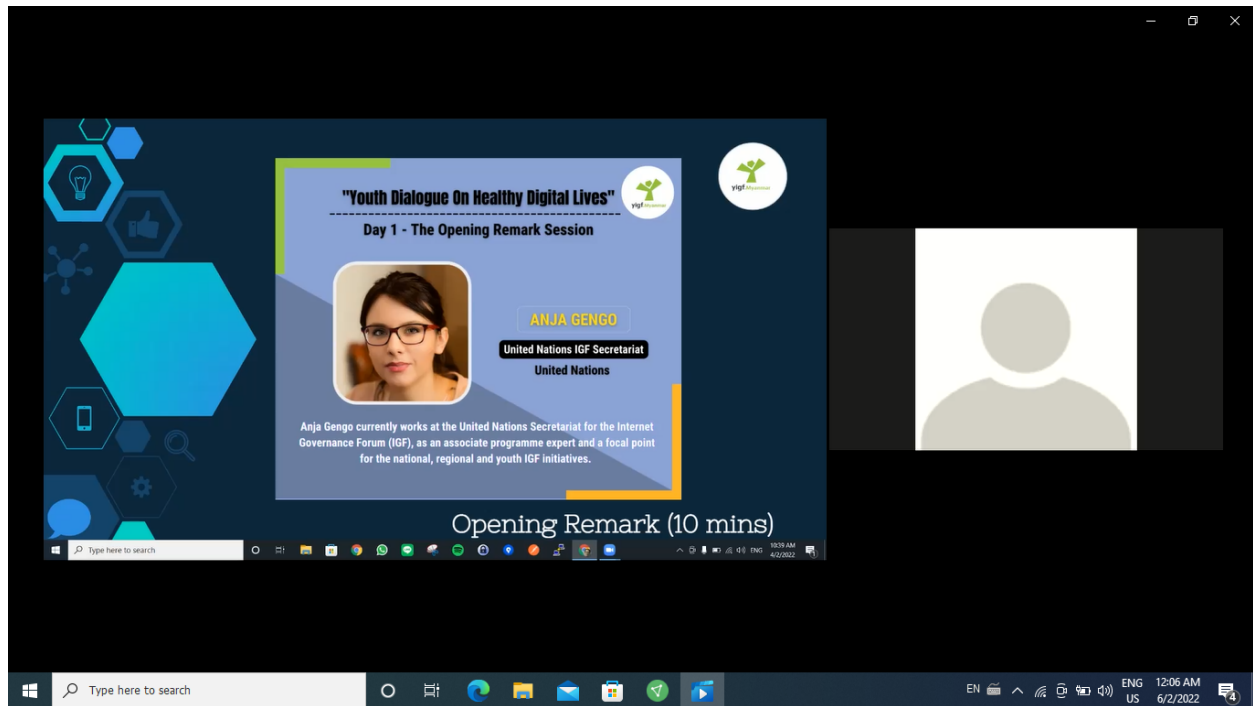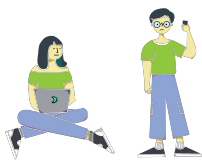
*Screenshot of Forum Day 1 Opening Remark Session*

Forum Day 1 started with Opening Remarks by **Anja Gengo _ UN IGF Secretariat**, where she shared about the IGF 2022 process and how we can strengthen the role of NRIs. Followed by that, **Edmon CHUNG _ CEO at DotAsia Organisation** gave an explanation on what IGF and Multi Stakeholders are and also added some knowledge about Misinformation and Disinformation, the bottom up multi-stakeholder model, and global policy development. The next session was the introduction of yIGF Myanmar and **Ri Na** introduced our vision, missions and yIGF Myanmar journey. Afterwards, **Jenna FUNG _ Digital Policy and Community Relations Manager at Dotasia Organisation** presented the showcase of Asia Pacific Youth NRIs which included the introduction of Asia Pacific yIGF, NetMission Academy and Asia Pacific Internet Governance Forum included. Followed after is the highlight of the forum, panel discussion on misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech. **Ba Hein and Yin** shared about how social media generates, causing information overload as social media contents are UGC (users generated content), and in some cases, some of the editors' views are false news, leading to more mis/disinformation.
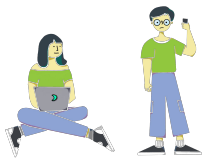
The speaker also shared useful Digital hygiene tips to consider every possible consequence before writing or sharing posts on social media and doing V-I-A which is Verified, Independent and Accountability. After that, participants enjoyed a 10-min break and then discussed related policy questions in their respective breakout rooms, such as whether mis/disinformation and hate speech is spreading rapidly during this political turmoil, brainstorm sessions holding responsible for it, ways we combat the mis/disinformation, and hate speech problems on social media and share their experiences on the internet. Finally, Day 1 successfully ended with the explanation about the presentation participants are to give on Day 2.
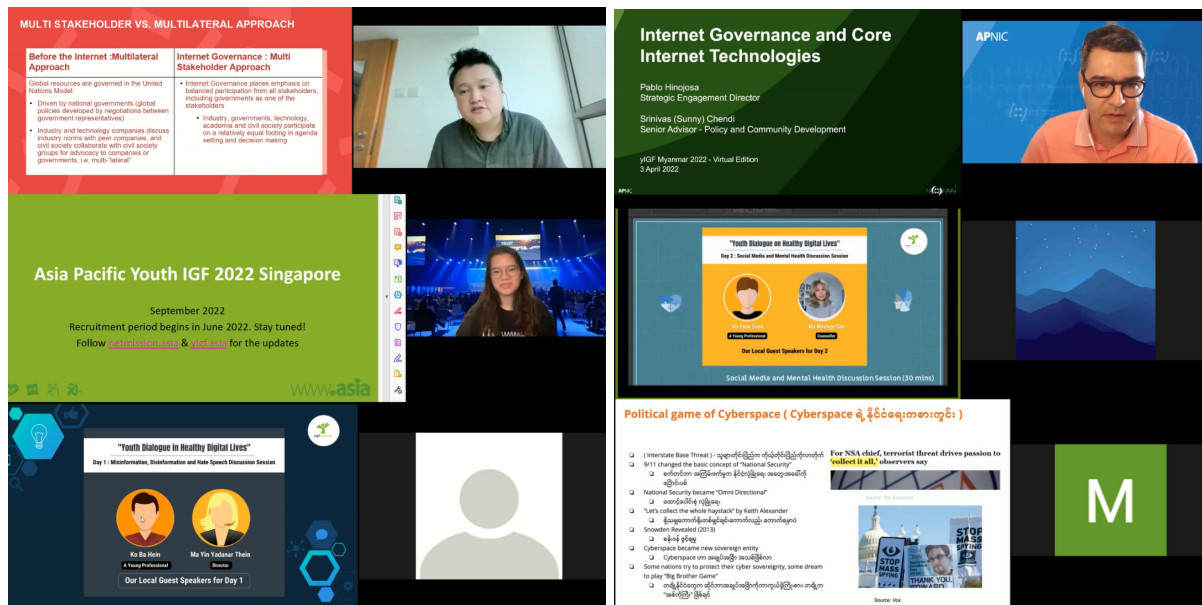


*Screenshots from Day 1 and Day 2 Speaker(s)' sessions*

Forum Day 2 began with the sharing session on Internet Governance – Core Technologies by **Pablo Hinojosa _ Strategic Engagement Director at APNIC and Sunny Chendi _ Senior Advisor - Policy and Community Development at APNIC**. Afterward, **Myo Min Aung** shared the Case Study on Internet Governance. A panel discussion on Social Media and Mental Health followed next with the speakers, **Pyae Sone and Moenge San**, where they discussed the relationship between social media and mental health, the positive and negative influences on mental health using social media, and how we can balance them. Next comes a 10-minute coffee break and breakout room
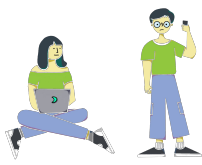
discussion on local IG issues, such as how young people get affected by social media and their experiences regarding mental health due to social media.
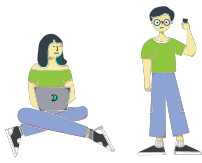
Thereafter, group presentations about Cyber Security, Safer Internet, and Cyber Bullying were given. Later on, there was a 10 min feedback and reflection session. We received feedback from the participants to hold such Internet Governance forums more frequently as the Internet becomes a necessity and the organizing committee shall focus more on the public relations of yIGF Myanmar. After that, we concluded the forum with a closing remark. Overall, the forum was held successfully despite various challenges happening in the local community such as security concerns, Internet Connectivity, and electricity blackouts.
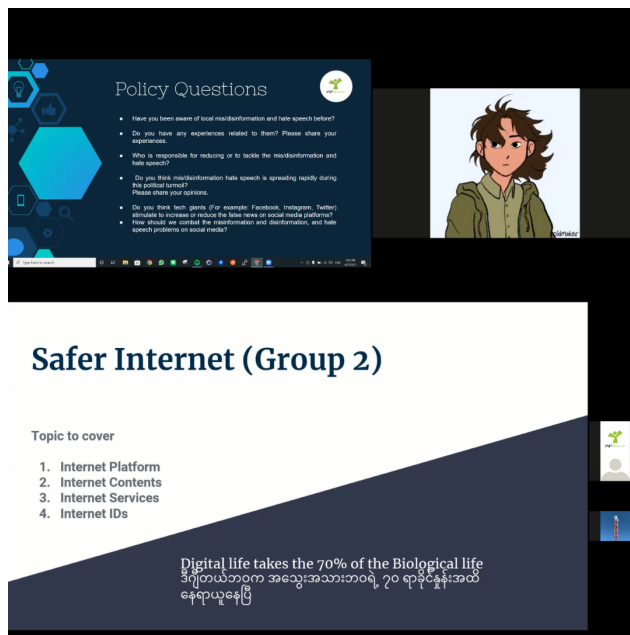


*Group Presentation and Policy Question(s) Discussion*

## Stage III : Post forum activities

To evaluate the performance of the forum organizing team as well as to collect the inputs from the respective stakeholders such as the speakers, volunteers, observers and participants, we asked them to give genuine feedback through a google form. Then, we developed this consolidated document for reporting purposes to the Internet

governance community. We will also deliver this summary report to the Internet governance community through the mailing list addresses and publish it on our website.
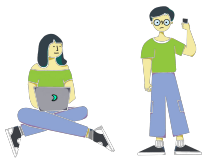
**Speaker(s)' Stakeholders list of First Youth IGF Myanmar**

*List of Guest Speakers*

| Name | Gender | Stakeholder group or Region |
|---|---|---|
| Anja Gengo | Female | Intergovernmental Organization |
| Ba Hein | Male | Civil Society |
| Edmon Chung | Male | Technical Community |
| Jenna Fung | Female | Civil Society |
| Moenge San | Female | Social Enterprise |
| Myo Min Aung | Male | Academia |
| Pablo Hinojosa | Male | Technical Community |
| Pyae Sone | Male | Social Enterprise |
| Sunny Chendi | Male | Technical Community |
| Yin Yadanar Thein | Female | Civil Society |

*List of Participants*

| Name | Gender | Region/ State |
|---|---|---|
| Aung | Male | Rakhine State |
| Amir | Male | Rakhine State |
| Kyal Sin | Non-binary | Yangon |

| Kyi Sin | Female | Yangon |
|---------|--------|--------|
| Khatta | Female | Magway |
| Khant | Male | Rakhine State |
| Mohammed | Male | Rakhine state |
| Maung | Male | Rakhine State |
| Mohamed | Male | Rakhine State |
| Myo | Male | Rakhine State |
| Ywal | Female | Shan State |
| Naing | Male | Mandalay |
| Phyo | Male | Karen state |
| Wint | Female | Ayeyarwady |
| Yee | Female | Shan State |
| Zon | Female | Yangon |

**Outputs**
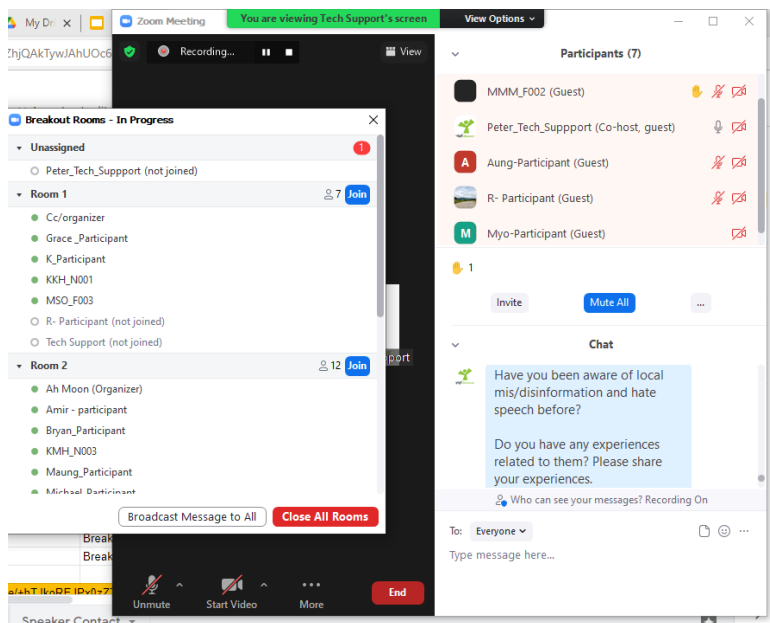


*Screenshot of Forum Day 1 Breakout Room Session*
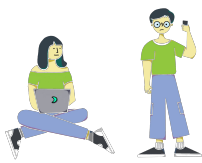
Although the forum targeted youths aging 18-30 from across Myanmar, there was one motivated and aspiring participant who was just 16 years old. We received 42 applications and the actual attendees were 15.
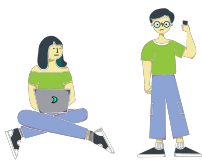
Gender
15 responses



Male
Female
Non-binary

33.3%

60%
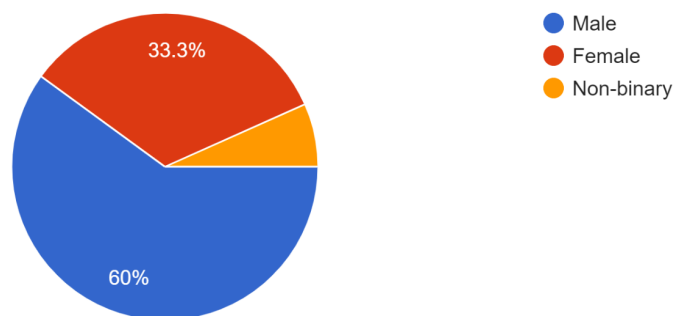
Statistics of Participants' Gender

Do you think the sessions covered the forum themes?
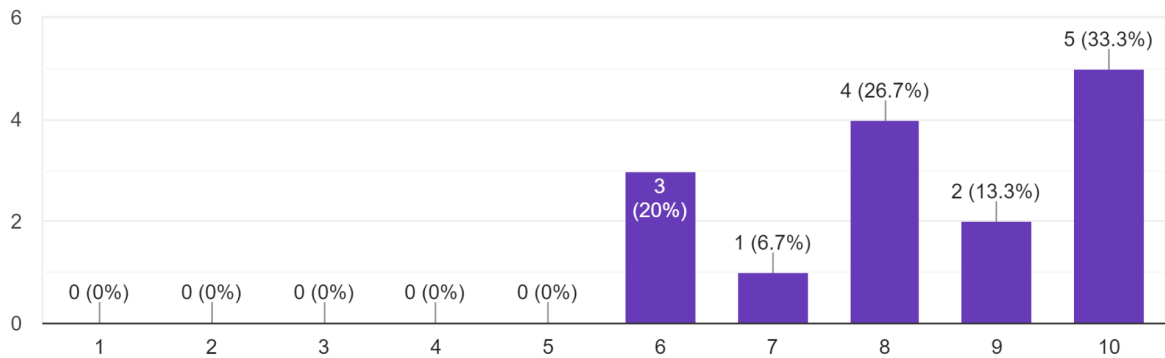15 responses



Yes
No

100%
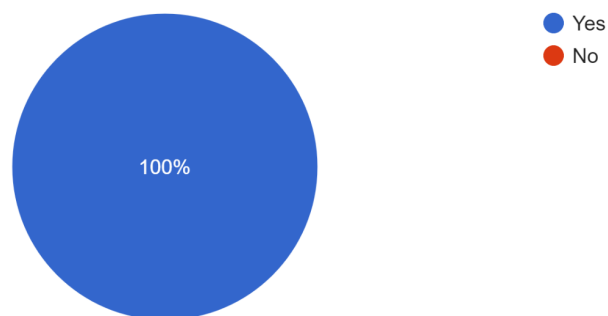
Result of the participants' feedback

According to the participants' feedback, all of the sessions covered the forum themes and moreover, our project goal was met as we can conclude in the latter statistics.

Please score your knowledge gained on Internet Governance from this forum?
15 responses



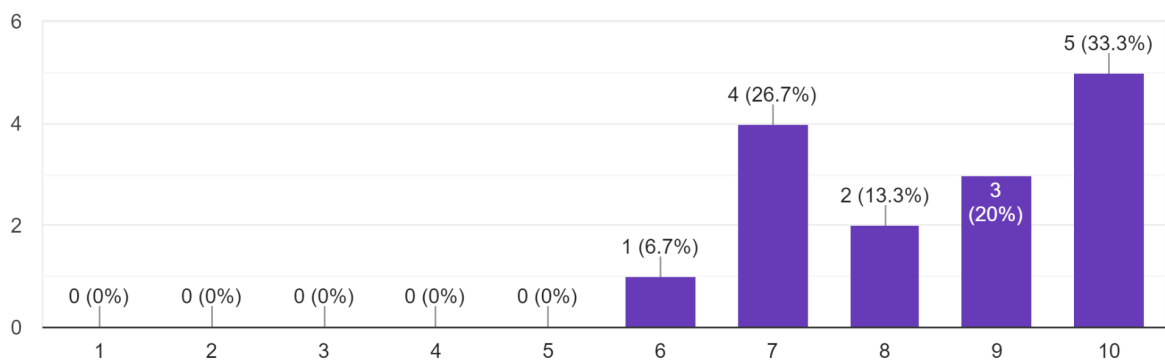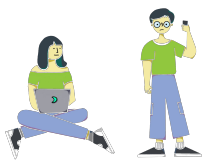*Statistics of the participants: level of knowledge that gained on Internet Governance from the first youth Internet governance forum Myanmar*

Please rate the knowledge gained about Mis/Disinformation and Hate Speech from this forum?
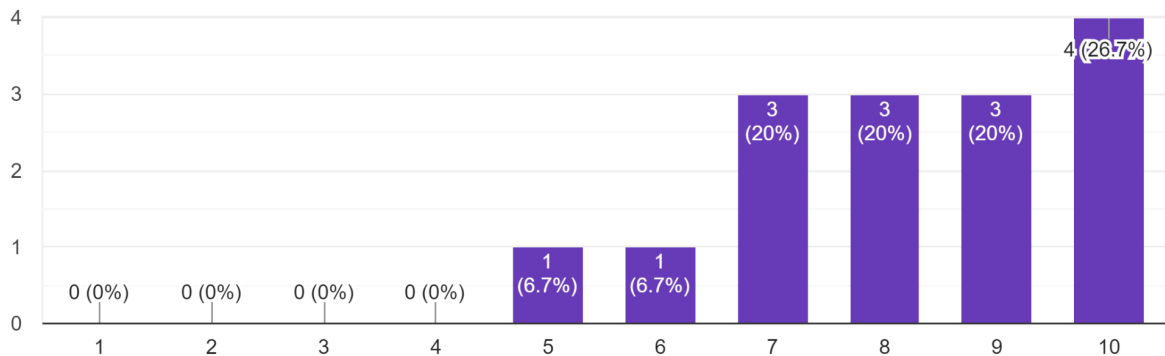15 responses



Statistics of the participants: level of knowledge gained about mis/disinformation and hate speech from the first youth Internet governance forum Myanmar.

Relating to misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, all of the participants have somehow improved their knowledge strongly.

Please rate the knowledge gained about Social Media and Mental Health from this forum.
15 responses



*Statistics of the participants: level of knowledge gained about Social Media and Mental Health from the first youth Internet governance forum Myanmar*

Through the social media and mental health session, they also gained knowledge on some coping skills for navigating the mental well-being and usage of social media.

Do you think the participants presentation session is useful to enhance the knowledge and networking?
15 responses
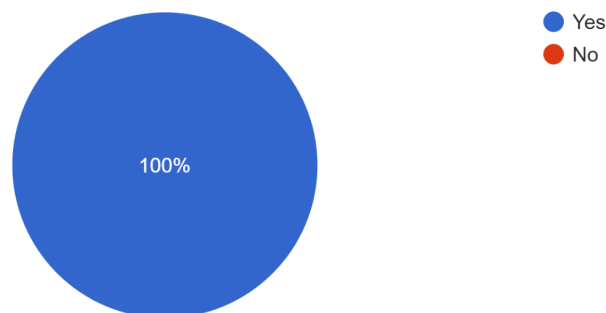


*Statistics of the participants' feedback regarding the presentation session*

**Evaluation of the First Youth IGF Myanmar Forum project**

We used the feedback form as an indicator to analyze the performance of yIGF Myanmar's project. Using these feedback forms, we also collected additional inputs from them for a consolidated final report to deliver to the United Nations IGF Secretariat. During the forum days, we also collected their voices through the breakout rooms where the policy questions were discussed. Internet governance is a whole new topic for the Myanmar youth participants. So, they reflected that they now gained new ideas and knowledge about the Internet governance, local Internet issues and ways to get involved in the regional Internet governance opportunities. They also understood the multi stakeholder model in discussing the policies related to Internet governance and the importance of youth participation in this kind of policy discussion. The participants gained a chance to connect with the people who share common interests. Even though yIGF Myanmar was held virtually, they have expanded their personal and professional network. This forum also provided them to start their Internet governance journey not only in the regional and but also in the global level discussions.

**Way forward**

Some of the forum volunteers and participants were a part of the organizing committee of the yIGF Myanmar in 2020. The other participants have planned to apply to the regional Internet governance programs such as APrIGF Fellowship Program, APIGA, Asia Pacific Youth IGF, etc.. to learn more deeply about Internet governance.

Based on the feedback forms which we collected after the forum, the forum participants show their interests in Internet governance. They also responded that they gained much knowledge about Internet Governance and requested to hold workshops, webinars and dialogues which are related to Internet governance in the future as well. Likewise, the social media platforms of yIGF Myanmar have shared the Internet governance opportunities for the Myanmar youth to represent Myanmar and raise the local issues in the regional Internet governance discussions.
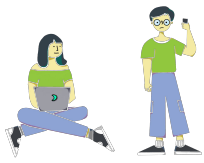
*Highlights of Policy Questions*

Day 1 - Misinformation, Disinformation and Hate Speech Speaker(s)' session

- *How can we differentiate misinformation & disinformation? What is their impact on society, and how can we tackle them? Could you please answer these with the relevant example cases in Myanmar?*
- *How do Social media generate or accelerate them? What will be the trends?*
- *What is "hate speech"? Do we have anti-hate speech law in Myanmar legal framework? How does international law protect the right to freedom of speech while combating "hate speech"?*
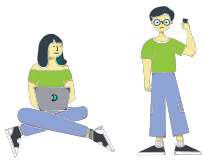
Breakout room sessions (Policy Questions)

- *Do you have any experiences related to* Misinformation, Disinformation and Hate Speech *? Please share your experiences.*
- *Who is responsible for reducing the issues of mis/disinformation and hate speech or to tackle the policy on them?*
- *Do you think mis/disinformation and hate speech is spreading rapidly during this political turmoil? Please share your opinions.*
- *Do you think tech giants (For example: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) stimulate to increase or reduce the false news on social media platforms?*
- *How should we combat the misinformation and disinformation, and hate speech problems on social media?*

**Key Takeaway**

**Speaker(s) sessions**

Disinformation is the deliberate spread of false information and news. For example, the coup d'état has arrested Sean Turnell in Myanmar. Sean Turnell is an Australian economist and former economic policy advisor to State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar. Soon afterwards, Cambodia's government news agency announced that Sean Turnell had been released from jail. When it  tries to control and sort out the problem of misinformation and disinformation, there  are  concerns about freedom of expression

and speech. There shall remain freedom of speech, but it needs to be filtered out the true information. To protect each citizen's rights and reduce government centralized power, it must refer to the ICCPR treaty. It can improve not only negative measurements like fines, penalties but also positive measurements by changing the concept of the government having complete access to citizens' digital information to popular sovereignty. Hate speech is more common among people in Myanmar. They are discriminated against and bad mouthed. Knowing Media Literacy alone is not enough. Myanmar people should be involved in policy-making processes at the program level. Therefore, it is needed to do more policy discussions by the "multi-stakeholder approach."

The Internet never forgets the data. Similarly, a lot of social media is slowly squeezing information out of us. When people start trying to use the apps with gallery access, it is absolutely not worth it. They have access to our information and we are under surveillance. It is also mistaken for thinking that people are using them. For anything that they are not buying, they are the products. Because on the one hand, it is allowed to the government to determine what is right and what is wrong. If it is given them the power to determine news, the news media will suffer a lot. It will greatly affect the people's right to information as the government will only let people know what they desire to spread. As a policy maker, governments need to consider the privacy of the Internet and the impacts in advance. At the community level, they are not even sure if this is fake news or hate speech. It depends on the education and attitudes of each individual. In short, not only policy makers but also each individual has a responsibility. NGOs also have a responsibility. To share on social media, people need to think for themselves first. People also have a responsibility. Also, it was committed that public accountability and information are very important. It is also necessary that Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are responsible. On the other hand, awareness needs to be raised. If the information is incorrect, we need to correct each other that it is wrong.

Day 2 - Social Media and Mental Health Speaker(s)' session

- How do we understand mental health?
- Do you think social media and mental health are linking each other in this digital era? How?
- What is your perception on the positive and negative impacts of using social
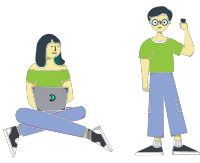
media on mental health?

- How can we balance between the uses of social media and betterment our mental health? What are your opinions?
- Are there any suggestions for navigating mental health issues these days?
- Are there any resources that you would like to share with the participants regarding mental well-being?

Breakout room sessions

- Do you think young people get impacted in their mental health using social media? Why or why not?
- Do you have any experiences regarding mental health due to social media?
- Do you express or post something on social media while you feel mental health problems? How do you behave?

**Key Takeaway**

Mental health encompasses psychological and social well-being. People can evaluate their mental well-being after analyzing their behaviors caused by their emotions. Mental health is very crucial because it communicates with people according to their feelings and emotions. When talking about social media, most people from Myanmar are very familiar with Facebook. It can be called not only Facebook but also an online network where people are interconnected in this social circle. In the social circle, it can get effects in both positive and negative ways emotionally using it. Moreover, social media allows people to access information and share their personal life stories. Consequently, it causes comparisons that lead to anxiety and depression among people. Sometimes, people fear missing out if they are taking a break from social media. It affects our mental health depending on our self-consciousness, acceptance, and so forth. Thus, some people do digital self-care such as taking a break from using the phone.

As human beings, people have fears. Emotional fluctuations are arising these days. When people can not take over these situations, they are getting tired. It is also important to know the coping skills for mental well-being these days. According to a study, it described that if people can reduce their screen time by about 30 mins, they can heal themselves by a greater percentage. People can reduce screen time in some ways such as
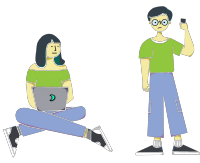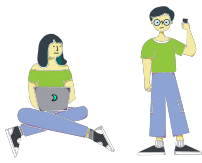
- trying to keep away the mobile device during activities,
- limiting screen time before going to bed,
- take a break from social media for about 3 days,
- spending more time with the family, hanging out with friends,
- pursuing our hobbies for mental well being

On the other hand, without using social media, everyone can be left behind. So, they have to use social media without harming themselves, they have to be aware of toxic things.

A story was shared by a participant when she did not use social media, during the third wave of Covid-19 in Myanmar. She even feared and got trauma using it. The result was just the fear of missing out. Facebook was the most used social media channel these days but she even stopped using Facebook for about 9 months.

Another participant also shared that "Young people get impacted in mental health because of using excessive amounts of time on social media. When there was a bad situation with Covid and political issues, it had seen some bloody news on social media everyday. These days we can't even eat meals and get nightmares everyday."A participant commented that "When you're not mentally prepared, you should quit or delete social media that are affecting your mental health."

**Overview of Project Budget**

We expensed the budget of 3,180,000 MMK for the honorarium for the program team, local speakers and forum volunteers, communication bill support for the participants, etc.

"CLOSING REMARK"

The forum's operation was obviously far from perfect because of the political situation. However, the organizing committee expected that the interest of individuals who participated in the forum's activities would increase and the youth voices in Internet governance could properly get involved and amplified.