

Methodologies used for #BYND2015 Global Youth Summit

Answering the question: what does crowdsourcing a policy statement by young people, for young people actually mean?

What is the BYND2015 Statement?

It is foreseen that one of the key outcomes of the #BYND2015 Global Youth Summit is a policy statement which encapsulates the key issues and recommendations as identified by a worldwide youth community. That is, a statement by youth, for youth.

How would this be done? – Methodology

From mid-July 2013 up until the 11 Sept. 2013 there has been extensive online outreach via a dedicated crowdsourcing platform and social media (more than four million people reached on Twitter alone) where young people have been engaged to identify key challenges and to propose and design solutions.

In line with the summit, the focus has been on how technology can change the world and drive greater socio-economic development post-2015 as well as how young people can better influence decision making processes. A main pillar of the methodology has been about empowering young people and to enable community-driven content through widespread community engagement.

In order to create a truly Global Youth Summit, a number of methodologies have been implemented during the time frame as stated above. The aim of these different yet complementary methodologies was to encourage, facilitate and enable as many young people from around the world as possible, to contribute and have their ideas and inputs heard. With this in mind, the Summit will be truly digitally-inclusive and overcome barriers affecting those individuals around the world who are still unconnected.

How will we track the online discussions?

The main 'community' online hub for BYND2015 is the crowdsourcing platform developed by ITU and built around the challenges identified during off-line workshops and Millennial jams held in mid-June 2013: <http://ideas.itu.int/> - to date there are some 2'500 users registered who have logged almost 1'000 unique ideas (proposing solutions to the challenges they have identified) which in turn have prompted more than 13'200 votes from the community.

In addition to this there is [a BYND2015 community page on Google+](#) where the community can gather before, during and after the Summit to create content and drive the conversation according to their interests. The community has been very active, regularly blogging and discussing issues, and using the community page as a sort of discussion space next to the crowdsourcing platform.

Apart from Google+ we are active on many different social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, and Weibo etc. Using the [#BYND2015 hash tag](#) we will track and measure the conversation to identify

what is being debated and what topics are the most popular. We are working with a social media intelligence company called Ripple to measure, visualize and map the online activity, systematically tracking trends and merging results into the final outcomes.

What about off-site participation?

Remote Hubs:

In order to reach out and connect to those individuals that may not be online, we have implemented the use of remote participation centres known as 'hubs'. Literally speaking, a hub is a physical space that can be used to bring people and ideas together around a common cause. Hubs should ideally provide a co-creative environment and provide a good network connection for link-up with Costa Rica.

Hubs in many ways are one of the more important stories of the Global Youth Summit. They are digital inclusion in action as many of the young people participating are not normally connected. Their voices are now being heard and will contribute to and shape the outcomes.

Hubs also illustrate what empowerment (of young people) can look like – we have provided a platform and tools for young people to run their own events which then feed back into the online crowdsourcing platform, blending the physical and virtual participation. Events are completely community-organized and take place without ITU presence. Young people have enthusiastically grasped the opportunity and are going out and mobilizing their peers to get involved and to make a difference.

The roles and responsibilities of the hubs include:

- Helping mobilize input to the crowdsourcing activities
- Nominating young professionals to lead input to the process
- Collecting the opinion of young people in a region to discuss their ideas for the future
- Facilitating online discussion in a thematic area

To date we have 43 active hubs spread across 31 different countries, as such, it became necessary to meet more frequently and to have individual meetings with hubs instead of one large board meeting to accommodate the increasing number of differing time zones involved and the very different schedules and commitments that individuals have.

The message to those interested in starting or creating a hub was clear: All you need is a motivated group of young people that are interested in ICT plus a venue with good internet connectivity. We made sure members of the ITU youth advisory board were dedicated to support hubs and answer any questions or queries.

The process began with a Youth Advisory Board that acted as the primary mechanism for community outreach and engagement, importantly, the use of hubs was crucial for encouraging discussions in local dialect instead of the traditional UN languages. Initially the board met once every two weeks to discuss any key findings or issues the hubs may have found.

The purpose of the youth advisory board is to identify and mobilize focal points across different

countries, regions and organizations to drive the online conversation and facilitate hubs in their areas. Through this network we will be able to drive conversation on the platform by outsourcing community engagement to groups of active and committed young people.

The roles and responsibilities of the Youth Advisory Board can be broken down as follows;

- Encourage and drive crowdsourcing activity
- Mobilize hubs to participate in the Summit (in local languages)
- Curate and note down key points to report in the Summit outcomes
- Report back during advisory group meetings

Furthermore, in collaboration with Telecentre.org, we also have an additional XXXX remote hubs around the world in XXXX amount of countries. Worth emphasizing, that many of the participants in these hubs are individuals who may not normally be connected. ITU hubs will also allow those unable to attend physically in Costa Rica to directly connect with the event on site and witness first-hand what is happening in Costa Rica, whilst contributing live key ideas from their parallel hub sessions.

Crowdicity:

The purpose of the Crowdicity platform was to generate ideas for each theme of concern to the GYS;

- Get Ahead
- Respect your Environment
- Be Healthy
- Be Smart, Be Safe
- Change your World

Within each theme, there are two questions or challenges that have been put to people in the hope that they will propose ideas or possible solutions to solving these issues. In many ways, the platform has become much more than an idea generating platform, arguably it has become an online hub in its own right. To date we have gathered approximately 1000 ideas that have come from some 2,500 young people. The community itself is in turn voting and commenting on the best ideas, which they are doing enthusiastically reaching some 25'000 actions [comments plus votes] to date.

This means that we have an insight into issues that affect young people from all over the world¹. This has brought an entirely new perspective and dimension to the Summit and has brought young people together from around the world, uniting them in a common cause that highlights the need to use ICTs for the good of society so that everyone can benefit in the future.

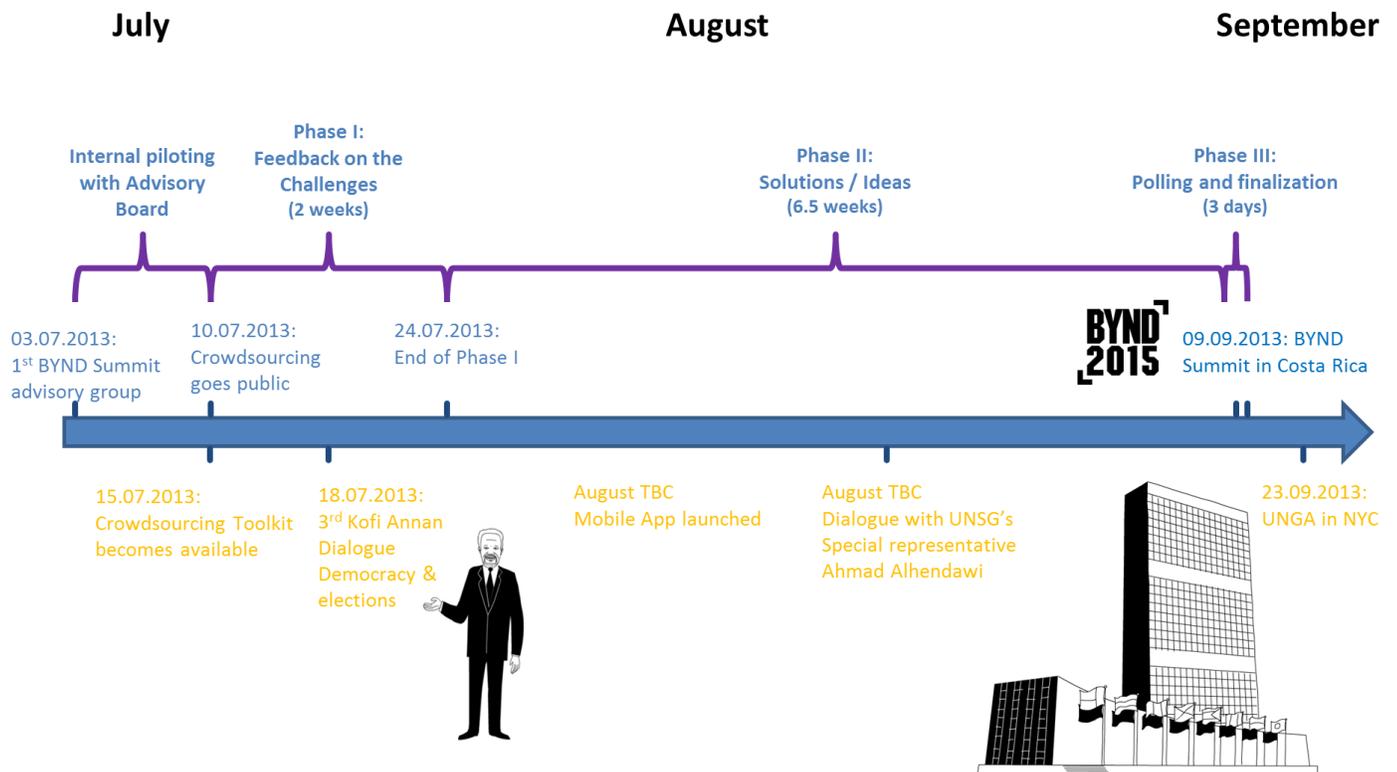
In order to ensure that ideas are accurately monitored, each theme was assigned a moderator to go through and moderate the content that was posted, therefore highlighting the truly original and great ideas that could be of benefit to everyone, and disregarding those ideas that may contain self-promotion or one-line statements that are not necessarily relevant to the ideas platform.

¹ A separate document has been compiled providing insights into what young people are sharing and proposing on the crowdsourcing platform as of 03 SEPT 2013 i.e. noting that consultations are ongoing, therefore a preview only.

The objectives of the crowd-sourcing platform are:

1. Demonstrate the importance of 'ICT/Broadband for development' (#ict4d) in the UN's Beyond 2015 development frameworks (#post2015), by delivering a crowdsourced statement to the United Nations General Assembly in September via the President of Costa Rica.
2. Develop a community of young advocates who can stand up for the role of ICT in the UN's Post-2015 agenda, and inspire others to do the same and can also coach and mentor up-and-coming talents in the industry; a community with whom we are now engaged and can remain engaged with long after the actual summit itself thus potentially benefiting future initiatives and outreach to youth communities on the issue of ICTs.
3. Access has not been taken for granted and significant efforts have been made to include those who are not connected. Through actively driving and enabling the creation of dozens of off-line hubs around the world, with a particular focus on engaging those who are not connected, and then feeding back their ideas and proposals into the online platform, we have ensured this is not just a conversation between those with access about access but the important voices of those who are not digitally included is fully integrated.

The initial stages of the platform were broken down into the following stages;



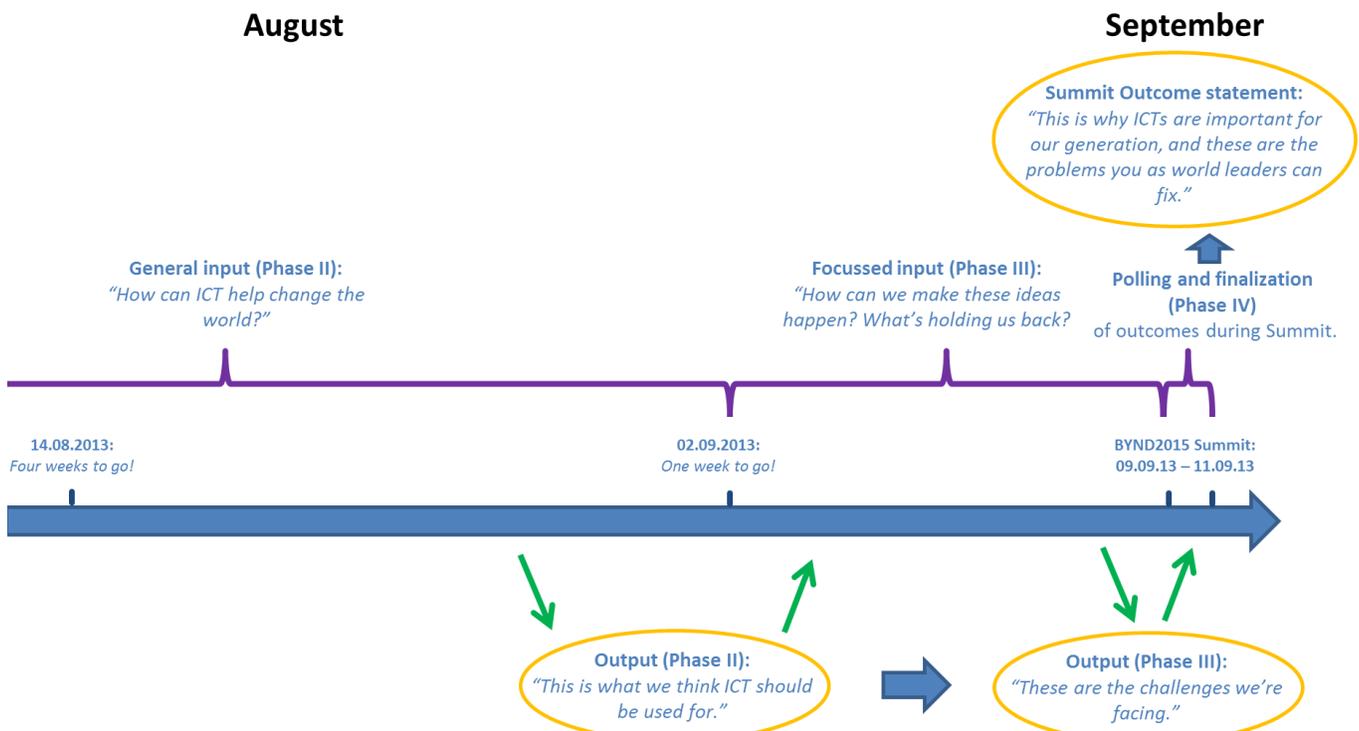
Phase I seeks initial feedback on the challenges in their original form as developed by young people in Geneva. Depending on feedback we will either proceed with the existing challenges or amend them as necessary. Phase I lasts until 24 July.

Phase II will see young audiences providing input to the challenges in the form of solutions and ideas. Other users will be able to critique and vote a particular idea up or down, forcing popular solutions and ideas to the top and helping filter priorities. Thus, solutions will become more focussed, and eventually enter the Summit as groundwork to face further scrutiny. During the Summit, these ideas will meet new ones as workshops and coding sessions focus on addressing the priorities as identified by online youth. Hubs and remote sites will link up via teleconference to provide localized input.

After initial consultation, it was decided that an addition phase should be added to the process. A key finding from the process revealed the fact that many young people are facing the same problems and difficulties, as such, it was deemed a ‘focused’ phase could be added to initiative collaboration between young people, potentially to further their ideas and furthermore, to see if other young people facing these issues could offer any kind of solution.

Phase VI entails polling and finalization which will span the three GYS days. During this session, participants onsite will lead the online finalization and polling on solutions / priorities which will eventually be reflected in the Summit outcomes. Summit participants will be actively involved in the preparatory process, and have a responsibility to reach out to their communities to generate feedback and engagement. Thus, when they travel to the summit they will have networks at home mobilized and ready to take action. Over the three days, the crowdsourcing activities spanning the previous weeks will be wrapped up and packaged in an intelligible statement that can be communicated with the UNGA.

As an additional phase was added and time progressed, a new graphic image was created:



This highlights the very nature of the GYS as it is an entirely new project that is community-driven and constantly moving and therefore requires flexibility, whilst at the same time, a great deal of engagement and moderation to ensure that nothing of importance is left out of the overall statement.

What will happen on-site during the event itself?

The BYND2015 participants online are following closely the nature of the debate as we run up to the Summit. The moderated conversation will be synthesized and used as input in Costa Rica by means of framing the discussion and ensuring that online activity is shared on-site and fed into workshops, discussions and hackathons etc. while those participating onsite will also vote on what they consider to be the best solutions. And again, this will be looped back from the Summit into the online communities, esp. via Google+ where we will continue to measure and refine the data to ensure that we have an accurate overview of what the final outcomes will be.

During the on-site event, there will be an introduction to kick off the youth summit that will feature a panel discussion with high-level speakers and special invited guests to frame the key issues and questions which could be addressed in the session. These introductory panels will be streamed in the 6 official UN languages.

Each day will be split to ensure that each theme is covered, including the global Hackathon. The general format will consist of workshops and group work, similar to that of the initial BYND2015 jam session. This will see smaller groups forming and breaking away to actively participate in roundtable discussions and consultations.

During these breakout periods, the session facilitators and moderators will have the opportunity to visit each group to see how they are getting on. This not only gives the participants an opportunity to discuss the ideas being suggested, they also get the chance to talk with those successful individuals that have and are using ICT to further themselves.

At the end of each session, there will be an interactive wrap-up where the opening panel featured high-level panelists and invited experts, the wrap-ups will feature young people from the workshops themselves, to act as rapporteurs and highlight key findings from the preceding group discussions. Furthermore, during these interactive wrap-ups, there will slots available for the remote hubs that are most active and engaged.

The format for the Hackathon will be slightly different as it will be an intense 24 hour process, however, it will encapsulate the essence of the GYS as it will see collaboration between partners around the world, with events simultaneously happening at the same time, working in unison towards the same goal, in this instance, to create realistic applications that can be used for social good that everyone can benefit from.

How will the statement be drafted?

The #BYND2015 team of the ITU will coordinate closely on-site to ensure all elements of the community-derived content, created through the extensive online and offline discussions and sessions, are fully considered and integrated. This component will be supported and reinforced by in-depth online metrics. The youth advisory board is responsible for elaborating a short written statement that accurately captures the key priorities and issues as well as the proposed recommendations and solutions.

After the summit a more extensive document will be prepared in addition to the statement for presentation in NYC at the General Assembly at the end of September 2013. This will additionally include comprehensive overview of online metrics, illustrative examples of community contributions, overview of the methodology and an outline of next steps. A multimedia video will also be produced to accompany this, similar in style and tone to the promotional video produced prior to the online engagement.

How will we be able to show that what we present is an accurate representation of what was debated by hundreds and thousands of young people?

The combination of human intelligence (core team of ITU bloggers and social media staff, the BYND2015 Youth Advisory Board and Hub leaders etc.) and the in-depth metrics are key to this and we aim to show accurate tracking of all the key data, key words, key conversations etc. that took place across a multitude of social media platforms and the crowdsourcing platform. Furthermore, we have asked each hub leader to post their key highlights from their sessions and discussions on the Crowdcity platform to ensure they are fully highlighted and integrated. During each session on-site in Costa Rica, there will be a young individual reporting on each session and workshop to pick out and collect the highlights or key ideas and themes that should be added to the statement, which will then be fed back to the team that are responsible for writing the overall policy statement, at the end of each day.

Having three main points of reference (crowdsourcing [including hub activity], social media conversation, and the summit event) will allow us to triangulate and maximize the level of accuracy in our findings.

Ends.