

A dynamic and global online community

TakingITGlobal is today, the world's most popular and, without a question, the most dynamic online community of young people making a difference.



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No generation has ever grown up in a world more connected, more complex, and more globalised than the current population of youth. No generation has ever grown up with the means, technologies and opportunities to satisfy curiosities and to learn about the most remote issues and cultures and the most foreign of contexts. More importantly, no generation has grown up with more possibilities to be involved in addressing challenges and to participate in processes that affect them more than today's young people. Multiple factors are responsible for this.



The concerned and interested nature of today's youth drives them to stand up and be counted. The leadership of inspiring innovators pulls together the pieces that bring an extraordinary vision to life. The Internet is the greatest driver of this youth movement. TakingITGlobal is the center of this vast, and fast growing revolution.

Five years ago, two energetic, passionate, idealistic young Canadians had a dream of harnessing the power of the Internet to empower youth around the world to participate in creating a different world. Five years later, their idea has come alive and has given birth to hundreds of thousands of connections, projects, conversations, relationships and forever changed the role of young people in addressing local issues and shaping global affairs. TakingITGlobal is today, the world's most popular and, without a question, the most dynamic online community of young people making a difference. The United Nations has also noticed it. Fortune 500 companies has

acknowledged this. The World Economic Forum also recognises it. And more importantly, a global network of the some of the worlds leading young thinkers, activists and leaders belong to this community.

It is almost impossible to quantify the impact of TakingITGlobal over five years. Because you cannot measure inspiration and its various manifestations. Yet the stories of those involved with TakingITGlobal make it very clear that it has re-shaped their world beyond the wildest dreams and imaginations that Michael Furdyk and Jennifer Corriero held back in 2000 when they launched their project.

TakingITGlobal serves an important role in today's global community. It provides a platform for the youth to connect, to learn and to take action. It provides tools and information that thousands of people would otherwise not have access to. Through TakingITGlobal, young people are engaged in understanding the world they are a part of, and as members of a learning and acting community, they grow to better identify their roles in this complex and often confusing world.

Young people have leapt into the waters of the ICT revolution and have fast become its most effective and important swimmers. More than ever before, youth are using technologies to create learning communities across the globe (www.pioneersofchange.net); to establish platforms for advocacy and pushing for changes in government policies (www.yesweb.org/yescountrynetworks); as well as to engage in a cross-cultural dialogue about matters most important to them (www.chattheplanet.com).

TakingITGlobal shatters the stereotype that youth are drawn to ICTs for entertainment, shopping, and perhaps to plagiarise the odd assignment. The

community of young people at Taking IT Global has a very clear objective: to make a difference in their communities. Their ideas transform to action. ICTs provide the tools and the means to act. Through TakingITGlobal's network, initiatives and partnerships, youth have launched community projects in over 150 countries (www.gysd.net) which is an outstanding achievement.

Events take place globally almost everyday that stop and reflect on important issues affecting our world. TakingITGlobal members are bound to be there (<http://events.takingitglobal.org>). At these events, youth are contributing to a global dialogue and thought process. They are actively participating in shaping the future of communities, nations and our planet.

Some consider five years of growth and existence to merely be worthy of applause, but not worthy of celebration. I beg to differ. Consider where TakingITGlobal has come from, what it has done, and the capacity with which this young organisation has efficiently, effectively and openly had an impact on our world. It has been started by young people with a big idea and little resources of any kind emerging as the bubble burst in the very realm that TakingITGlobal was about—the Internet; existing in a world that has fundamentally been re-shaped by the rise to prominence of terrorism, war, radicalism, nationalism, international conflict and tension.

TakingITGlobal has achieved growth in a global economy that, to be kind, has been sluggish and most importantly, it has captured the imaginations of thousands of people whilst engaging and empowering many more. If you had told anyone that you were about to launch a successful initiative in the midst of such an environment, they would laugh you off as a dreamer. Obviously, the founders of TakingITGlobal are not the only ones dreaming. If the impact and achievement of what TakingITGlobal today has achieved, at five years old, is not worth celebrating, what is?

The future holds greater challenges for our generation. As never before, there is a need for youth to be involved in making a difference in communities worldwide.

TakingITGlobal's role is more important today than it has ever been. A generation that has no sense of purpose is the greatest curse that mankind can ask for. TakingITGlobal offers doorways and spaces for youth to discover that individual and collective purpose. Without the financial support, and otherwise - of friends, members, foundations, corporations, philanthropists and insightful global citizens worldwide, initiatives like this cannot exist. TakingITGlobal, at once, provides an opportunity to both young members and generous people worldwide to contribute to make a better world. The results that have been achieved by the organisation and its network in five years tell this story with an undeniable power. It would be a very worthy investment for anyone with the means and resources to support and contribute to TakingITGlobal's efforts.

As globalisation continues to knock on doors, classrooms and neighborhoods worldwide, and as youth begin to wake up to the realisation that the world is theirs to hold and to mould, TakingITGlobal will continue to be a force that inspires, informs and involves millions around the world, in over 240 countries and territories, to create a more just and sustainable world. ■

Youth Social Enterprise Initiative

Investing in visionary young leaders with innovative ideas

“Young people are at the forefront of transforming their societies using ICT tools, yet too often youth projects lack mainstream recognition, opportunities to participate in decision making, and a sense of peer community to learn from.” - Rinalia Abdul Rahim, Executive Director, Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP).

The Global Knowledge Partnership, through its youth-focused members, is launching a new initiative aiming at catalysing young ICT-enabled social entrepreneurs. The Youth Social Enterprise Initiative (YSEI) is a first ever international fellowship programme that identifies and provides comprehensive support for young social entrepreneurs – passionate individuals with innovative solutions for social problems.

Young people make up almost half of the developing world. If social entrepreneurship is to bring increased efficiency and innovation to the conventional development landscape, the most dynamic young people must actively embrace it. Therefore, YSEI looks to young people as innovative and competent citizens to lead lasting social change in the world.

YSEI fellowships are designed to help young social entrepreneurs achieve their goals from the initial idea through to project implementation and impact creation. YSEI's support ranges from providing fellows with a knowledge base on development issues and social entrepreneurship, access to key support networks for young social entrepreneurs, engaged/onsite mentorship programs and seed grants up to US\$15,000 per project.

Young social entrepreneurs equipped with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) represent a powerful force of systemic social change. YSEI intends to pay special attention to support young social technopreneurs – passionate individuals with innovative ICT-enabled solutions for social problems. As young technopreneurs from Silicon Valley are to the information revolution, we hope young social technopreneurs can create solutions to achieve broad sustainable development objectives in a wide range of areas such as poverty reduction, environmental protection, gender equality and human rights.

Youth Social Enterprise Initiative's (YSEI's) vision is to catalyse a global movement of young social entrepreneurs who can bridge effective and scalable social innovations. Our community would foster innovation and the desire for change, such that young people find within themselves the potential to make change. YSEI invests in young social entrepreneurs because we believe they are the most powerful force of social change.