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Morning Majlis roundtable outcomes
Misk Youth Majlis 2024

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From Reels to Real Impact

How leaders and youth can harness influence to create clarity, trust, and social impact in today's shifting digital era

Contents

Introduction

In Davos 2024 the Misk Foundation initiated a pivotal series of roundtable discussions under the theme **"From Reels to Real Impact"** focusing on the transformative power of youth in driving social change. Aligned with Misk's overall theme for Davos 2024, **"The Big Now: Exert Your Influence",** that highlighted the power of leadership in crafting opportunities and fostering an ecosystem where the voices, ideas, and actions of youth are not just heard but interwoven into decision-making processes. Together the topics underscore the critical roles of youth and leaders in leveraging digital platforms to steer social change. Engaging a broad spectrum of experts from various sectors — public, private, media, and civil society — many of whom are champions of youth empowerment, these discussions aimed to harness a diverse array of voices and perspectives. The debates were amplified by Misk's latest research, *Youth-Led Positive Social Impact,* a comprehensive survey involving 18,000 young people and 500 business leaders across 20 countries. This data proved instrumental in guiding the Davos dialogues, offering a nuanced understanding of the challenges and aspirations of youth worldwide.

The outcomes and recommendations detailed in this report are direct results of these enriching conversations, emphasizing the importance of empowering the youth to leading positions in shaping a more impactful and connected world.

From Reels to Real Impact sheds light on the dynamic between the younger generation and social media. While a significant majority (81%)[1] of young individuals rely on social media for their daily dose of news and insights, there exists palpable skepticism, with over half worried about the potential bias in their feeds.[2]

At the same time this generation's drive for a tangible, positive societal shift is evident in their digital behavior, with young people being 68% more inclined to champion social causes online compared to their elders.[3]

This underscores a critical opportunity for leaders and organizations, who wield the necessary influence and resources, to rethink their approach to engaging with and empowering the youth. By fostering meaningful collaborations and initiatives, the potential of youth involvement can be unlocked to drive real-world positive impact.

In this report we will explore highlights from the roundtables such as the critical need for hyper localized strategies, especially in underrepresented communities across the Global South, where contextualized narratives and support are paramount to empower what was coined as minoritized majorities.

Ultimately, a fundamental question is addressed: How can leaders and youth leverage digital engagement and better work together to create positive and lasting social impact?

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1   MISK, 2020. Youth's Voice.

2   Oliver Wyman, 2023. A-Gen-Z Report.

3   Oliver Wyman, 2023. A-Gen-Z Report.

From Reels to Real Impact: Roundtable Discussions

Understanding the voices beyond the noise

How to raise awareness about distortions in how youth opinions are portrayed online and combat digital misinformation

Introduction

In the digital realm, where the vast majority of **youth heavily rely on social media for information,** a critical dichotomy emerges: 81% of young people go to social media for information, making it their number-one source.[4] At the same time, there is a **substantial trust deficit,** with fewer than a quarter of young users expressing confidence in the quality of content on social media.

Due to algorithmic limitations and biases, such as confirmation bias, favoring few privileged voices, the digital space is often dominated by a few narratives, leading to an underrepresentation of diverse youth voices and challenging the true breadth of youth perspectives online.

This discrepancy poses a twofold challenge: The reliability of online information and its narrow representation of youth voices can skew data and

4   MISK, 2020. Youth's Voice.

Highlights and insights from roundtable discussions

From margins to mainstream: Inclusive representation of youth online

Social media acts as a global megaphone, amplifying voices and spreading them through the digital sphere. What happens when this megaphone is only available to a small segment of the young population? The views of a few selected voices get perceived as common opinion defining a truth that only reflects the realities of a small fraction of the young population. Therefore digital tools accessible to all and role models relatable to various backgrounds and core values are needed. Only then are also youth with diverse socio-economic backgrounds and behavioral profiles, encouraged to claim their voice and empowered to be heard.

"

We need role models representing and speaking to the 'minoritized majority'[5] of youth globally"

Professor Rana Dajani
Founder and Director, We Love Reading

public perception, leaving leaders with a distorted view of youth sentiment. This hampers efforts to distill a truly representative youth voice for consideration in decision-making. Initiatives such as the "Generative Artificial Intelligence for All" project recently launched in Saudi Arabia try to address the increasing intricacy of the digital realm. Such efforts seek to enhance digital cooperation and strengthen AI capabilities. In light of these complexities, multilateral, collaborative efforts among leaders, platforms, and institutions are imperative to ensure fair representation within social media, recognizing its status as the main communication medium for youth and therefore a **key "digital town square" for initiating positive real-world social impact.**

From hashtags to heartstrings: Social media and the generational divide in communication

Today's speed of technological advancement is not just rapid — it's revolutionary, creating a formidable challenge for older generations in leadership roles to keep their finger on the digital zeitgeist. As a result, a generational communication gap emerges where leaders and youth are communicating on different channels and not always in mutually understandable terms. To close this gap, leaders must commit to ongoing adaptation, fostering a curiosity about the digital landscapes inhabited by the youth, and making concerted efforts to engage with them in these digital spaces.

5   Minoritized majorites refer to population groups whose interests and perspectives are often disregarded as marginal despite their substantially large population size, for example, interests of African youth as major share of global youth population.

From bias to balance: Fostering critical thinking and agency in youth

Children, as especially susceptible members of the digital community, find their perspectives and worldviews significantly shaped by their social media consumption. The prevalence of biased content on these platforms poses a tangible risk, potentially skewing how young minds understand the world around them. However, children's natural adaptability and eagerness to learn presents an opportunity. Equipping children with the skills to analyze information, craft their narratives, and voice their opinions confidently — alongside providing them with access to unbiased content — will not only enhance their sense of autonomy but also prepare them to be the architects of meaningful and lasting change.

From classrooms to real life: Teachers as architects of change

Teachers stand as the most influential link in guiding youth through their formative years, possessing a closeness that is unparalleled in the educational journey. This unique position underscores the necessity of elevating teachers from mere implementers to pivotal shapers of the educational policies. By leveraging knowledge and connection with students, teachers can be transformed into powerful agents of change, steering young minds towards empowerment. Their role is not just to educate but to guide students in navigating the complexities of their digital and real-world environments, making them indispensable in crafting an education system that truly meets the needs of today's digital youth.

Outlined action areas

The discussions highlighted the challenges faced by youth in their struggle for fair representation. Derived from discussion insights, the following action areas were identified to counter these challenges.

Recognizing the challenges highlighted in "From Bias to Balance" and "From Classrooms to Real Life" an initiative of integrating digital media literacy and in-person social skills into youth education is proposed. This initiative seeks to address the question: How can we empower youth with the necessary digital media literacy and social skills, with teachers playing pivotal roles as guides and mentors?

A skill-set for the digital age

Today's digital realm is a complex environment — especially for the youngest, most vulnerable users. Youth **need to be equipped with the adequate skills** required to prosper. This new skill set should integrate **media literacy**, which includes how to **recognize and address bias, critically assess online information, form an informed opinion** independently, and understand the **implications of underrepresentation of voices online.** Furthermore, skills that wither through the high use of digital should be promoted, such as critical thinking, storytelling, and working together with others.

As one of the most impactful roles in a young person's life, teachers should be engaged in empowering youth by being guides and mentors in today's digital age.
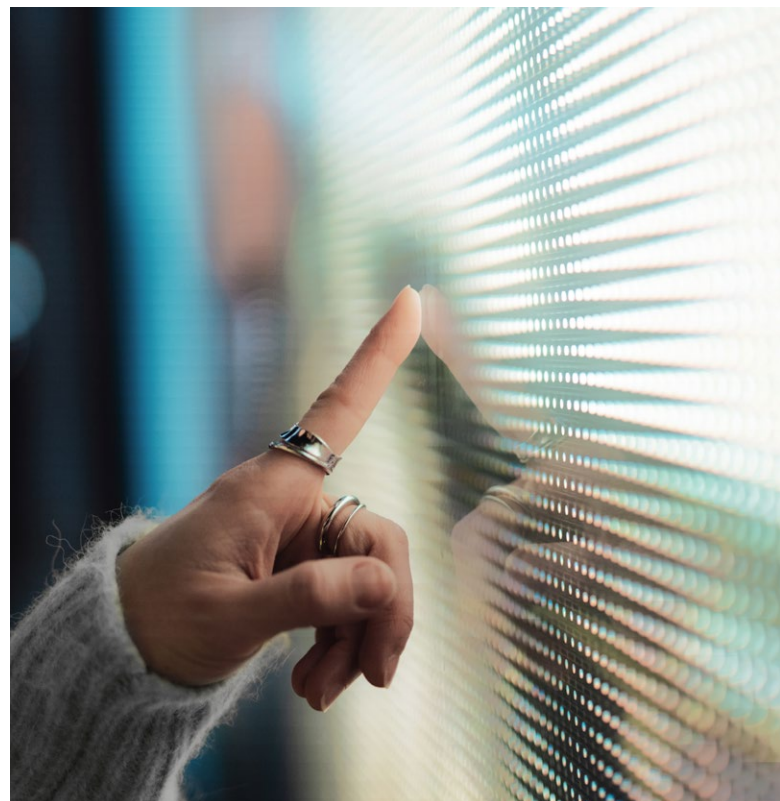
In light of the insights gained from "From Hashtags to Heartstrings" and "From Margins to Mainstream", an initiative intergenerational partnerships between youth and media leader is proposed. This will help develop a more representative view of global youth voices in the media. The central question this initiative aims to address is: How can intergenerational partnerships between youth and media leaders help develop a representative view of global youth voices in the media?

Collaboration with media

Intergenerational partnerships between youth and leaders of media companies are required to develop a representative view of global youth voices. Bias and misrepresentation give a false picture of the common sentiment among youth on social causes, excluding diverse and underrepresented segments of young users.

By working together and leveraging digital tools, youth and media companies can gain a clearer, undistorted view of young voices. This is particularly important for the "minoritized majority", whose voices are not fully represented in proportion to their population size. These young people need the opportunity to forge their identities in the media. Innovations could include: collaborations between media and youth to **represent a holistic view of youth opinions** and ensure complete representation of youth voices. For example, this could be done through the development of an **AI chatbot to collect youth opinions** and create a holistic view of youth sentiment, **accessible also to leaders and decision makers.**

Building upon the insights from "From Hashtags to Heartstrings" and "From Margins to Mainstream", an initiative of collaborating with tech companies to actively engage youth in shaping the narrative of the future and influencing how information is accessed and received in the digital age is proposed. The key question guiding this initiative is: What strategies can be employed to involve youth in shaping the narrative of the future and influencing how information is accessed and received in the digital age?

Collaborations with tech

The **trajectory of our future** will be significantly shaped by artificial intelligence (AI), especially large language models. The P in ChatGPT stands for "pre-trained" and is much more than just part of an abbreviation. It underlines that generative language models will only be as good as the information they are trained with. As such, these **models will determine future truths based on today's inputs,** and it is imperative to involve youth in developing and training these powerful tools. In the realm of AI, the **trainer defines the truth,** institutionalizing these norms for the long-term. Empowering youth to become trainers **ensures the inclusion of their voices.** This requires collaboration with tech companies to actively engage youth in the training process, where considerations of narratives and truths are defined. This approach **allows youth to actively determine what is considered true** and shape the narrative of the future, influencing how information will be accessed and received in the decades ahead.

"In demographic terms, generations come in 10-15 years brackets, but digital generations change every five years — this is the new speed of the world"

Dr. Samir Saran
President, Observer Research Foundation

Amplifying youth digital influence for more effective connection with leaders

How technology can help identify and bridge gaps between youth representation in decision-making settings and leadership actions

Introduction

Youth fervently desire change and seek active participation, often **expressing opinions about political and social issues through social media,** though **actual engagement is limited** (32% of youth actually engage in issues through social media).[6] Additionally, youth are **underrepresented in decision-making roles** (2.6% of global parliamentarians are under 30)[7] and institutions attempt to bridge this gap through youth initiatives (75% in G20 countries).[8] However, these initiatives, while acknowledged and connected to leaders, are often **perceived to lack real-world impact,** raising questions about the adequate extent of youth inclusion and their preparedness for positive contributions.

Private sector involvement is pivotal, as youth expects employers to align with social causes — 21% would consider other jobs if their employer is not engaged.[9] Currently, youth representation in decision-making is limited to specific initiatives, representing a small segment and lacking impact due to factors such as **limited agenda-setting authority and financial resources.**

To address this, **digital tools should engage more young voices** and provide them with a **stake in decision-making** processes, coupled with **capability building** through training. Amplifying commitments involves showcasing youth-driven impact, particularly in the digital space, and fostering private sector support for meaningful change.

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6   Oliver Wyman, 2023. A-Gen-Z Report.
7   United Nations, 2023. Article, "No-Say-Day".
8   MISK, 2020. Youth's Voice.
9   Oliver Wyman, 2023. A-Gen-Z Report.

Highlights and insights from roundtable discussions

From bystanders to leaders: preparing youth to lead impact

The young voices of our world are loud and clear, passionately pointing out areas that require social change. Fueled by a burning desire to make a difference, they are eager to join the ranks of those shaping our future. Yet, their youth often means they lack the experience to engage with seasoned leaders on equal footing, to turn their visions of social impact into reality.

Recognizing this gap, there's a compelling need to arm our youth with the tools for meaningful participation in decision-making. From a young age, we must weave into their education an understanding of the decision making landscape — how decisions are made, the intricacies of organizational structures, and the realities of limitations.

From disparity to equity: balancing global resource distribution

True empowerment of youth hinges on the equitable distribution of resources. Without essential assets like funding, authority, and structural backing, even the most driven young individuals find themselves unable to make a significant impact. The landscape of needs and gaps in resources is diverse across the globe, with unique challenges such as language barriers in the Global South illustrating disparities often overlooked in the North. It's crucial for international efforts to pave the way towards structured processes that ensure resources are fairly shared and accessible to all, enabling every young person the opportunity to shape their world.

> Financial resources are the number one barrier for social entrepreneurs: resources sharing has to happen internationally at scale"

Nik Kafka
CEO and Founder, Teach a Man to Fish
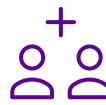
From hashtag communities to local realities: solutions for communities

Social media has transformed young individuals into genuine global citizens, immersing them in universal narratives that transcend geographical borders and often disconnect them from their local realities. Their engagement with global issues and solutions tends to overlook the unique local contexts and specificities crucial for meaningful interventions. To reconcile this global-local divide, it's essential to involve youth in ways that honor and elucidate the particularities of their communities, understanding the constraints and cultures that shape them. Recognizing these local nuances paves the way for tailored strategies, ensuring impactful and relevant contributions to their communities.

From inclusion to empowerment: shifting the table for youth — driven change

Recognizing the true empowerment of youth involves more than inviting them to the table; it's about moving the table itself. This shift involves redefining collaboration and empowerment, opening doors for youth to lead innovations and changes unseen by seasoned leaders. Transparency becomes key in this transformation, building trust and broadening discussions to alter fundamentally how youth and leaders collaborate. Leveraging existing tools like mentorship programs, educational initiatives, and shadow boards in broader contexts is essential for moving towards a youth-driven impact, ensuring their voices not only contribute but steer the direction of change.

Co-created action areas

Responding to the challenge raised under "From Bystanders to Leaders", an initiative was proposed that offers a way of arming young individuals with the expertise and abilities required to adeptly navigate the complex language and strategies employed by decision-makers. The question this initiative aims to answer is: How can youth be equipped with knowledge and skills to navigate decision-makers' language and strategies while taking ownership of driving change?

"In order to build trust, we have to go hyper local, with international best practices that local communities can apply to empower youth and close the gap between the Global North and South"

Gerald Abila
Founder and CEO, BarefootLaw

Leadership mindset: empowering youth to become leaders

Empowering youth to actively shape policies and decision-making involves providing specialized digital training tailored to local circumstances. Digital youth need to be provided with a nuanced **understanding of global issues contextualized within regional contexts.** By immersing youth in the intricacies of policymaking processes, procedures, and constraints that influence decisions, they **take ownership of driving change.** This **shift in self-perception,** from passive observers to active contributors, fosters a **sense of self-efficacy and value.** The comprehensive approach equips youth not only with knowledge but also the skills to navigate decision-makers' language and strategies, **preparing them to become leaders** who effectively engage across diverse issues and policy areas.

By equipping youth with both knowledge and skills, they become adept not only in understanding diverse topics but also in **navigating the language and strategies commonly employed by decision-makers.**

Drawing inspiration from the insights gained in the discussions on "From Disparity to Equity", "From Hashtag Communities to Local Realities" and "From Inclusion to Empowerment" an initiative is proposed that empowers youth to lead and drive social impact, ensuring they have the necessary support, guidance, and tools to create meaningful change in their communities. The central question guiding this initiative is: How can collaborative initiatives empower youth to drive social impact, ensuring they have the necessary support, guidance, and tools to make a meaningful difference in their communities?

Youth leading change in their communities

Collaborative initiatives are dedicated to empowering young individuals with **practical challenges that address social issues relevant to youth and impactful for local communities.** The collaborations aim to design targets and challenges that enable young people to drive social impact, putting the **process directly into their hands.** This approach encourages collaboration among youth and provides them with the necessary support to engage effectively across a variety of issues and policy areas, bridging the gap

between global awareness and local application. Ultimately, this initiative aims to instill a **sense of empowerment among youth,** equipping them with the tools and knowledge to make a **meaningful difference in their communities and beyond.**

Drawing from the insights of "From Inclusion to Empowerment", an initiative aiming to involve youth effectively in shaping fair and inclusive policies, extending their influence and impact at both national and international levels is proposed. The central question guiding this initiative remains: How can youth be effectively involved in shaping fair and inclusive policies, extending their influence and impact at national and international levels?

Policy shapers

Youth's perspectives have **great potential to shift the needle on societal issues where their experiences are pivotal** to defining adequate policies and regulations. Youth should be involved in creating and advocating for **fair and inclusive policies.** Such initiatives could include the formation of advisory boards involving youth. These dialogues, akin to, for example, digital citizen panels, could **extend to national and international settings, ensuring higher influence and impact** in addressing various social causes.

"

I am not trying to teach youth to do things the way I do — I rather learn from them, every day"

Gary Sorrentino
CIO, Zoom

Turning Insights into Action: The Path Toward Youth-Driven Social Impact

The real tests of youth-led change are action and results. Misk is committed to **bridging the gap between vision and execution** and as such, has outlined an action plan based on the roundtable insights.

An essential part of the road towards realization of these insights will be **working groups aligned with the core topics** from the Morning Majlis sessions. The primary goal of the working groups is to **detail and advance initiatives** with the **greatest potential to drive significant impact** on the youth.

The groups will unite a diverse array of stakeholders, including but not limited to those who actively participated in the roundtable discussions. Misk, in collaboration with key stakeholders, will host and support these working groups.

"

Leaders work on geographies...
but youth are borderless"

Ashwad Ismail
Head and Editor-in-Chief of Astro AWANI

These working groups will kick off with **defining themes and detailing impactful initiatives** to be launched. The **identification of key initiatives** will build on top of round table insights, **feasibility studies,** and success stories observed internationally. Finally, the working groups will meet periodically to discuss and push forward initiatives, aiming to achieve tangible youth impact.

Misk Foundation **commits to supporting and guiding the working groups** on their journey with three key elements: providing data and research, connecting the dots, and enabling key tools.

Data and research
Misk Foundation boasts a repository of data and research, serving as a **cornerstone for informed decision-making** while offering valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The working groups can **leverage the knowledge gained from existing programs,** such as the Misk Fellowship and Traineeship, to **offer guidelines and learnings for the effective implementation** of selected initiatives.

Connecting the dots
The foundation's extensive network of leaders includes a wide range of industry experts, a selection of which attended the Youth Majlis sessions at Davos 2024. This **network ensures the participation of all stakeholders critical to the successful implementation** of selected initiatives. The objective is to create a dynamic ecosystem where diverse perspectives converge, fostering innovation and collective action.

Enabling key tools
Misk Foundation provides a comprehensive set of resources dedicated to supporting and guiding the

working group's ambitions towards lasting impact. These resources encompass both **technological and organizational means** necessary for effective collaboration and real world implementation.

For example, initiatives like the Digital Media Literacy program could be seamlessly integrated into the curriculum of Misk Schools, ensuring real impact on youth development across different age groups.

Further, selected initiatives are envisioned to become **part of Misk's global platform,** acting as a springboard of international progress for the working groups in different global events/platforms.

In conclusion, the journey does not end with discussions and visions. It begins with the **commitment to act, to empower youth, and to enable youth to drive positive change.**

About Misk

Established by H.R.H. Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz in 2011, Misk Foundation is a non-profit organization devoted to cultivating and encouraging learning and leadership in Saudi youth for a better future for Saudi Arabia.

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