Narrative Interim Report

Project: "Observatorio de la Juventud" (Youth Observatory)

(This interim report was written between May 25th and June 3rd)

Storytelling

1. Background:

The world is currently living a time of great changes primarily driven by technology. Scientific progress, economic growth (in some cases, economic recovery) and other factors have made possible that some part of the world is living a time of relative prosperity. However, never before there have been so many inequalities. Economic, social, gender and even technological gaps are bigger than ever.

In this scenario where the only certainty is change, we ask ourselves, what is the role of youth in the construction of the world we live? Certainly is not a passive role as it was in previous generations. We are not "heirs" of the world but already actively involved in its construction. Many of the technologies and inventions that we use have been created by our generation, most of them using the Internet. We are creating a new world, a world of us.

However, that does not mean that all young (or even adults) are actually involved in these processes. The digital gap is still very big; millions of people around the world don't have access to a computer or even Internet connection and those who have it, not necessarily know that they can participate in the construction of this new world. Then we ask, How can we change this reality?

The Youth Observatory is a project that began in 2015, founded by young people from different countries who decided to join to train other young people on issues related to Internet ecosystem (governance, cybersecurity, etc.) to expand its participation in the forums where these issues are discussed, in order to use this knowledge to develop their society. In order to achieve they contribute to building the new world.

2. The Project:

The Youth Observatory was an idea borned in the context of the Youth@IGF 2015, a program led by Internet Society and CGI.br that tried to increase the participation of youth in the areas of discussion of Internet governance in Latin America and the Caribbean and was attended by 120 young people from the region.

There is no formal date of launch because the idea of making the Youth Observatory was evolved during the program, but at the end of September 2015 we had already decided the name of the project and its main objectives. At this stage, the first major collaborative step was the writing and publication of the "Youth Declaration", a document written in Spanish, Portuguese and English that expressed our concerns and wishes about the participation of youth in the areas of discussion of Internet governance.

The first physical meeting of the Youth Observatory members was held in Joao Pessoa (Brazil), during the X Internet Governance Forum, where we finalized the objectives, defined responsibilities and established communication channels in order to formalize the organization behind the project.

This process ended in February 2016 when we received the approval of ISOC and we were recognized with the status of "Special Interest Group" (SIG), which means that since that moment we have all the rights enjoyed by chapters local ISOC, including funding, advice and logistical support to achieve our goals, as well as been supported by an organization with global reach.

The main objectives of the project were:

- Create a platform to expand knowledge on the principles of Internet and its governance, and to promote a fluid exchange and to accentuate communication among youth in the region Latin America on these issues.

- Build an identity of youth, tending opening and disseminate their ideas within the Internet ecosystem, so they are to be included in local and regional debates.

- Empower young people in the region so they can advance their participation in Internet governance and the spread in their communities.

- Build capacity in young people and transfer knowledge to have solid tools and knowledge to generate new lines of discussion Internet Governance forums.

- Generate connections globally through dialogue and active cooperation of the youths.

3. In the Beginning:

Like every great idea, at one point we realized we needed resources to achieve the project objectives. That's why, in partnership with ISOC Paraguay, we sent a proposal to the funding program Beyond The Net of the Internet Society.

The proposal was the Youth Observatory project but added a program of training for high school students in Paraguay on Internet Governance issues.

4. Project Goals:

The objectives of the first part were:

a) Website development: This proposal involved creating a simple website, but functional to the project objectives. Communication tools, dissemination and education for our members and for our target audience (15 to 30 years old people) will be implemented.

Deliverables: Youth Observatory Website.

b) Call for Papers: This proposal involved the creation of an event oriented to young people between 15 and 30 years old interested in spreading papers write by them about Internet governance and other related Internet ecosystem issues, which will be published in the website regularly and continuously.

Deliverables: Papers on Internet Governance issues, ecosystem and other related topics written by young people.

c) Marketing campaign: This proposal involved the creation and implementation of a marketing campaign aimed at disseminating the project's existence throughout the region and to increase the exposure of our actions on social networks and other spaces. 5000 new followers was estimated.

Deliverables: Achieve 5000 followers on Facebook and mentions in international media (Digital RightsLAC, Wired, etc).

d) Recruiting new members: This proposal involved the recruitment of new members within the Latin American region to have at least one active member in each country of the region. A minimum of 50 new members was estimated in the first half period of the project.

Deliverables: Achieve 50 new members for the Youth Observatory project.

e) Website tools (blog, notices, etc)

Deliverables: Make new developments for the website. Work on the original web design.

5. Goals Achieved:

- We have already established an organizational structure that supports the various tasks to be performed. This has been possible through the creation of a Special Interest Group (SIG), which is a structure that has Internet Society recognition and is governed under its own statutes.

- We had hired the team of designers and developers for the website. The website is already done and in a beta test phase: http://beta.obdjuv.org/

- The marketing campaign has been developing since the beginning of the project, counting with the presence of two social networks: Twitter and Facebook. However, the mass media campaign (which includes paid advertising) has been postponed for strategic reasons. We already have 550 followers.

- To date, this campaign is not only continuous but has allowed members of countries where currently there was no presence of the organization. However, still pending deploy a wider dissemination campaign to achieve the proposed goals for the coming months. Therefore, the number of integrated new members to the organization has been only 30.