

Roundtable conducted at RISE World Summit 2021 on Jan 28, 2021, at 06:30 pm-08:30 pm IST

Generation Unlimited

UNICEF, YuWaah!, IDOBRO, and RISE Infinity Foundation

Introduction

The RISE World Summit, held across 28-29 January 2021, was a unique concept of a relay conference across time zones, starting with Japan and ending in the Americas. Adhering to the format of *no panels and no presentation* set for the entire summit, the roundtables were a core activity convened to have breakthrough interactions and encourage collaboration around the challenges the world faces.



The theme of the RISE World Summit 2021, "Beyond Boundaries, Search UNITY, Find OpportUNITY ", was based on the backdrop of the pandemic to search for interventions and innovations that will truly make this the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs. The Decade of Action calls for everyone and especially young people to work towards the 17 global goals set by the UN.

Roundtable Context

The Generation Unlimited (GenU) roundtable, co-hosted by UNICEF and Yuwaah, was based on the specific theme to re-imagine youth issues & solutions applying a COVID lens and beyond. The roundtable was attended by 118 participants from 23 countries, sharing challenges, best practices, innovations and opportunities for collaborations between solution providers and youth, who have faced COVID challenges.



Generation Unlimited (GenU), introduced by UNICEF in 2018, engages more than 43 countries. Early adopters of the agenda included India, Kenya, and Bangladesh who have all advanced their partnerships and programs.

GenU is a partnership platform that brings together a wide and diverse range of stakeholders to make a real and lasting impact in the lives and

future of young people. Young people themselves are not only at the heart of the agenda but key stakeholders in its development including co-creating solutions to challenges they face.

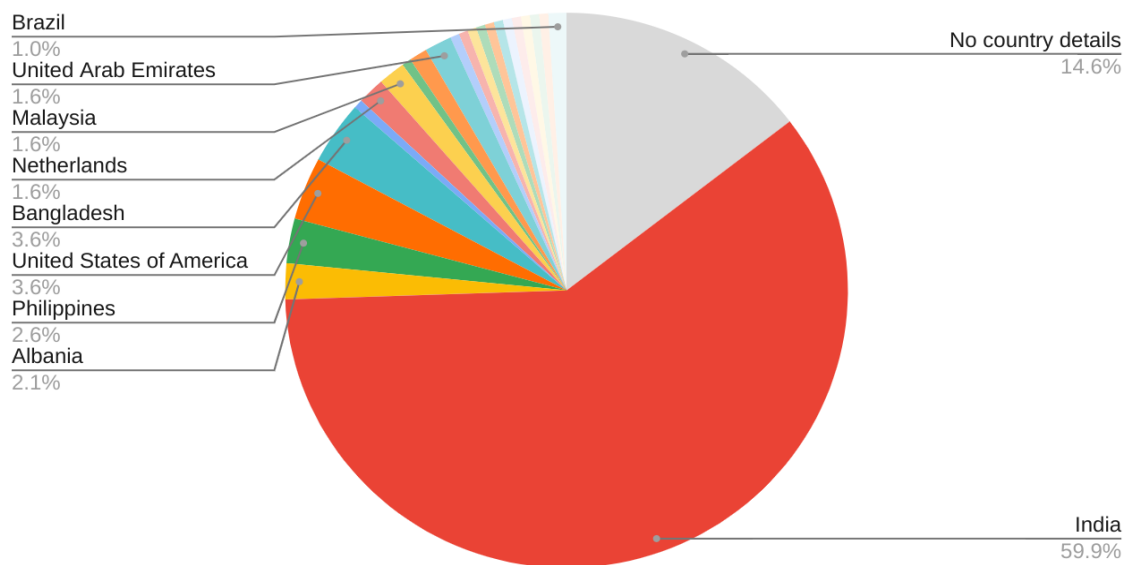
YuWaah (Generation Unlimited India edition) is a UNICEF India hosted platform. YuWaah aims to connect the Indian youth (10-24 years of age) with aspirational socio-economic opportunities, and amplifying their voice as changemakers.

Participants

118 participants from 23 countries and across the wide spectrum of age groups (10 - 70) and profiles attended the roundtable as can be seen below.

- Global organizations focused on youth programs by Government, corporate, development, and academia
- Country-heads at the forefront of conveying solutions for youth and focusing on youth leadership
- Heads of foundations, corporates, and government officials from initiatives that support young entrepreneurs and innovations
- Youth Leaders from across the globe who are championing interventions around skills, employability, and innovations for all

A total of 118 participants from 23 countries attended the GenU roundtable at the RISE World Summit 2021



Moderators

- **Thomas Myhren** - Senior Advisor, Country Support Generation Unlimited Global Team
- **Karon Shaiva** - Chief Impact Officer & Managing Director of Idobro Impact Solutions and Managing Trustee of RISE Infinity Foundation

Experts

- **Urmila Sarkar** - Senior Advisor, Generation Unlimited Global Team
- **Dhuwarakha Sriram** - Chief of Adolescent Development, GenU India
- **Laurat Raca** - Youth & Adolescent Development officer, UNICEF, Kosovo
- **Roeland Monasch** - CEO, Aflatoun
- **Deepali Khanna** - Managing Director, Rockefeller Foundation (Asia Regional Office)
- **Rakesh Kaul** - Partner, PwC, India
- **Orondaam Otto** - Founder, Slum2School Africa, Nigeria
- **Muhannad Al Jarrah** - Executive Director, INJAZ Education, Jordan
- **Raja Singham** - Co-Founder & MD, BAC Education Group, Malaysia
- **Rama Iyer** - Director, WPP India Foundation, India

Youth Leaders

- **Saddam Sayyaleh** - Founder, iLearn Jordan
- **Ayush Bansal** - Founder, iDreamCareer, India
- **Ulises Brengi**, GenU YPAT, Argentina
- **Eglantina**, Mentor- BONEVET Makerspace & GenU YPAT, Kosovo
- **Sandhya Saroj** - Young People's Action Team (YPAT), YuWaah's Youth advisory body
- **Amanda Kong Hwei Zhen** - Community Advocate for PwDs, MIRM, Malaysia
- **Richa Shivangi Gupta** - Co-founder, Labhya Foundation, India
- **Taha Bawa** - Co-founder, Goodwall, USA
- **Mohamad Hasan Al-Akraa** - Founder, The Al-Hasan Volunteer Network, Syria

- **Abhinav Huralikoppi**, member of YPAT, India
- **Jubilee Ayuba Juani** - Administrative Director, Team MUDA 's Streets2School initiative, Maiduguri, Borno

Special Invitees

- **Brian Lariche** - Founder & Chief Community Strategist, Lariche Community, Malaysia
- **Nandini Sood** - CEO, Design For Change, India
- **Amit Kumar** - Head (Inclusive Growth), UNDP, India
- **YAO Kouassi Félix** - Co-founder, Network for Africa of Specialists in Financial Education (RASEF), France
- **Madan Padaki** - Founder, 1Bridge and Co-founder, Head Held High Foundation and Sylvant Advisors, India
- **Joannes Yimbessalu** - Head, GenU Partnerships, UNICEF, Nigeria
- **Babette Anhalt** - Director, Day for Change, Netherlands



Key Discussion points

The session sought to bring all categories of stakeholders to the roundtable with a focus on the following:

- Amplifying youth as innovators and changemakers
- Discuss challenges youth face based on UNICEF's GenU programs strategic priorities - helping young people to become co-creators and develop their own innovative solutions to the challenges in their lives.
- Bringing to the forefront innovators and change-makers who are successfully addressing youth concerns
- Cross country coalitions and partnerships addressing youth issues or challenges
- Vitalizing commitment towards youth programming
- Need for multi-sectoral (Government, Private Sector, Young People, Development Partners, Academia etc.) partnerships to address the challenges faced by youth across the globe especially in a post COVID world
- Need for innovation and scale up of targeted 21st century programs co-created with the youth Greater access for young people in terms of skills, employment, entrepreneurship, innovations and as agents of change
- Reimagine the position of youth as a central stakeholder in development narratives and structuring policy frameworks and outcomes

Discussion Summary

The introduction of the session was by Ms. Karon Shaiva and co-host Mr. Thomas Myhren. Ms. Urmila Sarkar introduced the Generation Unlimited (GenU) initiative by UNICEF. GenU brings together partners from 45 countries, from government, multilateral organizations, civil society, the private sector and young people from around the world to enable young people to become productive and engaged members of society. She emphasized the importance of youth participation in achieving sustainable development goals. Mr. Laurat Raca from UNICEF's Kosovo office said that the government, UNICEF, and the young generation should come together and work for equipping the youth to get better

employment. Ms. Dhuwarakha spoke about Generation Unlimited India - Yuwaah! and its idea of youth for the youth. She mainly spoke about the Indian context for youth development.



At Generation Unlimited we're on a mission to empower all young people, wherever they may be, to realise their potential, to create better education skills and employment opportunities for youth and help them to become entrepreneurs.

Urmila Sankar - Senior Advisor,
Generation Unlimited Global Team
at RISE World Summit 2021

Mr. Thomas then invited Mr. Saddam Sayyleh, founder of 'I Learn' from Jordan who talked about bridging the gap between education and employment, how the ideas and voices of the youth can be turned into actions. He stated that the way forward is only through 'partnership', people have to come together and work in collaboration with each other.

We also heard from Mr. Roeland, CEO - Aflatoun. He spoke about the difficulty young people face to transit from school to work life. He also emphasized upon the major problems like school dropouts, financial issues, increase in informal sector jobs and the mindset of youth and their families all pose a major challenge in the development of youth. The voice of youth, Ms. Sandhya Saroj, representative of Young People's Action Team YPAT (YuWaah!'s Youth advisory body, Mumbai, India) put forward the need and importance of participation of children and youth in the decision-making process. This was followed by Mr. Joannes Paulus (UNICEF GenU, Nigeria) who emphasized the importance of using soft skills training to help youth adapt to the demanding work environment.

Ms. Nandini Sood, CEO of Design for Change, India spoke about creating an entrepreneur mindset in the youth especially in India. Mr. Taha Bawa, co-founder of GoodWall spoke about giving youth access to opportunities that will not only provide financial stability but also an aspirational career.

According to Mr. Madan Padaki, Founder, 1Bridge, entrepreneurship curriculum should be introduced at school and higher education levels. He also brought up a mind-tingling question where he proposed to think inverse i.e. What if the youth were running the world?

Mr. Orandaam Otta, founder of Slums2School Africa also chimed in from Nigeria. He emphasized the need for change in the education system as it is outdated with respect to the present day. Traditional classroom learning methods are no longer the only way of learning. Semi-formal, self-learning and home based learning methodologies successfully implemented at Slums2Schools Africa. This definitely did set the chat box on fire with answers and counter questions!

After the discussion on challenges Ms. Karon probed the panel to think about interventions to overcome these challenges. She called upon Mr. Rakesh Kaul, PwC-India, who put forward three interventions- democratized content creation and consumption; micro-financing and portability of skill transcript. Next, we heard from Ms. Aparna Shukla, SBI Youth for India who shed light upon the trend of reverse migration in India due to the COVID-19 pandemic and explained that youth's perspective will vary based on their context and it is therefore important to understand these diverse perspectives. Mr. Amit K, UNDP - Delhi, emphasised that technology alone cannot meet the challenges discussed previously. Hence digital and physical program components should work together to address the employability, learning and training needs of the youth.

In response, Mr. Muhannad Jarrah stated that there has been digital transformation due to the pandemic situation but not all have got access to this digital world. Ms. Amanda Kong, a passionate advocate and young person with disability from Malaysia, who spoke about the increasing barriers to access due to the pandemic and the need to develop the necessary skills to adapt to the new normal. Following the same thought, Mr. Felix Yao (Aflatoun), spoke about the need for more inclusive and equal education. Keeping in mind the new age economy, Mr. Brian Larichi, MIRM, Kuala Lumpur, spoke about training the youth in skills beneficial for the digital economy, viz. social media marketing skills and their role in the contemporary world.

Ms. Babette Anhalt Hilversum (Day for Change), concluded the session by emphasizing how COVID has affected everyone the same across the world and she takes this message back to

the youth in Netherlands that they are not alone and that there is a movement to support youth and bring them together. She also said how touched she was by what she had heard and would remember all her life, the words of young Sandhya from India, to bring youth to the table everytime a decision is taken that affects them.

To end the session, Mr. Roeland Monasch was requested to summarise the major points of the discussions put forward by the participants. He suggested that we identify models of success which are scalable and above all translate words into action.

In conclusion, the roundtable was an engaging fruitful discussion as it brought together both the youth as well as thought leaders from across the globe to have an engaging and inspiring conversation. A synopsis of the Challenges, Capabilities and potential Collaboration are given below.

Challenges

Employment

- Traditional Job opportunities diminishing due to digitalization, technological change and automation
- Young people that are working in the informal economy many working hard long hours and hazardous conditions and this really represents a tremendous loss a wasted potential
- Finding jobs that gives security to young people to have a better path in the future
- Difficulties to create standardized employment opportunities and vocational skill sets

Education / Skill Development

- 200 million secondary school-aged children that are not in school; 267 million young people today do not have relevant education or training needed for employment and two thirds of these are young women (data from UNESCO)
- Access to education the youth need with focus on learning the right skills to find a job and find the opportunities out there. How can we find them for the youth?

- Skills attainment and educational attainment tracking

Mental Health / Counselling

- Identifying the fears and challenges especially during the COVID 19 times (e.g. will they get the education they need, are they learning the right skills, can they find a job, what are the opportunities out there, how can we find them)
- Provide support for successfully transition from school to work life to transition from childhood to adulthood, and as they transition through their adolescent like sexual reproductive health issues, protection issues and child labor issues
- Change the defeatist mindset that most vulnerable young people will not be in school at the age of 15
- Most of the youth feel like they lack so many skills, but they don't actually see how gaining skills can translate into them becoming employed
- Parents are very busy. Teens do not have that safe space to go and speak up what they want and speak what they need.
- We've always asked the young people what they want and what they can do in the future, forgetting that they can do so much today



We need to create that space where children feel free to speak and say what they feel, and find a solution for that. We (children) need to be treated equally; we are an important stakeholder. We must make sure that children's perspective is included and that's how we get a better and compatible solution.

Sandhya Saroj - Young People's Action Team (YPAT),
YuWaah's Youth advisory body, Mumbai
at RISE World Summit 2021

Disabilities

- For children and youth with intellectual disabilities there is a lack of divergent wellness resources to actually cater to their needs. There is a need for infographics or pictorial forms to make presentation easy for them to follow.
- For children and youth with intellectual disabilities, access to training and employment.

Capabilities & Solutions

Youth Involvement

- Enable youth to design solutions from their own perspectives with potential for scale in the areas of education, entrepreneurship empowerment
- Start reaching children earlier in school, at the age of 10 or earlier
- Youth need to be treated equally; they are an important stakeholder. This should be kept in mind whenever we are deciding anything for the children
- Encourage entrepreneurship by hosting weekly youth showcase challenges with funding and support. Goodwall's mobile platform serves over a million and a half youth around the world to essentially showcase themselves, connect to opportunities and be supported within a like minded community. (Taha Bawa, Goodwall)
- Leverage the global youth engagement platforms to transform economic and social outcomes in order to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (Urmila Sarkar, UNICEF)
- Provide training to acclimatize Persons With Disability (PWDs) who are 18 and above to the office environment; give them a basic office task to have them stay relevant and stay up to date with the latest workforce requirement (Amanda Kong Hwei Zhen, Advocate for PWDs)



We can't solve this alone; we all have our strengths and we all have our weaknesses. How we come together to tackle this enormous problem is so inspiring for me.

Taha Bawa - Co-founder, Goodwall
at RISE World Summit 2021

Update Curriculum

- Slum2School Africa took learning into the community clusters by measuring learning outcomes based on the realities of today (Orondaam Otto, Slum2School)

- Developing a soft skills program and the goal is to reach over 5 million young Nigerians with soft skills that they can be used to become employable (Joannes Paulus, UNICEF)
- Provide free training on social media marketing and management that are currently what is expected in the gig economy. Giving these very short training sessions for free we can help youth find jobs very quickly. These specific trainings focus on one thing which gives the youth ability to go to an employer with something tangible (YAO Kouassi Félix, RASEF)



We took learning into the community and built learning clusters across communities in small circles. We saw that the learning outcome that we achieved in those clusters were 50% more impactful than in shared classroom

Orondaam Otto - Founder, Slum2School Africa
at RISE World Summit 2021

Technology Solutions

- Creating a technology platform which allows for collaboration to happen for people across all sections of society; where civil society government and businesses to come together and solve for pertinent problems of today (Rakesh Kaul, PwC)
- Identification of work streams or priorities of the GenU related to connectivity around every school and learners to the Internet, to scale up online remote learning scaling (Laurat Raca, UNICEF)
- Promote platforms like specialjobs.com that attempt to bridge the gap between equal opportunity employers, meaning employers who are keen to hire persons with disability and also connect them with the job seekers with disability use included right (Amanda Kong Hwei Zhen, Advocate for PWDs)



Specialjobs.com portal was launched in collaboration with Ministry of Human Resources, Asia, where we attempt to bridge the gap between equal opportunity employers, meaning, connect employers who are keen to hire persons with disability with the job seekers with disability.

Amanda Kong Hwei Zhen, Advocate for PWDs
at RISE World Summit 2021

Collaborations

UNICEF and GenU have been convening partners to accelerate results towards connectivity; by linking them through world class digital solutions, as well as boosting entrepreneurial skills and empowering them as change makers.

New Age Skill sets & Solutions

- Critical thinking, creativity and problem solving are important skills yet can be simple enough to roll this out for every age group through Resource Centres and Maker spaces or Labs
- Digital & Financial Literacy programs that boost entrepreneurial skills in emerging competitive economies as well as for personal life choices
- Entrepreneurship skills so that youth can become job creators, not only seekers, because in a country like India, there is not going to be a possibility of employing so many people there will not be so many jobs so ideally if each young person could be enabled with entrepreneurial mindset and skills.
- Prioritize access to legal solutions to engage young people as change-makers and put them in the driving seat for leading change in their communities

Engagement Models

- Build a network of Mentors to guide youth through every stage to achieve their aspirations be it education, employment or entrepreneurship
- Create Buddy programmes, Community of Volunteers, internships that allows for every child to experience and practice social skills
- Safe spaces to discuss mental health issues and to open up in sex education programmes
- Focus on Social and Sustainability issues and empower youth to solve it themselves.

Technology Drivers

- Develop a multi-stakeholder platform for sharing best practices around youth challenges and innovations and a global youth community that focuses on learning and evolving.

- Tools that makes it easy to scale, disseminate and evaluate the efficiency and efficacy of content and programmes
- Enables access for children with disabilities opening up new avenues for development and mainstream integration

Financing & Investment

- Provide microfinance to youth and allow for finance not to be only based on assets or collectibles that they have to provide because that's not available with them? How do we ensure a flow based finance to them so that it can increase they and make their entrepreneurial endeavor a success
- Develop a platform to enable Investments in youth programming particularly on skills, education, and employability. This platform should be approached in a way that transcends the perspective that youth are a demographic dividend and in need of capitalization.

Way forward



We all agree on what the issue is, and that it is an urgent issue. There are models of success which are scalable. The challenge now, following this inspiring two hour session, is how do we go in and operationalize that.

Roeland Monasch - CEO, Aflatoun
at RISE World Summit 2021

The Generation Unlimited roundtable truly brought together partners from the government, multilateral organizations, civil society, the private sector, and young people from around the world. To continue the conversation and foster partnerships, diverse platforms need to be developed and brought together to find and share scalable solutions. Moreover these platforms are such that engagement should be on an on-going basis as well as on-demand access for customised needs for the

challenges are many. Transition from school to work life, lack of access and resources, the digital divide are just the starting point.

Yuwaah, the Generation Unlimited program in India has launched a number of solutions from job portals, to learning tools, from an empowering U-reporting app to a whatsapp chatbot for responsible community involvement. Similarly we have seen multiple solutions and initiatives from partners around the world - Entrepreneurial mindset, New age skill sets, Value education and safe spaces to interact and share. These excellent initiatives by partners can be mapped for Replicator Programmes that can be implemented or through knowledge transfer and collaboration, contextualised to local needs.

However, as we were very vocally reminded by the youth themselves, before designing any intervention or platform, we need to remember that Youth need to be treated equally, as an important and capable stakeholder. After all, they are not just going to be Leaders of tomorrow, they are already contributing Citizens today!

NOTE:

For a more detailed understanding of the session outcomes, kindly access a complete recording at <https://youtu.be/fM0HgGd161s>

A LinkedIn group has been created by RISE World Summit Team to foster collaboration between participants. <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12494977/>

Annexure: From Chatbox

Mark Rendeiro, Amsterdam, Masterpeace: I like programs and initiatives that treat children as more than future workers. They are often spoken of as resources.. I would never want to be a resource.. resources are exploited and extracted. Of course it is meant in a constructive/good way.. or at least I hope it is in most cases.

Chris Morris ADB Manila : Our recent look at the impact of C-19 on Youth of the region makes reading so happy to join this session engaging young people to discuss the challenges that lay ahead hoping to avoid a " lockdown generation". [ADB/ILO C-19 youth impact study](#)

Saddam Sayyaleh: Happy to invite you to read this blog: [Creating a world where young people thrive](#)

Kanika Agrawal-WeAreSAATH: Children should be left to explore their own skills instead of pressuring them to move on the path of other's wishes!!

Prof. Vinod Menon, India : Youth are not the promise of the future, but promise of the present

Saif Islam/Dhaka/CARE : In Bangladesh, a recent youth survey showed 85% of the youth want to be involved in the nation's policy making, development and political processes, but more than 65% do not know how, which is cause for mounting frustration and a sense of being left out.

Khyati, Mumbai, Student : I would like to bring a change in the way people see the environment, climate change and plastic waste management.

Sandhya-Mumbai, YPAT India to All panelists : there's a digital divide many students are not able to attend online classes...

Abhinav Huralikoppi, Hubli, Karnataka, YPAT, UNICEF India : Nowadays, everyone is on devices and there are robots and machines. They may take over our jobs, decreasing the variety of jobs and making us jobless.

Karoli-na Hronova: as long as the format of the society is the consumerist one, problems will be still the same

Lalitha / India / NGO SPARK : I think if the youth were to run the world and I had a say in it, I would change the schooling system - give more priority to each child's interest and help build that instead of forcing them to learn things that they do not want to learn. I also think that more schools should give leadership and public speaking opportunities. Older people can encourage the interests of the children.

Aparna Shukla, SBI Youth for India, SBI Foundation: When it comes to vulnerable communities, I think rural areas - specially In India play a major role. With a large chunk of the population involved in agriculture - rural youth needs the most attention. After Covid 19 specially, there has been a lot of reverse migration (urban to rural) which has made the youngsters more restless with no idea as to what lies ahead.

Sandhya-Mumbai, YPAT India: there is increasing domestic violence and rapes, harassment. the community is becoming unsafe...when I go to play at night many parents don't send their girls even if they really want to because of this issue. not only at night during the day as well women and girls are asked to stay home as much as possiblewe have to find ways to make this safer space for all

Amit K, Delhi, UNDP : we need to a) recognise that youth are not a homogenous group . Their needs and aspirations differ based on geography, socio economic condition. gender, ethnicity..etc... and while looking for scale , there is a need to have in built customisation b) Technology is a great enabler but there is a need for physical (physical + digital) approach specifically keeping the increasing digital divide c) focus on localised opportunities

Saif Islam/Dhaka/CARE : I've seen rural female youth having less freedom of choice in areas such as occupation selection, spending money, and freedom of movement. However, I've also seen how some programs that harness the collective prowess of these young girls and engage in them in non traditional and transformative economic opportunities (such as ICT training, coding training and subsequent jobs in freelancing) have been able to break some of these norms and structures and have empowered many girls to make choices about what they want to do with their lives, how they want to spend money, when they want to bear children .. but admittedly addressing the challenges facing young girls in rural areas, especially girls susceptible to early marriage or child bearing and/or GBV, is perhaps the most difficult thing to do

Joannes Paulus, Gen U UNICEF Nigerica (Abuja): The issue of sustainability is becoming critical esp in the context of COVID-19. Innovation sometimes exacerbates the accessibility/inequality gap esp those in hard to reach communities. There is no incentive for tech companies and innovation partners to invest in closing this inequality gap.

Canica Gaur, New Delhi, Udayan Care : We also need to take account of the vulnerabilities of children with no family and who are left to be on their own at the tender age of 18 years. Indian laws do not have any provision for Care Leavers who are the youth.

Abhinav Huralikoppi, Hubli, Karnataka, YPAT, UNICEF India : we can maybe donate devices which we don't use/need to poor and needy people as it would benefit them a lot, especially during this pandemic. They can attend classes and other stuff using the devices and can keep them updated and make their struggles easier.

Vinod Bhanti: Disability is a critical issue, especially access, also rescue of Senior and Disabled children during disasters like fire and Earthquake. They are also more vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

Kapil Sangwan - Bhubaneswar - Vibha India : My thoughts having heard all the voices are:- 1. Involve the children/youth/PWD as an important stakeholders in the decision making related to issues directly related to them. 2. The challenges of the 21st Century are going to be very unexpected. It is the youth whose inexperience will lead to innovation to take on these challenges most effectively. 3. The youth need to be job creators and not job seekers. All of us who are in position to facilitate this must do the needful. 4. Let's look for solutions closer to where the problems lie. Give more weightage to bottoms up approach.