GA3: Special Political and Decolonization Committee

Student Officer: Ayşe Duman

Issue: Policies to ensure that digital tools are accessible and beneficial to historically marginalized populations

TIMUN '24

Turkish International Model United Nations

THIMUN Affiliated Conference

Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA3)

Issue: Policies to ensure that digital tools are accessible and beneficial to historically marginalised populations

Student Officer: Ayşe Duman – President Chair

I. Introduction

In modern times, digital tools such as the internet, mobile devices, and software applications, are an inseparable component of communication, education, health, and economic development. The same digital technologies have transformed and continue to revolutionise patterns of communication with the outside world, opening brand-new opportunities for information exchange and innovations. Yet, in this world, often where there is access by historically marginalised groups, the gaps in access are still highly disproportionate. Marginalised people usually lack the necessary infrastructure, financial resources, and computer knowledge that would allow them to fully benefit from modern technologies.

“Leaving no one behind means leaving no one offline, yet, half of the world’s population, an estimated 3.7 billion people, does not use the Internet” (UN/DESA, 2020). Although the number of internet users rapidly increased over the recent years, great differences remain between countries and regions when it comes to accessibility to digital tools.

Existing socioeconomic disparities in Central and South America are mirrored and made worse by the digital divide. While rural and distant locations face restricted access, high costs, and technological illiteracy, urban areas tend to have solid internet connectivity and advanced infrastructure. For instance, internet use is much lower in Latin American rural areas than in urban ones, depriving populations of access to essential services, information, and economic opportunities. These discrepancies have been exacerbated by the structural injustices left over from colonial history, especially for Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, whose access to technology and education has historically been limited.

The success of initiatives to reduce these discrepancies has been uneven. Although some underprivileged communities now have greater access thanks to programs like Peru's Internet para Todos and Colombia's Plan Vive Digital, there are still significant gaps. In addition to providing infrastructure, policies that address affordability, cultural hurdles, and education are necessary to ensure that these technologies are truly empowering if significant progress is to be made. It would mean that closing this digital gap is a priority for equality, economic development, and the full inclusion of excluded groups in the digital economy.

The COVID-19 epidemic further underscored the need to reduce the digital divide: while residents in metropolitan areas used online tools for remote work, education, and healthcare, access to education and basic services was severely disrupted among rural and marginalised groups. These disruptions underlined once again the importance of digital inclusion in promoting resilience and equitable development (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020). It is, thus, important to ensure that digital technologies are functional and available to the traditionally underserved groups within an increasingly digitised society. Unless these gaps are resolved, benefits of technological innovations will accrue to unequally, since old inequalities will become serious and prevent millions of people from realising opportunities for participation in the global economy.

II. Involved Countries and Organisations

Brazil

Brazil has made progress in increasing access to information technologies until 2018, yet significant inequalities persist. The country ranks 59th out of 121 in terms of internet access conditions, with a substantial number of disconnected individuals, particularly in rural areas (UN Trade and Development, 2022). While Brazil has implemented some initiatives aimed at bridging the digital divide, there remain significant gaps in accessibility and effectiveness. Significant challenges persist in providing digital access to rural and Indigenous populations, particularly in the Amazon region.

Launched in 2017, the objective of *Internet para Todos* is to expand Internet connectivity across rural and underserved areas in Brazil. It mainly focuses on the connectivity of broadband to the low-income communities for bridging the digital divide and increasing access to critical services. The National Broadband Plan (*Plano Nacional de Banda Larga*) is a plan that aims at increasing broadband penetration across Brazil, but with greater emphasis on economically less privileged regions. The National Policy for the Promotion of Racial Equality provides for improved digital access for Afro-Brazilian communities in recognition of the historical inequities perpetuated against these groups. It ascertains the use of digital tools toward promoting social inclusion and economic opportunities.

Colombia

While Colombia has indeed made great advances in building access to digital resources, there are still significant disparities, particularly among Afro-Colombian and Indigenous groups and those in rural areas. Notwithstanding these efforts, the road to digital equity is long and filled with hurdles in Colombia. The most remote regions-especially in the Amazon and on the Pacific coasts-face inadequate infrastructure and high connectivity costs.

Colombia's *Plan Vive Digital* (Live Digital Plan) program, which was first launched in 2010 and has since been revised, intends to increase internet connectivity across the country, with an emphasis on underprivileged rural areas. It aims to close the digital divide and improve chances for previously underserved communities by constructing broadband infrastructure and providing incentives for public access points. The government initiative, *Computadores para Educar* (Computers for Education), promotes digital literacy among educators and students by providing computers and internet connectivity to schools in rural and low-income communities. Promoting digital inclusion as a means of achieving economic growth and poverty relief is a key component of Colombia's larger ICT strategy, National ICT Plan (Plan TIC). The strategy, which emphasises increasing digital literacy, expanding connectivity to underserved populations, and facilitating access to crucial e-government services, is in line with suggestions made by groups like the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Mexico

Over the past couple of decades, Mexico has taken significant strides towards giving its poorer populations greater digital access via the CFE *Telecomunicaciones e Internet para Todos initiative* –a low-cost, widely available internet connection to some of the poorest rural and remote communities. Supported by the state-owned Comisión Federal de Electricidad, the programme has laid fibre-optic networks in areas where commercial telecommunications companies are unwilling to invest due to low profitability. Moreover, through its digital literacy programs, Mexico targets the youth and Indigenous people to reduce the knowledge gap. However, the program faces financial challenges and struggles to overcome the vast rural-urban divide in digital access

Peru

Peru's *Internet para Todos* program, initiated in 2019, represents a remarkable public-private collaboration aimed at combating digital exclusion. Led by Telefónica and supported at the regional level by various governments, the initiative aims to extend broadband infrastructure to rural and Indigenous populations in the Andean highlands and the Amazon basin. By 2023, it had connected more than two million people, but high deployment costs and adverse geographical conditions make this initiative hard to scale. It is also creating digital literacy in Peru through training that focuses on rural women and Indigenous groups, whose members are often native language speakers.

Argentina

Argentina has focused on integrating digital technologies into education and public services, especially through its Plan Conectar, which seeks to expand broadband access to 90% of the population, particularly in rural areas, by 2030. The government has signed agreements with international organisations

for financing infrastructure and accessing better connectivity for those unserved areas. The government has also prioritised gender equity in digital spaces, adopting a policy where rural women would be trained to use ICTs and making digital tools accessible in Indigenous languages.

United States of America (USA)

The United States plays both a direct and partnering role with organisations like the World Bank in promoting digital inclusion efforts within the Latin American region through USAID. Indeed, USAID has funded projects in countries like Colombia and Honduras, where the national plans include goals to ensure affordable internet access, improve digital literacy, and develop e-government platforms. Tech giants such as Microsoft and Google have U.S.-based companies partnering with regional governments to collaboratively design digital public infrastructure. However, U.S. participation is perceived as being tainted by geopolitical interests that have sometimes called into question the long-term commitment.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

The ECLAC has been a prime advocate of regional cooperation to bridge this digital divide. The targets for its digital agenda, eLAC, involve expanding broadband infrastructure, improving digital literacy, and enhancing affordability. ECLAC insists that inclusive policies must be directed toward excluded groups, such as rural and indigenous populations. The organisation has also issued detailed reports and recommendations on the socio-economic advantages of digital inclusion that shaped the national strategy in many countries of the region.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

The ITU supports Latin America through technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives in support of the closure of the digital divide. It has facilitated the harmonisation of mobile spectrum allocation, which reduces costs and encourages the rollout of mobile broadband networks. The ITU's Broadband Commission has also engaged with regional stakeholders to provide affordable access to the internet in underserved areas. It supports public-private partnerships to extend 4G and 5G networks, recognizing their critical role in enabling digital transformation.

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

The IDB has invested a lot of financial and technical resources into developing digital inclusion projects in Latin America. These investments include loans to extend the reach of broadband into rural areas, and money for digital literacy specifically targeting women and the most disadvantaged groups. The IDB also helps countries, such as Mexico and Peru, build digital public infrastructure relevant to their unique

socio-economic circumstances. Additionally, it promotes regional cooperation through initiatives like Vision 2025, which emphasises digital transformation as a tool for inclusive growth.

UNESCO

UNESCO advocates for digital inclusion, with strong attention to education for all and cultural preservation. It supports the integration of Indigenous languages into digital platforms, allowing the most marginalised populations to effectively use the technology while continuing to preserve their culture. UNESCO has also been involved in global campaigns for the improvement of digital literacy, working with governments across Latin America to provide education and training in rural areas.

III. Focused Overview of the Issue

Within the last five years, 1 billion new Internet users were added worldwide. An estimated 466 million people started using the Internet for the very first time in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An estimated 5.4 billion people, or over 63% of the global population, were online by mid-2022. However, 2.6 billion people-one-third of the world's population-do not have access to the Internet. A large portion of them live in small island developing states (SIDS), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and least developed countries (LDCs) International Telecommunication Union 2023. Although almost every urban zone in the world now has mobile-broadband networks, disturbing gaps in connectivity and Internet access persist in rural areas.

Around the world, 76% of urban households had access to the Internet at home in 2020, which is almost double those of rural households-39%. In the LDCs, for example, 10% of the rural population is covered by a 2G network and 15% of the rural population are living in areas with no mobile service. The connectivity gaps are more pronounced here (International Telecommunication Union, 2023).

Digital Public Infrastructures are foundational, government-backed digital networks intended to help ensure efficient service delivery, facilitate economic inclusion, and advance principles of equitable opportunity. It typically includes a system for digital identity, digital payment systems, and digital data exchange in making the residents' access to government programs, financial services, health, and education possible. The potentials for transformative DPIs in Central and South America are huge, with conventional social inequality, infrastructural deficiencies, and economic imbalances. DPIs can even out the inefficiencies in governance and ensure that marginalised groups access the digital economy to improve their economic opportunities and quality of life by reducing the costs of service delivery and improving transparency.

However, in practice, structural and socio-economic challenges have hindered the actualization of these policies across the region. Such issues pose daunting deterrents to development, even where the prospects for DPI are promising in order to bridge the digital divide and advance socio-economic inclusion. Many governments across the region have delayed formulating essential systems because of financial drawbacks and logistics of reaching faraway areas that are remote and rural. These are challenges that, with historical inequalities affecting marginalised communities, only stress how difficult it is to provide equal access to digital tools and services while at the same time introducing DPI frameworks to achieve digital transformation.

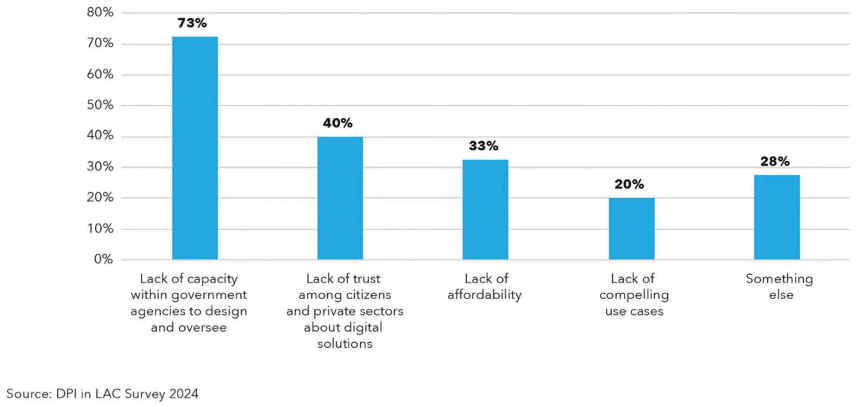

Figure 1: Most cited barriers to the deployment of DPI in LAC

1. Economic Barriers

Some of the largest wealth gaps in the world make economic inequality a major barrier to digital access throughout Central and South America. Around 209 million people in Central and South America, or about 33% of the population, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, are not connected, and most of them are from rural and poor backgrounds. In many countries, the cost of Internet services exceeds 10% of average household income, which highly exceeds the 2% affordability benchmark set by the ITU.

Marginalised peoples also often do not have access to digital devices such as tablets, laptops, and smartphones. Besides this, most families with lower incomes naturally still put basic needs before technological purchases. Economic barriers, linked to the historic and structural discrimination faced by Afro-descendant and Indigenous peoples, among others, are increasing income inequalities. For example, nearly 75% of the Indigenous population of Guatemala lives in conditions of poverty, significantly reducing their ability to access digital technologies.

2. Lack of infrastructure

A big part of Central and South America is unreachable in regards to digital infrastructure, particularly in rural and remote areas like the Amazon basin and Andean highlands. Digital opportunities are very tricky to provide in a few places. According to the World Bank, just 15 percent of families in Latin American rural towns have broadband internet connections, versus 60-70 percent for urban homes. This gap is felt strongly in countries such as Bolivia, Peru, and Paraguay, where geographic barriers include high terrain and deep forests, making infrastructure development more cumbersome to handle (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024).

Besides, steady and dependable access to electricity is still a major obstacle in rural areas. For instance, more than 67% of Bolivia's rural areas have been electrified; this means many people lack access to the electricity needed to run basic electronics or computers with access to the internet. Energy networks usually fail in remote areas of Peru due to the inadequacy of infrastructure, which has hindered sustained digital expansion.

Many governments cannot afford the high financial investments required to extend the digital infrastructure to outlying regions. According to the IDB, a roughly estimated investment of approximately $68 billion would be necessary to achieve universal broadband connectivity throughout the region. This financial challenge is compounded by poor rates of return on investment in sparsely inhabited places.

3. Social Inequalities

It is this digital gap that is further widened by inequalities in societies, the roots of which can be traced to Central and South American history. Specific challenges are faced by Afro-descendants, Indigenous peoples, and rural women. Racism and historical discrimination against these peoples create self-sustaining issues. This is the situation with countries like Mexico, Peru, and Brazil, where the majority of their Indigenous people lack a public school system that would help them improve their digital skills. UNESCO estimates that more than 40% of Latin American Indigenous children are excluded from secondary-level schooling, the most important time for developing digital literacy.

Another aspect of the problem is gender disparities. Compared to men, women in rural areas are much less likely to own digital devices or utilise the internet. For instance, according to the GSMA's Mobile Gender Gap Report, societal norms and economic dependence contribute to the 25% lower likelihood of mobile internet connection among Latin American rural women compared to men. Additionally, for historically oppressed communities, language barriers contribute to the technological advancement process. Because digital tools and platforms are primarily available in Spanish or Portuguese, which further restricts their usefulness and accessibility, many Indigenous communities, including those who speak Quechua and

Guarani, encounter obstacles. These disparities foster systemic poverty and exclusion in addition to hindering individual possibilities. A 2021 study conducted by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), for instance, revealed that socioeconomic disparities widened as marginalised populations with poor digital connectivity were less able to take advantage of telemedicine and remote learning initiatives during the pandemic.

IV. Key Vocabulary

Digital divide: Digital divide, essentially refers to the gap that lies between people having access to information and communication technologies like the internet and mobile devices, and those who do not. It signifies a larger socio-economic inequality due to geographic placement, income level, and education. The digital divide further leads to more significant social and economic discrepancies, with the worst impacts of all being the limitations it imposes on the potential for education acquisition, health benefits, and opportunities linked to participation in the digital economy.

Broadband connection: Broadband is a high-speed connection to the Internet that provides fast, constant access to it, allowing for such applications as video streaming, online gaming, and communication. It is more rapid than the conventional dial-up links and can be accessed using technologies related to fiber-optic cables, DSL, cable, and wireless services.

Affordability: Affordability refers to the cost of accessing digital tools, such as internet services and devices, relating to the levels of income for individuals or households. When these are too expensive, they impede access for groups with lower incomes. The affordability gap in many regions shuts off access to essential services from economically deprived populations.

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI): Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) refers to foundational, interoperable digital systems designed to provide inclusive access to essential services and enable governments, businesses, and citizens to interact effectively in the digital age. DPI includes systems such as digital identity platforms, payment systems, and data exchange networks that serve as the backbone for digital economies and governance. The aim of DPI is to enhance transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity by ensuring that digital tools and services are accessible to all segments of society, particularly underserved populations.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT): Information and Communication Technologies are technologies that grant access to information through telecommunications, broadcasting, and digital media. These technologies include, but are not limited to, the internet, mobile networks, computers, and various other digital means of carrying out communication, data exchange, or the exchange of digital content.

Digital Literacy: Digital literacy is the set of skills and knowledge required for using digital technologies appropriately to access information, communicate effectively, and inform and participate in various aspects of digital spaces. It includes technical skills in basic operations, security awareness, and moving around digital content. Marginalised groups that lack digital literacy are more likely to be excluded from the benefits of DPIs and digital tools.

e -Government: E-Government is generally defined as the use of digital technologies, especially the internet, by government organisations in delivering services, interacting with citizens, and managing the respective public administration more effectively and efficiently. It also encompasses all forms of online services, including tax payments, access to government information, permit applications, and electronic voting. E-government is mainly aimed at enhancing the delivery of public services and making the processes of government more accessible and transparent for all peoples of the population.

Marginalised Populations: Marginalised populations are groups that experience systemic disadvantage due to factors like race, gender, socio-economic status, or geography. These groups often include Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, rural communities, and women.

Rural-Urban Divide: The rural-urban divide refers to the gap in the availability of various services, infrastructure, and economic opportunities between the urban and rural sectors. The majority of rural areas in Latin America lack the minimum infrastructure for digitization like broadband.

Infrastructure Gaps: The infrastructure gap refers to the difference between a state's current economic infrastructure and the required infrastructure for access to specific areas and their benefits to the population.

Inclusive Growth: Inclusive growth means that economic growth has to provide a due share to all sections of society, particularly the marginalised, in terms of equal opportunity, resources, and services. When well implemented, DPIs can trigger inclusive growth by guaranteeing equal access to digital services for every citizen, regardless of background or location, improving economic participation and social integration.

V. Important Events & Chronology

Date	Event
2003	The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) The summit emphasised the importance of providing access to information and ICTs for all, especially marginalised populations, ensuring that they benefit from the digital economy and society.

2010	The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Formed under the UN, IGF holds annual meetings on global issues in internet governance and focus on accessibility, digital inclusion, and the rights of marginalised groups in the digital realm.
2010	2010 - *eLAC 2015* Initiative by ECLAC This initiative outlines a roadmap for the region in order to develop ICTs and increase digital inclusion, specifically in areas of underserved populations.
2014	The Latin American and Caribbean Internet Governance Forum (LACIGF) This regional meeting, under IGF, focuses on the issue of internet governance in Latin America and the Caribbean.
2015	Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 9 of the SDGs targets resilient infrastructure, encourages innovation, and increases digital inclusion.
2016	UNESCO's Focus on Indigenous Digital Inclusion UNESCO launched a series of programs geared towards increasing digital access and literacy among indigenous communities in Latin America.
2017	*Rising Voices* Empowerment Program Rising Voices, a Global Voices project focuses on the inclusion of the marginalised, majorly the indigenous groups, to digital platforms.
2018	The International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) "Digital Inclusion for All" Initiative ITU initiated this to ensure that excluded groups from all over the world are included on digital platforms. It has targeted people with disabilities, women as well as rural populations.
2019	*Internet para Todos* in Peru The idea was to provide low-cost internet access in rural and less favoured areas, especially those parts of the Amazon and Andean region. The aim was to close the gap of the digital divide through collaboration with the private sector, including Telefónica, to make sure that the digital services reach marginalised populations.
2020	COVID-19 Pandemic and the Surge in Digital Access The pandemic brought out the digital divide in Latin America, as it did in most parts of the world with many marginalised populations, especially in the rural areas.

2020	Brazil's *Internet for All* Program Brazil's Internet for All initiative - launched in 2017 and expanded during COVID-19-pursued bringing broadband internet to remote regions, including rural regions and the Amazon.
2021	Digital Transformation Frameworks in Latin America ECLAC and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) published frameworks on digital transformation, placing emphasis on the importance of inclusive policies with regard to digital access for vulnerable groups.

VI. Past Resolutions and Treaties

Resolution E/CN.5/2021/L.6 – "Socially Just Transition Towards Sustainable Development: The Role of Digital Technologies" (2021)

UN Meetings Coverage on Digital Technologies and Inclusion (2021)

This resolution by the UN Commission for Social Development emphasises the role of digital technologies in addressing social inequalities and improving well-being, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It encourages Member States to act towards closing the digital divide and promote digital inclusion for marginalised communities, including rural populations, women, and youth.

Resolution A/RES/73/17 – "Impact of Rapid Technological Change on the SDGs" (2018)

UN General Assembly Document A/RES/73/17

This resolution by the General Assembly focuses on the role of technology in achieving SDGs by highlighting the need for international cooperation in order to mitigate the negative impacts caused by technological divides. The resolution does this by particularly considering vulnerable populations in developing regions, including Central and South America.

Resolution E/2021/27 – "Mainstreaming Gender into UN Policies, Including Digital Equality" (2021)

UN Economic and Social Council Session (2021)

This Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution addresses a digital dimension of gender-focused policies. It urges the promotion of including women and girls in digital spaces and addresses barriers to access caused by socio-economic inequalities.

These decisions were passed in the UN, wherein countries in Latin America, such as Brazil, Colombia, and Argentina, actively participated in various related frameworks. However, as nonbinding resolutions, their implementation rests on national priorities and capacities. While these resolutions and frameworks have given critical direction, the response of these resolutions to digital inclusion in Latin America has not been entirely satisfactory. Infrastructure gaps, economic inequalities, and limited national resources remain key barriers.

Resolutions have raised awareness of the digital divide globally, and pointed out its contribution to broader socio-economic objectives. They have stimulated regional initiatives. Yet, despite their successes, the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms and the restricted funding for national and local implementation so far have contributed little tangible progress. Rural areas and Indigenous populations remain underserved due to geographic and economic barriers. These resolutions bring forth the following: a call for sustained commitment and targeted investment required to overcome structural barriers and ensure equitable access to digital tools among the most marginalised sections of society. Turning these commitments into practice requires continued effort.

VII. Failed Solution Attempts

Policy reforms, international partnerships, and financial investments have all formed part of the efforts to combat and resolve the digital divide among historically marginalised groups in Latin America. Each of these has posed some challenges and hence has not yielded the desired outcomes.

***eLAC 2022*:**

The eLAC network, under the coordination of ECLAC, was meant to enact digital inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean. It focused on expanding broadband access, improving digital literacy, and fostering regional cooperation. Weak governance structures, along with a lack of funding and the differential commitment from the participating countries themselves, has meant actual progress is patchy. Where national programs have been underfunded, many rural and Indigenous communities continue to lack access to digital tools. The *eLAC*, while raising awareness and setting ambitious goals, failed to have much effect due to a lack of enforceable mechanisms, as well as limited collaboration.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):

Programs such as Peru's *Internet para Todos* and Brazil's *Internet for All* relied on PPPs to extend internet access to underserved areas. These programs have faced logistical and financial challenges in deployment due to high costs in remote areas. Additionally, private interests often pursue profit maximisation policies that leave the poorest and most isolated communities with inferior services. PPPs

stand a better chance, but their operations must be watched and regulated more closely by governments to prioritise the interest of poor, marginal groups over and above commercial interests.

Deployment of Military Resources in Infrastructure Development:

Some countries have deployed military engineering units to build infrastructures in remote areas, inclusive of telecommunication projects in the Amazon. These efforts helped establish physical connectivity in some areas but did not help in bridging the huge digital divide, and their scaling-up was inadequate. While military involvement has helped in logistical support, it cannot replace comprehensive socio-economic programs tailored to local needs.

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Loans:

The IDB invested several billion dollars in loans for the improvement of Latin America's digital infrastructure in order to develop access to broadband and improve digital literacy. But many projects sank in cases of misadministration, corruption, and too little local capacity to maintain the infrastructure beyond the short term. While funding is crucial, its effect appeared to be very limited in this case where mechanisms of governance and accountability happen to be weak.

High deployment costs, especially in rural areas, along with insufficient national budgets, have limited the scope for these infrastructure projects. Fragmented political priorities and inconsistent implementation within countries have resulted in most of the regional and national initiatives being out of alignment. Most programs did not take into account barriers such as underlying social inequities, alongside factors like gender and language, which impede fully benefiting from a digital tool. This means that, in this respect, future efforts to be meaningful must go beyond the holistic approach to infrastructure, affordability, education, and social inclusion by strengthening governance and oversight mechanisms.

VIII. Possible Solutions

Firstly, it is required that digital technology access be ensured through a multi-stakeholder approach for historically marginalised people. Collaboration between governments, private technology companies, and civil society organisations would be needed for the increasing of digital access with the help of international organisations such as the ITU. Governments should focus on creating regulatory frameworks and enabling policies that stimulate investment in efficient and affordable ICT infrastructure. This involves setting standards to reduce consumer costs, ensuring fair competition in the telecommunications market, and providing aid to low-income individuals. For instance, it has been possible to cut costs and extend access to

mobile Internet, particularly in underserved areas, due to the ITU's global harmonisation of the mobile spectrum.

In digital inclusion, broadband networks-mobile internet, in particular-are cardinal. Already in many developing countries, the use of mobile technologies, such as 3G and 4G, is by far the most common means of accessing the internet. Ongoing deployments of 5G offer fresh opportunities to address connectivity gaps. However, this must be affordable and accessible for all people. This will ensure spectrum distribution and infrastructure development in rural and isolated areas where gaps are more noticeable, done through collaboration of governments in cooperation with international organisations like the ITU.

Infrastructure development should be combined with digital literacy programs going forward. Programs should target the appropriate use of digital tools, teaching underserved areas, and modifying such efforts to cross linguistic and cultural barriers. For example, websites, online learning platforms, and portals regarding higher education can be designed keeping in view the native languages and cultural backgrounds of indigenous groups. Likewise, UNESCO and similar organisations could be quite helpful on their part by providing the relevant guidelines as well as materials for such initiatives.

Last but not least, regional frameworks such as eLAC 2022 and other multilateral agreements should be strengthened and used as a basis for stronger efforts. National governments can use these agreements as a framework for integrating their strategies for digital inclusion. Monitoring systems and annual reviews are also needed to ensure accountability and adherence. The international community can endeavour to bridge the digital divide and ensure that everyone has fair access to digital tools by utilising collaborations, coordinating technology developments, and including regulatory frameworks.

IX. Useful Links

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, https://www.cepal.org/en

Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms (Internet for Trust, UNESCO), https://www.unesco.org/en/internet-trust/guidelines

World Bank Digital Development Projects, https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/digital

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Digital Development, https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/backgrounders/Pages/digital-inclusion-of-all.aspx

UNESCO on Digital Inclusion, https://www.unesco.org/en/digital-inclusion

X. Works Cited

Appaya, Sharmista, David Porteous, and Axel Rifon Pérez. "Powering Progress: How Digital Public Infrastructure Is Transforming Latin America and the Caribbean." *World Bank Blogs*, 24 Sept. 2024, https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/digital-development/powering-progress--how-digital-public-infrastructure-is-transfor.

B20 Brazil, "Digital Exclusion in Latin America: A Barrier to the AI Economy", *B20 Brazil*, https://b20brazil.org/w/digital-exclusion-in-latin-america-a-barrier-to-the-ai-economy

Community Tech Network, "Digital Mythbusting: Why the Digital Divide Is Not Just a Rural Issue." *Community Tech Network*, https://communitytechnetwork.org/blog/digital-mythbusting-why-the-digital-divide-is-not-just-a-rural-issue/

"Digital Mythbusting: Why the Digital Divide Is Not Just a Rural Issue", Community Technology Network, https://communitytechnetwork.org/blog/digital-mythbusting-why-the-digital-divide-is-not-just-a-rural-issue/.

"Indigenous Peoples", International Telecommunication Union, https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Indigenous-Peoples/Pages/default.aspx.

International Telecommunication Union, "Digital Inclusion of All", *International Telecommunication Union*, https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/backgrounders/Pages/digital-inclusion-of-all.aspx

International Telecommunication Union, "Indigenous Peoples and Digital Inclusion", *International Telecommunication Union*, https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Indigenous-Peoples/Pages/default.aspx

International Telecommunication Union, *Declaration of Principles,* World Summit on the Information Society, https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html.

Porteous,David John; Rifon Perez,Axel; Appaya,Mandepanda Sharmista; Martinezgarza, Ricardo; Albornoz,

Nicolás; Zaballos, Antonio García, "*Unlocking the Potential of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) : A Region-specific Perspective - A World Bank-IADB Technical Note (English)*", Washington, D.C.,World Bank Group. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099072524161522274/P1786161f166e904318ce516dc8d17f524b

Rojas, Alejandra; "The Digital Divide as a Disadvantage in Access to AI Resources: Implications for Latin America", *Revista Chilena de Derecho y Tecnología*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2022, pp. 27–45., University of Chile, https://rchdt.uchile.cl/index.php/RCHDT/article/view/60730/72673

UNESCO. "Guidelines for Strengthening Internet Trust." *UNESCO*, https://www.unesco.org/en/internet-trust/guidelines

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "UN/DESA Policy Brief #92: Leveraging Digital Technologies for Social Inclusion." United Nations, 2020, www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-92-leveraging-digital-technologies-for-social-inclusion/.

United Nations, "Leveraging Digital Technologies for Social Inclusion", *UN DESA Policy Brief 92*, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-92-leveraging-digital-technologies-for-social-inclusion/

United Nations, "The Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation", *United Nations*, https://www.un.org/en/sg-digital-cooperation-panel

UN Press Release, "Socially Just Transition Towards Sustainable Development: The Role of Digital Technologies on Social Development and Well-being of All," *United Nations Economic and Social Council*, 2021, https://press.un.org/en/2021/ecosoc7050.doc.htm.

World Bank, "Digital Economy for Latin America and the Caribbean (DE4LAC): Country Diagnostic, Jamaica Dissemination Workshop", *World Bank*, https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2024/06/05/digital-economy-for-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-de4lac-country-diagnostic-jamaica-dissemination-workshop

World Bank, "Digital Development", *World Bank*, https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/digital