

Young Professionals Subcommittee

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Goals

The main goals of the Region 8 Young Professionals team for 2016 are:

- Improve the status of Young Professionals Affinity Groups in Region 8, consisting of:
 - no inactive or dormant Young Professionals Affinity Groups in the Region;
 - Young Professionals Affinity Groups report their activities on vTools through L31 reports in a timely manner, and they all have the minimum required 2 activity reports before the end of the year;
 - maintain regular communication with Young Professionals Affinity Groups, either through email or Skype calls;
- Create and share additional support material and manuals relevant for Young Professionals, mainly guides to successfully running a Young Professionals Affinity Group and simple explanations of the bylaws governing them, strategies for measuring event success and impact, strategies for getting funding and sponsorship for events and other topics;
- Support Young Professionals Affinity Groups to organize more STEP events and work closer with students in their Section;
- Increase the number of Young Professionals Affinity Groups that freely and efficiently collaborate with their parent Section;
- Increase visibility of Young Professionals program in Region 8.

Status and Past Contributions

- Very successful Young Professionals activities and workshop track at the Region 8 Student and Young Professional Congress, which took place in Regensburg, Germany between 17th August and 21st August. There were four workshops aimed at Young Professionals, and one workshop dedicated to brainstorming strategies for students and Young Professionals to work together more often. The workshops were highly effective, and ideas resulting from some of them are being incorporated in the MGA Young Professionals business plan for the next three years. In addition, on the first day there was a networking cruise for all Young Professionals participating in the Congress, which included icebreakers and team building activities.
- One of the three winners of the 2016 MGA Young Professionals Hall of Fame Award is the Egypt Young Professionals Affinity Group. They were presented the Award during the Gala Dinner at the Region 8 Student and Young Professional Congress.
- Membership statistics: since June 2016, the proportion of Young Professionals members in Region 8 has steadily increased, representing 34,71% of the total Region 8 membership at the end of August 2016 (compared to 28,99% in February 2016).
- Significant increase in social media reach: the Region 8 Young Professionals Facebook page has now 1,809 likes, almost double the number of likes from January 2016. Furthermore, during the Region 8 Student and Young Professional Congress days, the page reached a total of 56,000 Facebook users, and peaked at 6,079 users reached in just one day through native posts (20 August 2016), and 9,168 users reached on 28 August 2016 through native posts as well as shares and posts by other users. As of 4th September 2016, the statistics have stabilized at an average of 14,000 users reached each week and 17,000 actions of engagement each week (users liking, commenting or sharing Region 8 Young Professionals content). In addition, the Region 8 Young Professionals Twitter, LinkedIN and Instagram pages are steadily growing.
- As of 4th September 2016, only one Young Professionals Affinity Group in Region 8 is not active. We are in the process of reaching out to the respective parent Section for support. We hope that by the end of the year, a new team will be elected to reactivate the group. This marks the highest rate of active Young Professionals Affinity Groups in Region 8 in the past four years, at least.
- One of the main priorities for the rest of the year is to encourage the successful organization of elections for new Affinity Group chairs in Affinity Groups that need it. There are currently 18 Young Professionals Affinity Groups in Region 8 where the chair has outstayed his/her term, and thus need to organize elections as soon as possible. As of 4th September 2016, six of the 18 Affinity Groups have notified us of their intentions to organize elections or have already involved the Section Executive Committee for support.
- Four new Young Professionals Affinity Groups have been established in the past five months (in order of establishment date): Israel, Palestine, Bahrain, Republic of Macedonia. Three other Sections are in the process of establishing Affinity Groups, to our knowledge.
- Preparations for this year's Young Professionals signature event in our Region are in full swing. This year, the signature event and meet-up will take place during the Eurosime Conference in Oulu, Finland. It will consist of a workshop on soft skills and training for successful networking, which is open to conference attendees, followed by a networking event opened to all IEEE members in Finland Section.

Outlook

- Continue efforts to increase visibility and awareness of Young Professionals program and activities in Region 8
- Help Affinity Groups remain active, and encourage them to recruit and train new members and volunteers, in the interest of successful succession of volunteers in leadership positions
- Increase engagement and collaboration between Young Professionals Affinity Groups, student branches and technical societies. There is a large potential for successful collaborations, and they can be highly beneficial in improving member retention rate, diversify event content, and gather funding for activities.

- Increase involvement of Young Professionals at IEEE conferences organized in the Region. This can, but should not be limited to, be part of the MGA Young Professionals signature event model initiative.
- Since there is a steady increase in the involvement of Young Professionals in various events organized in Region 8, their involvement should be encouraged as part of cross-section Student and Young Professional Congresses due to take place in 2017. This will help engage the local Young Professional community, as well as bring them closer to students, and help graduate students learn more about volunteering opportunities as part of their local Young Professionals Affinity Group.
- There have been many successful programs and initiatives taking place in Affinity Groups across Region 8, for example the internship and company branch programs done by Affinity Groups in Portugal, Jordan, UAE, etc.. Such programs should be encouraged and even develop a method to help volunteers implement them in other Sections or collaborate to improve their impact.

Points of Concern

- Lack of support from Sections and Section Chairs towards their Young Professionals. Several Affinity Groups have raised this issue, from Sections not providing the full rebate to Affinity Groups, to complete lack of support for events that take place.
- Many Affinity Groups struggle to get funding for their events, which severely impacts the number and quality of activities they can organize. Several volunteers have informed us that the funding application process for STEP and CEW takes too long, and in at least one case, the funding was not received, even though it was approved. Funding remains the biggest challenge faced by Young Professionals Affinity Groups in Region 8.
- When comparing the number of Young Professionals members in Region 8 in August 2015 to August 2016, there is a clear decrease (803 fewer members in August 2016 than in August 2015). It appears that the greater decrease in members happens in European Sections, in most cases. This suggests that Young Professionals members in Europe are less satisfied than members in other areas of Region 8, a proposition which has been increasingly visible through the feedback and opinions of Young Professionals members and Affinity Groups from European Sections. New programs, initiatives or benefits should be considered for this membership segment for the future.