

Young Professionals Subcommittee

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Goals

The main goals of the Region 8 Young Professionals team for 2017 are to:

- 1) Improve the status of Young Professionals Affinity Groups in Region 8, consisting of:
 - a) no inactive or dormant Young Professionals Affinity Groups in the Region;
 - b) Young Professionals Affinity Groups reporting their activities on vTools through L31 reports in a timely manner, and they all having the minimum required 2 activity reports before the end of the year;
 - c) maintain regular communication with Young Professionals Affinity Groups, either through email or Skype calls;
 - d) create at least 1 new Young Professionals Affinity Group in the Region;
- 2) Increase the number of Young Professionals Affinity Groups that freely and efficiently collaborate with their parent Section;
- 3) 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;
- 4) Bridge the gap between the 3 main segments of Young Professionals by:
 - a) Supporting Young Professionals Affinity Groups to organise more STEP events and work closer with students in their Section;
 - b) Supporting Young Professionals Affinity Groups to organise more Meet-ups events and work closer with industry in their Section;
 - c) Supporting and encourage Young Professionals Affinity Groups to allocate resources to entrepreneurship activities;
- 5) Relevant partake in the IEEE Sections Congress to be held this August in Sidney, Australia;
- 6) Cooperate with SAC for the continuous success of Cross-Sectional SYP Congresses and the Region 8 SYP Congress;
- 7) Cooperate with the other MA subcommittees and take advantage of each others' strengths to achieve our goals, particularly with SIGHT, PA and LM;
- 8) Focus not only on supporting active Young Professionals volunteers, but also on the development of programs that directly aim to increase Young Professionals members satisfaction based on segmentation studies;
- 9) Increase visibility of the Young Professionals program in Region 8.

Status

The on-going activities contributing to the achievement of each of the goals described above are listed below:

- 1) Since two years ago, the 47 Young Professionals Affinity Groups in Region 8 are distributed by the entire team in order to provide a better service to the volunteers. By having each team member focusing on 6 to 10 groups, dedicated continuous support that is relevant for each Affinity Group in particular is guaranteed and their challenges are tackled more efficiently. Email is the communication mean of choice, though Skype calls are frequently held with Affinity Groups facing more serious issues, on the process of being revitalised or with brand new committees. There are currently 2 Young Professionals Affinity Groups on the path of becoming dormant, but joint efforts with the Section ExCom are already ongoing to reverse the process. There are 11 Sections lacking a Young Professionals Affinity Group of which 6 show to have the necessary dynamics and manpower to change this in the near future.
- 2) Stronger cooperation between the Young Professionals Affinity Group and their parent Section is currently achieved in 2 ways: by using the Region 8 Young Professionals team as a mediator and during Region 8 Committee meetings, during which face-to-face discussions with the Section Chairs about their Young Professionals Affinity Groups and how they can help them grow can be had. The division method also plays a major part on this, as during the meeting, each team member only has 6 to 10 Section Chairs to dedicate their time to.
- 3) In the past few months, the following manuals have been written or updated and are available for distribution: *How to Organise a Region 8 SYP Congress* (in cooperation with SAC), *SAMIEEE for YPs* and *Young Professionals Operations Manual*. Currently under draft are: *Guidelines to organize a Cross-Sectional SYP Congress* (in cooperation with SAC) and a YP slide presentation the Young Professionals Affinity Groups can readily use to increase visibility of Young Professionals in their Section. Another important milestone is the Event Exchange Program, which development started with the Region 8 Young Professionals team and has now been taken over by MGA Young Professionals for implementation worldwide. This platform will allow the volunteers to see all the activities organised by other Young Professionals Affinity Groups geographically, hopefully working as an idea pool.
- 4) This is a major point for future work. While significant effort has been put into the increase of the number of STEP events organised and the retention of Students to Young Professionals at the transition level, additional work needs to be done in 2017+ into satisfying Young Professionals members and retain volunteers after they leave Academia, thus those in an industry and/or entrepreneurship environment.
- 5) New topic for 2017, still to be kicked off. See Outlook Section.
- 6) In 2015, 6 Cross-Sectional SYPs took place: ISYP, CEuSYP, WESYP (1st edition), HSYP, MESYP and NSYP (1st edition). The Young Professionals team was strongly involved in guiding the organisation of these congresses and delivered workshops in all. This year, ISYP will be dissolved and merged with WESYP and a new GCC Cross-Sectional Congress is taking place in May. Preparations for the organisation of the CEuSYP, HSYP and NSYP are under go. SAC and YP subcommittee work side by side with the OCs. Significant increase of Young Professionals activities across the Region and cooperation between neighbouring Sections is observed after these events.
- 7) New topic for 2017, still to be kicked off. See Outlook Section.

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- 9) Increase of the visibility of Young Professionals in Region 8 has been so far achieved by participation and delivery of workshops in SYP Congresses and online media campaigns as the “Message to Young Professionals” and the IEEE Day video gathering messages from Young Professionals Affinity Groups around the Region. Considerable attention has been given to Facebook presence: the Region 8 Young Professionals page has now 2090 likes, more than double of what it had at this time last year. Statistics show an average of 14.000 users reached each week and 17.000 actions of engagement each week (users liking, commenting or sharing our content). A Facebook group for Region 8 Young Professionals Affinity Group Chairs was created for closer collaboration and fast delivery of news. Region 8 Young Professionals Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram pages are steadily growing. Another activity that results in a wider spread of the Young Professionals image is through our volunteers during award season. This year, there were 9 nominations for the Region 8 Outstanding Young Professionals Affinity Group Award and 7 nominations for the Region 8 Young Professionals Exceptional Volunteer Award, marking the highest volunteer engagement on this matter since the past 4 years.

Outlook

This year’s plan to attain the goals listed in the beginning of this report is given under the same order below:

- 1) Given its success, the “divide and conquer” strategy will be carried on during this year. As most of the existing Young Professionals Affinity Groups are currently in good standing, efforts will be directed mainly to revitalisation and initialisation. This requires constant collaboration with the parent Sections and even local Student Branches, who often have the manpower or connections to older volunteers fit to transition into the Young Professionals world. A new “group call” concept will be employed among neighbouring Young Professionals Affinity Groups. The 47 groups have been split into 6 smaller groups based on their geographical location. This will enable the Affinity Groups to share their practices and learn from each others’ challenges on a regular basis. By getting acquainted with the surrounding Young Professionals Affinity Groups experiences, each group should feel less lonely in their struggles and learn new tricks on how to overcome them. In return, motivation and engagement should go up and the number of dormant groups should remain low or null. An increase of Cross-Sectional activities and cooperation beyond the SYP Congresses is also expected.
- 2) To continue as up to now.
- 3) The *Guidelines to Organise a Cross-Sectional SYP Congress* and the standalone Young Professionals slide presentation will be ready within the next month. During the remainder of this year, the following additional manuals will be prepared: *Sponsorship for Dummies*, update of the *SAMIEEE for YPs* manual to include new queries, update of the *How to organise a Region 8 SYP Congress* manual and update of the *vTools Reporting Manual* accounting for the new user interface. Additionally, a webinar on *Publicity & Visibility* will be arranged for YP Chairs. Depending on the volunteers’ response to this format, more training webinars might be prepared.
- 4) This year, the main focus will be on the development of initiatives and support of activities that aim to serve the Region 8 Young Professionals members in industry, all the way from the ones at big well sustained companies to the ones that just started their own small business. This will be handled in 3 fronts:
 - a) *Company Branch Program*, rebranded proposal under construction, targeting Young Professionals members that left academia, specifically the ones that are now in industry. The concept passes through applying the Student Branch model to companies, enabling not only a more natural extension of the volunteering time span, but also of a more dedicated volunteering activity, focusing on the core of the business at hand and required soft skills.
 - b) Initiative focused on Region 8 Young Professionals members that chose to become entrepreneurs. There is currently no support or entrepreneur-aimed program in Region 8. This is a segment of the Young Professionals members that is growing each day faster and is a segment of the Young Professionals members that chooses to leave the community; what IEEE is at this time capable of offering once they cross this line is yet to become pertinent. The Young Professionals subcommittee is at the moment finishing up a proposal for a new program designed to serve young entrepreneur members to present to the Region 8 OpCom for approval within this quarter.
 - c) *Meet-ups*, new funding opportunity from MGA Young Professionals. The Young Professionals Affinity Groups have now the chance to apply for up to 1500\$ to support their organisation of meet-ups at relevant technical conferences in their Section. Since it is a relatively new initiative, the Region 8 Young Professionals team has put together a list of relevant conferences in the Region and is contacting the Young Professionals Affinity Groups in the hosting sections to advertise the opportunity, encourage them to apply and offer help in the organisation process. This is beneficial in 2 ways: on one hand, it stimulates networking between Young Professionals members and on-site training of essential soft skills at their career stage; on the other hand, it increases the visibility of Young Professionals in Region 8 and attracts new (young industry) people to join IEEE.
- 5) Young Professionals are at the core of IEEE’s strategy for 2025. Representing a considerable slack of the totality of IEEE members and active volunteers, this is the period in which the personal decision of committing to IEEE and its ideology or not is taken. Focusing on this membership segment and its community needs is vital. Region 8 is one of the largest and, without a doubt, most culturally diverse of all Regions 1 to 10. As so, the Region 8 Young Professionals team plans to share its vision and concrete near future plan by contributing to the pool of recommendations being collected to the IEEE Sections Congress. Furthermore, an efficient approach will be well-thought-out and beforehand defined to gain (and give) the most out of (to) the event on-site;
- 6) Parallel to preparing and guiding the organization of HSYP, MESYP, CEuSYP and NSYP, SAC and YP teams are looking into possible hosts for the WESYP Congress. Time and efforts also being put into bringing to light an African SYP

Congress. African Sections face difficulties either for VISA or financial reasons to attend the other SYP Congresses taking place in Region 8. Support and encouragement of these initiatives in this geographic area is of paramount importance. It is in this environment, together with representatives from Region 8 to discuss possible opportunities and solutions and colleague volunteers from neighbouring Sections experiencing the same reality and dares that a local difference can be made. In the next couple of months, the call for applications to organise the next Region 8 SYP Congress in 2018 will be put out. Once more, the Region 8 Young Professionals subcommittee will work closely with SAC on the selection process and guidance of the chosen organising team until the event is due and afterwards for the reporting phase.

- 7) Collaboration with the fellow subcommittees under Member Activities is another main goal of the Young Professionals team for this year. This is foreseen with, but not limited to, SIGHT and PA (Professional Activities).
- 8) See point 4.
- 9) In addition to the online media presence and campaigns, there are a number of other projects in view as having a channel for training of Young Professionals volunteers at IEEE-TV, continuation of the YP Newsletter redaction (2 editions per year), coming up with a good selection of promotional materials for distribution during the Cross-Sectional SYP Congresses and, last but not least, invest on *Signature Events*. *Signature Events* are yet another new funding opportunity from MGA Young Professionals in the same line as Meet-Ups, but at a larger scale. These events should be organised by the Regional Coordinators and take place at a relevant high impact conference (or gathering), where IEEE (and non-IEEE) members from diverse backgrounds come together in one spot. This will expose people outside the community to IEEE and Young Professionals, as well as increase the visibility of Young Professionals in Region 8 within its members.

Points of Concern

Young Professionals in Region 8 have grown immensely in the past few years. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. This improvement is inherent to the successful development of programs focusing on Young Professionals in industry and connected to the entrepreneurship life; programs that are not only designed to be exploited by volunteers, but by members. As soon as Young Professionals leave academia, the slice of members actively volunteering decreases, so targeting the regular non-volunteer member will result in the highest return in form of retention. The Region 8 Young Professionals team is working on 2 major proposals to address the before mentioned point, but these programs can only get off ground with the support of the Region 8 OpCom and other closely related subcommittees, as SAC and PA.

Another point is related to Cross-Sectional and Region 8 SYP Congresses. It has been statistically seen that volunteering activity and member engagement has its peak right after these events. The participants have the chance to connect to and learn from other volunteers as well as receive training directly from Region 8 Committee representatives. The success of these events has been substantial, which has led to unseen numbers of attendees and, in the case of the Region 8 SYP, volunteers fulfilling the funding criteria. Additionally, the number of Cross-Sectional SYP Congresses is increasing every odd year, with 2 new editions in 2015 and, potentially, 2 more in 2017 (1 still to be confirmed), resulting in a total of 6 (or 7) this year. Further financial support of these events by Region 8 might be required to maintain their quality and sustain the possibility of delivering training tracks to the participants by Region 8 Committee volunteers.

To finalise, the Young Professionals Affinity Groups in Region 8 frequently express their financial status, reaching of their local Student Branches and relation to their Section ExCom has their biggest difficulties to overcome. The first point will hopefully be minimised by the new funding opportunities provided by MGA Young Professionals. The second has been efficiently dealt with during SYP Congresses by encouraging joint work sessions between Student and Young Professionals members and by a closer collaboration between the SAC and YP subcommittee, which ends up being reflected on the volunteers. For the last point, however, the approach leading to the best results has been to have face-to-face discussions with the Section Chairs about their Young Professionals Affinity Groups needs and struggles during Region 8 Committee meetings. The circle discussion sessions are incredibly helpful for this purpose. The Region 8 Young Professionals team hopes thus to see those maintained within possible.