

## Young Professionals Subcommittee

Vinko Lesic

### Goals

The main goals of the Region 8 Young Professionals team for 2020 are to, regardless of the pandemic:

- 1) Continuously improve the status of Young Professionals Affinity Groups in Region 8, consisting of:
  - that there is no inactive or dormant Young Professionals Affinity Groups in the Region (2 reports in vTools, either virtual, in-person or hybrid and good-standing officers)
  - create at least 1 new Young Professionals Affinity Group in the Region;
  - bring the local events to global stage in virtual times through our network, social media, and other distribution channels, for greater knowledge exchange.
- 2) Facilitate the implementation of Young Professionals programs: STEP (500\$), Meet-Up (1500\$) and Local Activity Funding (750\$) - now also in virtual form;
- 3) Bridge the gap between the 3 main segments of Young Professionals by:
  - Supporting Young Professionals Affinity Groups to organize more STEP events and work closer with students in their Section;
  - Supporting Young Professionals Affinity Groups to organize more Meet-up events and work closer with industry in their Section;
  - Supporting and encourage Young Professionals Affinity Groups to allocate resources to entrepreneurship activities;
- 4) Encourage and ensure the activities' visibility and recognition of Young Professionals Affinity Groups in the Region by Region 8 Young Professionals Newsletter and social media, Young Professionals Impact Blog, Region 8 News and IEEE Region 8 Today;
- 5) Cooperate with Young Professionals from technical societies for ensuring most relevant technical impact for Young Professionals;
- 6) Cooperate with the other subcommittees and take advantage of each other's strengths to achieve our goals, particularly with SAC, WIE, PEA and AfI;
- 7) Create, update and share support material and manuals relevant for Young Professionals, focusing on strategies and tools for virtual events, and how to increase the publicity and visibility of their activities;
- 8) Focus not only on supporting active Young Professionals volunteers, but also on the development of programs that directly aim at increasing Young Professionals members satisfaction based on segmentation studies and feedback from local volunteers.

### Progress reports for next xSYPs or SYP

#### xSYPs approved since last meeting

Activity on standby as in-person events are restricted and travel grants suspended

#### YP activities planned

Built on the foundations of agile team structure and inherent flexibility that comes with the age of our volunteers, together with the proficiency in virtual tools and soft-skills being a strong component, we have managed to make a timely transformation to virtual operation, already since the very beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. Our continued effort since then is to engage the local activities and bring our affinity groups to the exemplary function.

- Currently, there are 53 Young Professionals Affinity Groups in Region 8 with expressed interest from IEEE Zambia Section to establish a new YP AG.
- The largest focus by the end of the year is to ensure that all the affinity groups perform well in terms of activities but also the reports. The acclimatization to the concept of virtual volunteering is evident within AGs with many exemplary cases available already since the beginning of the year. Others, who hoped for the better second half of the year, are now also adopting the virtual concept. The influence of the pandemic on the activities is however evident, especially by slowing down our growth in members and activities.
- Collaboration with the fellow subcommittees under Member Activities, Technical Activities or societies as so far been successful with: WiE, PEA, ComSoc YP, MTTS YP, PES YP, AfI. At the beginning of 2020, we have initially set lots of plans to expand the existing collaboration with societies (CSS, IMS, PELS, PES, MTTS, ComSoc and others) but this had to be abandoned unfortunately due to conferences facing difficulties in the times of pandemic
- Based on the results from the segmentation study, two main programs and two visibility strategy that were designed previously, focusing on reaching out directly to the Young Professional members, have been transformed to virtual editions and already had a great success:
  - IEEE Connecting Experts - series of webinars that are bringing a technical topic by an expert in a given field in form of a conference keynote style presentation. The talks are broadcasted over social media, recording up to 10x larger audience than through teleconference tools;
  - IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative - the program of technical entrepreneurship where we have selected 60 ambassadors from 20 sections (30 events altogether) despite the pandemic, which will be held in November;
  - YP Home Offices - emergency program aiming for engagement of our members in the time of pandemic, by sharing the photographs of their home offices, where we collected 3 of them in April;
  - YP Voice - previous program that had great success aimed at publishing short inspirational quotes of our successful members on why they joined the IEEE.

## IEEE Region 8 Virtual Student and Young Professionals Congress Report

R8 Virtual SYP 2020 Congress, September 14-26, 2020

Social media page: <https://www.facebook.com/R8SYP>

Website: <https://www.r8svp.com/virtual-svp>



In the wake of escalations of COVID-19 and following developments since March 2020, while striving to ensure the safety, certainty and reliability of our dear volunteers, we have sadly decided on May 15 not to hold the Region 8 Student and Young Professionals Congress 2020 in the envisioned form of an in-person meeting during August 5th to 9th, 2020. The decision summed up personal and collective continuous monitoring of this special situation done from the perspective of five different committees (SYP 2020 hosts, R8SAC, R8WIE, R8CCT and R8YP – incorporating over 40 dedicated volunteers), but also Region 8 leadership. The communication was regularly maintained with section chairs, student branch chairs and young professionals affinity group chairs.

After several weekly meetings of above-mentioned committees, together with IEEE Region 8 leadership, we started the IEEE Region 8 Virtual Student and Young Professionals Congress as a completely new thing in IEEE, built on our experience of successful local, regional and international projects and programs that have been carried out since March this year, and through IEEE volunteering of the same level. The IEEE Region 8 Virtual Student and Young Professionals Congress 2020, or vSYP 2020, took place in a unique form and spread over 13 days during September 14-26, 2020, in a hybrid format with 3 hours of daily content during 18-21h CEST (16-19h UTC). The vSYP involved a series of plenary sessions, workshops, competitions, social activities, and many more – through separate Student, Young Professional and Women in Engineering tracks. It follows a good practice of virtual conferences, summits, and other business events, while striving to imbue the tailored focus for our students and young professionals. This implies learning from experts, learning from each other, learning both about the technology and cultures, strong networking, getting feedback from our volunteers to steer Region 8 and the whole IEEE, and of course, doing it all while having fun along the way. In addition, in-person local meetings and presentations in countries throughout R8 were envisioned, where local government and health regulations allowed, broadcasted for everyone as part of the IEEE R8 vSYP program. This part was entrusted by section ambassadors who coordinated all the local activities and communicated with Region 8 teams.

The full program of the congress can be found at <https://www.r8svp.com/vsyp-program> while the recordings of the talks are published to the YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-3hFWeel4CED99Znt1SGFA/videos>.

- A stronger technical aspect of YP is being introduced, with new societies forming and supporting their own YP programs. This is transformed now through the webinars and our IEEE Connecting Experts program. In the previously established manner, society YPs are facilitating communication with speakers and R8YP are facilitating communication with local AGs and bridging cultural and language barriers.
- Increase of the visibility of Young Professionals in Region 8 has been achieved by sharing broadcasting their webinars on our social media with "one-click-to-global" approach, through the ambassadors track of R8 vSYP, YP Home Offices program and envisioned YP Voice one, and we are continuously diverting them to publishing the articles in R8 Today and YP Impact Blog. Our main approach is by using social media and e-notice as way of wide-distribution of the information. For this, we are regularly maintaining:
  - R8 website: <https://ieeer8.org/category/member-activities/yp>
  - YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/IEEEER8YoungProfessionals>
  - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Region8YP>
  - LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ieee-r8-young-professionals>
  - Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ieeeyp>
  - Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Region8YP>
  - Facebook (entrepreneurship): <https://www.facebook.com/IEEEER8Entrepreneurship>
- Finally, new IEEE Volunteering platform is introduced by Young Professionals, open for everyone, as a flexible way to find volunteers for short or long term commitments, one-time or continuous. We are transferring our webinars application process to the platform and engaging AGs through it. The platform is available <https://volunteer.ieee.org>

### YP Activities developed

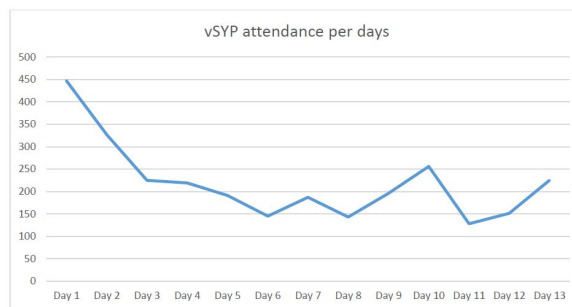
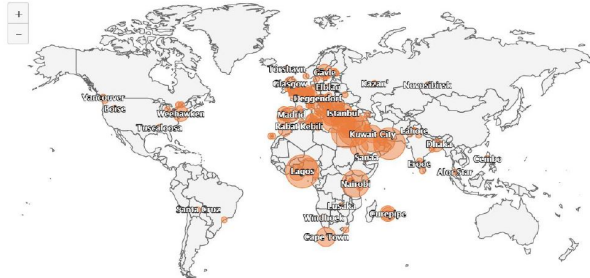
Connecting Experts Program: Since the lockdown unfortunately cancelled or postponed plenty of our events, we are all turning to digital and online versions. With this, our IEEE Connecting Experts program of bringing speakers to industry has transferred to the online version of series of webinars, open for participation and streamed through our social media. The program brings technical (with a special category of space), professional and entrepreneurial topics by experts in a given field in form of a conference keynote style presentation of 30-45 minutes duration followed by Q&A, to the wide audience of young professionals, including MSc and PhD students, young industry professionals and young tech-entrepreneurs from Region 8. The online version is kicked-off as a response to the current pandemic confinement with a goal to provide education and engagement to the electrical engineering young professionals. So far, we have organized 35 webinars of high-profile speakers involving collaboration with

**Statistics**

The congress overall had 1700 registered participants and about 900 "unique viewers" for both live teleconference room participation and the recordings playback. The figure below depicts the geographic illustration of our attendees during the first day of the congress, which is also very representative for the whole congress.

**Map**

Where in the world are people joining from?



In addition, NASA's talk on Day 10 has 774 more views over social media and IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative finals on Day 8 have 1100 more views over social media.

11 different IEEE OUs: IEEE Young Professionals (global), R8 Entrepreneurship Initiative, R8WiE, MTTs YP, ComSoc YP, IEEE Standards Association, and YPAGs from Sweden, Lebanon, Turkey, Denmark and Norway. IEEE Connecting Experts Calendar calendars is established, and webinars are live streamed on R8YP Facebook page and YouTube channel, and are archived there. In total, the program accumulated over 17,000 views and over 2,600 more from R8 vSYP YP Track, combined in teleconference rooms and on social media, live and recordings.

**IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative:** IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative was announced at SYP Congress in Porto 2018 and kicked off in August 2019, and today is very much scaled up. The initiative consists of three main envisioned programs:

- Entrepreneurship Week as series of local tech-entrepreneurship events coordinated by local ambassadors in their own sections;
- Mentorship Program takes the local winners to the global scene as an acceleration program of education and visibility;
- IEEE Pitch is a pool of local winners that are taken to the next level of the competition. Each Entrepreneurship Week provides 3 winners to the total number of 35 in 2019 that are further filtered by International Committee of evaluators (R8YP, R8PEA, R8AfI, IEEE Vienna Office, IEEE Entrepreneurship) who are experienced in various domains of technology, business, marketing, management but also of strong social impact stemming from sustainable engineering. The finals were carried out at vSYP 2020.

**Young Professionals in Space:** After great success of YP in Space in Barcelona and Dubai, 2020 edition was scheduled to be held in November in Aveiro but is postponed for 2021. Instead, we have established a special category of "Space talks" as part of IEEE Connecting Experts program of webinars, and a special edition was held as part of R8 vSYP Congress by Goutam Chattopadhyay from NASA's JPL.

**IEEE Region 8 Virtual Student and Young Professionals Congress:** The R8 vSYP Congress report is attached separately. In short, the congress was held during September 14th to 26th with separate Student, Women in Engineering and Young Professionals tracks, and with special contribution from 13 sections through their ambassadors: Turkey, Ukraine, Ghana, Kuwait, Kenya, Denmark, Nigeria, Sudan, Qatar, Serbia and Montenegro, Greece, Lebanon and Sweden. Every day held at least 3h of content, in some cases also with parallel sessions, resulting in total of over 40h of content.

**Proposals for improvements**

This year is obviously very much different in all aspects and any activity held deserves high praises and is a true gesture of volunteering. Lots of activities were in fact postponed to the second half of 2020 but it is now evident that virtual period will take longer than expected. The IEEE has this benefit that gathers electrical engineers and in general people with affinity to

Young Professionals Track:

www.r8syp.com/virtual-syp September 2020

16:00 UTC September 14	IEEE R8 vSYP Opening Ceremony Susan "Kathy" Land, IEEE President-Elect; Magdalena Salazar Palma, Region 8 Director; Flavia Dinca & Vinko Lesic, IEEE Young Professionals	IEEE
17:00 UTC September 15	The New IEEE Volunteering Platform – Volunteering on Your Terms Flavia Dinca, IEEE Young Professionals Chair	IEEE
17:00 UTC September 16	Recognition and Engagement Strategies Workshop Flavia Dinca, IEEE Young Professionals Chair	IEEE
15:00 UTC September 20	Do it Yourself - Smart Home Kathy Giori, EdTech Entrepreneur and Strategic Industry Advisor	Technical
16:00 UTC September 20	IEEE R8 Entrepreneurship Initiative Finals Start-up Pitch Competition, by Mohamed ElDallal, Vinko Lesic & Mohammad Zidan; IEEE R8 Entrepreneurship Initiative	Entrepreneurial
17:00 UTC September 21	Tool Up in a Virtual World - Volunteering Training IEEE Region 8 Young Professionals Team	IEEE
16:00 UTC September 23	Are We Alone? NASA Technologies to Find Life Beyond Earth and Answers to Other Science Questions Dr. Goutam Chattopadhyay, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology	Space
17:00 UTC September 23	Build a Business That Lasts Inji Amr Borai, MBA, Mastercard Advisory Team for MEA	Entrepreneurial
17:00 UTC September 25	Business Model Canvas Mohammad Obaidat, Director at Queen Rania Center for Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial
15:00 UTC September 26	IEEE Region 8 Awards Ceremony IEEE R8 Young Professionals and R8 Entrepreneurship Initiative Awards	IEEE

IEEE Connecting Experts  
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technology. This is a great benefit in the situation when the world is transforming to virtual form, and we should be able to adapt to the situation promptly.

New programs are now required that are suitable both for virtual and non-virtual world, and it is very clear that we could use new programs. So far, we have established the concept of webinars, but more can be done in the virtual domain. IEEE and Region 8 may perhaps find a way to initiate and facilitate such kind of ideas.

In IEEE, now more than ever, the stage is common for all committees and events are easily shared - globally. We have managed to do that among various Young Professionals segments but very rarely outside the community. This is partly due to additional burden of transferring to virtual domain leaving less time for other effort but there is also a large space for additional initiatives that may arise outside the young professionals category.

Despite the pandemic situation, there were lot of examples where in-person activities within a section were possible to conduct but many of them were chosen not to due to IEEE restriction on travel. This decision can be treated with more insight and distributed to local decision, together with the responsibility of reimbursements etc.

While very much improved compared to the previous reporting period, the visibility of our activities is still identified as the thing we have sacrificed the most. While everyone is aware of our deeds in R8 committees, they are rarely aware of the specifics, which is a very important feedback on possible strategies of R8. Even more, YP AGs are rarely aware of the results. This is an extraordinary year, but the segment of visibility is where we need most of the help or the burden should be reduced on other parts (2020 is also a year with a lot of added reporting requirements from many various sides). The next step would also be a way of reaching out of IEEE to potential members and Region 8 Today articles may be directed towards external portals and newsletters.

Entrepreneurship is becoming a significant thing among Young Professionals, and results from the Entrepreneurship pilot confirm it. We pushed this further in 2020 already from the start. Facebook page is now over 4200 followers (1400 followers at the beginning of 2020), with the highest reach-out post of 170k (16k at the beginning of 2020). The program is now more tied with IEEE Entrepreneurship (global) with exchanged judges in competitions, joint organization of content at the conferences and expos, and scheduled IEEE booths, much of which has been postponed due to pandemics, but the collaboration is maintained.

### Points of Concern

Concerns from the previous report have all been greatly addressed and mitigated, even despite the pandemics. As a general advice for future committees, our impression is that more time and effort needs to be provided to African AGs compared to European or Middle Eastern because: 1) African AGs are newer and we are expecting many more to be formed together with new sections and subsections, 2) non-reimbursement shock is stronger due to lower liquidity of sections and lower overall

The Young Professionals track was built on the experience of IEEE Connecting Experts program of webinars by R8YP team, IEEE Young Professionals instructional and teambuilding webinars, and Talkspreneur program by IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative, together with the finals. In total, it involved 10 talks spread over 8 congress days. These are the following:

**14.9. YP Welcome Words During Opening Ceremony**

**Speakers:** Flavia Dinca, IEEE Young Professionals Chair and Vinko Lesic, IEEE R8 Young Professionals Chair

**15.9. The new IEEE Volunteering platform – volunteering on your terms**

Engaging and retaining volunteers, especially Young Professionals, may prove challenging. Factors such as career and family can leave little time for any other commitments. Sometimes, long-term volunteering engagements may not be possible for some, even though they would like to be more active in IEEE. The IEEE Volunteering platform helps address such needs by introducing a degree of flexibility to volunteering within IEEE and making it easier for members to find the right volunteering opportunities for them. Through this platform, IEEE members are able to advertise and search for volunteering opportunities, be they short- or long-term, local or remote, or specific to certain skills or activities. This talk will discuss volunteer engagement strategies and provide a live demo of the new IEEE Volunteering platform.

**Speaker:** Flavia Dinca, IEEE Young Professionals Chair

**17.9. Recognition and engagement strategies**

Engaging Young Professionals is key in ensuring retention of student members upon graduation, but also as a method of developing the next generation of volunteers and leaders for your respective organizational unit. This session will review best practices in several areas: volunteer training and recognition programs, membership communication and outreach strategies, tools for developing professional networks, along with other career development and membership engagement examples. The session will draw from past experiences of Affinity Groups, Sections, Regions, and Technical Societies and Chapters to provide a variety of solutions that can be applied around the world.

**Speaker:** Flavia Dinca, IEEE Young Professionals Chair

**20.9. Do It Yourself – Smart Home**

Ms. Giori is an EdTech and IoT Entrepreneur, working to promote the adoption of more open source software and hardware learning opportunities around the world. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Minnesota and her master's studies at Stanford University. Furthermore, she gained a lot of experience working in the industry, among others in Mozilla, SkyPilot Network, Inc., SRI International, etc.

The topic of her speech is DIY Smart home, so don't miss the opportunity to hear it on Sunday, 20 September.

**Speaker:** Kathy Giori, EdTech Entrepreneur and Strategic Industry Advisor

**20.9. The Finals of IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative**

IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative is a tech-entrepreneurship program IEEE Region 8 Young Professionals and IEEE Professional and Educational Activities teams brought to strengthen and boost our young IEEE entrepreneurs. The program foundations incorporate various backgrounds of industry, academia and entrepreneurial domains obtained through different IEEE Region 8 subunits by CEOs, senior managers, startup initiators, professors, large summit founders and more.

In 2019, we have introduced a competition phase known as IEEE Entrepreneurship Week and organized locally in sections, student branches and affinity groups, with local ambassadors, organizers and competition expert evaluators. Such events were held in 20 countries and continued further with the best 6 winning teams. In 2020, the program is scaled up through IEEE Foundation and in relation with IEEE Entrepreneurship to go beyond our Europe, Middle East and Africa region, to the global stage. These are the finals of 6 winning teams and their innovative technical solutions, competing for the prize of presenting them at international summit and exhibition, and joining the club of the most prominent IEEE Entrepreneurs.

The finals of the IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative were held during the congress, which means bringing the best of the best to the public, the ones that are selected among the winners from 20 countries of IEEE Region 8 - with their robots with lasers, remote-clinics, agriculture monitoring system and counterfeit

standard. This means larger attention is required for those AGs in terms of having more frequent meetings, supplying with manuals and templates (not necessarily in written form), and finally double-checking of the documents, but mostly being at disposal as every section and situation is very specific.

## Other Issues to report

goods recognition app. What they have all practiced for months in the virtual world, it was delivered in the form of dynamic pitch presentations by the teams and gripping discussions with our judges who are some of the most prominent entrepreneurs and CEOs, globally. More than everything, we expect the startups and their technical products to rise up to great success on the global level and deliver this engineering potential to the world, by the means and network of IEEE.

Speakers: Rawan El Jamal and Mohammad Zidan, IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative team



The judging committee of the finals of IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship Initiative

#### 21.9. Tool Up: YP Volunteer Training

This session will focus on helping Young Professionals (YP) volunteers from around Region 8 to connect, share their stories and help each other with some of the most common challenges encountered by Young Professionals Affinity Groups (YP AGs). In addition, it will cover best practices in managing AGs, rules governing AGs (including reporting), how to make the most of the tools available for volunteers, succession practices, and voting rights of YP members in IEEE as a whole. Please note that while this session is compulsory for all YP participants funded by Region 8, it is also open to any other participants interested in attending!

Speakers: IEEE Region 8 Young Professionals team: Vinko Lesic, Sara Barros, Ines Inacio, Abdullateef Alyu, Almedin Kavaz, Seif ElHajjem, Manuel Balesteros Carballo

#### 23.9. Are We Alone? NASA Technologies to Find Life Beyond Earth and Answers to Other Science Questions

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which completed eighty years of its existence in 2016, builds instruments for NASA missions. Exploring the universe and our own planet Earth from space has been the mission of NASA. Robotics missions such as Voyager, which continues to go beyond our solar system, missions to Mars and other planets, exploring the stars and galaxies for astrophysics missions, exploring and answering the question, "are we alone in this universe?" has been the driving force for NASA scientists for more than six decades.

Fundamental science questions drives the selection of NASA missions. We develop instruments to make measurements that can answer those science questions. In this presentation, we will present an overview of the state of the art instruments that we are currently developing and layout the details of the science questions they will try to answer. Rapid progress on multiple fronts, such as commercial software for component and device modeling, low-loss circuits and interconnect technologies, cell phone technologies, and submicron scale lithographic techniques are making it possible for us to design and develop smart, low-

power yet very powerful instruments that can even fit in a SmallSat or CubeSat. We will also discuss the challenges of the future generation instruments in addressing the needs for critical scientific applications. The research described herein was carried out at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, USA, under contract with National Aeronautics and Space Administration. **Speaker:** Goutam Chattopadhyay, a senior scientist from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory

#### 23.9. Build a business that lasts

An interactive session covering the basics of lean startup approach to building a business and the importance of rapid and continuous testing and learning delivered to you by Inji Amr Borai, MBA, a Senior Managing Consultant in Mastercard's Advisory team for MEA holding Stanford and MIT degrees. **Speaker:** Inji Amr Borai, Senior Managing Consultant in Mastercard's Advisory team for MEA

#### 24.9. Innovate Your Growth

In this workshop, students and young professionals will be put in one virtual room and work on the launching of a new collaborative program. Currently, STEP is the only initiative aiming at bringing students and young professionals closer together. It's time for something new and out of the box. Do you think you have what it takes to revolutionize IEEE? Join us and have a direct impact on your future as a volunteer! We look forward to working with you!

**Speakers:** IEEE Region 8 Young Professionals and IEEE Region 8 Student Activities Committee

#### 25.9. Business Model Canvas

An interactive session covering the basics of strategic management and lean startup template for developing new or documenting existing business models. It is a visual chart with elements describing a firm's or product's value proposition, infrastructure, customers, and finances.

**Speaker:** Mohammad Obaidat, Director at Queen Rania Center for Entrepreneurship

#### 26.9. Awards Ceremony

Our part in IEEE Region 8 Awards Ceremony encompassed IEEE Region 8 Young Professionals Awards for year 2019. Those are

- Region 8 Outstanding Young Professionals Affinity Group Award - United Kingdom and Ireland Section Young Professionals

To recognize Young Professionals Affinity Groups (AG) within Region 8 for their efforts, successes, and achievements in carrying out the mission of IEEE YP and the aims of IEEE in Region 8 within their Section during the calendar year of 2019. Recognition will be given to the Young Professionals AG that displayed the most successful maintenance of ongoing efforts, as well as the development and implementation of new programs. These activities shall leave an important imprint on the Section and on Region 8. The winning AG will receive a certificate providing the citation for the award and a cash prize of \$400 granted by the R8 YP Subcommittee to the corresponding Young Professionals AG.

- Region 8 Young Professionals Exceptional Volunteer Award - Saeed Al Mansoori (United Arab Emirates)

To recognize a volunteer within Region 8 for his/her dedication towards the mission of IEEE Young Professionals. The recognition will be given to a devoted Young Professional member that presents the most successful maintenance of ongoing efforts, leadership skills, and remarkable development and implementation of new ideas and programs within the last year. These activities shall have an important impact on the Section and on Region 8 Young Professional community, and other IEEE members. The winner will receive an award and diploma providing the citation for the award granted by the Region 8 Young Professionals Subcommittee.

- Special Recognition Young Professionals COVID Fighter - Gerard Duff (Sweden)

As the situation this year is a unique one, our team decided to introduce a unique, one-time recognition (hopefully) for distinguished volunteering efforts in the times of COVID-19 pandemics. The recipient Gerard Duff is the R8 vSYP Congress Chair and IEEE Young Professionals Sweden Chair who devoted

enormous effort, time and personal sacrifice in the organization of the congress that recorded 1700 global registrations of the potential participants. Before that, the equivalent time and effort were put in the organization to the cancelled SYP Congress in Gothenburg, and meanwhile he supported every R8 Young Professionals program diligently. We found this award and recipient very appropriate.

Apart from IEEE Region 8 Awards the winner of the IEEE Region 8 Entrepreneurship finals, Nigerian startup MyClinic was awarded 1<sup>st</sup> place, following the paid participation in high-profile tech-entrepreneurship summit in 2021, aiming Web Summit. The award was handed by Mohamed El Dallal, Co-Leader of the project. **Speaker:** Vinko Lesic, IEEE R8 Young Professionals Chair

#### Ambassadors and section activities

The local event participants followed the vSYP official program for 2 hours starting by introduction from the section and a brief "hello message" the whole world, and apart from that also the local 1h content for with complete freedom and own signature style – lectures, social part, virtual part or cultural part imbued with technical spirit. The role of an ambassador was to compile all the great ideas and put it to the frame of a one-day event (or longer). The official, common part was held in English, while the remaining part of the local events was encouraged to be in the section language(s).

Ambassadors were also encouraged to apply their sections for Region 8 subsidies for the organizational effort as it was presented at Virtual Section Chairs Meeting with Region 8 officials. Such applications were intended to be consider as an official subsidy request and forwarded to the responsible Region 8 officials, but unfortunately no requests have been submitted and the feedback was that our volunteers have nothing to spend money on in the virtual world, while the vSYP frames ensured the necessary tools, forms, design and visibility.

The sections that selected their ambassadors and participated in the congress are: Turkey, Sudan, Qatar, Kuwait, Kenya, Ukraine, Nigeria, Lebanon, Denmark, Greece, Ghana, Serbia & Montenegro, and Sweden.

#### Congress moderators

Lastly, the congress itself would not be possible without the great technical support for chosen teleconferencing tools "Crowdcast", guiding the speakers and participants to using it, initiating and maintaining, and finally moderating each session of the congress. The moderators were Adam Jastrzebski, Gerard Duff, Barbara Vujkov, Ines Inacio, Abdulateef Aliyu, Maciej Borowka and Vinko Lesic, with the help of Nazila Fough and Manuel Ballesteros Carballo.

by Vinko Lesic, October 28, 2020