The iRAISE Youth Manifesto

The Future We Want - Youth Perspectives on Generative AI

WE, children, adolescents, and young adults, represent nearly 40 percent of the world's population. We are the first generation to grow up in a world with Artificial Intelligence: it's in our classrooms, on our phones, and amongst our friends. Yet, too often we are left out of the decisions that are shaping our future.

That is why international dialogue on AI must include us. This is our call to give youth a place at the table, and for world leaders to protect our education, mental health, and social well-being.

Young people want a world where AI technologies enhance what we are capable of, rather than limit us. Yet today, we are being asked to use these powerful tools without clear guidance, and before their safety is proven and their long-term impacts are fully understood.

We are at a turning point — because AI is shaping our future. The safeguards that will shape it cannot be left solely to the companies developing these tools, nor to adults who did not grow up with AI as a constant presence in their education, relationships, and society.

AI should help young people learn, create and think critically. It should strengthen curiosity, challenge our thinking and expand our knowledge, rather than replace human judgment, emotional growth, or social connection. AI for adults is designed for productivity- to make something quickly, to give an answer. AI for young people needs to do something different- it needs to support our growth. The more we let AI think for us, the harder it is to think for ourselves.

We also need our mental health protected from overreliance on AI. Across different regions, studies show similar patterns: many young people are already using AI chatbots for advice, companionship, and emotional support. With no proper safeguards protecting us, young people are in danger of emotional dependence on AI that could replace the connections and support that should only come from real people.

Further, we are concerned about what AI will do to our jobs. Roughly half of college students believe AI has already diminished the value of their education. We worry we will be exposed to displacement and job market collapse before we even have the chance to enter the workplace.

More broadly, we believe AI can be a transformative technology for society. It can expand access and opportunity, advance research and medicine, and support communication across languages and borders. But these benefits will also depend on our ability to trust our sources of information, discern fact from fiction, and inherit a planet that can sustain our future. This is why we are concerned about misinformation, environmental impacts, and the risk that AI could deepen existing inequalities.

These problems are solvable — but not without us. Behind every AI framework, every safeguard, every policy recommendation, there are students sitting in classrooms, kids interacting with AI tutors, teenagers forming opinions, identities, and even emotional connections in part shaped by AI systems. We, as young people, have the fundamental right to help design the future we will inherit. The moment is now.

The youth of the world call for:

1. Youth participation in AI regulatory bodies and policy discussions.
2. Standards that ensure AI products are safe for each stage of childhood development
3. Transparency from companies on the development of their products
4. Universal educational design that includes AI literacy, while also prioritizing the tried and true ways young people learn best.

Adults have the power to make effective legislation. Young people bring the lived experience needed to fully understand the repercussions of AI: both the successes and failures. We do not yet know the long-term consequences of growing up with AI. What we do know is that childhood is too important to treat as a live experiment.

The value of AI to humanity will be measured not by how much it can do FOR us, but by how much it supports us in learning and thinking critically, creating, connecting to others across languages, cultures, and communities, reducing inequalities and solving world challenges.

So that we can all flourish — together.



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