Call for Applications

Residential Institute on
Frontiers and Frames for a New Digitality
Organized by
School of Digital Justice, IT for Change

October 28 – November 1, 2022
Thailand

Deadline: 10 August 2022, 11.59 PM IST

How to Apply?

To apply, please complete this **online form** by the deadline. For clarifications and queries, write to us at **schoolofdigitaljustice@itforchange.net**

Overview

Digitality unfolds at a rapid pace, undoing and remaking social and economic structures, relationships and materialities. The pandemic has provided fuel to fire, accelerating adoption and uptake of digitalization in several sectors. But this transformative phenomenon, tightly controlled as it is by powerful actors, has been a force of extraordinary inequity and antithetical to the goal of redistributive justice, particularly in the Global South.

Over the past two years, not only have we had a ringside view to breakthrough digitalization across all sectors and areas of impact, but also witnessed unprecedented growth in wealth and power for large technology corporations. We have simultaneously witnessed worrying excess and malpractice by Big Tech with grave social, political and economic outcomes — data extractivism, the exacerbation of worker precarity, reversal of gender justice gains, the infrastructural takeover of much of the developing world, hijacking of global to local governance spaces and fora, and ecological plundering — to name but a few.

These trends, which have become too glaring to wish away, have instigated an important civic and political reckoning and left little doubt about where the next frontier for justice lies. Across social movements and sectors, civil society actors have begun to recognize the contours of the challenges the digital presents. Nurturing this groundswell into an enduring local-to-global movement for change requires perspective building and deepening of next-generation leadership in civic spaces, South-South cooperation and cross-movement dialogue and coalition building — all firmly rooted in a Southern standpoint for equity and justice.

Objectives and Learning Outcomes

IT for Change's **five-day residential institute** on <u>Frontiers and Frames for a New Digitality</u> is a significant step in this direction. With the fault-lines of contestation being redefined for social movements engaged in various sectors, the institute aims to capacitate civil society actors with the necessary vocabulary and tools to appropriately frame and approach emerging digital intersections with their work, as well as develop strategies for effective political organization.

The institute will enable emerging civil society leaders in Global South spaces to:

- Learn about, critically examine and take stock of unfolding trends in the political economy and impact of platformization.

- Make relevant connections, and chart solutions and intervention pathways for effective political organization.

- Be part of an ongoing community of activist-scholars, development professionals and researchers from the Global South to strengthen Southern perspective-building on digital justice.

- Map and identify common struggles across regions, which can provide avenues for new and collective models of resistance in addition to enhancing the collective bargaining capacity of the Global South on an international stage.

This institute is part of IT for Change's flagship track— **School of Digital Justice**, a pedagogical vehicle to further the vision of re-imagining and realizing socio-structural transformation for a just digital economy. The **School of Digital Justice** seeks to democractize discourse and perspective-building on the digital through legal-institutional, feminist and political economy approaches.

About the Institute

The institute will introduce participants to the political economy of the digital and offer an overview of critical trends, developments and debates. Indicative areas we will explore are provided below:

Platform Capitalism and Datafication of Economic Relations

- **Role of Data in the Political Economy:** A primer to data and its role in the digital economy, monopolization of data and intelligence infrastructure.

- **Historicizing Big Tech's Monopoly:** Exploring Big Tech's market power, e-commerce and platform marketplace dynamics, platformized value chains, privatization of digital commons.

- **A Beginner's Guide to Internet Governance:** The WSIS process and the history of

international digital cooperation, the California Ideology, the Chinese model of the internet, rise of multistakeholderism and new issues in global governance.

- **Policy Issues and Responses**: Big Tech regulation and containing market power, frameworks for data policy and governance, moving towards a global digital constitutionalism.

Feminist Visions of Digital Justice

- **Feministizing the Digital Economy:** Feminist perspectives on digital economy, labor and future of work, gender inclusive digital paradigm.

- **Feminist Big Data and AI cultures:** Feminist visions and intersectional design of the AI and platform ecosystem, critique of surveillance economy and encoding of gender in state data architectures.

- **Feminist Social Contract for a New Digital Economic Future**: A feminist digital welfare state, gender inclusive public infrastructures and transformative imaginaries of the care economy.

Digitalization and Future of Work

- **The Changing Nature of Work:** The rise of non-standard employment and gigwork, disruptions to traditional livelihoods and sectors of employment, the long tail of automation.

- **Impact to Worker Rights:** Precarity and informalization, data-based worker surveillance, issues with algorithmic management, threats to collective bargaining.

- **Challenges and Opportunities for Worker Organization and Mobilization:** Unpacking institutional challenges to traditional unionization, lessons from new forms of worker organization, worker-led digital models.

Data and AI governance

- **Critical Policy Approaches to Data:** Exploring individualist and collective approaches to conceptualizing and governing data, understanding personal data protection and freedom from harms, a primer on non-personal data, data governance issues in digital trade and value chains.

- **Harnessing Data for Economic Equity:** Data governance approaches for containing market power, emerging community and collective models of data governance, models for socialized data value.

Data-enabled Governance and the State

- **The Rise of Digitalized Citizen Infrastructure:** Datafication in critical development sectors (health, education, agriculture), marketization of state programs and public services, digitized privatization of public resources.

- **Digital Dispossession-Citizen Rights in the Digital Polity:** Datafication of state and governance systems, introduction of AI-based automated governance systems, data based surveillance, impact on citizen rights

Who can Apply?

To be considered for a place in the institute, applicants must be:

1. Residing and/or working in the Global South.

2. Proficient in the English language (The institute will be transacted in English).

Our institute would be a great fit for applicants who are:

- Civil society activists, scholars/researchers or development practitioners from the Global South, working on digital rights, climate justice and biodiversity, labor issues, gender justice, trade justice, or international development politics.

- Curious about the ways in which digitalization has altered their fields/domains of research, and keen on grasping legal and public policy changes.

- Interested in exploring intersections of law, technology and policy, dynamics of the data economy and its bearings on development, human rights, social justice, gender equality and labor rights.

While we wish to give priority to building institutional capacities, we also encourage change makers who work in an independent capacity to apply.

What to Expect?

The institute will provide an exciting opportunity for participants to learn from leading activists, thinkers, and experts in the field who will be the resource persons for the sessions. Through readings, lectures, case-study sessions, and group activities, the institute will enable participants to:

- Broaden their understanding of datafication of society, and define the key challenges for digital rights, global justice and democratic governance in the era of digital capitalism.

- Explore theoretical frameworks on platform economy, digitization of political economic relations and the idea of citizenship within the digital paradigm.

- Gain insights into current policy debates on the digital, and emerging faultlines in the international developmental context.

- Explore further research and advocacy of synchronous projects along with opportunities for collaborative work.

- Forge connections and working relationships, and have opportunities to be part of IT for Change's future work.

Cost

IT for Change will cover lodging and meals for all participants.

Organizations nominating team members are encouraged to fund the travel cost of their applicants. A limited number of travel fellowships are available for participants/organizations unable to cover travel costs. (If a travel fellowship is required, please indicate that in the application form.)

Venue & Accommodation

The residential institute will take place from **October 28 to November 1, 2022 in Thailand**. Participants are expected to arrive no later than October 27, 2022 and stay for the entire duration of the course — November 1, 2022.

All participants are required to have relevant and current travel documents including a valid passport, visa and vaccination certificate.

Applications are open until August 10, 2022, 11.59 PM IST.

About the Organizer

Founded in 2000, IT for Change (ITfC) is an NGO based in Bengaluru, India, and is in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. For over two decades, ITfC has worked towards its aim of realizing a society in which digital technologies contribute to human rights, social justice and equity. Through research, model building and policy advocacy, ITfC's work critically examines the digital paradigms of development, seeking to build bridges across different sectors and movements in the global struggle towards an equitable digital society.

To learn more about IT for Change, visit https://itforchange.net/

The Residential Institute on Frontiers and Frames for a New Digitality is supported by the Fair, Green and Global Alliance and the European Commission.