



2024 Global South Alliance (GSA) REPORT

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Global South Alliance 2024 Report

Reporting Period: January to December 2024

Secretariat: Paradigm Initiative

Introduction

The Global South Alliance was established in early 2023 following extensive discussions between Aapti Institute, Data Privacy Brasil, and Paradigm Initiative, who now form the Alliance's Steering Committee. The Alliance also includes 10 member organizations from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, namely Asociación por los Derechos Civiles, Bolo Bhi, Center for Communication Governance, CIPESA, Derechos Digitales, Digital Rights Foundation, Internet Bolivia, KICTANet, Pollicy, and Research ICT Africa.

The Alliance was formed with the mission of unifying NGOs dedicated to the promotion of mutual learning and the advancement of digital rights with a perspective from the Global South. Based on meetings at the Data Privacy Global Conference, RightsCon and Internet Governance Forum, the organisations structured an alliance that aims to create bonds of solidarity and dialogue between organisations from the Global South (or Majority World). The goal is not to create a formal, registered coalition to represent the Global South, but rather promote a space for mutual strengthening, dialogue and listening between a small group of organizations.

The Alliance's work is focuses on:

a

Challenging inequalities and asymmetries:

Coordinating work on visa discrimination, how to protect Global South organizations against discrimination, to help each other on financial issues and governmental repression against the work of civil society;

b

Raising our voices

together: Coordinating work on Global Digital Compact and policy issues like digital public infrastructure, digital IDs, and data-driven public policies in the Global South.

2024 In Focus

In the year under review, the Alliance transitioned its secretariat from Data Privacy Brasil to Paradigm Initiative in April 2024 as per the agreement during the formation of the alliance - that secretariat roles will be rotational between steering committee members on an annual basis. Paradigm Initiative assumed the responsibility of coordinating and facilitating the alliance's activities, including preparing meetings, developing agendas, and compiling relevant documents in collaboration with the Steering Committee. This transition marked a strategic move aimed at enhancing and democratising the operations of the alliance, ensuring alignment with its overarching objectives.

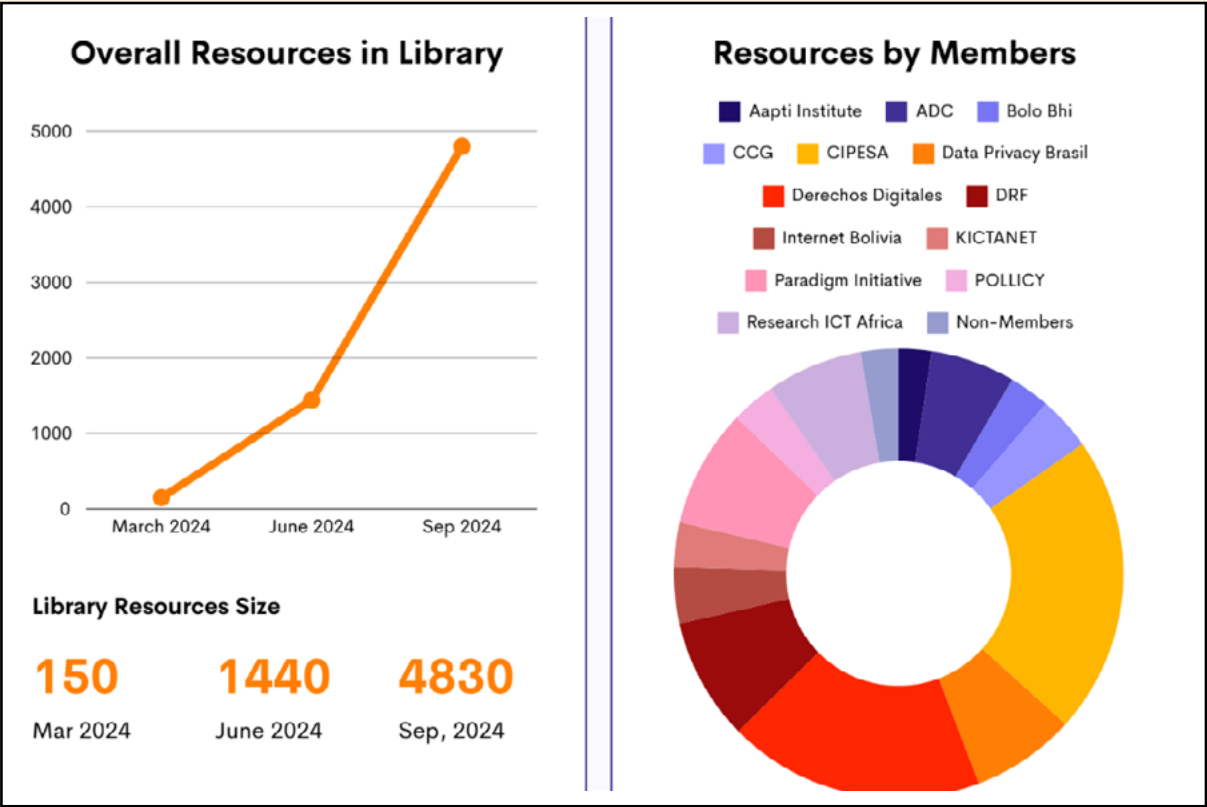
1. *GSA Projects*

a. Datafication and Democracy Fund

In February 2024, the Alliance closed the call for proposals for the [Datafication and Democracy Fund](#), attracting over 60 applications from organisations in the global south, seeking subgrants of a maximum amount of US\$ 8,000. Following a thorough selection process undertaken by the steering committee, five organisations were successful and received the 2024 Datafication and Democracy Fund. The organisations included Like a Palm Tree (Africa), Center of Security and Citizenship Studies (LatAm), Corporación Cambio Sostenible (LatAm), Criminal Justice & Policy Accountability Project (Asia), and Ikigai Innovation Initiative (Africa). Over seven months, the organisations focused on research topics which include online protection of children, facial recognition in public spaces and surveillance of minorities, biometric data analysis in immigrant populations, and data governance in elections. The hosting of the fund by the alliance demonstrates the alliance's commitment to supporting innovative initiatives aimed at promoting data democracy and equitable access to technology across the Global South.

b. Digital Library

In February 2024, the Alliance began discussions on the Digital Library which serves as a repository of resources contributed by member organisations such as podcasts, videos, and written documents, as well as promoting exchanges between organisations and fostering cooperation. We onboarded a Digital Librarian to specifically manage the library and support members of the alliance to access resources and also offered training session for organisations interested in utilising the notion platform for storing resources. The digital library can be accessed [here](#).



2. Community Convenings

a. Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF) - Accra, Ghana

The Global South Alliance actively participated in the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF), hosting a series of impactful activities, including a Day Zero event, a panel discussion, and a team dinner. DRIF has established itself as a crucial platform for shaping digital policy in Africa, fostering debates on policy directions, and building partnerships for action. The Alliance's Steering Committee contributed to the Forum's opening session, which attracted 560 in-person participants. During the GSA side event, Alliance members engaged in discussions on the Alliance's role in shaping policy in the Global South, explored funding opportunities, and devised strategies to secure resources for members to participate and engage in global convenings. A key outcome was the recognition of the need to expand access to the Digital Library to other civil society organizations within the Global South.

Members also deliberated on admitting new organisations to the Alliance, agreeing to host open meetings to gauge interest and discuss potential membership.



Representatives from the Steering Committee organisations pose for a photo on the sidelines of the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum in Accra, Ghana.

b. Data Fest Africa - Nairobi, Kenya

DataFest Africa is an annual event that celebrates data science and its ever-evolving impact on the African continent. During DataFest Africa 2024, the alliance hosted a workshop on the datafication and democracy fund and shared preliminary findings of research projects conducted by the five grantees of the DDF from Africa, India, and Latin America.



c. Data Privacy Global Conference - Sao Paulo, Brazil

The Alliance supported members of the alliance to join the Data Privacy Global Conference (DPGC), which was held in Sao Paulo in Brazil from November 25 and 26, 2024. The Conference is an annual convening that brings together experts, policymakers, and industry professionals to discuss the latest trends and challenges in data protection and governance. The Alliance's steering committee participated in an opening panel to set the tone for the Conference, focusing on Data Protection and Governance. A total of 418 attendees participated at the DPGC



Representatives from the Steering Committee organisations stand with panellists after the opening session of the Data Privacy Global Conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

d. Net Mundial - Sao Paulo, Brazil

Members of the Global South Alliance who attended the meeting discussed the declaration and were able to bring up the issue of reinforcing regional and international Internet Governance Forums. The official NETmundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement is available [here](#).



Global South Alliance members during the Net Mundial+10 event in Sao Paulo, Brazil

e. UN Civil Society Conference - Nairobi, Kenya

GSA members developed a [position statement on the Global Digital Compact](#) ahead of the Summit of the Future and published it during the UN Civil Society Conference. During the forum, PIN, on behalf of the alliance, attended the GNI Policy Readout and elaborated more on GSA's statement. Members who took part in the UN Civil Society Conference had a networking dinner on the sidelines of the Conference.



GSA members hold a networking meeting during the UN Civil Society Conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

f. GSA Open Meetings - Virtual

The alliance hosted two Open Meetings in 2024, focusing on global digital governance and publicising the research conducted by the Datafication and Democracy Fund grantees.

The first open meeting was held on June 18, 2024 focusing on global digital governance. The meeting was a platform for the alliance to build consensus on pertinent issues in digital governance. The meeting allowed civil society organisations to discuss the need for the GDC to support initiatives such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to ensure the participation of diverse

voices in digital governance. The open meeting was also a platform to discuss opportunities for continuity of civil society participation as the South African President will be taking up the facilitating role of the T20 in 2025. The meeting met its objectives and civil society organisations made enquiries on how they could join the alliance. In 2025, the alliance will discuss the admission of new members. Global North organisations also made enquiries on how they could fund the alliance. As a result, the alliance is now in talks with Global Focus as they have expressed interest in supporting the localisation of the Digital Library.

On October 22, 2024, another open meeting was conducted where five organisations that received the 2024 Datafication and Democracy Fund - Like a Palm Tree (Africa), Center of Security and Citizenship Studies (LatAm), Corporación Cambio Sostenible (LatAm), Criminal Justice & Policy Accountability Project (Asia), and Ikigai Innovation Initiative (Africa), shared their findings on the research they had been working on since April 2024. The meeting unpacked datafication and democracy, raised awareness on the Datafication and Democracy Fund, and shared findings on the research conducted by the 2024 Datafication and Democracy Fund grantees. The open meeting was attended by over 250 participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America.



g. Summit of the Future Side Event

Global South Alliance members hosted a side event during the United Nations Summit of the Future. The side event was held on September 21, 2024.

Outlined 5 objectives of the GDC (Close the divide, expand inclusion, foster inclusion. Following the meeting, the alliance members met and discussed the need to monitor the implementation of the GDC, formulate metrics to track the progress of GDC implementation, give reviews, participate in processes at local regional and international levels with government, companies and UN agencies, make inputs to key developments on the implementation, conduct research and advocacy on implementation of the GDC and endorse the GDC.

GSA Direct and Indirect Reach

Date	Activity	Event Objectives	Attendees
23-35 April 2024	DRIF	DRIF is a platform where conversations on digital policy in the Global South are shaped, policy directions debated and partnerships forged for action. During the forum the GSA hosted a planning side event with members and convened a networking dinner.	560 pax
May 2024	UN Civil Society Conference	The conference was a premier event on the civil society calendar at the United Nations. The forum provided a platform for preliminary discussions and data ahead of the Summit of the Future in September 2024 at the UN Headquarters in New York. During the forum, the GSA published a position statement on the Summit of the future and the Global Digital Compact.	2000
19-19 June 2024	DataFest Africa	DataFest Africa is an annual event that ultimately celebrates data science and its ever-evolving impact on the African continent. During the forum, we shared the Alliance's Datafication and Democracy Fund and preliminary finds of the research projects under the fund.	250
18 June 2024 and 22 October 2024	Global South Alliance Open Meetings	GSA's open meetings initiative was introduced to share the Alliance's work to a larger audience outside of its members. This came as a result of growing interest by NGOs to join as members but we are yet to determine the membership criteria.	250 participants (Both meetings combined)
25-26 November 2024	Data Privacy Global Conference Opening session	DPGC brings together professionals, researchers and decision-makers to discuss cutting-edge issues and propose ways for technology, rights and social justice to advance together.	418 attendees

Conclusion

The Alliance strengthened its work and increased its reach in the year 2024. Active participation by members contributed to efficient implementation which saw the alliance gaining interest from non-members and funders reaching out expressing interest to support the alliance's work. In 2025, the secretariat role will be handed over to Data Privacy Brazil in alignment with the agreement that secretariat roles will be rotational between steering committee members on an annual basis. The Datafication and Democracy Fund achieved its goals and grantees produced reports that will shape future global discussions on data and digital democracy.

