

UN YOUTH FLASH

>> SPECIAL <<

'Making Commitments Matter'

- A Toolkit to Evaluate National Youth Policy -

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Youth to evaluate UN Programme of Action

The United Nations Secretariat is encouraging young people to contribute to the evaluation of national youth policies. During two special meetings in the fall of 2005, the General Assembly will review the progress made in the ten priority areas stated in the World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond (WPAY). It will also review the progress made on the five new emerging issues, adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2003. As part of its preparations, the UN Secretariat has developed a Toolkit to assist young people to participate in the 2005 review. Creating the Toolkit was an idea of Anna Chojnacka, a youth delegate to the General Assembly in 2003 (see interview below). It assists young people to consider what progress their Government and civil society have made in the development and implementation of policies and programmes on the priority areas since 1995, when the WPAY was adopted. In addition to providing methods for evaluating this progress, the Toolkit also contains concrete tools to further youth work.

How does it work??

>> Target group <<

The Toolkit is meant for youth organizations and/or representatives working with youth who are able to assess national actions.

>> Goals <<

The Toolkit has three goals: 1) to assess a country's progress in reaching the WPAY goals; 2) based on the findings, to prioritize the work of youth organizations; 3) to initiate actions at the national level.

>> Report back the outcomes <<

The Toolkit is developed as a mechanism for youth organizations to initiate dialogue with their Governments and the UN Programme on Youth. Since the implementation of the WPAY depends on the capabilities and

priorities of Governments, the Toolkit is mainly drafted to support youth in reporting back to their national decision-makers. But, The UN Programme on Youth would also like to be kept informed of your findings.

It is suggested that youth organizations choose one or two priority areas of particular relevance and interest to their contexts and use the toolkit to gather the suggested information. After evaluating their findings, using the resources provided in the toolkit, organizations are encouraged to share their results with us via email at:

youth@un.org ; or via post to: United Nations Programme on Youth, DESA, 2 UN Plaza, DC2 1311A, New York, NY 10017, USA.

While this is an ongoing process, we encourage you to send us your evaluation as early as possible, or up to December 2004.

>> Different languages <<

The Toolkit is currently available in English only. We are working on a translation into other languages. Our website and Youth Flash will keep you updated on their appearance.

>> To order the Toolkit <<

The Toolkit 'Making Commitments Matter' is available electronically at: www.un.org/youth

You can order free printed copies of the Toolkit by sending an email with your full postal address to: youth@un.org. Please indicate how many copies you would like to receive.

>> More info <<

Read the introductory chapter of the Toolkit itself for more info on 'how to work with the Toolkit'.

With any other questions, suggestions or comments, please contact: youth@un.org

Interview Anna Chojnacka

Anna Chojnacka was the youth delegate in the Netherlands mission to the General Assembly in 2003. She has been actively involved in many youth development projects, e.g. for the Dutch National Youth Council and the Dutch United Nations Organization.

1. You were the initiator of the Toolkit, what was your initial thought behind it?

Since in 2005 the aims of the World Programme of Action for Youth for the Year 2000 and beyond (WPAY) will be reviewed, the most logical thing to do seemed to ask the youth around the world about the state of their world and to inquire about the issues mentioned in the WPAY.

Unfortunately this was not self evident. Lots of young people, especially the ones that are affected directly by the effects of issues, like lack of education and poor health, are not aware of the existence of the WPAY and do not have the necessary skills and facilitations to gather information about whether the WPAY had any effect in their direct environment. There was definitely a need for a set of tools that young people can use to gather insights and

information and thus to be able to participate in the processes that effect them directly.

2. What do you think of the result? Does it meet your expectations?

Yes it does! I'm totally enthusiastic about the outcome. It is more than a toolkit: it is also a good overview of policies that are agreed upon and various initiatives that are there for the youth to use in their lobbying and actions with the aim to improve their lives. I was also highly impressed by the speed the Toolkit has come about, I presented the idea to the Youth Programme in October, three months later a solid 54 page booklet was on the table! It totally changed my perspective on the UN's ability and speed to turn ideas into action!

3. What ways do you see for the Toolkit to be used?

The WPAY gives an overview of the agreements the UN member states made with regard to several issues that affect the young citizens of the world. Now, a decade later, it is time to look into the promises made and see whether they have been kept. Young people can ask the policy makers what actions were taken to achieve the goals that were set almost ten years ago. This would be a good way to examine failures and to gather best practices, in order to share them with others in similar settings.

4 And finally, do you have any valuable tips for young people in their lobby work at (inter)governmental level?

As I already mentioned, there are many agreements and resolutions, signed by governments over the past years, in which they plead that they will take various actions to improve the lives of their (young) citizens. These promises made by your political leaders are powerful tools in your battle for a better life. Also, there are usually funds available to pursue the goals as set out in agreements, whether on international, national or local level. Various youth organizations are getting more and more experienced in making useful use of those resources. By organizing yourself and cooperating with other organizations with the same aims (not necessarily youth organizations) you can achieve far more than you can imagine!

Thank you!

N.B.: Read more about Anna's work as a youth delegate for the General Assembly at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/news/interview2003.htm>

Contact

UN Youth Flash is a free service of the UN Programme on Youth, of the Division for Social Policy and Development, within the Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) at the United Nations Secretariat in New York.

