



HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Bob, Joop, Fred, Julie, Emily, Charlotte, Mike, Sylvie and Frank of the UN Programme on Youth wish you a successful and happy 2006!

WELCOME to the UN Youth Flash, a service of the UN Programme on Youth, keeping you up-to-date on the youth agenda of the UN and partnering youth organizations around the world. We encourage you to forward this Youth Flash to people in your network.

News from UN Headquarters

Experts met to discuss indicators on youth

From 12 to 14 December 2005, the Programme on Youth, UNDESA, hosted an expert group meeting, at United Nations Headquarters in New York, bringing together academics and experts from youth organizations, United Nations Agencies, and intergovernmental organizations to discuss a set of indicators that can be used to monitor and measure youth development over time.

The participants discussed possible indicators for all 15 priority areas within the World Programme of Action for Youth. It became apparent that for some of these areas indicators are well established and monitored by UN Agencies (e.g. education, employment, health, HIV/AIDS), while for other areas no global indicators are developed yet (e.g. participation, leisure, poverty, armed conflict).



For more information, the summary report and some of the presentations made at the meeting, visit:
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/youthindicators.htm>

News from UN Agencies around the world

World Food Programme: Fight Hunger - Walk the World



Fight Hunger - Walk the World is seeking support for its effort to eliminate child hunger. Walk the World is an annual worldwide, 24 time zones demonstration, in support of ending child hunger. The objectives behind the Walk are awareness raising, creating a network and pressuring key policy makers and world leaders to take concrete and efficient actions to achieve the 1st Millennium Development Goal: to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015.

On 12 June 2005, over 200,000 people walked in 266 locations, in 91 countries. They raised US\$1.5 million for school feeding programmes. Next year, on 21 May 2006, the aim is set to achieve 750,000 walkers in many more locations all around the world. You can join them! Fight Hunger - Walk the World seeks to partner with youth organizations and networks engaged in global decision making activities and advocacy.

For more information visit <http://www.FightHunger.org> or e-mail fighthunger@fighthunger.org.

More News from UN Agencies...

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World Bank: Call for submissions of youth employment interventions

Within the framework of the Youth Employment Network (YEN) and supported by the German Ministry of Development Co-operation (BMZ), the World Bank is undertaking an inventory of policies and interventions designed to integrate young people into the labour market.

This project will build a global inventory of good practice accessible to youth employment policy-makers and practitioners. As a broad range of organizations have been identified as potential sources of information about policies and interventions, the YEN would like to encourage all inputs to this initiative. This is an excellent opportunity for organizations at the international, regional national and local levels to make practical contributions to a global youth employment tool.

Call for content:

<http://www.developmentgateway.org/yen/rc/filedownload.do?itemId=1050053>

Submission template:

<http://www.developmentgateway.org/yen/rc/filedownload.do?itemId=1050056>

UNICEF: State of the World's Children 2006 "Excluded and Invisible"

Hundreds of millions of children are suffering from severe exploitation and discrimination and have become virtually invisible to the world, UNICEF argues in its recently launched flagship report, the State of the World's Children. The report explores the causes of exclusion and the abuses children experience. It identifies four circumstances in which children are most likely to become invisible and forgotten: children without a formal identity; children without parental care; children in adult roles; and children who are exploited.

The summary and full report are available at: <http://www.unicef.org/>

UN-HABITAT: Jam on urban problems very successful

From internet cafes in the slums of Nairobi, New Delhi and Lima to flashy office blocks in Europe and North America, between 1 and 3 December, thousands of people beamed into the Habitat Jam for a global internet discussion of urban problems. The event aimed at bringing fresh ideas from ordinary people to leaders and experts preparing for the third session of UN-HABITAT's World Urban Forum in Vancouver next June.

To read more, visit:

http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf/2006/JAM2005_news2.asp and <http://www.habitatjam.com>

Feature: Tackling Poverty Together in Malawi

The Programme on Youth and the National Council of Swedish Youth Organizations (LSU) are jointly implementing a project called Tackling Poverty Together. The project aims to strengthen the role of young people in poverty reduction strategies in the countries of Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. The participants recently met for a first workshop in Ndola, Zambia.

We asked **Ndawona Dennis Mwafulirwa** a few questions about his experiences. He is a young man aged 25 and living in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi. He works with the Scout Association of Malawi as a Programme Commissioner. The Scout Association of Malawi is a voluntary, non-political, and not-for-profit youth organization working in the area of youth development. Currently it concentrates on leadership, skills development and sexual reproductive health. Others in the Tackling Poverty Together Team for Malawi are:

Dumisa Kaponda, a young woman of 21 years, works with CARER and is based in Zomba. CARER is a Centre for Research and Education on Human Rights that works to sensitize people on their human rights and responsibilities. Malawi CARER is facilitating a project on paralegal advisory services, for which Dumisa works as a paralegal officer. The project's priority is to assist vulnerable groups such as youth; older persons and women;

Allan Muhome is a 25 year old law student at Chancellor College and is a member of the Students Law Society of the University of Malawi based in Zomba. The Students Law Society is involved in advocacy activities that include good governance, human rights and legal issues in general. All these are pro-poor programmes, offering legal advice to those who cannot afford it. The Society also visits surrounding areas to conduct human rights campaigns and to organize workshops for fellow university students;

Shupekire Jere, 22 years old, also works with the Scout Association of Malawi described above. She is based in Mzuzu.



Feature continued...

Why are you concerned about the role of young people in poverty reduction?

"The main reason is that poverty levels are high in Malawi and we, being youth, have thought it wise to concentrate on youth poverty. Young people between 15 and 29 make up over 50 per cent of the country's population and the majority of these young people live in poverty. Yet on the other hand, young people are regarded as the most productive sector of the population, they are energetic and willing to learn and change things.

As youth, we feel a responsibility for ourselves and our peers to ensure that poverty levels are reduced. The future is ours and it is clear that no one is going to change things for us. We have to play our role!"

Are young people currently involved in the drafting and implementation of poverty reduction strategies in Malawi? If so, how?

"Young people are not currently very involved in the drafting and implementation of poverty reduction strategies in the country. Upon returning from the Ndola workshop, I visited my Ministry of Economic Planning and Development. One thing I learned from the visit was that there's an assumption that all issues concerning young people shall be considered in the country's National Youth Policy and a related National Youth Development Plan (which exist in draft form). The Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy of 2002 does not really reflect the needs of young people. Youth are mentioned in passing, mainly in relation to basic education and HIV/AIDS, and this is further proof that the new Strategy must involve more young people in both its drafting and implementation."

How should young people be involved in poverty reduction strategies?

"There are a number of ways in which governments can involve young people in poverty reduction strategies, particularly at the grassroots level where real poverty among youth occurs. They can consult young people during the strategy development or formulation process and then in the actual implementation (i.e. by supporting initiatives by young people that focus on poverty reduction and income generation). They can also build the capacities of youth and their organizations by raising awareness and accessibility of the poverty reduction strategies. This way young people are aware of what is expected of them and can be supported to achieve these expectations. Finally, young people, through reputable organizations and forums, can be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy's progress."

In October, you participated in the workshop 'Tackling Poverty Together: The Role of Young People in Poverty Reduction'. What did you think of the workshop?

"The workshop was an eye opener and a motivator. Through the workshop, our team and the other participants shared our understanding of youth poverty. We also learned more about economic development policy, both at the international and

country level, and we are giving it a second eye. Each time we hear about Malawi's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper now, we are thinking of our role as young people.

We are now able to understand what is happening in the country as far as poverty reduction is concerned. We have thought about where the government is doing well and where it is failing. We are also noticing whether or not the government involves young people. We are able to value our role this time around in poverty reduction processes, as young people at the local, national and international level, as individuals, as members of the civil society and as a big voice to be heard (remember, youth represent 50 per cent of Malawi's population). And we have the skills, including advocacy, communication, and above all, knowledge."

Next February you will come together again to finalize your action plans. What are you doing to prepare for the second workshop?

"The Malawi team is in the process of implementing the action plan that we created during the Ndola workshop. We have so far identified youth NGOs that are interested in the Tackling Poverty Together project and we have started to meet with them. We are also talking to the relevant ministries in our Government, such as the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and the National Youth Council of Malawi."

Is there anything else you would like to share?

"Young people need to be proactive. By meeting the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, we learned that a new poverty reduction strategy is soon to be launched. This policy, called the "Malawi Growth and Development Strategy", is going to replace the current Poverty Reduction Strategy. We discussed with the Ministry how the government will ensure that young people are involved this time around. We were advised to work with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture to review the draft and to voice our recommendations. This is our next step.

The other thing we learned about was the existence of a National Development Plan and a National Development Fund that was established in August 2004. This was announced in the inauguration speech from the president of the country, Dr. Bingu Wa Mutharika. The speech emphasized harnessing the potential of youths by equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary for their active participation in social, cultural, economic and political development of the country. Areas of focus are skills training for self employment, preventive health services and provision of recreational facilities.

As a team we believe that the National Development Plan has a lot to offer to the young people of Malawi, who are present in big numbers. Hence we shall continue to work with the Government and make the case that young people deserve commitment and implementation of the country's development plans."

Calendar of Youth Events

NB: Some events are open for participation by invitation only

8-17 February '06: 44th session of the Commission for Social Development

UN Headquarters, New York. The Commission for Social Development is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), charged with preparing social policy for the Council, including on youth development issues. This year's priority theme is the review of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006). Youth organizations with consultative status to ECOSOC may submit written statements to be circulated and also make oral presentations during the general debate at the Commission. For more info:
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2006.htm>

22-25 February '06: Tackling Poverty Together, phase 2

Kampala, Uganda. The United Nations Programme on Youth and the National Council of Swedish Youth Organizations, with financial support of the Swedish Government, are working on a technical assistance project called "Tackling Poverty Together: The Role of Young People in Poverty Reduction Strategies". Youth

from Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia are trained and guided to strengthen their role in poverty reduction strategies and develop and implement their own action plans. The first phase took place in October 2005 in Zambia, where they created concrete action plans. In February, the participants will convene again in Kampala to discuss their achievements and plans for follow-up activities. See also the feature article in this Youth Flash.

19-23 June '06: World Urban Forum

Vancouver, Canada. The World Urban Forum was established by the United Nations to respond to rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies and policies. The World Urban Forum gives non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, urban professionals, academics, governments, local authorities and national and international associations of local governments a common platform to discuss urban issues in formal and informal ways and come up with action-oriented proposals to create sustainable cities. The theme in 2006 is "Our Future: Sustainable Cities - Turning Ideas into Action".

More information: <http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf/2006>

On the Internet

Youth participating in the UN Climate Change Conference

From 28 November to 9 December, hundreds of youth from around the world joined their world leaders in the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Montreal, Canada. Listed are a few related websites that tell their stories:

- Blog "It's getting hot in there":
<http://www.itsgettinghotinhere.org/>
- International Youth Summit, including the "Our Climate, Our Challenge, Our Future - International Youth Declaration":
<http://www.beyondkyoto.org/index.en.html>

- New York Times article "Youths make spirited case at climate meeting":
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/09/international/americas/09climate.html>

Portal de Juventud

This is a portal site for youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, sponsored by UNESCO and the Centro Latinoamericano sobre Juventud:
<http://www.joveneslac.org/portal/> (in Spanish only)

Contact information

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.

Currently working with the programme are Joop Theunissen (Focal Point on Youth), Fred Doulton (Associate Social Affairs Officer), Julie Larsen (Associate Social Affairs Officer), Charlotte van Hees (Associate Expert on Youth Policies and Programmes), Mike Thiedke (Consultant), Sylvie Pailler (Administrative Assistant) and Frank Cohn (Intern).

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Visit our website at <http://www.un.org/youth>