

UN YOUTH FLASH

Service of the United Nations Programme on Youth

19 January 2005

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. Below you will read more on:

- News from UN Headquarters in New York
- Feature: "Young people in New York City, a reflection of global youth"
- Calendar of Youth Events
- Interesting websites

News from UN Headquarters in New York

>> Third edition of Directory of African NGOs available <<
The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), published the third edition of the Directory of African NGOs. The Directory can be searched by country, by action area (such as agriculture and education) and by category (including youth). It provides a description of the organizations' activities and their contact details. The information is available in English and French. You can order the CD-ROM of the Directory, free of charge, by sending an email with your full postal address to engo@un.org.

>> Join the online discussion on youth and gender equality <<
The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW/DESA) invites you to participate in a three-week online discussion (17 January to 6 February 2005) on the "Vision of Young Women and Men for Gender Equality". The outcome of these discussions will feed into the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held from 28 February to 11 March 2005. The Commission will then review and appraise the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, both adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, and the Outcome Document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in 2000. One of the commitments made by Governments is to promote the role of youth in achieving gender equality. For more info on the themes of discussion and to register, visit: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forums/review/youth/index.html>

Feature: Young people in New York City: a reflection of global youth

This is a summary of an interview held with Dr. Cary Goodman, the Executive Director of Directions for Our Youth, a New York based NGO that addresses increasing dropout rates and overall student apathy throughout the New York City public school system.

Cary has been involved in youth community work for 30 years, both as a teacher and community worker. He was actively involved in the struggle against apartheid, did an internship with the United Nations Department for Public Information, and was awarded the UN Peace Maker Medal in 1985. In that year, the United Nations was celebrating its fortieth anniversary and the International Youth Year. Amidst the heat of the Cold War, Cary organized a peace parade of 5000 children in front of the UN building.

"The fifteen priority areas from the UN World Programme of Action for Youth are a very close match with the problems encountered by the youth in this city. The concerns and problems of young people in New York are the same as those faced by young people all over the world. There are tens of thousands of young people living in poverty in this city, who depend on food pantries and soup kitchens. Of course there are many youth, from wealthier families, much better off. My organization works with the youth who are most in need, who come from distressed families, and for whom social structures provide the least success. These young people need to be empowered. We translated the World Programme of Action into an Urban Youth Agenda, a bill of rights for young New Yorkers, which forms the foundation of our work."

The youth work in New York City is coordinated by the Commissioner of Youth, who is in charge of the Department for Youth and Community Development. An Interagency Coordinating Council on Youth ensures interagency collaboration on youth related issues by bringing various departments together, including the Departments of Education, Health and Juvenile Justice System. Most public services are outsourced to NGOs, divided by regions and themes.

"Our work is exclusively connected to education, leisure and advocacy. We use a group and an individual approach. Empowerment is our key word. Empowerment by giving youth the skills to solve the problems most important to them. The major problem in the city is that youth development work is heavily under funded. Youth is not front and center for the city, there is no clear mission, such as the UN has with the World Programme of Action for Youth. I am not sure if there is an integrated youth policy developed, if so, it is not accessible on the internet or otherwise widely spread."

Youth participation and advocacy are not very widespread in New York. There is a Youth Board, offering advisory services to the Department for Youth and Community Development, which has two young members representing youth, but there is no youth council. Cary thinks that the reason for the absence of a youth leadership movement is that youth are not empowered enough to participate. "This generation has not benefited from the experience of previous generations who lived through the civil rights movements. The unions are defaulted, not active in youth matters. Only government sponsored elements cater for youth. New York youth are disconnected from the histories of the peace, women's and environmental movements."

When asked about his message to the member states of the General Assembly, when they meet next October to review the World Programme of Action for Youth, he states: "Young people in New York City are nearly oblivious to the UN. It would probably rank well below almost every NYC landmark, such as the Yankee Stadium, Central Park, Radio City Music Hall or Madison Square Garden, as far as how many young people visit it, or follow the activities which take

place there. The Member States should set an example for youth to call upon their leaders to pay attention to the needs of young people."

To read more about the Department of Youth and Community Development, visit: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/home.html> . To read more about Directions for Our Youth, visit: <http://www.dfoyo.org>

Calendar of Youth Events

NB: Some events are open for participation by invitation only

>> 31 January 05: "Youth Take Action for Environmental Responsibility"
UN Headquarters, New York. The UN Programme on Youth and the UN Environment Programme support a panel discussion entitled "Healing Our Planet: Youth Take Action for Environmental Responsibility". The meeting is organized by the Gandhi-King Season for Nonviolence New York Task Force and the Temple of Understanding Youth Council, in honor of environmentalist Wangari Maathai of Kenya winning the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize and the beginning of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in 2005. For further inquiries, email: Jwretzel@templeofunderstanding.org , or visit: <http://www.templeofunderstanding.org/newSite/whatWeDo/youthPrograms.php>

>> 9-18 February 05: "Commission for Social Development"
UN Headquarters, New York. The Commission for Social Development will meet for its 43rd session in February 2005. The review of the World Programme of Action for Youth will be on the agenda, as the Commission will discuss the Secretary-General's World Youth Report 2005, before it is submitted to the General Assembly in the fall of 2005. A panel discussion on the global situation of youth will be held on Monday 14 February 2005 (see next item). To stay updated on the schedule: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2005.htm>

>> 14 February 05: "Commission for Social Development discusses youth"
UN Headquarters, New York. The Commission for Social Development will hold a panel discussion on the linkages between the World Programme of Action for Youth and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), entitled "Working with Young People on Common Goals". Following the presentation of the Secretary-General's World Youth Report 2005, the topic will be presented using inputs gathered through consultative activities with young people, including responses to the "Making Commitments Matter" toolkit.

>> 28 Feb. - 11 March 05: "Commission on the Status of Women"
UN Headquarters, New York. The Commission will be focusing on two thematic issues as outlined in its multi-year programme of work: 1) Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"; and 2) Current challenges and forward looking strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls. For more info: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/49sess.htm>

>> 15-17 April 05: "Global Youth Service Day"

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) is an annual global event led by Youth Service America with the Global Youth Action Network. The goals of GYSD are: to build the capacity of organizations to promote youth participation, service, and learning; to educate the public, the media, and policy-makers about the year-round contributions of youth around the world; to mobilize youth and adults to meet the needs of their communities through volunteering; and to share effective practices in youth service and civic engagement. On Global Youth Service Day, millions of young people in countries everywhere highlight and carry out thousands of community improvement projects. Visit: <http://www.GYSD.org>

>> 30 April 05: "Deadline submissions review WPAY"

In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly will review the achievements made in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), ten years after its adoption. Your input will be considered! Reviews received from young people before 30 April 2005 will be summarized into a report that will be submitted to the General Assembly. To assist you in this review, the United Nations Programme on Youth has developed the booklet "Making Commitments Matter, a toolkit for young people to evaluate national youth policy". You can download this toolkit from <http://www.un.org/youth>

>> 15-19 June 05: "African Development Forum V devoted to youth issues"

UNCC, Addis Ababa. The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) brings together stakeholders in Africa's development - including heads of state, ministers, heads of international organizations, civil society leaders, research institutes and Nobel Laureates - to debate and discuss policy alternatives and emerging strategic issues for Africa's development. In order to put the issue of youth on the African development agenda, the fifth African Development Forum will be devoted to youth development issues. For more information, please contact: Kwabia Boateng, Office of Policy and Programme Coordination, UN ECA, kboateng@uneca.org.

>> 30 July - 08 August 05: "3rd World Youth Congress"

Stirling, Scotland. Peace Child International (PCI), together with its worldwide network of some 700 partner groups in 155 countries, will organize a third World Youth Congress on the theme: "Young people working for a sustainable world community". The first Congress was held in Hawaii in 1999 and the second in Morocco in 2003. The Congress series provides a forum for young people who are active in development/poverty eradication, to meet and develop their network. Anyone between the ages of 18 and 25 can apply and attendance is free! For more information, please visit <http://www.scotland2005.org>

>> October 05: "Evaluation of the World Programme of Action for Youth"

UN Headquarters, New York. The UN World Programme of Action for Youth will be evaluated by the General Assembly during two plenary meetings. More information can be found at: <http://www.un.org/youth> .

Interesting websites

>> WSIS Youth Caucus <<

In November 2005, the United Nations will hold the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis, Tunisia. WSIS brings together world political, business and civil society leaders to create a

shared vision for the information society, and implement an Action Plan to ensure equitable access to technology, and harness ICTs for development. The Youth Caucus is a loose group of young people that tries to input youth opinion. Membership is open to all interested parties. Visit their website at: <http://www.wsisyouth.org> . The official website of the UN on WSIS: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/>

>> Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network <<
The Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network is an alliance of indigenous youth organizations in Asia and the Pacific. It aims to promote and defend the rights of indigenous peoples. For more info, visit: <http://www.apiyn.org/home.htm>

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), Sylvie Pailleur (Administrative Assistant) and Eyyub Hajiyev (intern).

To subscribe and unsubscribe to the information service, please send an email to: youth@un.org, with 'subscribe' or 'unsubscribe' as the subject line.

>>>>>>>>> VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT <http://www.un.org/youth> <<<<<<<<<<<<