

UN YOUTH FLASH

Vol. 6, No. 2, February 2009

WELCOME to the UN Youth Flash, a service of the United Nations Programme on Youth to keep you informed about the work of the UN on youth issues. You are encouraged to use and forward the information below to other networks. This update is prepared with input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes. UN Youth Flash can also be read on-line at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/flash.htm>.

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FEATURE: Measuring Youth Development: The Way Forward

Side-Event at the 47th Session of the Commission for Social Development

How do we assess the socioeconomic development and inclusion of youth? How can we work together to ensure efficient assessment of these elements? These were the questions on the minds of attendees at the 5 February side-event, "Measuring Youth Development: The Way Forward", co-hosted by the United Nations Programme on Youth (UNPY) and the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), during the Commission for Social Development at the United Nations. The event presented current international-level approaches to gauging the social situation of youth, and discussed the way forward in the further development and implementation of evaluation tools and approaches.

The event featured a moderated panel discussion featuring perspectives from UNPY, CYP, the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean (ECLAC-Caribbean). Panellists presented varied conceptual and technical views on assessing youth development, and presented these elements within a wide range of contexts.

The UNPY highlighted their recent expert-led process to develop goals and targets to monitor the effective implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, and stressed the need to formally identify the data that can be used to monitor them effectively. They noted the need for a dynamic approach in developing indicators and implementing the goals and targets, as the goals and targets are over-arching objectives within a broad development paradigm that may require adaptation within regional and local contexts. As contexts shift, chosen indicators may not continue to properly illustrate the situation being gauged.

The CYP echoed the call for dynamism in their presentation of the Youth Development Indices (YDI). Their YDI features a three-pronged approach to gauging youth development. It advocates a Youth Empowerment Measure, a Youth Education Index, and A Youth Poverty Index, and provides basic guidelines as to the elements to be addressed within each measure. The guidelines are based on the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment agreed upon by the Commonwealth States. In their application of the YDI, individual states select the specific indicators that best reflect the situation within their

contexts. The need for this type of tailored monitoring was reiterated in the presentations by the ILO and ECLAC –Caribbean. These speakers also highlighted data availability as a major issue in assessing the situation of youth.

In addressing the issue of data availability, UNSD listed a wide range of youth-related data collected by their office, which address issues of lifestyle, and socioeconomic development, making special reference to the UN Demographic Yearbook. However, they noted significant difficulties in collecting youth-specific data on the international level. The statistical definition of “youth” is a key problem, with different age thresholds across nations creating problems of comparability of country-level assessments. Similarly, there is extreme variability in the country response rates in provision of the data sets collected by UNSD. The more complicated variables become, the lower the response rates tend to be. This is most unfortunate, as the more complicated variables tend to have more explanatory potential.

So where do we go from here? The youth, and other country representatives, NGO representatives and UN entities present at the event prompted discussion on this point. It was agreed that youth need to be recognised as a heterogeneous population with differences among cohorts within and across nations. This was deemed important for affecting policy as related qualitative information on lifestyle elements such as religion, household structure, and cultural attitudes are often root elements feeding widely used and accepted social development indicators such as unemployment and literacy.

In promoting measurement and evaluation, a need for a bottom-up approach was advocated. Participants agreed that youth are unique agents and beneficiaries of socioeconomic development and Governments need to know how that cohort of their society is faring in comparison to other sectors; as such, there is a need to encourage Governments to monitor youth development, on their own terms, as a means of strengthening their socioeconomic development policies and youth-targeted interventions. Participants suggested that related regional and international level initiatives should focus on providing guiding conceptual and technical principles and pulling together the available information to assess the global situation.

Greater collaboration within and across the working levels is a means of pulling together all the relevant and available data to paint the most complete picture of youth development and empowerment. This approach can provide an adequate mix between dynamism and comparability. With individual NGOs and intergovernmental organisations working within and across the national, regional and international levels to build evaluative capacity and buttress data availability for the social and economic elements most relevant to their varied spheres of work, the range of scope of available data would increase. Co-ordinated efforts would avoid duplication in this area, and allow for maximised effect.

More youth involvement is key in, both determining valid and relevant indicators, and in collecting and assessing the data. This is especially relevant in collecting qualitative data. Who better than youth to guide us on the thoughts, attitudes and circumstances which shape their decisions and frame their living situations?

For more information on the event and its outcomes, please contact the United Nations Programme on Youth at youth@un.org or visit <http://www.un.org/youth>.

NEWS FROM UN OFFICES

(Find out more about the work of United Nations system organizations on youth issues at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/agenda.htm>).

ESCWA – Youth workshop in Iraq

In the context of its efforts in monitoring countries' responses to the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) participated in the Workshop on the National Youth Survey and the National Youth Strategy. This Workshop was organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) in Iraq, in collaboration with the UNFPA Iraq Country Office, in Amman, Jordan, from 10-11 February 2009. The workshop focused on the process of executing the National Youth Survey by the Central Statistical Office (CSO) in Iraq and discussed the formulation of the national youth strategy, its Results Framework and Work Plan, as well as UN support in this endeavour. ESCWA's presentation to the workshop highlighted the importance of formulating national youth policies/strategies in the context of the WPAY, and included an overview of the main findings of its regional survey on monitoring WPAY implementation. More information: shakoori@un.org or georgi@unfpa.org.

FAO - Youth Climate Change Activities

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) have announced the results of the "Our world our climate our food" international drawing competition. From the over 1400 drawings from 46 countries the winning drawing was from sixteen year-old Chan Hiu Wing from Hong Kong. His logo will be used in the development of the climate change and food security youth guide, challenge badge and activity packs. This and other FAO youth projects are being financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). New competitions will be announced shortly. Considering the high standard of the drawings submitted the FAO/WAGGGS team have worked hard to put all the drawings on-line for all to view at: www.fao.org/climatechange/youth/en.

OHCHR - Indigenous Fellowship Programmes

Each year, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organizes an Indigenous Fellowship Programme aimed at strengthening participant's knowledge of the United Nations system, general Human Rights mechanisms and other mechanisms that deal specifically with indigenous issues. This programme is exclusively for indigenous persons and is implemented in close cooperation with universities and UN agencies. The goal of the programme is to train participants to be better equipped in assisting their organisations and communities in using existing international instruments and mechanisms to protect their rights. This training programme is available in 4 languages: English, Spanish, French and Russian. Deadlines to apply to the 2010 programmes are: English: 30 April 2009; Spanish: 15 July 2009; French: to be confirmed; Russian: 30 September 2009. More information: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/fellowship.htm>

UNDESA - GAID Committee of eLeaders for ICT and Youth

The Committee of eLeaders for ICT and Youth is an active stakeholder network, coordinated and guided by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Global Alliance for ICT and Development (UNDESA-GAID). Consisting of young professionals, leaders and academics from around the world, the 12-member committee has been working on ICT4D (ICT for development) projects that have a youth-led and youth based development impact. In the coming months, the Committee of eLeaders will also work with Taking IT Global to create and host a global "best practices" online portal, for youth to present and share ICT4D best practices. The Committee plans to select the most innovative ideas and recognize them internationally. The eLeaders will showcase this project at the Global Forum in Monterrey, in June 2009. For more information on the eLeaders activities and their projects, please visit:

<http://www.un-gaid.org/Networks/StakeholderNetworks/YouthLeaders/tabid/960/Default.aspx>

UNESCO - Best practices in youth policies and programmes

An inter-agency, inter-organization project organized by IMJ, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO, ECLAC, WHO/PAHO, UNV, IDB, OIJ, OECD, CYP, IPPF, EVAC, FLACSO, Trust, OAS, YABT, SEP, UdeC, SEJUVE, "Best practices" aims to recognize, share and publish successful practices in youth policies and programmes in eight themes, namely.: education; employment; sexual and reproductive health; prevention of youth violence; poverty reduction; voluntary work; youth participation and leadership and; integral youth development. The project will be implemented in three stages that includes: (1) A regional call for proposals in order to identify and select good practices (March-April 2009); (2) A Regional Meeting in order to give recognition to and analyze practices and trends; and to stimulate the exchange of knowledge and experiences among relevant actors (September 2009), and (3) The publication of a book and a technical guide on the eight themes. More information: Berenice Alcalde, b.alcalde@unesco.org.

UNESCO - Vanguardia Latina Youth Forum 2009

Vanguardia Latina is an innovative annual forum to strengthen Inter-American networks. It provides an opportunity for young Latin American and Hispanic university students to exchange ideas on, and contribute to, current and emerging issues. It is also part of a larger Espacio Vinculación (EVAC) initiative, which sets out to build and reinforce networks between young people, universities and decision-makers, with a view to developing concrete plans of action. The Forum will be held in Los Angeles, California (4th to 6th May 2009). A delegation of UNESCO youth representatives has participated in the forum since 2006. UNESCO's Section for Youth, Sport and Physical Education selects the youth representatives from a list of candidates submitted by the UNESCO National Commissions and, in certain cases, by the National Youth Councils of the countries of the region. Candidacies must be submitted by the 16th of March. More information: Berenice Alcalde, b.alcalde@unesco.org.

UNESCO – Goi Peace Foundation International Essay Contest 2009

Through the annual essay competitions, UNESCO and the Goi Peace Foundation encourage young people to share their vision for the future. The theme for this year's contest is "The role of science in building a better world". Scientific progress has brought many benefits to humanity, while some applications of science have had adverse impacts. Through the competition young people will answer questions such as "What kind of science and technology do you think is needed for realizing a more equitable, prosperous and sustainable world for all? The deadline for entry is 30 June 2009. Please see the complete guidelines at <http://www.goipeace.or.jp/english/activities/programs/0901.html>

UNESCO Biodiversity awards for young scientists

Young scientists from around the world working on projects ranging from working to conserve mangrove forests in Iran to conserving orchids in Cuba have been recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for their work on biodiversity. Eleven people have been selected as winners of UNESCO's 2009 Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Young Scientist Awards, and they will each receive a cash prize of up to \$5,000 for their research on ecosystems and biodiversity focusing on sustainable interaction between people and their environment. Biosphere reserves are sites taking innovative approaches to conservation, ecological sciences and sustainable development which are recognized under UNESCO's MAB Programme. Currently, there are 531 such sites in over 100 countries. More information:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29934&Cr=unesco&Cr1=youth>

UNESCAP – Expert Group Meeting on the WPAY issues

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) organized an Expert Group Meeting on Regional Follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY): Ensuring Regional Youth Development in Bangkok, Thailand from 12-13 February 2009. Participants included scholars and experts in the field of youth and development from the region, as well as experts from United Nations agencies and programmes and youth NGOs. Participants reviewed the progress made in areas of WPAY and identified issues and challenges in the region and made policy-specific recommendations. The meeting also featured special presentations on youth volunteerism and social entrepreneurship. More information:

http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/meetings/EGM_WPAY_2009/index.asp.

UNHABITAT – Race to end poverty and help urban youth

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) has signed an agreement with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) aimed at giving hope to disadvantaged and vulnerable youth through sport. The landmark pact brings the two organizations together to create initiatives that encourage young people to participate in sporting activities, advancing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), an internationally agreed set of targets aimed at eradicating poverty and other social ills by 2015. More information:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29808&Cr=youth&Cr1=development>.

UNICEF VOY - Awards honour children's advocacy groups

Three child/youth-led organizations, Tamilnadu-Pondicherry State Parliament of Children in India, Young African Stars Nigeria and Kids Link Fiji, received a memorable award on 6 February 2009. They were honoured as leaders and agents of change. Every Year San Marino- Alexander Bodini Foundation honour's child/youth led organizations that work with UNICEF to promote and support the advocacy of Child Rights. UNICEF Voices of Youth (UNICEF-VOY) sends a call for nominations to all country and regional UNICEF offices in order to find exceptional groups of young people. More information:

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sanmarino_47887.html

WHO/UNFPA - Review of adolescent mental health in resource-poor settings

A review has been undertaken to capture recent research and empirical evidence on the critical mental health issues affecting adolescents in the most resource-constrained countries. The review was conducted by WHO's Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development (CAH) in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, UNFPA, and the University of Melbourne. Special focus is on the evidence for interventions that can be delivered at primary health care levels by non-specialist providers and within families and communities. The draft document was reviewed and critiqued by a small group of experts and a number of recommendations were made for refining the findings. In order to further the WHO/UNFPA agenda, an informal meeting of the advisory group was convened by CAH in collaboration with UNFPA in New Delhi, India, 15-16 December 2008. The meeting reached consensus on the "considered views of the researchers for action" and the ten key messages emerging for advocacy. The publication of the entire Review as a supplement of the peer-reviewed Journal of Social Psychiatry was agreed upon and an outline was developed. More information:

<http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health>.

WHO/UNICEF – Meeting on the rights of the girl child and adolescent girls

WHO's Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development (WHO/CAH) participated in a meeting of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) - Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on

26 January 2009. The meeting was set up by UNICEF to foster collaboration between the committees and strengthen collaboration with WHO and focused on the girl child and adolescent girls, and identified themes to focus discussions. Outcomes of the meeting include that a joint working group be established and discussion days be organized around themes of joint interest. The first theme proposed was "adolescent girls". UNICEF and WHO began discussions on strengthening collaboration between the two organizations at headquarters and country levels on human rights issues. UNICEF will be meeting with CAH to identify workplan items for further collaboration. More information: <http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health>.

World Bank - Youthink! Therefore you Blog

Be a part of a global conversation! The World Bank's Youthink! Website (<http://youthink.worldbank.org>) has launched a blog (<http://youthinkblog.worldbank.org>) by and for youth who are interested in development issues like poverty and education. Read the ideas and experiences of other young people around the world, and join in with your thoughts and comments. This is about what we think! Youthink! also now has a community on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Youthink/92789800182>).

YOUTH IN ACTION

African youth to climb Kilimanjaro joining UN campaign for climate change

A group of young people from impoverished urban areas in Kenya, Tanzania and Ghana, will set off on a gruelling trek to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro under the United Nations banner to draw attention to the effects of climate change. Ten underprivileged youth will join 25 other people from the private and public sectors in the fourth annual ascent to the "rooftop of Africa" organized by the Kilimanjaro Initiative, a Nairobi-based non-governmental organization (NGO), in partnership with the "UNite to Combat Climate Change" global campaign. At the top of Kilimanjaro, the group will use a satellite telephone to call Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. More information:

[http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=30012&Cr=climate&Cr1=.](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=30012&Cr=climate&Cr1=)

Youth camp on peaceful coexistence held in Iraq

A week-long camp for 80 young women and men was organized by Relief International through their Iraqi Community Based Conflict Mitigation Youth Program. Entitled Peaceful Coexistence Camp, the project was conducted in Sumeil and included youth from different regions, nationalities, religions and tribes, as well as internally displaced young people from Iran, Syria and Turkey. Activities ranged from lectures, documentary films, variety entertainment, visits to places of worship, as well as science competitions, as well as discussions and training on social inclusion, democratic processes, problem-solving and positive citizenship. More information: mohannadpr@gmail.com.

Red Hand Day to bring and end to the use of child soldiers

More than 250,000 "red hands" were collected by youth representatives from over a 100 countries around the world and some were presented to the UN Secretary-General. The date of 12 February is of special significance, since it was seven years ago that the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict entered into force. More information:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29891&Cr=child+soldiers&Cr1>.

WPAY Competition

Organized by the World Assembly of Youth, the competition for young people is based on the 15 priority youth issues of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY).

Participants can prepare presentations, reports, essays, discussions, poems or forms of arts that would portray how they would tackle the WPAY issues (<http://www.way.org.my/issues.html>). Deadline: 27th March 2009 More information: <http://www.way.org.my>.

PUBLICATIONS

(For UN documents on youth, visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/library.htm>).

UNESCO Review of Sex, Relationships, and HIV Education in Schools

Prepared for the first meeting of UNESCO's Global Advisory Group held in December 2007, this global review of sex and HIV education in the schools is based on interviews with 22 experts from Africa, Europe, and North and South America, together with searches of scientific journals and other literature. More information: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001629/162989E.pdf>.

UNAIDS HIV and Young People: Guidance Briefs

The UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) developed this series of seven Guidance Briefs that aim to help decision makers (including development practitioners, governments donors and civil society organizations) understand what needs to be done, based on the latest global evidence on effective interventions for young people. The seven briefs are: Overview of HIV interventions for young people; HIV interventions for most-at-risk young people; HIV interventions for young people in humanitarian emergencies; Community-based HIV interventions for young people; HIV interventions for young people in the education sector; HIV interventions for young people in the health sector; HIV interventions for young people in the workplace. More information: <http://www.unfpa.org/hiv/iatt>.

CALENDAR OF YOUTH EVENTS

(Please send us information on major international youth events that do not appear below)

4-7 March 2009: Global Innovation Forum on Clean Technology

Organized by Athgo International, this Forum will be held at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and provides an opportunity for 200 students and young social entrepreneurs from around the world, to learn and advance their causes towards achieving environmental sustainability in the context of the UN Millennium Development Goal 7. Participants will showcase sustainable practices and highlight renewable energy initiatives in a creative environment. More information: http://www.athgo.org/programs/forums/current_upcoming.html

5 - 8 March 2009: Belgrade International Model United Nations

Belgrade International Model United Nations (BIMUN) provides students an opportunity to learn more about current international issues and ways to resolve them. The process allows young people to apply basic diplomatic courtesy and further develop their interpersonal, public speaking and negotiation skills. More information: <http://www.bimun-unaserbia.org>.

17-19 April 2009: Youth Forum of the Americas

The Youth Forum of the Americas is a pre-Summit forum of the Fifth Summit of the Americas. The Forum creates a space for young people to discuss and contribute to putting into action the themes of the Fifth Summit of the Americas. Participants will present the results of a consultation process related to the central themes of the Fifth Summit that was

conducted throughout the region. These will be presented to Heads of State attending the Fifth Summit. More Information: www.youngamericasforum.com

24-26 April 2009: Global Youth Service Day

During Global Youth Service Day, young people from around the world will work to address the needs of their local communities through service and be recognized for their contributions as a part of a global youth service movement. More information: <http://www.gysd.org>.

23-24 April 2009: European University Hunger Summit

Universities Fighting World Hunger: The European Hunger Summit offers an opportunity for students, faculty, and administrators from universities and North American study abroad programmes across Europe to discuss ways to fight world hunger and malnutrition through an international grassroots student movement. More information: <http://www.universitiesfightingworldhunger.org>.

5-10 May 2009: World Creative Youth Forum (WCYF) 2009

The theme of the Forum is "Education for Sustainable Development". It will focus on Peace and Human Rights, Climate Change, Sustainable Lifestyle, Entrepreneurship, Education and Technology, and Advocacy for Sustainable Development. More information: www.worldcreativeyouthforum.net.

9-14 June 2009: Global Youth Forum in Mongolia

The Forum aims to encourage dialogue among young people to develop mutual understanding and cooperation in addressing global problems. The event is being organized by OYUNLAL-UILS, a non-governmental and non-profit organization working to promote youth development in Mongolia. Issues covered at the Forum will include environmental protection & climate change, poverty, decent work and unemployment, public health policy and HIV/AIDS, and gender equality. More information: <http://www.oyunlaguils.mn/index.php?ID=7>.

5-7 August 2009: Global Model UN Conference

The UN Department of Public Information will organize the first annual Global Model UN Conference in Geneva, Switzerland from 5-7 August 2009. The event will bring together university-level students from Model UN programmes currently organized around the world. The theme of the conference will be "The Millennium Development Goals – Lifting the bottom billion out of poverty". It will involve youth in all aspects of the planning process and encourage the organization of new Model UN programmes where they do not exist, serving as a model of best practices. Furthermore, it is expected that the Global Model UN will inspire the next generation of leaders to be involved in national and global issues. More information: <http://www.un.org/gmun>.

12 August: International Youth Day 2009

Theme: (Forthcoming: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/iyouthday.htm>)

21 - 26 August 2009: TUNZA International Youth Conference

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with the UNEP National Committee for the Republic of Korea will be organizing its Tunza International Youth Conference on the Environment in Daejeon. The Conference will bring together 200 youth, to learn about the environment through plenary sessions, workshops and field trips. The Conference will be in three segments, Global townhall meeting on 21 August, Regional Meetings from 22-23 August and Conference from 24-26 August. The daily themes include Climate change: Limiting the FootPrint, Youth and Green Jobs, Disasters and Conflicts and

their Impact on the Environment and Sustainable Lifestyles. More information:
http://www.unep.org/tunza/youth/conferences_events/TIYC2009.

31 August – 4 September 2009: World Climate Conference-3

Organized by the World Meteorological Organization, the World Climate Conference-3 (WCC-3) provides the world community with a unique opportunity to address the challenges associated with current climate variability so as to build societal resilience to the imminent effects of climate change. More information:

http://www.wmo.int/pages/world_climate_conference/index_en.html.

29-30 September 2009: Global Youth Enterprise Conference

Designed as a participatory learning event, this conference aims to support youth enterprise and entrepreneurship programmes and policies to achieve greater effectiveness around the world. Participants include practitioners, funding organizations, the private sector, academics and youth leaders from around the world who will share best practices, unique approaches, and groundbreaking ideas that help youth develop the necessary skills and opportunities to start their own businesses or seek quality employment. More information:

<http://www.youthenterpriseconference.org>.

7 - 18 December 2009: United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15)

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change entered into force on 21 March 1994. The Convention sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle climate change and recognizes that the climate system is a shared resource whose stability can be affected by industrial and other emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The Convention enjoys near universal membership, with 192 countries having ratified. More recently, a number of nations approved an addition to the treaty, called the Kyoto Protocol, which has more powerful (and legally binding) measures. The Protocol's first commitment period begun in 2008 and ends in 2012. A strong multilateral framework needs to be in place by 2009 to ensure that there is no gap between the end of the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period in 2012 and the entry into force of a future regime. COP15 (Conference of Parties) in Copenhagen is a vital step in this process. More information: <http://www.cop15.dk>.

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