

## Reach out to the National Commissions, and make your voice count, says Sané

by Enoch Ndri

The 6th UNESCO Youth Forum began its work today on Thursday, October 1. The event was opened by Mr. Pierre Sané, UNESCO's Assistant Director General for Social and Human Sciences; by Youth Keynote Speaker Mr. Adeola Ojeniyi, Regional Programme Coordinator for the West African Youth Network; and by Ms. Golda El-Khoury, Chief of UNESCO's Section for Youth, Sport and Physical Education. The speakers welcomed the youth del-

egates, and urged them to take advantage of the space offered to them by conducting a constructive dialogue and issuing concrete recommendations to UNESCO's General Conference, the organization's highest decision-making body.

UNESCO's commitment to hold its Youth Forum on the eve of its General Conference is unique among the agencies within the United Nations. But the relationship between these spaces for dialogue and the impact of the Youth Forum on the General Conference has been under much debate. Ac-

ording to Pierre Sané, interviewed after the day's plenary sessions, UNESCO will not limit its action to the Youth Forum and the General Conference. It will also look to develop its work with international youth organizations.

The collaboration is a necessity because the current economic crisis has unavoidably affected young people around the world, "in terms of employment, and in their future prospects for starting families," says Sané. UNESCO aims to engage in collective thinking and exchange, and will gather

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## Youth, Employment, and the Crisis

by Karim Aboumeri

"Investing out of the crisis: towards a partnership between UNESCO and youth organization" was the title of the Forum's first plenary session. Moderated by Mr. Pierre Sané, it gathered distinguished speakers that transmitted their experiences on how to deal with the economic and financial crisis.

Before the floor was handed to the speakers, Ms. Jana Jabbour, delegate for Lebanon, took stage to present the summary of the 7th week of online discussions that preceded the Forum, where the youth expressed their concern that the world "is facing an unprecedented set of global crises." The summary she presented drew attention to the fact that the crisis affecting global markets "is accompanied by a series of pre-existing crises and global challenges, from extreme poverty and widening inequalities to increasing environmental degradation and climate change." Participants stressed that education "is still the key to overcoming the global crises, and quality education must be seen as a means of creating job oppor-

tunities."

Mr. Tarik Yousef, the Dean of the Dubai School of Government, discussed 'Making Markets Work for young people in the Middle East'. Presenting the experience he has acquired in a region strongly affected by the crisis, Yousef explained some elements of the framework developed to look at issues of youth in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa). He stated that "problems and challenges facing youth predate the crisis, and are mainly concerned with their two transition phases: moving from school to work, and from work to family," demanding specific policy frameworks for youth in education, employment, marriage, and housing.

Ms. Shin-Young Jeon, PhD candidate at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, presented "Beyond the global crisis: towards a partnership between UNESCO and youth organizations: challenges and responses to the Asia Pacific Region". She stressed the importance of youth's educational level, and the unequal distribution of the development tools linked to the quality of education.

The Team Leader of the UN Programme on Youth, Ms. Nicola Shepherd, focused on priority areas such as poverty, hunger, HIV/AIDS, and the role of young women. She also discussed youth employment and its obstacles, along with climate change.

Ms. Susana Gonzalez, Technical Officer of the Youth Employment Network (ILO-World Bank-UN), stressed "investing in youth employment," presenting policy recommendations ranging from macroeconomic measures, to supporting employment and earnings, and income maintenance. She also presented examples of employment programs and enhancing access to credit.

The last speaker, Mr. Bady Acuña Franco, the Executive Director of *Colectivo Integral de Desarrollo*, spoke about the initiative he started some 19 years ago "when no one believed in the role of youth," that looks to develop and advocates for "integral youth development" approaches to the work with young people. Young people are "capable of taking initiative, and so the program is directed at them, since they are the present and should not be regarded solely as the future."

## Giving a voice to youth at the General Conference compiled by Renata Summa

Meet the two delegates who were elected to present the final report of the Youth Forum at the 35th UNESCO General Conference:

**Justin Adriel Ordoyo, 21, Philippines** - "I am very honoured to have been selected by 64 countries. I hope my words will be representative of youth's voice. Youth represents an important part of the world's population, so in order to achieve anything we have to work with youth. We will play an important role during the General Conference."

**Sara Mallawi, 22, Saudi Arabia** - "I was overwhelmed when I was chosen to speak at the General Conference ... I am grateful for all those who supported me. I will try my best to meet their expectations."

## The Drafting Committee, it's their final word compiled by Karim Aboumeri and Renata Summa



**Carlos Cisneros, 20, Ecuador**  
"I have learnt that instead of having many suggestions, the final report is a moment to propose a strategy. Equally important is to make sure our recommendations will be put into action by the National Commissions."



**Kartik Das, 22, Singapore**  
"I will be focusing on how to use communication tools to create awareness. With the financial crisis it is difficult for the young people to start their careers, so one way would be through youth and social initiatives."



**Anne Lemieux, 25, Canada**  
"I will be stressing the cultural side of the report. We have a big role to play if the Member States of UNESCO decide to listen to us".



**Yasir Jamal, 23, Morocco**  
"We need to pressure our governments to work in the youth's interest and not in their personal interest. In this report, I wish to give a special attention to education, research and security."

## Leadership skills, key to success

by Shuk-Wah Chung

The wooden desks in UNESCO's big conference room are almost full. Sitting behind them are the nation's chosen delegates – young, sassy and confident, these are the leaders of tomorrow, all working and striving to make a difference within their community.

But, being successful is not always easy. It takes knowledge, guts and most importantly, leadership skills. Some people naturally have it and others are scared of it.

"Leadership is everything," says Al Hadid. "We need young leaders cause we're in constant need to improve ourselves. If we're not good leaders then we can't achieve anything."

Al Hadid, 23, from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), runs the Intilaaqah Toastmasters Club. With thousands of clubs already around the world, Toastmasters is a concept that aims to help its members improve their communication and leadership skills through public speaking.

Al Hadid and his friends began the club in 2006 after noticing the struggle that young people faced in trying to communicate their thoughts and ideas – not just with people in high positions, but also with

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Youth delegates from 109 countries vote for members of the Drafting Committee. Photo by: Siena Anstis

## NGOs and UNESCO – their role in helping us out of the big EC (Economic Crisis)

by Enoch Ndri and Shuk-Wah Chung

The Joint Programmatic Commission on Youth (JPC) works with youth organizations that are officially tied with UNESCO. Their objectives are to reinforce the contribution of youth in UNESCO's activities by acting as a centre of expertise, and help to promote continuous dialogue between UNESCO and NGOs.

This is an extract of our conversation with Cecilia Grimaldi, a representative of the JPC on Youth.

**Q. The main topic of this year's forum is "Investing Out of the Crisis." What do you suggest for youths to cope in this economic downturn?**

A. First of all young people should not be discouraged if schools and institutions aren't able to support them ... I [believe] that all skills a young person can have, and that don't necessarily stem from schools, ... can be an asset to enter the labour market.

**Q. The online discussions of the delegates have shown that work experience has become an obstacle for graduates entering into the labour market, as employees tend to favour experience. What do you suggest for this?**

A. In the call for jobs, [employers often want] three years of [work] experience or more, and here is where UNESCO should stand up and say: this is a young person, he/she does not have years of experience, but from their training young people have acquired skills. This is something that is valuable, useful and deserves to be recognized.

*Leadership Skills - cont. from page 1*  
people from other countries.

"90% of all conflict lies in miscommunication," he says. "This can be erased if we learn to talk to each other."

For Al Hadid, a program like Toastmasters is very important for young Emiratis as more and more people feel the need to become global leaders, especially as the country grows economically and makes its mark internationally.

**More info about the Intilaaqah Toastmasters Club can be found at <http://qtm.ae/>**

*"Canadian youth delegates. Harbingers of change?" requires a correction. The following sentence was incorrectly attributed to Anne Lemieux and Xhing Chiu: "some of the UNESCO National Commissions fail to send youth who are actually representative of their countries."*

### Today's Activities

#### 9:30 - 11:00 – Parallel Sessions

Observers' Session, Room XVI, Miollis  
Social and Human Sciences, Room II  
Education, Room IV  
Sciences, Room VI  
Bureau of Strategic Planning, Room VII  
Culture, Room XI  
Communication and Information, Room XII

#### 11:15 - 12:30 - Parallel Sessions

2nd Round, same rooms.

#### 15:00 - 1800 – Plenary Session II

"Youth participation – UNESCO Youth Forum, a long approach, Room XI

#### 18:00 – 21:00 Visit to the Louvre Museum

The initiative presented by Mr. Franco during the plenary session on youth and crises, was selected as a 'best practice' in the framework of the project **Best practices in youth policies and programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean**. The initiative, which gathers, among others, 7 UN agencies, the IDB, OECD, OIJ, CYP and OAS, is coordinated by UNESCO's Section for Youth, Sport and Physical Education. For more information visit <http://youthpractices.ucol.mx>, or talk to Berenice Alcalde (b.alcalde@unesco.org).

*Sané - cont. from page 1*

suggestions that will allow the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to work with youth organizations through National Commissions.

UNESCO also encourages young people to get closer to National Commissions in their respective countries as it is at the national level that the response to the crisis is going to be elaborated. Young people are also encouraged to collaborate with their youth councils and organizations to get closer to the Ministries in charge of youth affairs and social development to demand participation in the elaboration of the response to the crisis.

Sané acknowledged that it is difficult for young people to get access to the UNESCO National Commissions in their countries, but he stressed that solutions can be found in order to facilitate the collaboration between the two groups. In this respect, young people can call on National Commissions through the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum.

More important, however, is the grassroots action by young people to approach the Commissions and say, "listen, we know that at the international level UNESCO is recommending that National Commissions work with youth organizations, but how will you implement it?"

**Please submit questions for tomorrow's interview with Mr. Barbosa, Deputy Director General of UNESCO, by speaking to the team of youth journalists.**

## Op-ed: Today's youth, citizens of the world



Youth delegates during the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum. Photo by: Siena Anstis

by Siena Anstis

Over the past four years I have had the great fortune of being able to live and travel in different places around the world. As I made it my job to spend time talking with youth from different countries - primarily Uganda, Kenya, Canada, Denmark and Kosovo - I quickly discovered that we have one common and highly relevant role: together, we are rendering borders less relevant in the traditional sense.

Youth of today bring a new perspective. Already a tangible reality in our lives, we are willing these borders into irrelevance.

As the UNESCO Constitution states: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses must be constructed." Youth around the world bring a mentality that promotes cooperation between previously sworn enemies.

For example, Behar Xharra, a young Kosovar, feels equally comfortable working with Serbian youths as with his own Albanian brethren and he helps ensure that a cross-border dialogue is maintained between peers, as a means of stabilizing the unsteady political climate that Kosovo was born into. Youth in the Obunga Slum in Kisumu, a town in Kenya's Western Province, call for the celebration of cultural and ethnic diversity in their country, as well as the end of ethnic stereotypes that have divided their country.

The desire of youth to continue building this global nation - through the use of direct dia-

logue and increasingly useful social networking tools like Facebook and Twitter - is a powerful movement that will not be broken by rigid governments or an economic crisis. Indeed, many young people, have decided to turn these obstacles into an opportunity to further solidify this global perspective despite great adversity. Through global alliances, "le capitalisme casino" is rendered inadequate and unsustainable. Youth are developing a method of sustaining humanity which relies on a global understanding. These strong international alliances will help ensure that people resort to violence less and less frequently.

The UNESCO Youth Forum is a great opportunity for this perspective to continue flourishing. In just one room, there are representatives of 109 countries. Such a meeting of minds, whether or not our leaders pay any attention to the recommendations of youth during the upcoming 35th UNESCO General Conference, will resonate across the world. The baggage of ethnic conflict is slowly eroding and being replaced by new values of a generation that celebrates diversity, which brings new alternatives to the globe's problems.

While I do not want to paint an overly idyllic picture, there is something brewing beneath the surface which offers youth a vision of a global world where differences are to be appreciated, not manipulated. In the long-run, for there is no "quick fix" to the world's current crisis, humanity might learn from its mistakes.