



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

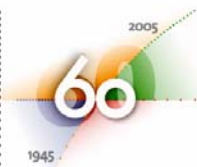
Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

# Acting with and for youth



Bureau of Public Information  
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## Acting with and for youth

Young people aged 15-24, the symbol of a society that is replenishing itself, account for nearly 20% of the world's population. UNESCO is supporting the energy and goals of this vibrant, heterogeneous force in order to help them in their development.

**U**NESCO's commitment to youth dates back to its founding. Early in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Organisation helped to set up international projects that enlisted young volunteers to rebuild Europe. Sixty years later, youth is a priority group integrated into all of UNESCO's programmes and activities.

### Action strategy

UNESCO's objective is to further young people's self-empowerment. The Organisation goes to great lengths to give them the means to act and help them improve their own qualities by reaching out to them and meeting their expectations.

To do that, UNESCO seeks and encourages support for youth within its own Secretariat, among Member States and among its various partners. United Nations inter-agency cooperation is a major vector in the advancement of youth.

The **Youth Section**, which was set up in 1998, is in charge of coordinating UNESCO's action with and for young people. It aims to encourage their integration into UNESCO programmes and facilitates the creation of partnerships, for which it has a huge network of youth groups and NGOs.

The Section also assists Member States in developing their youth policies and cooperates with all the units within the Organisation thanks to its youth focal points. In this connection, it has developed training programmes for

UNESCO staff on the integration of youth issues. Lastly, the Section is a source of information for and about young people.

### The UNESCO Youth Forum

This event, the main bridge for dialogue between young people and UNESCO, is above all a unique place where young people from around the world

can exchange their ideas, compare their points of view and share their experiences. It is an essential meeting that also brings together representatives of NGOs and international youth networks.



Since the first time it took place, in 1999, the Forum, the only one of its kind anywhere in the United Nations system, has continuously raised its profile in terms of the number of young delegates in attendance, the number of Member States represented and observers, and the recognition of its growing importance. In 2003, the Forum became "an integral part of each session of the General Conference". It provides young people with an opportunity to develop specific strategies and proposals that can be realistically implemented in the framework of its programmes and activities.

## The Youth Section's approach:

- Young people are a resource, not a problem.
- Young people are partners, not a target group.
- Young people have specific interests and needs, and skills they are willing to contribute.

## The Youth Section's role:

- **Participation:** to ensure young people's presence in UNESCO's organs (Secretariat, permanent delegations, national commissions).
- **Partnership:** setting up partnerships with youth associations, NGOs and networks and cooperating in the development of joint projects.
- **Policies:** providing Member States with assistance in integrating youth issues into all the policies and programmes.
- **Promotion and information:** acting as a youth information clearinghouse, producing and distributing publications.
- **Monitoring:** tracking and assessing projects targeting youth and encouraging research on the advancement of youth.

UNESCO's 4<sup>th</sup> Youth Forum hosted 237 participants in Paris from 31 September to 2 October 2005. The theme was "Youth and the Dialogue among Civilisations, Cultures and Peoples: Ideas for Action in Education, the Sciences, Culture and Communication". The Forum's report, containing serious recommendations, was presented to the 33<sup>rd</sup> General Conference of UNESCO, which, for the first time, integrated them into the Commissions' work.

## Examples of good practices

### • Education

The Youth Section has become involved with four Southwest Asian NGOs in a project called "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty of Young Women" in South Asia, which aims to promote young women's self-empowerment and help them become agents of social change (site on line soon).

### • Human and social sciences

In cooperation with the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation, the Section has developed a kit: "HIV/AIDS and human rights: mobilising youth".

### • Exact and natural sciences

The Section is committed to youth organisations of small developing island states and contributes to the project "Youth Visioning for Island Living", which deals with economic, social and environmental issues.

### • Culture

In partnership with the Oxfam International Youth Parliament, the Section has contribution to the production of *All Different, All Unique*, the "youth" version of the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Also, *The World Heritage, Today and*

*Tomorrow with Young People* was published to raise youth awareness of protecting the world heritage.

### • Communication and information

In order to offset the lack of consistency of information sources about youth, the Section helped to set up a global youth information and data exchange network, *Info Youth Network*.

### • National commissions

Several UNESCO national commissions have developed committed initiatives in the area of youth advancement. Some have a youth unit (Canada, Republic of Korea), or an individual in charge of developing projects for and by young people. Others include members of the national youth council or other bodies representing young people (Sweden).

### • Youth Commission

The Youth Commission brings together the youth organisations of the UNESCO-NGO Liaison Committee and strengthens their contributions to UNESCO activities.

## Contact :

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## To find out more

UNESCO Youth Section:  
[www.unesco.org/youth](http://www.unesco.org/youth)