

# UNESCO YOUTH FORUM 2015

Young Global Citizens for a Sustainable Planet



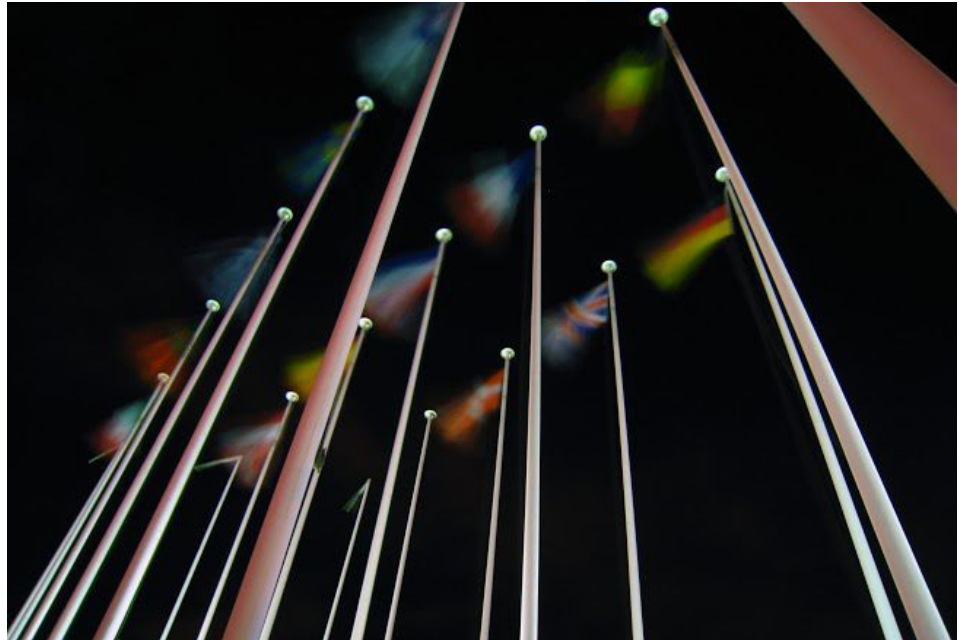
United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Youth Forum  
9th Edition  
26-28 October 2015

THE AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY 50  
*of* PARIS YEARS





## A SNAPSHOT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND A SUSTAINABLE AGENDA

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said, "Young people have ingenuity and creativity. They can change the world through the power of science, technology, and innovation." With every one in four people being between the ages of 10 and 24, the world now has its largest generation of youth in history. It has never been more crucial for young people to work together to solve the environmental and sustainability concerns facing our planet today.

### **The Issues at Stake**

For young people around the world, climate change means a lifetime of vulnerability to unpredictable and increasing climate risks, such as natural disasters. Investing in the health, education, and opportunities for young people is vital to ensuring a positive transition into a prosperous economic, social and sustainable development of our planet. Following the UN Sustainable Development Conference (RIO+20) in Rio de Janeiro, and in preparation for the upcoming November UN Climate Change Conference (COP 21) in Paris, the UNESCO Youth Forum's main goal is to formulate key recommendations and voluntary commitments for a post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

UNESCO's Director-General Irina Bokova stresses the importance of young people in bringing awareness to these central issues, "It is crucial that we take this opportunity to harness the energy of young people as we make the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to a Sustainable Development Agenda."

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>>> Go to <http://en.unesco.org/9th-unesco-youth-forum/program> to view the forum schedule

# SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

## Moctar Demele



A 25-year old from Burkina Faso, is one of the inventors of Faso soap, winner of the 2013 Global Social Venture Competition, and the Blum Center People's Choice Award. Faso is an innovative mosquito repellent, anti-malarial soap. It is manufactured locally from herbs and natural ingredients including shea butter and lemongrass oil. Since half of the world's population is at risk of malaria, this pioneering product has been, for many, truly life-changing.

## Cecilia Garcia



A young activist who has been working to promote and defend the rights of young people for nearly a decade. As the Director of Espolea School, a Mexican youth-led organization, Garcia has participated in different initiatives to promote young people's sexual and reproductive rights, foster young women's empowerment, and prevent gender-based violence through peer education. She also conducts research on the situation of young people in Mexico and Latin America to identify the challenges they face when exercising their rights. Garcia's interactive workshops on gender and gender perspective help identify positive or negative outcomes on policies geared towards young people.

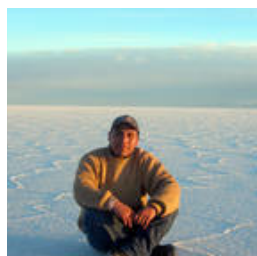
## Gautam Yadav



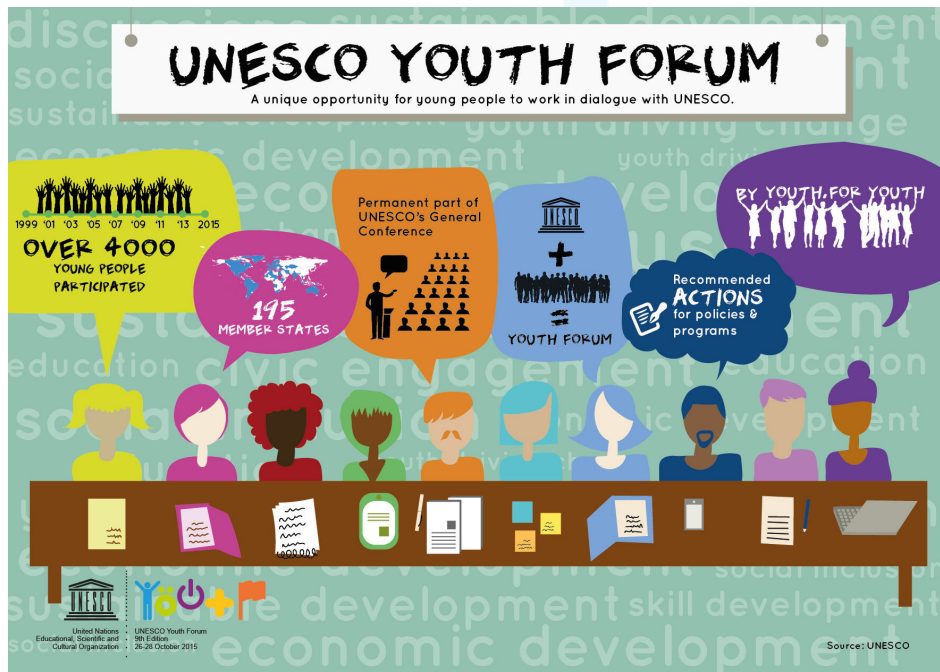
An HIV and human rights activist, Yadav works to protect the rights of the LGBT and PLHIV communities across the globe. Additionally, he serves as a voice on many international forums. Yadav is one of 14 HIV+ people in Mumbai, India, who photographed their lives in order to combat stigma and prejudice. In December 2012, he participated in a week-long photography workshop to tell his story.

# UNESCO/JUAN BOSCH PRIZE RECIPIENT

## Manuel Alejandro Olivera Andrade



Andrade, from Bolivia, was selected for the UNESCO/Juan Bosch Award based on his work focused on how a country can benefit from its own natural resources, such as lithium, as an alternative source of energy. The award, which was founded in 2009, is given by UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova and rewards young researchers who contribute to social science research, which in turn helps shape social policies.



*Continued from page 1....*

### **The Forum at a Glance**

From 26 to 28 October, more than 500 young people from around the world will descend upon UNESCO's Paris headquarters to participate in the 9th Youth Forum.

As a whole, the UNESCO Youth Forum creates a community focused on solving sustainable development issues. Leading up to the event, the organizers of the forum created community groups on popular social media networks. Currently, the Facebook page is full of encouraging messages by delegates from countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Japan, Lebanon, and Uganda, just to name a few. With this amount of excitement generating online already, the conference will be bursting with positive creative energy led by young eager minds,

passionate about solving global challenges and the difficulties of creating a sustainable world.

To capture the interest of this audience, the format of the forum was created with input from youths hailing from around the world. The collaboration was initiated through online surveys and discussion groups resulting in a format that will include debates, networking opportunities, and concerts.

The goal of the three-day gathering is to bridge the gap between UNESCO's initiatives regarding these key themes and youth populations living in the organization's participating Member States. Since the event's beginning, the Youth Forum has allowed emerging global citizens to express ideas, concerns, and suggestions pertaining to pressing social issues.

## What's Going on at the Forum

Ms. Irina Bokova, UNESCO's Director-General, will kick off the event with an opening address followed by inspirational youth speakers such as Moctar Dembele, Cecilia Garcia, Salim Salamah, Alla Toutounji, and Gautam Yadav. Each of these individuals will be sharing their stories, which range from gender-rights activism to refugee aid work. Beyond the speakers, interactive workshops will launch the forum into action by getting delegates to share ideas and formulate opinions to be presented later in the event.

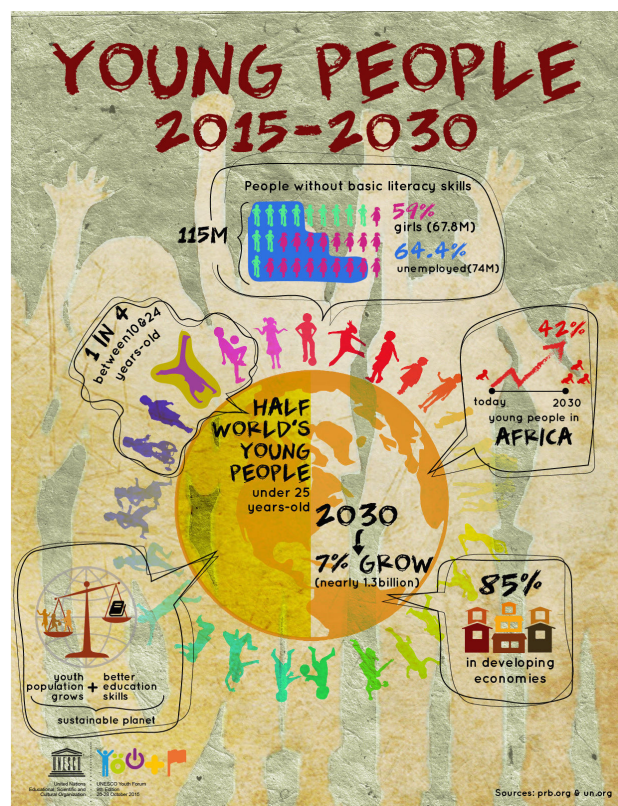
The second day is primarily focused around group activities intending to build upon the proposals drafted by individuals on the previous day. This is also when the forum's sponsor organizations will come into play, collaborating with the representatives to cement raw ideas into shape. The two major partners of the forum are MiSK from Saudi Arabia and Perfect World from China, both of whom will be involved in the refinement of the Youth Forum proposals. These two partner organizations will provide feedback and give their opinions on what they wish to see accomplished during the three-day event.

The event wraps up on the third day with a set of capacity-building workshops in the morning and individual organizations educating attendees on specific topics. During the closing session, the delegates will be providing a list of recommended actions and commitments to be given to the UNESCO Member States. These points will be referenced as the youth opinion within UN affairs in the future and will have an impact on further programs that the UN may wish to undertake in regions and countries around the world.

Yet the end of the forum isn't the end of the delegates'

responsibilities. In order to achieve its goals, UNESCO tasks the attendees to continue activism work in their home countries, employing the new sets of skills learned at the forum. Ideally, they will take further steps to improve their own immediate communities and spread their knowledge and skills acquired during the forum.

While the UNESCO Member States will have new initiatives proposed to them after the UNESCO Youth Forum, it is the attendees who will be expected to take the knowledge they've learned and apply it across the world to see the future they desire become a reality.



# ABOUT THE ISSUES:

## Climate Change

Our climate is undergoing dramatic changes because of increasing greenhouse gas emissions from human activity, according to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Higher temperatures, rising sea levels, increased ocean activity, and ice melt are all a result of climate change. The latest IPCC Synthesis Report stressed that the need for urgent action against climate change is intensifying.

As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at the launch of the Synthesis Report: "Science has spoken. There is no ambiguity in the message...leaders must act. Time is not on our side... decisive action will build a better and sustainable future, while inaction will be costly."

## Sustainable Development

A large focus of this year's conference will be dedicated to discussing the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. A short-term solution is not enough to mend our planet. The global crisis is severe therefore the solutions must be sustainable for our future. The Sustainable Development Goals for "The future we want" will be discussed over the course of the forum.

The goals include poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development. These issues are essential for change and UNESCO believes that the youth are at the center of sustainable development.

# PARTNERS

## MiSK Foundation

The MiSK foundation was established by Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi deputy crown prince, and minister of defense, to foster opportunities for Saudi youth in the domain of education. The foundation aims to foster creativity and talent to fully develop the potential of the country's future generations.



The foundation strives to advance the future of Saudi Arabian society through opportunities in arts and sciences as well as by establishing partnerships with global and local organizations.



## Perfect World

Perfect World is an online gaming company based in China, well-known in the field for its PerfectWorld license. It is part of the Perfect World industry, which was established by Michael Yufeng Chi in 2004. Perfect World not only produces online games, but also produces film, television and educational material.

Perfect World has been rewarded by the Chinese government and is considered as a solid cultural actor, which enables the promotion of culture around the world.



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