

Connecting those with plugs

by Renata Summa

The main plenary session on day 2 focused on youth participation, the cross-cutting theme of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum. It was moderated by Golda El-Khoury, Chief of UNESCO's Section for Youth, Sport and Physical Education.

Ensuring follow-up activities to the Forum was also a major concern of the plenary session. The chief of the National Commissions Section, Xiaolin Cheng talked of the work of the UNESCO National Commissions, stressing that to reinforce youth participation in their activities, the onus is on young people to work at the national level towards an increased integration of their concerns in the work of the Commissions. Anushka Wijesinha, who was a delegate at the 3rd UNESCO Asian Youth Forum, held for the third successive year, presented this regional Forum as an example of a way of keeping youth involved after the UNESCO Youth Forum.

One of the main concerns of the global gathering of youth attending the Forum were ICTs, which were presented as a good instrument to create banks of best practices and share successful experiences.

Social networks were also underlined as tools to bring about change and connect young people from all over the world.

Jennifer Coriero, from TakingITGlobal; Sinead Ward, from the Foroige Youth Work Organization; and Gwakisa Makaranga, from the youth desk of the Tanzania National Commission all explained the importance of social net-

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Debating with the sectors

The Parallel Sessions which took place yesterday discussed youth issues in terms of the priority themes identified by UNESCO's five Programme Sectors: Education, Culture, Social and Human Sciences, Communication and Information, and Science. The Bureau of Strategic Planning also held a session.

Delegates were given the opportunity to work in smaller groups, through roundtables supported by facilitators and sector experts. Delegates were also encouraged to ask questions and at the end of each session participants presented a series of recommendations.

Flip to pages 2 and 3 for more information on the sessions!

Let's communicate!

by Karim Abou Merhi

For Nino Muñoz Gomez, Director of UNESCO's Bureau of Public Information (BPI), the organization's image does not result from the work conducted by the BPI. Instead, "it is a result of what the organization was able to do and deliver, day by day and according to the values it stands for. After all, we're not looking for publicity, but achievements."

So, how to ensure that this image - which reflects the work behind UNESCO - is maintained? Adaptation is key for any organization looking to stay 'on the beat', and UNESCO is no different: "one of the challenges is to adapt to whatever the media outlet is, but for us it is always the story that comes first, and therefore we try to cooperate with the UNESCO sectors to know exactly what they are doing."

Though 'new media tools' are in place (such as audio-visual content), Mr. Gomez is careful not to be fully driven by the new trends "any relationship with the media is cumulative, and even when new things emerge, the old are not automatically thrown away."

Thus, the balance is guaranteed, but what about youth, the focal point of anything new? "It's important for us to reach them through the media

they are familiar with, which currently include all sorts of interactive websites such as YouTube. For example, we started an online forum prior to the World Conference on Higher Education that took place in July, and this type of resource is attractive to youth

Moreover, in recognition of the importance of 'opening up' to new forms of communicating, the annual meeting of Directors of Communication from UN agencies held a special session to discuss the importance of making all its institutions "more open, and a recommendation was approved by the [UN] Secretary General in this regard."

In turn, how can youth communicate with UNESCO? It goes without saying that a bi-annual forum is not enough, and Mr. Gomez urges the younger generation "to feel authorized to react to what we are doing. Let us hear what you think, communicate with us and react to what we are publishing, whatever your opinion", adding that young people should not hesitate to react, and promote the 'youth dimension'.

"You are a major component, and you have a strong say in what is going on now and for the future, and your active participation is a must," he concluded.



Youth delegates entertaining their peers during the Bateaux Mouches outing on Thursday, October 1st. By Daniel Coulomb-Herrasti.

Youths: keep your dreams alive! There is a light at the end of the tunnel!

by Enoh Ndri

Education and employment opportunities for youths have been seriously damaged by the global crisis, causing a lot of trouble to young people around the world. But the Team Leader at the UN Programme on Youth, Nicola Shepherd, has urged youths not to lose hope and follow their dreams as the world will find its way out of the crisis, and young people are going to be key actors in decision-making processes related to their lives.

The crisis has complicated all aspects of young people's lives, a fact which can be seen especially in education and employment. Education programs for youths are being cut and employment opportunities are much fewer than they were before the crisis. And young people are finding themselves in situations where they are unable to find a job. No region of the world es-

apes the harsh realities imposed by the global economic crisis, particularly in the developing world, where the number of youths falling below the poverty line is an even greater concern than the lack of job opportunities. However, young people must not lose heart; the effects of the severe crisis that has hit the world are subsiding, and youths will be actively involved in designing their future, not just helpless bystanders.

The issue of youth participation has gained relevance with the crisis (youth are now a priority); therefore, their voice should be heard. Nicola Shepherd strongly believes that it is important for youths to have a voice in negotiation and decision-making processes devoted to addressing the crisis; "youth have very interesting and creative ideas" she argues. "The most important thing that comes out of the crisis for the youth organizations right now is again the issue of

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"Youth delegates are also responsible for follow ups"

by Renata Summa

The Youth Forum is slowly coming to an end and the UNESCO headquarters will soon hold its 35th General Conference. So how can you be sure that all those ideas you are exchanging will be kept alive after the Forum is over?

"The delegate has a great deal of responsibility. People come here with a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of ideas. Don't go home and forget about all of it," says Michael Millward, Secretary of the General Conference.

Millward also calls for greater institutionalization of the follow-up to the Youth Forum. "The General Conference takes the Final Report of the Youth Forum very seriously. What we need now is greater institutionalization of the partnership between the Youth Delegates and UNESCO after the Forum," said Millward, who also believes that the very fact that the Youth Forum is being held for the 6th time shows that it is successful.

"The success of the Forum is not to be questioned. Just don't forget it is up to you also to make it progress," reminds Millward. "Work with people in your country."

Communication and Information

Youth Violence Prevention: create space of expression and get young people involved

by Enoch Ndri and Renata Summa

The communication session of the 6th Youth Forum has identified key elements to help young people build confidence, develop enhanced skill sets and nurture a sense of belonging, community and values in order to favor youth violence prevention.

The session acknowledged that lack of educational opportunities; unemployment and the absence of positive life perspectives represent significant causes of rising violence among youths.

One remedy envisaged by the session is to use education to help improve critical thinking skills and play a crucial role in combating violence. Education at this level must not be limited to pupils and students (formal education), but a combination of

both formal and informal educations by creating open spaces for youth to get engaged (e.g. keeping schools open on weekends and afternoons for cultural and extracurricular activities) and developing programmes contributing to the character formation of youth and a sense of belonging to a community.

This aspect represents an environment of sustained learning; of opportunities and perspectives to help overcome ignorance and hopelessness. The communication session also recommended the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to help build bridges and share knowledge, skills, and attitudes. ICTs can serve as a good catalyst enabling youth to advocate non violent behaviors and foster a culture of peace and tolerance.

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working, and how it can really make a difference to youth all over the world. They also provided inspiring examples of how young people are creating changes through social networking.

However, unequal or insufficient access to ICTs, and therefore, to social networking, which prevents the most vulnerable people and regions enjoying all the benefits it brings, remains a problem. As Sylvia Namukasa, a youth delegate from Uganda comments, "In Uganda, ICT only favors the urban youth who can access computers, unlike their rural

counterparts, many of whom have never had a chance to look at a computer." Uganda only has 2 million internet users out of a population of 32 million people. Saudi Arabia has 6 million users from a population of 28 million and Norway has almost 4 million internet users from a population of 4.6 million.

The situation is complex, and varies from country to country. Giving youth more opportunities to access new technologies, and to participate in social networking, however, still deserves all our efforts.

Sweden: give youth a greater voice

by Renata Summa

Sara Haraldsson, 20, and Daniel Frelen, 27, both Swedish delegates at the Youth Forum, believe that a disconnect between the Youth Forums, the National Commission and the General Conference persists.

Believing that governments must include youth in decision-making, they have taken the first step towards a more inclusive process: with their government's support, they are now

a formal part of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO.

"Our role here is really important," says Frelen, "but, the most important work is done at the National Commission. Unfortunately, [many] youth fly [to the Youth Forum] and don't even see their National Commissions who only arrive in Paris when [they] are gone." To solve this disconnect, the Swedish delegates are also advocating that the Youth Forum takes place at the same time

as the General Conference.

Furthermore, the two delegates want the right to represent their countries as 'youth experts' during the General Conference. "National Commissions have Science experts, Education experts, but they don't have youth experts. Who better to do this job than youth delegates?" they ask. "Everyone says youth are important, that we are the future. If we are so important, please give us more voice."

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO and sharing success

by Siena Anstis

Vast countries like Canada, the second largest country in the world, are faced with many challenges when trying to ensure that all Canadian youth are heard in international forums like the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum.

To remedy this problem, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO has implemented a new approach to youth participation this year, one which Marie-Christine Lecompte, Youth Officer with the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO, hopes other countries might be interested in learning from. In order to reach out to youth in Canada, the Youth Section of the Canadian National Com-

mission for UNESCO decided to elect provincial coordinators from the Commission's Youth Advisory Group (YAG), who currently represent youth nationally and internationally.

These provincial coordinators were given the major role of going into their communities and bringing in new youth voices who were not already on the YAG. The goal was to ensure that youth who might not have access to multinational organizations like UNESCO - for example, because of poverty or limited infrastructure - were given a chance to voice their opinions.

While Lecompte understands that the Canadian National Commission has more resources that many other Commissions she hopes that

Science

Participants call on UNESCO to promote clean technologies and the green economy

by Enoch Ndri

The impact of the global crisis is raising awareness of environmental issues. Therefore, the role of science in identifying the solutions has become crucial. The parallel session on science discussed and issued recommendations for work in this field.

There is no way to delay the matter, UNESCO must tackle environmental issues and safeguard the environment for today's generations and generations to come. In this line the Science session of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum recommended the promotion of a green economy and clean technologies, as well as the promotion of recycling resources and energy; for example, rather than being a source of disease and environmental prob-

lems, waste can be turned into thermal energy and serve to cover some of the needs of a population. In addition, the Science session placed a specific emphasis on renewable energy and strongly recommended that governments should get together in the management of forests in Africa, which are cut down for fuel. The session also urged UNESCO to encourage the establishment of a link between vision, perspectives and actual facts through activities with tangible impacts in the field. And finally, to help protect the environment in the long term, and make protection more effective, environmental issues should not be limited to early education and to the home, but should also be part of curricula throughout school and university educations, nor should they be limited to science education.

Kitso Masi, 24, Botswana, African representative on the Drafting Committee.

"I represent an average young African. My opinions will be reflected on what is happening on my continent from a practical point of view. I think I can give voice to vulnerable young people and I will consider the African reality as a whole while writing the final report."

Keep your dreams alive! - cont. from page 1

participation and the need for them to take part in decision-making processes" she added.

In this respect youths are considered a priority at the UN, which highlights the need to make their voices heard clearly and loudly on issues that affect their present lives, or their future; and equally the importance of getting people to recognize the importance of involving youths in the life of their communities. This approach seems to be increasingly acknowledged as a "best practice". Shepherd indicated that every year there is greater recognition by governments that youths are an important component of their populations.

Lastly, the UN Programme on Youth's team leader reminded the young people who are particularly affected by the crisis to understand that life can be very difficult, but they should not turn to violence and crime as a way of coping with their circumstances. Rather, they should look for inter-generational support, notably from their families - through parents, uncles, aunts, and grandparents, among others. By relying on these networks, and keeping their hope and belief alive, they can find a path towards education, employment, and a positive future.

Please check out the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum's blog at <http://unescoyouthforum.wordpress.com/>. Contributions are welcome!

If you or your National Commission is interested in learning more about this, please contact Marie-Christine Lecompte at marie-christine.lecompte@unesco.ca.

Culture

The role of culture in promoting youth-centered sustainable development

by Shuk-Wah Chung

Dynamic, passionate and energizing would define yesterday's parallel session on culture.

For most of the delegates, their main concern was about the preservation of traditional culture. As a delegate from the Asia-Pacific region remarked, while clothing and traditional costumes are one aspect that defines national culture, it is also slowly dying due to the expense and impracticality of wearing traditional garb everyday.

The UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Presentation demonstrated that youth are very active in the fight for cultural preservation. As one of its most famous projects, the presentation demonstrated how young volunteers were raising awareness, organising activities and establishing links with other youth organizations to engage and educate young people of the importance of their famous sites. Slides from countries like Indonesia, France and Italy

showed volunteers cleaning, rebuilding and publicly supporting their heritage sites.

Following this, there was a discussion on the U-40 World Forum which encouraged civil society to discuss issues of cultural diversity.

The session then moved on to ideas of actions and programs to propose to UNESCO. Being a unique opportunity to express ideas, delegates came up with suggestions such as establishing better media coverage of UNESCO projects; creating a "UNESCO club" in each country that focused on cultural preservation; and to make campaigns more "sexy" and appealing to youth through tools like social media.

Some delegates left feeling that implementation would follow. However, others felt the discussion was not "global" enough. As Soukdaly Sisaykeo, 24, from Laos said, "More attention needs to be given to Asian countries and developing cities."

Observers' Session

Rest assured; your recommendations will be taken into account

by Enoch Ndri

The observers are the new watchdog for the recommendations of young people, and will follow their implementation in the field. The parallel session of the observers has decided to support the youths in their fight to come out of the complications added to their lives and livelihoods by the global economic crisis. The problems brought about by the crisis must be solved with young people as part of the solutions and actors in decision-making processes. Observers committed themselves to supporting youth activities locally. The participating NGOs will serve as a vehicle to help disseminate the recommendations of the 6th

UNESCO Youth Forum; and it is a new mechanism set up to ensure that the voice of the young people is heard in the long term. In addition, the observers will lobby and campaign in the favor of the recommendations young people are making today. They strongly recommend that youth consultation must not stop at the level of the Youth Forum but should continue long after in order to integrate their views into issues which affect their lives. Finally, the observers recommended a long term evaluation - a continuous evaluation that will help the implementation, development and evolution of the recommendations, which in turn will make the Forum a continuous process, not just a three day meeting.

Bureau of Strategic Planning

Avoiding violence and youth radicalization

by Renata Summa

The Bureau of Strategic Planning held yesterday a parallel session on Youth @ the Crossroads: A future without violent radicalization'. The session acknowledges that keeping young people busy is not enough. 'Thinking that young people will use their free time to violent activities is a prejudice towards youth', stress Denis Mizne, of the Brazilian NGO Sou da Paz (I belong to Peace). According to the expert, what really matters is the skills developed during the activities offered to the kids and young adults. He gave the example of sport classes: instead of only working on sport

skills, you can teach youth how to respect laws and their peers.

After the presentation, youth delegates recognized citizenship and full voting rights as effective ways to integrate people to the society and to avoid violence. Most of them agreed that UNESCO should not only promote intercultural dialogue but also focus on interreligious dialogue in order to prevent youth radicalization. In order to fight against marginalization and radicalization, all delegates agreed that UNESCO should strengthen its efforts to reach all youth, especially those who are not represented by the Youth Forum.

Education

Education among today's youth

by Karim Abou Merhi

It all comes down to education, whether one talks of the African kids dropping out of school to work and help their families, or of the recent graduates in developed countries who complete their education to find themselves without evident job prospects.

In a parallel session entitled "How to make education more relevant in today's world?" youth delegates and UNESCO experts shared their thoughts regarding three 'major' questions, the first being "what concrete actions can be done for children who must work to help their families instead of going to school?", on which the Ethiopian delegate stressed the importance of "making sure grants are reaching the children... if there's no food kids will not go to school," while Mohamad from Qatar added that "where I come from, helping the family is sometimes more important than education."

The second question revolved around the fact that college students are not finding employment opportunities after graduation "and how to ensure

that educational skills are relevant for labor markets needs". Anushka from Sri Lanka suggested that UNESCO encourages stronger dialogue between curriculum planners and job providers, while Sylvia from Uganda urged graduates to "create their own jobs, and look for people with whom they share a talent." Petra from Slovakia called for tighter cooperation between companies and schools, while Nattaphol from Thailand brought up the fact that "the field of engineering is crowded, yet still most students want to study particular fields," asking UNESCO to work more with the governments so as to make sure people understand "that there are other jobs."

The third question was "what can be done to attract teachers and encourage them to work in rural areas?". While Juan Carlos from Puerto Rico pointed out that "teachers prefer to stay in the city since they are offered more money," others highlighted the role played by gender in rendering rural areas unattractive for potential teachers. It was also said that governments were not providing the "basic needs of teachers."

Social and Human Sciences

UNESCO SHS Global Strategy on Youth

by Shuk-Wah Chung

The Social and Human Sciences (SHS)'s youth-related work is coordinated by UNESCO's Section for Youth, Sport and Physical Education. The parallel session was devoted to a discussion of the Sector's global strategies and implementation methods.

These included strong goals and project ideas such as policy-development; youth participation mechanisms; and conducting and collecting youth data in order to distribute to youth organizations and academia

The strategies will be finalized through a series of regional consultations with young people and other key partners.

Another important part of the session focused on the African Youth Charter, the draft 10 year Action Plan of the AU Commission on Youth Development and the draft

UNESCO Strategy on African Youth. As a region that is a main priority for UNESCO, this document spells out what is crucial in the field of youth participation: national youth policies and administration, real help for capacity-building, health issues, basic rights for young people, and the right to participate in policy-making processes.

Though it was unfortunate the session did not cover other regions, it was the practical information relating to final implementation and articulation to SHS's strategy for youth that offered the transparency the delegates wanted. For Stella Nakawuki Lukwago, 24, from Uganda, this was the most helpful part from the session.

"More action is needed so the ideas aren't just a document. Implementation will make this realistic," she said.

Today's activities

- 9:00 – Youth to discuss Final Report in Regional Groups
- 9:30 – Reflecting on yesterday's parallel sessions
- 10:30 - 12:30 – Adoption of Final Report
- 15:30 – Questions and Answers with Mr. Marcio Barbosa
- 17:00 – 17:30 – Closing Session

Please check out the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum's blog at <http://unescoyouthforum.wordpress.com/>. Contributions are welcome!

Meet the Youth Journalists!

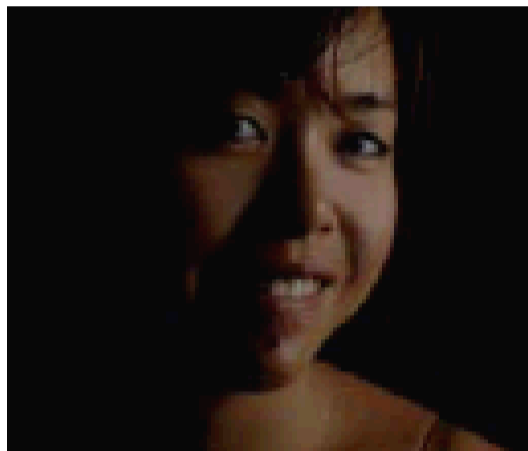
Siena ANSTIS



Siena, a 21-year old Swedish-Canadian, is currently working in Nairobi as the Regional Communications Officer for the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) East Africa under the AFK (Canada) International Development Management Fellowship program. A freelance journalist and photographer, she received the Canadian International Development Agency's Journalism & Development Grant 2009. Inspired by work in Uganda in HIV/AIDS and information and communication for development (ICT4D) for women farmers, she primarily writes about human rights, community development and ICT4D in East Africa. She is also a team member

of Project Diaspora (PD), an organization which motivates the Africa Diaspora to invest 'back home.' Through PD, she assists with the Women of Kireka initiative to help Ugandan internally displaced refugees pursue income-generating activities. In 2008, she studied at the Danish School of Journalism in Denmark. During this time, she also wrote about ethnic reconciliation in Kosovo. She is a weekly blogger for THIS Magazine and a correspondent for Neighborhood Watch, an Australian radio show. Siena graduated with a B.A. in Journalism and Anthropology from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada in 2009.

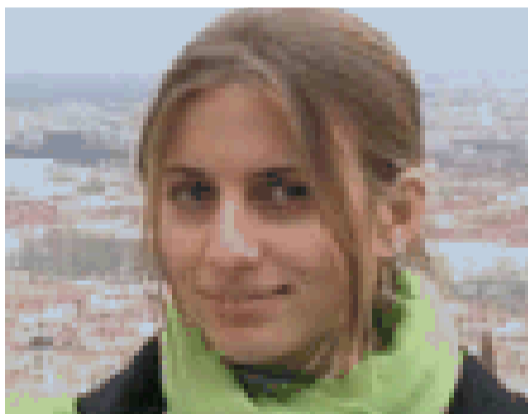
Shuk-Wah CHUNG



Shuk-Wah is an Australian freelance radio/print journalist currently living in Beijing, China. Her stories have been broadcast/published in The Age newspaper, Australia; Asia Calling radio, Indonesia; Free Speech Radio News, USA; and other local and international publications/stations. Since moving to China she has covered events like the 2009 riots in Urumqi, Xinjiang; internet censorship; and stories reflecting present

and future trends in the world's largest growing economy. Her media career has been diverse, having worked as a technical operator/producer for the Australian community radio network; an audio/radio trainer for migrant communities in Australia; and project manager for a youth radio broadcast. She believes in media for its ability to give people a voice and for the wonderful, strange and exciting opportunities it brings.

Renata SUMMA



Renata was born in São Paulo, Brazil, where she spent most of her life. She studied journalism at the University of São Paulo, where she wrote for the campus newspaper and worked for the university channel. After working for an NGO which fights contemporary slavery, and writing a guide book, she worked for the international desk of the Folha de São Paulo newspaper. Your browser may

not support display of this image. She recently completed a Master's in International Relations from Sciences-Po, in Paris. She has also lived in the U.S. and in Italy, and speaks Portuguese, French, English, Italian and Spanish. Among her passions she lists food (eating, cooking, buying and growing it), travelling, literature, international relations and photography.

Karim ABOU MERHI



Karim is currently a reporter for An-Nahar newspaper, which is the largest and oldest in Lebanon. His department mainly deals with two sections: youth education (principally con-

cerned with youth organizations, schools and universities, and generally all things related to student life), and "civic activities" (especially issues related to NGOs and their work). Also covered are cultural events. He started his work at the newspaper almost two years ago. After starting as an intern, Karim became a member of the Newspaper's staff. Since 2007, he is also part of the editorial board of Nahar

Ash-Shabab (which can be translated into "Nahar of the youth"), the weekly supplement published by the newspaper every Thursday, which deals with issues that might interest youth, ranging from sports to politics to culture. He was appointed Executive Editor of the supplement in 2008. He majored in economics and minored in political science at the American University in Beirut.

Enoh NDRI



N'guessan is a youth journalist working for West Africa Democracy Radio. As a Human rights activist and leader, he was part of the twelve Ivorian youth del-

egates that joined the Senegalese and Beninese young journalists who campaigned for human rights through the media across West Africa, through the Canada World Youth Program: Journalists for Human Rights, from August 2006 to February 2007. He has written articles for the Quebec based JHR (Journalists for Human Rights) and conducted research on the relationship between the religious leaders "Marabouts" and the exploited "Talibee" children in Dakar. He has also

represented the Ivorian youth human rights leaders at the Intergenerational Human Rights Forum at the University of Connecticut, USA in 2008. He has a BA in English Language Studies and is currently completing a Master of Arts in Communications for Development and Behaviors Change at the University of Cocody-Abidjan. Enoh has joined a number of Ivorian journalist organizations, notably the Association of Ivorian Journalists for Human Rights.