The Youth Community of Practice (YCoP) global listserv links professionals and practitioners at USAID and its partner organizations to effective youth development ideas, information and best practices to help:

*Design more effective, sustainable youth programs, and
*Better integrate youth participation in USAID development projects

In this *Links* Violence and Conflict Series Part Two: Youth Promoting Peace and Nonviolence

A vast number of youth across the globe are forced to grow up in violent environments where conflict is the norm and peace is just a dream. Still, many youth, like the Colombian youth of Red Juvenil de Medellin, find the courage to promote nonviolence within their violent societies. Others have the opportunity to develop peace and democracy skills through programs such as those organized by Peace Child Israel or Youth Communication Center. The programs and resources in this *YCoP Links* highlight unique initiatives for and by youth who live in conflict or post-conflict areas.

**Announcements:**

**World Leadership Conference**
http://www.worldleadershipconference.org/index.html
The inaugural World Leadership Conference is a landmark five-day international conference gathering youth from all over the world to engage in meaningful discussions on the ethos of leadership and the central tenets of how the world works through predominant current affairs. The theme of this year’s conference is “Environment and Economics.” The biennial international conference will be held from June 15-19 in Singapore.

**Inaugural Event: Panel Discussion on What Influences Youth Programming**
IREX and the International Youth Foundation (IYF) are pleased to invite *YCoP Links* readers to the inaugural event for the Society for International Development's (SID) Youth in Development Work Group. A panel discussion addressing pressing questions in youth programming will include key stakeholders from across the youth programming community, including youth, practitioners and government representatives. The brown bag lunch will focus on the issues of leadership, culture and tradition, institutions, and political and economic environment and their influence on youth programming. The lunch will be held on Thurs., June 11, from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m., at IREX. Please RSVP by June 4, and direct any questions to Sulaiman Bah at sbah@irex.org.

**Projects and Initiatives:**

**Peace Child Israel**
http://www.mideastweb.org/peacechild/
Founded in 1988, Peace Child Israel uses theatre and the arts to teach “democratic values, tolerance and mutual respect.” The organization unites Arab and Jewish youth in weekly dialogues for eight months. At the completion of the eight-month program, the youth work together to write a play based on their experiences during the program. The youth perform the play in front of family and friends, and in the second year of the program, they form
“Leadership Troupes” and perform the play in front of school audiences once a month. One of Peace Child Israel’s plays, *Six Actors in Search of a Plot*, has been performed in front of American audiences.

**Youth Communication Center**
The Youth Communication Center (YCC) was founded in 1997, in a town in the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina, by a group of youth whose first goal was to create a youth radio station to be used as a forum for young people to discuss youth issues within a post-conflict environment. YCC achieved that goal in 1997, when the organization launched what would become the most listened-to radio station in the area, Radio Balkan. YCC expanded its media projects to include publishing a monthly, youth-produced magazine, *Banja Luka Youth Bridge*. The radio and magazine, in addition to YCC’s other programs, intend to promote communication between youth of different nationalities and ethnicities in a “safe and neutral place.” YCC’s other peace-building programs include psychosocial support programs for war-affected children and youth, youth volunteering and community service projects, and democracy development projects (e.g., advocacy, NGO capacity building).

**Red Juvenil de Medellín (Medellín Youth Network)**
http://www.forusa.org/programs/colombia/Buildingfrominsideout2.html  (English description)
http://www2.redjuvenil.org/component/option,com_mamboezine/Itemid,30/  (Red Juvenil website, in Spanish)
The Red Juvenil de Medellín began in 1990, when a group of youth who had been negatively affected by Colombia’s armed conflict decided to band together to create a network of nonviolent youth. Leonardo Jiménez, a member of Red Juvenil, states: “The exhaustion [from violence] has generated in us an identity. The war has generated in us an identity. Our common stories have generated in us an identity. There is talk in Colombia about an armed revolution. But for us, revolutions are not made with weapons. ‘Revolution,’ what is it? To renovate, to create, to invent” (see English description for entire testimony). Red Juvenil’s revolution involves using theatre and music to promote nonviolence throughout their communities. The organization also conducts trainings in nonviolence in schools and violent neighborhoods.

**Somali Youth for Peace and Development (SYPD)**
http://www.sypd.org/
Founded in 2004, Somali Youth for Peace and Development (SYPD) focuses on providing emergency relief and development assistance to vulnerable populations, particularly children and youth. In war-torn Somalia, chronic unemployment has pushed youth into joining militias. SYPD offers youth an alternate path by providing job training in areas such as computer usage and repair and photography. To promote peace and democracy, SYPD has also created a Youth Movement for Democracy Club in Mogadishu, conducted democracy workshops with youth involved in militias, and held a number of democracy and governance trainings and discussion forums with youth and youth workers.

**Yéle Haiti**
http://www.yele.org/index.html
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/02/AR2007030201927.html  (*Washington Post* article)
Wycleaf Jean’s foundation Yéle Haiti funds projects related to Haiti’s education, health, environment and community development. Youth figure prominently in a number of Yéle’s programs, as the organization believes that “given a genuine opportunity to shape the future, Haiti’s youth will shock the world with their ability to take the country to the next level.” One of Yéle’s current projects works with imprisoned young men and boys who were recruited by Haiti’s armed gangs to be child soldiers (see *Post* article), in addition to other adolescents and
children who come from conflict-affected areas. The rehabilitation project offers the imprisoned youth opportunities for education and skills training, and it places other conflict-affected youth into a group home focusing on behavior modification. Both initiatives help youth learn how to transition successfully back into society. Yéle’s other youth-focused programs include sports programs, computer training, an outdoor education program focused on the environment, an HIV/AIDS education initiative that uses hip hop as the medium, and more.

Resources for Practitioners:

A Force More Powerful
http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org/game/
Contrary to most popular video games, A Force More Powerful focuses on teaching players how to resolve conflicts without violence. The game uses 10 nonviolent scenarios inspired by historical nonviolent movements. The player adopts the role of the chief nonviolent strategist who takes on dictators, occupiers, colonizers, and corrupt regimes. The game helps players learn about strategic planning as they “[take] charge of the movement’s materials and human resources, [recruit] new members and [build] alliances” in their efforts to resist violent conflict, yet secure human rights. A Force More Powerful was designed by The International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC), media firm York Zimmerman Inc., and game designers at BreakAway Ltd. While the game was created for an adult audience, it is appropriate for ages 14 and up.

Network for Youth in Transition
http://cpbinternational.ning.com/
The Center for Peace Building International has created a networking site “to strengthen the dialogue and increase awareness about the role youth play in development and peace in their communities.” The site includes discussion forums, blogs, videos, event postings, links to resources related to children’s rights, and peace and conflict news from around the world. For example, one video link shows a short, youth-made film depicting the experiences of disabled Liberian youth.

Looking for YOUR input: We would like to hear from you! YCoP welcomes ideas, resources, and best practices on effective youth programs and youth participation. We would also like to encourage nominations of other youth practitioners or youth leaders to participate in the YCoP Links listserve. Hit “reply” to send information and feedback to YCoP Links.

To unsubscribe from the list, users should send an e-mail to listserv@info.usaid.gov with only “unsubscribe youthcop” in the body of the e-mail. (No signatures please).

Mission of YCoP: The Youth Community of Practice provides a forum for professionals and practitioners at USAID and its partner organizations to gather, consolidate, archive, disseminate and exchange information, knowledge, ideas and best practices, particularly related to the incorporation of youth participation in USAID development projects. The Youth Community of Practice is an informal body of volunteer members, reached through a global list serve and Washington-based chapter. Both the list serve and DC chapter forums include USAID staff, youth practitioners outside of the Agency, and youth themselves. It is jointly sponsored by the office of education in the bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT) at USAID and the Education Quality Improvement Program3 (EQUIP3), and implemented by the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC).

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in the materials provided through YCoP Links or posted by listserv participants is not official U.S. Government information and does not necessarily represent the views or positions of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Government or EQUIP3. For a copy of the guidelines and/or charter, put the request in the subject line of the email and send to: youthcop@lists.info.usaid.gov. Participants should be aware that the list is public and not private communication. When participants voluntarily disclose personal information on a list serve, that information can be collected and used by others and may result in unsolicited messages from other people.