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 One: Violence and Violence Prevention
Concerns with self-confidence and identity, pressure to find meaningful work opportunities, and uncertainty about the future: these issues face many youth in developing countries. Violence, in the form of gangs or drugs, provides an outlet for dealing with the stresses that accompany this transitional period. This *YCoP Links* offers resources that explore why youth might turn to violent solutions, in addition to highlighting a few organizations and initiatives that help youth find alternatives to violence.

**Announcements:**

*YCoP Links* Series Call for Suggestions of Programs, Projects, and Resources!
The May series of *YCoP Links* will focus on Violence and Conflict. Part Two will focus on programs related to peace and conflict. We are seeking suggestions of innovative new projects or excellent resources that would fall into this category. Links should be fairly up-to-date (i.e., the program, project, or organization should still be active, and the resource should either be one that is regularly updated or, if a publication, should not be older than two years). Please send any suggestions to skratzig@edc.org.

*Ignite Change Now!* Global Youth Assembly 2009
The Global Youth Assembly is a social forum for 1000 Canadian and international youth (16-28 years old). The goal is to provide the youth delegates with a vibrant social forum where they can gain new knowledge and perspectives, make new friends, create new goals and projects, and develop the confidence and support they need to take action and ignite positive social change in their communities. The *Ignite Change Now!* Program objectives include: promoting diversity and inclusion, encouraging youth expression through various media, educating youth by building awareness and developing knowledge, empowering youth through skills training and creative workshops, supporting dialogue and youth action, and collaborating with other youth groups and movements to promote and support their work. The Assembly will be held in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, from July 30th to August 2nd, 2009.

*Projects and Initiatives:*

Youth Challenge Alliance Program and Challenge 10—Peace for the EX
Headed by Creative Associates International, the Youth Challenge Alliance Program builds off the previous success of the unique Challenge 10—Peace for the EX program. Challenge 10—Peace for the EX was a reality show that followed a group of former gang members as they learned how to create sustainable businesses through participation in an entrepreneurship program. Following the reality show, Creative Associates continued to help gang members leave the streets by teaching them entrepreneurship through other Challenge programs. Now, with the Youth Challenge Alliance Program, the organization continues its workforce development programs, in addition to establishing outreach centers for vulnerable youth and coordinating with the Government of Guatemala “to develop and implement a youth focused crime-prevention strategy.”

**Youth Crime Watch**
http://www.ycwa.org/world/index.html

Created in the United States in 1979, Youth Crime Watch (YCW) has spawned numerous international branches in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. YCW’s international branches, like the YCW America, “challenge youth to reduce drugs, violence, and crime” through civic participation, community partnership, and crime prevention activities. In Nigeria, for example, in addition to launching a youth nonviolence magazine in December 2008, YCW has school and community chapters throughout the country. Jamaica’s YCW of Flanker created a Peace Wall Mural to symbolize the Flanker community’s commitment to peace. YCW Nepal recently held a press conference to draw attention to problems of drug abuse and crime. Information on what other YCW country programs are doing is available by following links from the YCW website (above).

**Gun Free South Africa**
http://yoffiegfsa.org/index.html (Gun Free South Africa Youth Activism Report)

Founded in 1994, Gun Free South Africa (GFSA) aims to reduce the number of firearms in South Africa. GFSA runs a variety of programs, including a number of initiatives that directly target youth populations. For example, Words over Weapons uses e-learning materials to teach nonviolence in schools. After a tremendous amount of advocacy by GFSA advocates, including youth, South Africa passed the Firearms Control Act. Youth activists have had an important role in GFSA’s advocacy and youth programs. Adam Yoffie’s oral history project “Ten Years Later: An Examination of the Current State of Youth Activism” (see link above) chronicles six partial life stories of GFSA youth activists. In the interviews, the participants discuss their work with GFSA and offer suggestions for working with youth.

**Resources for Practitioners:**

“**Youth Violence and Alcohol**”

The World Health Organization’s report “Youth Violence and Alcohol” draws a correlation between youth alcohol consumption and violence, including bullying, gang violence, sexual aggression, and assault. The report uses data from a range of surveys to explore the magnitude of alcohol-related youth violence. It also outlines risk factors for youth violence ranging from individual factors (e.g., low intelligence, attention disorders) to community and societal factors (e.g., presence of gangs, income inequality). Finally, the publication discusses prevention measures, including policy recommendations, and offers a couple of case studies of successful programs in Colombia and Australia.
“Gang Violence in Central America”
This brief article, published in April 2009, gives a comprehensive overview of the youth gang problems faced in the Central American countries of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala. The authors offer the latest statistics on gang violence in the area and possible causes for street gang formation. The article also compares resulting government policies and approaches in the region.

Mapa de la Violencia: Los Jóvenes de América Latina
Published in 2008, the Mapa de la Violencia: Los Jóvenes de América Latina (Violence Map: Latin American Youth) offers a comprehensive analysis of the characteristics of youth violence in Latin America. Comparing regional and international statistics, this report looks at four main causes of violent death amongst Latin American youth: transportation accidents (as an indication of everyday violence on public streets), homicides, suicides (indicating self-violence), and deaths by firearms. It concludes with an integrative analysis that intends to deepen the understanding of the issue and assist in the creation of more effective policies. The report is published in Spanish.

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 listserv. 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 listserv and Washington-based chapter. Both the listserv 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.