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: Health Series Part Two: Mind and Body
Part Two in YCoP Links’ Health Series focuses on young people’s minds and bodies. In the developing world, health conditions often place a heavier burden on youth, as they struggle to develop in the face of preventable and curable diseases, like malaria and tuberculosis (TB). Mental health issues also cause problems and can often drive youth to pick up unhealthy habits, such as smoking and drug abuse. The organizations below highlight health initiatives led for and by youth, including awareness-raising campaigns for malaria, TB, and smoking, and education and outreach programs for mental and physical health.

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 One will be specifically devoted to violence prevention programs (e.g., gang prevention). 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 these categories. 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.

Projects and Initiatives:

Youth 4 Health Campaign
http://y4h.hriday-shan.org/
The Youth 4 Health Campaign (Y4H) began following the First Global Youth Meet on Health in 2006, which drew together youth leaders from over 35 countries. Y4H “aims to connect youth across the world to form a global alliance of young health advocates and facilitate concerted actions for promoting health friendly policies.” The campaign focuses on issues such as tobacco, diet and exercise, and HIV. Y4H activities include appealing to the UN Secretary General to focus on health promotion issues (particularly tobacco control), advocating for global smoke-free public places, encouraging peer to peer HIV education activities, and promoting healthy eating and physical activity policies.

Volunteer Partnerships for West Africa and the Kick Malaria Out Campaign 2009
http://www.vpwa.org/kick-malaria-out-2009-campaign
Volunteer Partnerships for West Africa (VPWA) is a Ghanaian youth-led NGO that works in a variety of areas, including community development, sanitation, entrepreneurship, vocational training, health education, and foreign exchange. This year, VPWA is implementing a month-long malaria awareness campaign – Kick Malaria Out 2009 – in six West African coastal
nations, from Liberia to Nigeria. The campaign is designed to educate communities across West Africa about the effects of malaria on West African populations, in addition to prevention and eradication methods. As part of the outreach, volunteers will conduct clean-up training exercises to “show communities how to prevent and clear water stagnation which is the breeding source of mosquitoes.” The campaign will run from August 20–September 20, 2009.

Sunshine in Your Heart Project
http://www.nphe.org/english.html
In China, suicide is the leading cause of death for young people aged 15 to 34 (see BBC article). The Sunshine in Your Heart Project, implemented by the Red Cross Society of China, attempts to reduce these deaths by educating youth and those who work with youth (e.g., parents, teachers) about psychological health issues. Through their Life Education—Basis of Successful Life curriculum, the Sunshine in Your Heart Project intends to help youth develop a healthy self-image, positive interpersonal skills, and the ability to solve conflicts with the goal of preventing youth suicide, depression, anxiety, drug use, and other health problems. The organization runs teacher training programs that instruct teachers on the use of a youth life skills curriculum, and it has a parent program that helps parents learn how to develop positive relationships with their children.

“I am stopping TB” Million Youth March
http://www.millionmarch4tb.org/home.aspx (March site)
http://www.emro.who.int/stb/ (World Health Organization, Eastern Mediterranean Region)
The Eastern Mediterranean Partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) organized the Million Youth March to stop tuberculosis (TB) on World TB Day in March. According to the WHO, approximately 800,000 people in the Eastern Mediterranean region suffer from TB. The objective of the Million Youth March was to draw attention to this disease, which, though preventable and curable, still leads to over 100,000 TB deaths per year in the region. Youth in more than 15 countries, including the conflict-ridden countries of Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan, participated in the event, marching together and holding educational events and rallies to raise awareness of, and advocate for, TB prevention (see March site for photos and media coverage).

Ugandan Youth Development Link
http://www.uydel.or.ug/
The Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) has a number of adolescent health projects, including those that target vulnerable populations, such as street children. Through their Alcohol, Drug and Substance Abuse Demand Reduction project, UYDEL uses 110 peer educators to reach out to in-school and out-of-school children in Kampala and Wakiso districts; as a result, many schools in the districts have created Drug-Free Clubs, and more youth are seeking help at health centers. The organization also collaborates with 14 other NGOs and the Health Department to conduct an outreach program that helps street children access youth-friendly health services. Other UYDEL projects include HIV/AIDS awareness and testing projects, educational film screenings, youth-friendly drop-in centers for sexual health services, and vocational training for youth.

Resources for Practitioners:

“Mental Health of Young People: A Global Public Health Challenge”
Published in The Lancet in 2007 this article gives an overview of the mental health disorders that affect young people aged 12 to 24, as well as key challenges to addressing mental health needs (e.g., shortage of mental-health professionals, stigma). The authors propose a “population-based, youth focused model, explicitly integrating mental health with other youth...
health and welfare expertise.” Further, they discuss the additional issues faced by youth in developing countries, acknowledging that there are differences between wealthy and poor countries in the priorities for young people; the article states, for example, that “while 78% of countries in the high-income category have a child and adolescent mental-health policy, not one low-income country does.” The article includes case studies of mental health programs in South Africa and Jamaica.

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.