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: Youth and Peace Activism: Even in today’s interconnected, increasingly globalized world, the sad features of prejudice, intolerance, and violence persist. Youth are often victims of these unfortunate realities, but youth can and are playing an important role in peace activism from the Caucuses to the Middle East to South and Southeast Asia. By giving youth in conflict zones the tools to organize and act for peace, youth programs can empower youth to play an active part in making their world a more peaceful place to live.

Announcements:

5th World Youth Congress – Istanbul, Turkey, July 31 – August 13, 2010
The fifth semi-annual World Youth Congress will be held this summer in Istanbul, Turkey, and will bring together one thousand youth from all over the globe. Each of the five sessions of the World Youth Congress have had different themes, and this year’s focus will be on the Turkish concept of “imece,” translated roughly as social solidarity and sensibility. Specifically, the components of imece are democracy, togetherness, solidarity, trust, and volunteerism, and the Youth Congress will undertake various activities to promote these concepts among the group of youth attendees. Workshops will be held on each of these themes, and cultural events and other social programs will fill the two week program. Applications continue to be accepted through January 31st, 2010, but for those youth who cannot attend the conference in Istanbul, a “Virtual Congress” will be provided on the World Youth Congress website where interested youth may keep up-to-date with Congress events, see photos, and ask questions.

Projects and Initiatives:

Cyprus – Youth Activism Project
Beginning in May, 2009, this two year project aims to engage and empower youth in Cyprus and to prepare them to actively take part in the transition to peace on this island that has been a center of political and social conflict for decades. Through a multitude of activities, the Youth Activism Project seeks to give both Turkish and Greek Cypriot youth the opportunity and the tools to take ownership of a solution to this decades-old conflict and to make it work in a sustainable way. The project is managed by the Cyprus Network for Youth Development and is coordinated through two leading organizations in Cyprus, namely the Soma Akriton in the Greek Cypriot community and the Mediation Association in the Turkish Cypriot community.
The network itself is composed of 12 different Cypriot organizations with diverse specialties and backgrounds, but all with several years of experience in peacebuilding. The Project includes activities such as research (conducted by youth) on youth opinions and attitudes, media outreach, summer camps and festivals, exchange visits, debates, and a youth parliament.

**Youth Initiative for the Promotion of Peace in the North Caucuses (YIPP)**  
http://www.irex.org/programs/yipp/index.asp  
As it enters its third year of operation, YIPP continues to advance the economic potential and peace-building skills of young adults in the North Caucuses. YIPP seeks to achieve this goal by pursuing four different objectives. First, YIPP seeks to develop professional and life skills among youth through providing training in entrepreneurial, managerial, and life skills. YIPP also works to cultivate cultural understanding through youth sport and leadership camps that bring together youth from different ethnic groups. Third, the program supports youth-initiated community development, and has so far conducted more than 80 training sessions providing over 450 youth with skills in conflict mitigation and civic participation. Finally, YIPP works to improve access to information among youth by funding Centers for Accessing Technology (CATs) and providing three-month basic computer courses.

**Youth for Peace (YFP) Peace Education and Leadership Project (Cambodia)**  
http://www.yfpcambodia.org/index.php?page=program  
The Youth for Peace organization is now entering its ninth year of providing Peace Education Project and Leadership Project workshops to youth in Cambodia. The Peace Education project begins with a “Building Good Self Workshop,” in which youth learn to listen to others, express themselves, and learn that although conflict is a normal part of life, it need not escalate into violence. “Second Step” workshops then follow, in which the themes of conflict resolution, non-violence, national identity, prejudice and tolerance, loyalty and building good family values, and gender, are all addressed, and youth work in small groups to help them internalize the lessons of the workshop. To further instill these lessons in youth, field trips, reflection trips, and outreach activities are conducted after the two main workshops have been completed. After youth have graduated from the Peace Education project, they are also encouraged to participate in YFP’s Leadership Project, in which youth learn to develop their own initiatives for social change in their families, schools, and communities, based on the lessons of the Peace Education project workshops.

**Sulhita Peace Leadership Training Program**  
http://www.sulha.com/ShowItem.asp?ItemId=sulhita_youth_leadership  
Over the past year, the Sulha Community Organization, a local organization operating in the West Bank and Israel, has hosted six youth peace gatherings, bringing together 80 youth per session, aged 16-21, from Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. The goal of the gatherings is to build trust between Palestinian and Israeli youth, which was strained further in the wake of the violence that occurred in southern Israel and Gaza in early 2009. Youth who “graduated” from the three day peace gatherings were invited to continue their involvement through the Sulhita Peace Leadership Training Program, in which participants in the peace gatherings become leaders who are able to plan and arrange the logistics and content of future gatherings and other activities for Israeli and Palestinian youth. Thus, the gatherings are made sustainable, and are hosted by youth, for youth. Activities planned by youth include participation in the UN International Day of Peace, sharing youth stories with the general public, and working to include youth’s families in future gatherings and peace activities.
Resources for Practitioners:

Globalization of Youth Activism and Human Rights
This brief report authored by UNESCO’s Carla Koffel discusses the intersection of youth activism and human rights within the context of our increasingly interconnected and globalized world community. Focusing on how youth have played a powerful role in pushing social and political change, the report discusses the ways in which youth may become more informed about the critical issues that they face, and how globalization can give them the power to cooperatively confront some of the world’s most pressing problems.

Reflective Peace Building: A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Toolkit
http://kroc.nd.edu/sites/default/files/reflective_peacebuilding.pdf
Although not designed specifically for youth peacebuilding projects, this toolkit, published in 2007 by the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, in association with Catholic Relief Services, encourages peacebuilders to be “reflective practitioners,” learning before, during, and after implementation of peacebuilding programs. The toolkit includes chapters on ethical practice in peacebuilding, the four dimensions of change in conflict transformation, peacebuilding theories, suggestions on indicators of progress in peacebuilding projects, and other issues of critical importance for peacebuilders.

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.