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 Democracy: This year marks the seventh year since the World Youth Movement for Democracy initiated the World Youth Day for Democracy. The day, celebrated on October 18th, commemorates and celebrates young people’s role in fighting for and strengthening democracy. This year’s theme, Recognizing Youth Activists at Risk, seeks to draw the world’s attention to the plight of young people who have been detained, or who face possible detention because of their activism. The day was commemorated with discussions and meetings around the world, an essay contest, and other events. More information about the day is available at the World Youth Movement for Democracy’s website, http://www.wyndonline.org, and the event blog, http://day18oct.wordpress.com.

In honor of this annual campaign to raise awareness about young people’s role in promoting democracy, this issue of YCoP Links features information not only about activities associated with the World Youth Day for Democracy, but also about organizations, projects, and announcements related to young people and democracy worldwide.

Announcements:

Center for International Private Enterprise Announces Youth Essay Contest Winners
The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) has announced the winners of its 2010 Youth Essay Contest in three categories: Democracy that Delivers; Entrepreneurship and Society; and Women and Participation. The winning entrant in the Democracy that Delivers category is “Arise O Nigerians!” by Temitayo Olofinlua, from Lagos, Nigeria. The second- and third-place winners were Shofwan Al Banna Choiruzzad of Indonesia and Kseniya Oksamytna of the Ukraine, respectively. The winning essays are available online.

Each year, CIPE invites young people to share their ideas on how to create opportunities for youth to strengthen democracy and the private sector in their own countries. Students and young professionals aged 18-30 are eligible to participate. For each category, first-, second-, and third-place recipients receive a $1,000 honorarium, and CIPE publishes the winning essays.
World Youth Day for Democracy Roundtable at American University

To commemorate World Youth Day for Democracy, the National Endowment for Democracy and the Peacebuilding and Development Institute held a roundtable discussion on how youth can reach out to each other across borders, support youth participation in democracy, and create solidarity for youth activists at risk. The event featured a talk by Tapera Kapuya, the coordinator of the South Africa office of the National Constitutional Assembly, a civic movement that campaigns for a new constitution in Zimbabwe. Kapuya, who has been the African regional secretary for the International Union of Students and a Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow, spoke about his experience developing new strategies and opportunities for involving youth in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. For more information about the event, e-mail CeciliaA@ned.org or shirak@american.edu.

Youth Invited to Vote on PLURAL+ 2010 Youth Audience Award

www.unaoc.org/pluralplus/

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the International Organization for Migration are calling on young people from all over the world to vote before November 1st for their favorite video from the PLURAL+ 2010 Youth Video Festival finalists. Participating videos express young people's thoughts, experiences, questions and suggestions on migration, diversity, integration, identity and social inclusion. Recognizing youth as powerful agents of social change, PLURAL+ aims to ensure youth engagement in these important issues both at local and global levels by mainstreaming their voices through a variety of media platforms and distribution networks around the world. Youth up to 25 years of age should visit PLURAL+ website for further information on how to watch the videos and vote.

Projects and Initiatives:

Freedom House’s New Generation of Advocates Program

http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=66&program=83

The New Generation of Advocates program is carried out in the Middle East and North Africa by Freedom House, which supports democracy, monitors freedom, and advocates for the expansion of human rights. New Generation of Advocates offers young people the skills and strategies necessary to effectively advocate for peaceful political change. Key components of the program include training in practical skills, professional fellowships, collaboration with fellow reformers, media outreach, partnerships with government officials, and protection strategies. This training program aims to make individual activity and organizations better equipped to influence policy debates and build support for political reform in their countries. New Generation of Advocates activities include study tours for activists; small grants given to Algerian and Tunisian organizations and activists; and professional fellowships for emerging civil society organization leaders.

Democracy Camps in Kyrgyzstan

http://www.ifes.org/Content/Projects/Europe-Asia/Kyrgyzstan/Kyrgyzstan-Democracy-Camps.aspx

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has held numerous Democracy Camps for students in Kyrgyzstan since 2000. Tailored to high school students, the ten-day camps are intended to develop students' problem-solving skills and promote values such as leadership, responsibility, and civil participation to
strengthen democratic society. Using lectures, group work, competitions, theater, and sports, these summer camps provide a place where young people can discover their talent and potential. The goal is to impart an increased sense of confidence and empowerment, so youth can carry out projects to improve their own communities. The 2010 camp ran from July 19 to July 28 and included student participants from throughout Kyrgyzstan.

_Democracy Is … Campaign_

_Democracy Is …_ is a global multimedia essay contest that asks engaged youth around the world to complete the phrase “Democracy is…” through online challenges and offline dialogue. The State Department, in partnership with more than 15 companies and organizations, sponsors different contests, including the recently completed Democracy Photo Challenge. The winners of the photo challenge were announced on September 15th, the United Nations International Day of Democracy. The 12 winning entrants and photos - selected from nearly 3,000 entries from 131 countries - can be viewed on the campaign's website. The photo challenge was inspired by the Democracy Video Challenge, a short video contest launched in 2008. In the past two years, more than 1,600 people from 111 countries submitted video entries and spurred the online engagement of nearly 3.5 million people. The winning photographs will be exhibited in the South lobby of the United Nations in New York.

_Open Society Youth Initiative_
[http://www.soros.org/initiatives/youth/about](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/youth/about)

The Open Society Institute (OSI) Youth Initiative works to identify, inspire, empower, and learn from a network of young, active citizens promoting open society ideals. The Youth Initiative supports projects that promote youth as partners in all aspects of the Open Society Institute's work, which is devoted to building tolerant and vibrant democracies worldwide. Among the Youth Initiative's programs are the Debate Program, which supports youth engaged in critical discussion of issues that affect their communities, and the Youth Action Fund, a small grants program to fund youth-designed and youth-run projects. Other projects have included journalism training in the Middle East for young photojournalists, and an international camp in Turkey that brought together OSI programs, foundations, grantees, and young activists to share their work on web communities for marginalized youth, youth in closed societies, and national youth policies.

_Youth Parliament of Pakistan_

The Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency launched the Youth Parliament of Pakistan in 2007 to engage youth in Pakistan in healthy discourse and expose them to the democratic process and practices. Members of Youth Parliament Pakistan are selected for duration of a year at a time. The specific objectives of Youth Parliament Pakistan are to educate Pakistani Youth about politics and democracy and to demonstrate how parliaments legislate, debate and enact reform. In addition, the Youth Parliament serves as a forum for young people to voice their views about a range of national and international issues. The debates in the Youth Parliament are meant to not only help the young members in their personal development as a useful citizen, but also to serve the purpose of articulating views of the youth on vital issues facing the nation and conveying these to the government of Pakistan.
Resources for Practitioners

UNICEF Child and Youth Participation Resource Guide – Governance and Politics
http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/index_governance.html
This section of the UNICEF Child and Youth Participation Resource Guide features links, reports, case studies and other resources focused on young people’s participation in policy analysis. The resource collection may be especially useful for practitioners seeking to involve children and youth worldwide in governance and the public decision-making processes. Some examples of resources available for download are “Children and Young People Build Participatory Democracy in Latin American Cities”; “Remixing Citizenship: Democracy and Young People’s Use of the Internet”; and “Broadening the Bounds of Youth Development: Youth as Engaged Citizens.”

This publication from the Academy for Educational Development describes the impact of the five-year Armenia Youth and Community Action Program (YCAP), which was designed to provide the means for young people to participate in developing their communities. The report is set against a background of a relatively new tradition of civic engagement in Armenia, especially among youth. It outlines a series of recommended actions to involve and engage marginalized citizens, among them: foster an enabling environment; ensure groups find a neutral place to meet; begin with an assessment; and use mass media effectively. Following the recommendations are several case studies that detail what works and what doesn’t in community engagement, especially among youth. The report stresses that the methodologies and approaches used to implement YCAP can be replicated anywhere (with some adaptation), but that the tools are only useful if citizens use them to invigorate and encourage their fellow communities.

Engaging Youth in Decision-Making: A Path toward Active Youth Citizenship in Eritrea (2010)
This winning essay from the Center for International Private Enterprise’s International Essay Competition discusses the importance of fostering a sense of citizenship among Eritrea’s youth. Young people in Eritrea have played an immense role in the struggle to establish a democratic society. Still, despite their efforts and past involvement in public life, today Eritrean youth struggle to influence policymakers and to have opportunities to participate in decision-making. This article outlines the importance of fostering the participation of young people in Eritrea’s development.

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 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.