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United Nations Development Programme

FINAL REPORT

FORUM ON YOUTH AND DEVELOPMENT

LAUNCH OF UNDP YOUTH STRATEGY 2014-2017

31 MARCH – 1 APRIL 2014, TUNISIA

ORGANIZED BY UNDP TUNISIA
UNDP BUREAU FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND
UNDP REGIONAL BUREAU FOR ARAB STATES

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UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in more than 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

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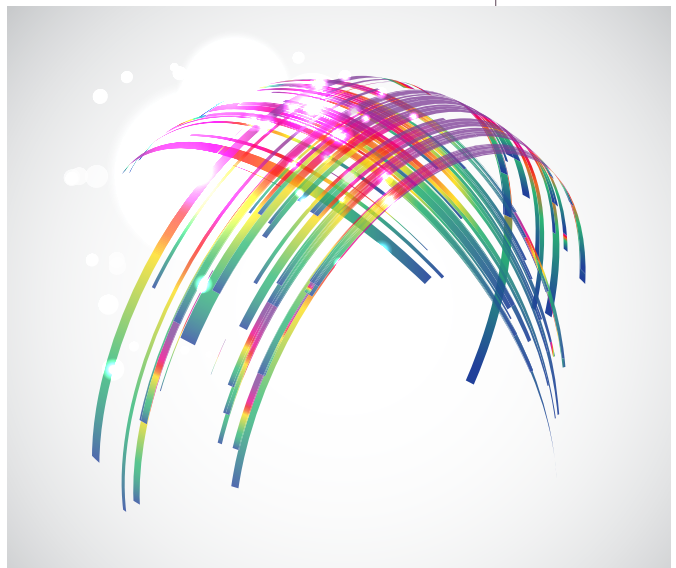


INTRODUCTION

The 'Youth and Development Forum' which convened in Tunisia from 31 March to 1 April 2014, was organized by the UNDP Country Office in Tunisia, UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, and the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy which houses the core youth facility. The organizers of the event would like to thank the Government of Tunisia for its generous support and guidance, and for hosting this momentous event in Tunisia, a country whose national development experience -including notably, the role and prominence of youth participation since 2011 which influenced the national governance and political landscape and called attention to the need for a new social contract- served as a source of inspiration to youth within the Arab region, and globally, and as an impetus to the development of the first ever UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017: 'Empowered Lives, Sustainable Future'.

The 'Youth and Development' Forum was a unique platform from which to launch the UNDP Youth Strategy which encompasses three major areas of work for UNDP policy and programming on youth and development, while embedding the work of UNDP in UN system-wide efforts aimed at enhanced inter-agency collaboration and coordination, efficiency and results orientation. The Forum brought together a wide breadth of stakeholders including country delegations from over 40 UNDP programme countries comprising UNDP staff, government and youth partners; independent global and regional youth experts and organizations, representatives of civil society, the private sector, foundations, and UN partner agencies. A participants list is attached.

The Forum explored ways to enhance youth participation in public decision-making and political processes, in particular – one of the three youth pillars within the strategy, and was followed by a meeting convened by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States which considered next steps for implementation of the strategy within the Arab region.





DAY 1: YOUTH STRATEGY LAUNCH

OPENING CEREMONY

Youth have constituted the backbone of the intellectual and social movement in Tunisia and elsewhere... the integrity of society and the safety of its ethics and morals requires also the contribution of youth who are aware of the requirements and construction of development

His Excellency, Mr. Sabeur Bouatay, Minister of Youth and Sports, Women and Family, Republic of Tunisia

Opening Ceremony,
UNDP Youth
Strategy Launch



The Opening Ceremony was honoured by the presence of His Excellency Mr. Sabeur Bouatay, Minister of Youth and Sports, Women and Family; Ms. Sima Bahous, Assistant Secretary General and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States; Mr. Mounir Tabet, Resident Representative and Resident Coordinator, UNDP Tunisia; and Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

His Excellency Mr. Sabeur Bouatay

His Excellency Mr. Sabeur Bouatay commended the sustained support of UNDP Tunisia in various development sectors during the historical transition of Tunisia, and for selecting Tunisia as the venue for the launch of the strategy. His Excellency noted that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2015-2019 will be implemented in the form of cooperation projects including *inter alia*, capacity building initiatives for youth and support to youth to enter the labor market and provide better services delivered to

youth. These strategic interventions are necessitated by the ongoing reality that despite youth having potential and representing a real demographic power, in most cases, youth have not received adequate attention to maximize their potential and are not sufficiently accessing employment due to disparities between training and demand, insufficient support structures (emotional, social, psychological) including counseling to ensure that youth are not attracted to extremism, lack of coordination and programmes. Emphasizing that poverty and unemployment need to be dealt with within a global development approach that provides social care and contributes to effective solutions, His Excellency stressed the need to give more prominence to youth now more than ever, and to consolidate the presence and contributions of youth in public management, along with civil society, the development of democracy, and full and active citizenship through participation in political parties.

Citing the below results of national surveys carried out jointly by the Government and UNDP in 2013 to better understand perspectives of youth in democratic transitions, the Minister highlighted that youth appear to be going through a crisis in terms of not fully realizing the practice of citizenship, rejecting in part, political activities and opting for social spaces to work and organize themselves:

“Participation in association work does not exceed 6%.

Participation in political parties limited to 2.7%.

Intention to join a political party does not exceed 8.4%.

Percentage of active youth in civil society did not exceed 6%.”

The challenges that the Minister cited in the context of Tunisian youth very much resonated through the two-day global forum as participants shared national and regional experiences in the context of youth civic engagement and participation in political processes and platforms, and together worked to identify innovative approaches and development solutions.

In closing, the Minister stressed that youth are essential to the development process and that the success of the UNDP Youth Strategy will require knowledge of the needs of youth so that endeavours lead to results that actually reflect the aspirations of youth.

Sima Bahous

Ms. Sima Bahous reflected on the power of today’s generation of youth as the most creative, connected and informed than any previous generation – establishing bridges, and developing programmes that benefit society. Ms. Bahous also recognized the challenges that youth face and therefore, the importance to support an enabling environment for youth



Presentation of the UNDP Youth Strategy by Ms. Sima Bahous to His Excellency Mr. Sabeur Bouatay



empowerment. Citing the inspirational choice to launch the youth strategy in Tunisia where three years ago, youth rose side by side, calling for a new contract between state and society, and inspiring not only the Arab region, but the entire world, Ms. Bahous emphasized that the Arab region is entering into an important period of social and economic change during which youth must be increasingly engaged. Launching the Youth Strategy on behalf of UNDP and the Office of the UNDP Administrator, Ms. Bahous recalled that the Youth Strategy goes hand-in-hand with the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 which was approved in September 2013, and how the Youth Strategy in tandem with the Strategic Plan, endeavor to create job opportunities and support livelihoods, end marginalization and provide special care to women. Ms. Bahous reflected on the consolidation of the sustainable development approach within the youth strategy with its emphasis on economic empowerment, civil participation in public institutions and political life, strengthening capacities of youth to respond and thrive – all guided by an underlying human rights based approach- and concluded by emphasizing that the strategy is not a traditional horizontal strategy and that the full engagement of and partnership with youth will be critical.

Mounir Tabet

Speaking to the spirit of the Tunisian Poet Abu al-Qasim al-Shabi's poem "If the People Wanted Life One Day", Mr. Mounir Tabet paid tribute to the social, political, civil and economic consciousness of Tunisian youth, determination in having their voices heard by decision-makers, their role in sparking events in Tunisia in 2011 and their subsequent active participation in Tunisia's transition processes towards a democratic path. Mr. Tabet referred to the recently signed new Constitution for Tunisia which recognizes youth as a driving force:

Article 8: Youth are an active force in building the nation. The state seeks to provide the necessary conditions for developing the capacities of youth and realising their potential, supports them to assume responsibility and strives to extend and generalize their participation in social, economic, cultural and political development.

Constitution of Government of Tunisia signed 26 January 2014

Mr. Tabet elaborated on the role of the United Nations in deepening engagement with youth since the start of the transitional phase, including civic education programmes in all provinces of Tunisia, training in dialogue and consensus building workshops, undertaking of opinion polls of young people and their expectations of their constitution. While recognizing positive achievements, Mr. Tabet acknowledged that important challenges remain, including notably high rates of youth unemployment in Tunisia, in the region, and globally, and the need for creative solutions and thus the timeliness of the UNDP youth strategy which encompasses strengthening economic empowerment and livelihoods as a core area of work.



Ahmad Alhendawi

Mr. Alhendawi elaborated on the unique history that Tunisia has created in terms of the form in which its democratic transition has taken, congratulated Tunisian youth for their contribution to the process and encouraged Tunisian youth to continue working toward fully exercising of political rights. Mr. Alhendawi referred to the Tunisian experience as one to learn from when considering the potential that youth movements have demonstrated in history and therefore, reflected on the need to continue to support the coordination of youth movements at all levels.

Mr. Alhendawi spoke to the work of the United Nations, which through his Office in collaboration with 40+ UN agencies (Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development), seeks to consolidate and coordinate efforts on youth initiatives at the national, regional and global levels. Mr. Alhendawi congratulated UNDP and youth globally for the development of a strategy that addresses three major pillars which very much reflect the needs of youth today, while noting in particular that the full breadth of economic empowerment – not only as it pertains to employment – has been taken into consideration in the strategy which very much resonates globally and in particular the Arab region, which is host to this momentous event.

YOUTH AND THE UN SYSTEM

DISCUSSANTS

Ms. Rosemary Kalapurakal, Deputy Executive Coordinator, UNV

Mr. Mohamed Jouili, Director, National Youth Observatory, Tunisia

Ms. Sabá Loftus, Organizing Partner, UN Major Group for Children and Youth

MODERATOR

Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

This session explored how the UN system, government and the youth community partner together to respond to issues and challenges facing today's youth. Referring to the important triangular partnership among government, youth, and the UN system, the SG's Envoy on Youth briefly recalled the prominence that youth receives in the five-year agenda of the UN Secretary General and therefore the need for partners to work in genuine partnership, and in a coordinated and results-oriented manner.

The panel reflected on the nature of youth participation and why it is essential to have young people involved in





development efforts, discussions and debates. Ms. Kalapurakal challenged participants to consider that **the question should not always be from the perspective of ‘what can UN agencies with their strategies do for youth?’ but ‘what can youth do for development?’** and that without the voices of youth brought into UN programmes and global platforms such as the ongoing post-2015 discussion and debates, the UN would be less effective and less inclusive. Referring to a global community of young volunteers Ms. Kalapurakal emphasized that when addressing inclusion, volunteers have the ability to go deep into communities to reach minority and vulnerable groups and that youth volunteering for development has the potential to influence programmes of the UN. Citing various ongoing efforts under the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Youth (UN Youth-SWAP) including an ongoing initiative ‘Regional Project on Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future’ that currently advocates for the role of youth volunteering in development and builds collaborative capacities among partners including youth, Government and the UN, Ms. Kalapurakal emphasized that it is key for partners to bring in valuable voices of youth while considering individual value-added and collective potential to transform.

In considering structured approaches and mechanisms by which participation and voices of youth can be facilitated and channeled toward global development debates, Ms. Loftus of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth reflected on the fact that youth in all their diversity nevertheless face universal challenges such as unemployment, poverty, discrimination; as well as universal life stage experiences including vulnerability, a desire to create and be innovative, coming into the workforce, not necessarily having pre-conceived political agendas, seeking opportunities to push boundaries. Ms. Loftus emphasized that change begins at the local and community level and therefore it is essential to consider challenges at the community level, encourage local and national activism, hold governments and leaders accountable, seek out partnerships as necessary to make this happen as no work can be done in isolation, and to use the available channels and platforms for voicing perspectives on sustainable development. Elaborating on the **mission of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth to serve as a constituency for any young person who wants to be involved in sustainable development discussions at the UN**, Ms. Loftus explained that the UN system is strategically placed to broker dialogue and partnerships and that the UN Major Group encourages structured dialogue and conversations with a view to



building consensus on priority topics, enables stakeholders to follow different negotiation processes, creates opportunities for youth to be heard in communities, and scales-up voices to feed into on-line platforms.

The panel further reflected on the issue of youth participation and engagement, from a sociological perspective with Mr. Jouili elaborating on the results of national surveys that were undertaken in Tunisia in 2013 to better understand the relationship between youth and public life, and specifically the absence of a desire to be involved in political parties, structures and institutions due to a lack of confidence of young people in political parties and representative structures. This being representative of a global trend and not limited to Tunisia, Mr. Jouili posited that youth do not represent a position or status, but a number of challenges, proofs and forms of self-affirmation related to capacities and performance. Facing individuality and the need for self-expression, coupled with the desire to find solutions and achieve aspirations, **youth are opting for new forms of expression and activism, including social networks and structures. Therefore, it is essential that entities working with youth take into consideration sociological changes and recognize these new forms of youth participation** when working together on policy and programming. Finally, as democracy is increasingly local and its success is more ensured when developed from the bottom-up, participatory democracy lends even more importance to social networks.

The question and answer period addressed the challenges that volunteers face in terms of compensation, the need to strengthen the bridge from volunteerism to political/formal participation and to better understand the development impact and knowledge that volunteerism brings towards informing policy. At the same time, it is already widely recognized that **volunteerism is about community and that it is the extension beyond community that creates great potential and scale.**

In concluding, the panel noted that solid frameworks exist to inform the youth agenda - including the World Programme of Action for Youth (the 'founding' global framework), the UN Youth-SWAP, individual UN agency strategies for youth, national and regional youth policies, etc. – and that accurate diagnoses of the challenges along with strong localized strategies, mechanisms for dialogue, and equal partnerships among youth, government and the UN are several key components to creating change.



UNDP Youth Strategy

PRESENTERS

Ms. Renata Nowak-Garmer, Research Analyst, Poverty Group,
UNDP Bureau for Development Policy

Ms. Noella Richard, Governance Specialist, Democratic Governance Group,
UNDP Bureau for Development Policy

Ms. Charu Bist, Urban Livelihoods Specialist,
UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery

MODERATOR

Mr. Ali Salman Saleh, Focal Point on Youth, UNDP Bahrain

This session served to inform participants on the process that went into the development of the UNDP youth strategy and to provide an overview of the strategy, its three outcome areas, and strategic programming entry points.

The development of the strategy was inspired by many elements including the fact that 85% of today's youth are in developing countries; UNDP's participation in Youth21 in Nairobi in 2012; the investment made by the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund 2012-2014 cycle of youth and participation/empowerment projects, the preparation of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017; the development and approval of the first-ever UN System-Wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP); general momentum and emerging demand and initiatives on youth within the global network of UNDP Country Offices and Regional Service Centres, as well as the emergence of UNDP global programmes on employment and volunteering (UNV).

UNDP Youth Strategy
Outcome Areas



Youth Strategy Outcome 1 **'Increased economic empowerment of youth'** which encompasses adapting sustainable development pathways to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce socio-economic inequality and exclusion through building productive capacities of youth and an enabling environment for enhanced youth employment, employability and entrepreneurship', was presented by Ms. Renata Nowak-Garmer. The presenter elaborated on global facts and figures, citing structural unemployment challenges (youth 2-4



times more likely to be unemployed); the disadvantaged situation of young women, and the poor quality of jobs (working poverty, underemployment) as a major issue particularly in developing countries. The above coupled by demographic facts – i.e., the developing world is young- underscore the importance of tackling the employment challenges with a renewed resolve. The presenter elaborated that UNDP will address both the demand and supply side of labour as well as policy environment that needs to be more conducive to job creation for youth. At the same time, UNDP needs to work not just for youth but with youth to make sure that they are not merely beneficiaries but actors for change and advancement of socio-economic development in their countries. They need to have voice and channels for meaningful participation in the decision-making affecting their lives and their countries. UNDP is uniquely positioned to ensure that our development efforts not only strengthen the livelihoods and jobs of youth, but also facilitate their inclusion in all spheres of society.

Youth Strategy Outcome 2 **‘Enhanced youth civic engagement and participation’** which encompasses promoting inclusive and effective engagement and participation of young people and youth organizations in planning and decision-making processes and platforms at local, national, regional and global levels that support sustainable development solutions to poverty, inequality and exclusion, was presented by Ms. Noella Richard. The presenter elaborated that political processes and institutions are still characterized by limited youth participation, in particular in formal processes. Young men and women are very often disillusioned with political leadership and political institutions and excluded from policy development and implementation. Moreover, political activism or civic engagement of youth is not always organized according to formal groupings. As a global force, however, youth are increasingly moving to the centre stage of development debates; they demand to be involved in the decisions that shape their societies. Youth Strategy outcome 2 recognizes the need to support young men and women in understanding their rights and the channels through which they may exercise their civil and political rights and contribute to decision making processes that impact their lives. From a development perspective, the involvement of young men and women in participatory processes and planning and policy making at all levels plays a pivotal role. It ensures that their rights are promoted and that their voices are heard, that inter-generational knowledge is shared, and that innovation and critical thinking are encouraged at all ages to support transformational change in people’s lives and communities. Important to note also that youth have to be perceived as the leaders of today, not just tomorrow.

Youth Strategy Outcome 3 **‘Strengthened resilience building’** which encompasses strengthened youth engagement and capacity to address and respond to change in disaster preparedness, crisis prevention, response and recovery, and resilience building in crisis and/or conflict contexts, marginalized youth and environment, was presented by Ms. Charu Bist. The presenter elaborated that in the context of conflict prevention and recovery, young people’s contributions and leadership in preventing and resolving conflict violence and extremism, or in the recovery process after crisis is a rich resource essential to building sustainable peace and stability. Young people can play valuable roles as innovators and



agents of change, and their contribution should be actively supported and seen as part of building peaceful communities and supporting democratic governance. Young men and women are playing an active role in protecting and renegotiating relations and hierarchies based on age and gender. During periods of crisis, alternative political structures might emerge that are more inclusive of women and/or youth. Young women are contributing as managers of natural resources in rural economics and this in turn impacts both diagnostics and solutions towards resilience building. At the same time, the lack of economic opportunities, livelihoods and employment could lead young people towards violence, armed groups and piracy; thus, the issue of jobs and livelihoods and its importance for youth and nation building, cohesion and conflict prevention. UNDP's efforts are geared towards the social, political, economic and cultural reintegration of youth, particularly marginalized youth.

UNDP needs to learn from what has worked and not worked, consider scaling up successful initiatives and exploring innovative partnerships with a wide breadth of partners. In this regard, there is strong momentum within the IANYD to inform the future post-2015 development agenda and advocate for greater youth participation and involvement. There is also strong appetite for greater coordination in the area of youth empowerment to support existing and new country networks, enhance programming, foster partnerships and support stronger accountability mechanisms.

Youth Policy

DISCUSSANTS

Ms. Emily Erasito, General Secretary, Fiji National Youth Council

Mr. Daniel Adugna, Program Manager, Youth Division of the African Union Commission

Ms. Alejandra del Pilar Sandoval Salas, Assistant Director General, IMJUVE, Mexico

Ms. Nato Alhazishvili, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Azerbaijan

RESPONDENT

Mr. Andreas Karsten, Researcher and Journalist, youthpolicy.org

MODERATOR

Mr. Gert Ceville-Danielsen, Programme Specialist, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre

This session explored fundamentals in youth policy, e.g. why there is a need for youth policy, principles/common denominators for youth policy development, levels of stakeholder engagement, how UNDP may support youth policy development, implementation and the sustainability of policy.

Speaking to the need for a national youth policy, and drawing on the experience of the Fiji National Youth Council, Ms. Emily Erasito emphasized that **national youth policy seeks to address youth related issues in the national context and has the ability to provide**

an enabling environment, guidance, support for implementation, and streamlining of perspectives within the youth agenda. Furthermore, as youth issues are cross-cutting, Ms. Erasito stressed that the scope of work should not be limited to the Ministry of Youth for example, but rather, needs to be mainstreamed at all levels and therefore youth policy needs to provide guidance and clear mandates on how to implement across the board. For example, issues related to youth employment need to be addressed by diverse parties and therefore collective effort is essential. Within the context of translating youth policy to practice, Mr. Andreas Karsten from youthpolicy.org emphasized that it is critical to understand the realities faced by young people, and proceed accordingly and that to **take youth policy forward there is need for an Action Plan with clear outcomes, targets, and timeline that will lay out a clear agenda to be executed. Action Plans also need to earmark adequate funds to implement the policy, and without all these ingredients the policy cannot be effective.**

In terms of engagement of different youth groups in the development of national policy/action, Ms. Alejandra del Pilar Sandoval Salas and Mr. Daniel Adugna elaborated on the respective experiences of IMJUVE and the African Union. In the case of IMJUVE, Ms. Alejandra del Pilar Sandoval Salas spoke to the bottom-up approach toward taking forward the youth agenda in Mexico, which involved over the past few years, the organization of 32 forums where youth needs were assessed through **round tables that were attended by academia, civil society, and youth volunteers to ensure inclusive participation.** The engagement process also involved collaboration with the Council of Europe to learn about youth initiatives of the Council of Europe, collaboration with the University of Mexico to launch an online course on youth policy, and a planned youth summit for December where heads of government will discuss a youth policy implementation plan.

Mr. Daniel Adugna elaborated on the experience of the African Union, a regional platform that liaises with national youth councils that further utilizes state constituencies to reach out to youth in the region, recognizing that different countries are at different levels with regards to youth issues and need to target policies accordingly. Mr. Adugna cited that **an ongoing and major challenge to engagement of youth for increased political participation in the African region is that once youth are trained they are still unable to make an impact due to lack of effective platforms for youth to engage with government,** and that this is due in part to youth not being taken seriously by government bodies, many of which are composed of older age cohorts. To address this issue the Youth Division of the African Union Commission has been working to increase government's understanding of how youth can meaningfully contribute, and engaging government officials in youth training activities.

Panelists together reflected on what youth generally want and need in order to be more meaningfully engaged, including technical support on mentorship and building skills, as well as financial support for entrepreneurship; support to youth who are vulnerable to social crime and violence – prevention and then engagement; and platforms through which they



*Emily Erasito,
General Secretary,
Fiji National
Youth Council*



may actually provide inputs into the formulation of national youth policy, as has been the case of many countries where youth have actively provided inputs to the post-2015 development agenda.

The Question and Answer period that followed addressed various elements of youth policy formulation and implementation including partnerships, youth engagement mechanisms, and follow-up support mechanisms for current, inclusive and sustainable youth policy. It was recognized that **the engagement of minority groups of youth remains a challenge (e.g. in the SIDS context) and that efforts must continue to be undertaken to ensure inclusivity of minority groups in youth policy development and implementation, particularly given that local leadership, youth networks and young leaders networks at local and community level have proven very effective in project implementation.** The panel also stressed that partnerships with private sector and CSOs are essential, particularly in terms of skills training and creation of employment opportunities for youth. Finally, information, access to updated information and resources, and networks are all critical toward designing and updating youth policy to ensure that youth policy and/or law does not become obsolete.

Partnerships

DISCUSSANTS

Mr. Mohamed Jalloh, Head, Youth Employment Programme, Sierra Leone Country Office, Restless Development

Ms. Emily Ross, Deputy Director, UN Relations & Special Initiatives, United Nations Foundation

Mr. Jeffrey Avina, Director, Public Affairs and Citizenship, Microsoft Middle East and Africa

Ms. Hazami Barmada, NEXUS Middle East, and Al-Mubadarah, Arab Empowerment Initiative

MODERATOR

Mr. Beniam Gebrezghi, Programme Specialist, Civil Society Division, UNDP Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy

*Beniam Gebrezghi,
Programme
Specialist, Civil
Society Division,
UNDP Bureau for
External Relations
and Advocacy*



This session explored key issues related to partnerships for development, including cross-sectoral initiatives and strategies, and how to put diverse values and interests together beyond dialogue, to results oriented partnerships that contribute to development effectiveness.

From the perspective of a global youth organization as well as to the experiences of the Sierra Leone Country Office of Restless Development, Mr. Mohammed Jalloh spoke to how **multi-stakeholder partnership** among government, NGOs, youth-at-risk, youth in rural communities,



policymakers, the private sector and UNDP has been essential towards support to initiatives on youth and sustainable economic development. **South-South cooperation**, as in the case of the Restless Development graduate internship model that has been piloted in Sierra Leone and replicated in Uganda, is also an essential form of cooperation to encourage, while taking into account that in any new investment or partnership, there may be a degree of risk; therefore trust and accountability measures must be solidly in place.

Ms. Emily Ross of UN Foundation emphasized the **importance of ICT** in building and nurturing partnerships whether it be through the potential of ICT to convert opinions into action, to share development solutions, to offer platforms for peer-to-peer network discussions. Along these lines, Mr. Jeffrey Avina of Microsoft MENA spoke to a best practice employability portal created in Egypt which provides a one stop shop for career guidance and advice, **mentoring with private sector**, basic level mentoring with peers that already have benefited from accessing jobs, access to job opportunities (NGOs, private sector, etc.). Mr. Avina stressed that creating partnerships is not difficult when all parties have clarity on ideas, resources and the plan of action, and emphasized that opportunity and voice are essential requisites for youth to seek to address today's multi-faceted challenges.

Ms. Hazami Barmada followed these sentiments by speaking to the vast world of resources and opportunities available to youth but the lack of instruments and platforms through which to channel the talent and **connect talent to opportunities**. Speaking to the NEXUS experience, Ms. Barmada elaborated that today's young generation of philanthropists and social-entrepreneurs actively engage in peer-to-peer platforms, are taking more risks, and are eager to create and/or support programming and facilitate investments toward innovative development solutions.

Panelists reflected on what UNDP should consider when engaging in partnerships with youth based organizations. Partnership principles included honesty and sincerity, the need to recognize the added-value of individual partners and the collective partnership, consideration of long-term partnership rather than short-term or ad-hoc work, recognition and encouragement to tap into and utilize the know-how from youth, identification of issues that are truly of interest and relevance to youth, keeping the partnership fresh and evolving. The notion of naturally emergent leadership within partnerships and the need at the same time, to find equity and balance in relations among key partners was also cited as an important element to reflect upon. In considering partnerships with the private sector, panelists reflected that it is natural for the private sector to seek visibility in its efforts and the private sector will seek to make their footprint through corporate social responsibility units, supporting social good through technical support (not just funding).

The panel then considered whether UNDP, as it embarks on a new journey with the post 2015 development framework, may wish to focus on new and more effective partnerships for the UN and its partners – partnerships that adopt a larger vision which encompasses resources intended as innovation, technology, research, human capacity, and move beyond consideration of mere financial flow. Panelists concurred that a renewed open-mindedness, inclusiveness and emphasis on engagement of local partners and local know-how



would be important, with youth leading public agenda debates, incorporating new tools for facilitating social change, with private sector increasingly engaged in and supporting public platforms for engagement and social good. Partnerships that could potentially drive the data revolution and accountability, support regional capacity building (e.g. in media training) and support replication of internship programmes, could also be very important as UNDP establishes partnerships in the post-2015 development agenda.

The Question and Answer period reflected on common denominators of encouraging UNDP to consider more 'disruptive innovation' as partnerships are forged and/or strengthened; continuing to advocate for value;-drive partnership principles of trust and respect; incorporating intra-sectorial vision on working with youth partners; strategically positioning UNDP on priority issues; supporting ICT and mobile technology as an enabler; and advocating for a culture of creativity and drive towards piloting initiatives even at risk of failure as part of the process, as a path towards success – in short, to be courageous when moving forward in new partnerships.

YOUTH AND INNOVATION

DISCUSSANTS

Mr. Jeff Martin, Founder and CEO, Tribal Brands, Inc.

Ms. Janine Chase, Project Manager, Youth-IN, UNDP Barbados

Mr. Kingsley Bangwell, Executive Director, Youngstars Foundation, Nigeria

MODERATOR

Ms. Jennifer Colville, Advisor, Knowledge, Innovation and Capacity Group, UNDP Bureau for Development Policy

This session explored innovation and enablers to innovation in the context of youth, participation, empowerment and development.

Young people are a powerful asset in innovating for sustainable human development. In fact, the bulk of innovations for development in past years were driven and developed by young people. UNDP has been working closely with young people in finding new ways of doing business and innovating in the design of approaches, services and platforms.

Mr. Jeff Martin reflected on an **important prerequisite for being open to innovation – namely, exposure to new and other ways of thinking and living**, along with a recognition that “innovation starts with acceptance of failure”. In consideration of the evolving climate of innovation, Mr. Martin challenged assumptions regarding innovation by contending that the next defining innovations will come from the South, and that **within this paradigm of ‘reverse innovation’, the future of innovation will come from the South and drive innovation in the North** because ideas that can be sustainable in a developing world context can be brought to scale in the developed world as well, and that it would be critical to shine lights on successful examples of reverse innovation in the future. The impetus to reverse

innovation would entail identifying development challenges, building in short feedback loops, and using **mobile analytics** to show results and to correct course quickly and as required. Participants were also challenged to consider innovation as moving from a focus on “likes” to “needs and wants” through leveraging social media. Along these lines, Mr. Martin elaborated on how incentive systems can be created to change behavior that will support the achievement of development goals and in this regard, it would be important to analyze big data –gathered through ICT platforms for example- in order to discern shifts in behavior and proof of impact of interventions.

Mr. Martin encouraged engagement of corporations and building of private-public partnerships to help drive innovation and social change. Elaborating that **‘brands will be the currency of the future’**, brands need to build their reputations and by using mobile analytics to show how engaging in social causes has a positive and immediate impact on their reputation, private-public partnerships can be massively driven. Showing brands that social investments are the future way of building a brand is a theory currently being tested and Mr. Martin contemplated that in the future, “young people will stage protests against brands just as we protested in front of embassies and governmental institutions.”

Recognizing that reverse innovation is a natural aim and impetus for UNDP, and that **there is a need to build agile systems based on needs and quick feedback loops**, the panel then explored the source of youth innovation and what factors are conducive to youth and innovation. Speaking from the experiences of the Caribbean Youth-In Network and Youngstars Foundation, Ms. Janine Chase and Mr. Kingsley Bangwell cited the need to involve young people from the start in the design and implementation of development solutions, as **young people are highly motivated when they feel and actually have real scopes of influence** and the space to really create something. Reaching youth who are not online and in urban areas must be offset by efforts to leverage youth groups and networks, use SMS and mobiles. Furthermore, development organizations such as UNDP have an important role to play in advocating the approach of engaging young people from the beginning, asking the right questions, recognizing and supporting ideas, systems, or small and early successes of initiatives that have the potential for scale, demonstrating thought leadership and the creation of ideas, linking the ‘needs-driven’ approach to innovation to the UNDP policy environment. For example, innovative forms of social media, participatory processes and gamification remain a ‘hard sell’ with many organizations but small successes –supported by partners such as the UNDP- may have the potential to convince skeptics and bring ideas not only to fruition but also to scale.

The Question and Answer period centered on the innovation agenda within UNDP and whether UNDP is prepared to engage in innovation activities that fail, in response to which Ms. Colville elaborated that UNDP has taken a very deliberate approach within the innovation agenda as it invests in prototyping and takes calculated risks when trying new approaches, while managing expectations of donors and partners. [In-depth discussion on innovation subsequently took place on Day 2].

Janine Chase,
Project Manager,
Youth-IN, UNDP
Barbados





DAY 2: YOUTH, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The second day of the Forum began with an informal breakfast meeting organized by UNDP and the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, in order to brief UNDP colleagues from country offices on the work of the Envoy in supporting harmonization and coherence amongst UN entities, share information on the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Youth and discuss recent and upcoming activities to strengthen youth participation and youth involvement in the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development. The objective of that session was also to inspire the establishment/strengthening of specific youth participation mechanisms at the national and regional levels. An interesting experience was shared by Mr. Natal Donnalioia, from UNV Sri Lanka, where a youth advisory board was recently established. UNDP colleagues from country offices and regional centres expressed interest in receiving more information about the Youth-SWAP and in being included in a global distribution list / virtual community of practitioners to discuss youth issues, coordination within the system and youth participation.

PRESENTER

Ms. Moema Dutra Freire, Programme Analyst, Social Policies Unit,
Focal Point on Youth, UNDP Brazil

DISCUSSANTS

Mr. Bader Zamareh, Executive Director, Sharek Youth Forum,
Palestinian Programme

Mr. Alexandru Cocirta, Project Manager "Youth Access to Justice",
UNDP Moldova

Ms. Erike Tanghoj, Program Coordinator, Program for Young Politicians
in Africa

RESPONDENTS

Ms. Nelly Corbel, Gerhart Center of Philanthropy and Civic Engagement

Ms. Ivana Savich, Center for Human Rights and Development Studies,
and Youth Representative - UNDP Civil Society Advisory Committee

MODERATOR

Ms. Diane Sheinberg, Programme Specialist, Democratic Governance
Group, UNDP Bureau for Development Policy

The purpose of this session was to discuss challenges that youth face in the areas of participation in public decision-making processes and political institutions; to discuss the experiences of ongoing initiatives that seek to address these challenges; and to consider strategic entry points for UNDP as it moves forward with implementation of Youth Strategy Outcome 2: Civic Engagement and Participation in Political Processes and Public Institutions.

Building foundations for civic engagement

The panel reflected on the need to build strong foundations for young people, starting from the importance for a young person's knowledge of rights and duties to be understood, developed and nurtured from early on. Participants reflected on the need for citizenship to be nurtured from the teenage years amidst the reality that interventions with regard to youth from 15-18 years old are insufficient, despite the fact that young people are guided by labor laws as of 15 years of age in many countries but are unable to vote until 18 years of age. It was stressed that young people are missing basic knowledge on governance, rights, participation and political systems and Ms. Savich posited that youth rights, **recognition and protection of rights are directly linked to the propensity of youth for political participation**. For this reason, it is critical to support rights education, advocacy and protection, as well as educational initiatives and civic education activities that will instill a sense of responsibility within youth as both rights-holder and duty-bearer in one's community.

Ms. Corbel invited participants to consider the modes and ecosystem in which youth operate, the counter-forces to efforts to strengthen empowerment (higher education being an important component), and the need to identify community issues to bring together youth regardless of political alignment, and support platforms from which to encourage civic awareness, responsibility and participation. **Prioritization of the voices of youth in the post-2015 national consultations**, involvement in gaming initiatives (e.g. 'Community planet' which brings in youth voices to address education, corruption and public policies as they pertain to employment challenge'), support to youth mainstreaming and youth-sensitive budgeting were all cited as proven entry points for fostering youth participation and engagement, from the perspective of UNDP Moldova, represented by Mr. Cocirta.

Other entry points included familiarization and participation in the electoral cycle process. Mr. Zamereh spoke to the challenges of engaging a whole young generation in Palestine, to become familiar with entry points for civic and political participation from being active in local youth councils and town halls, to becoming familiar with electoral processes, sensitized to security issues, party affiliation, and how for example, electoral electronic systems are vulnerable to exploitation.



*Moema Dutra Freire,
Programme Analyst,
Social Policies Unit,
Focal Point on Youth,
UNDP Brazil*



Social structures vs. traditional political structures

Another reflection that resonated among panelists and participants is the **apparent rejection by today's generation of youth of traditional political structures, parties and systems**, due mainly to a lack of trust in governing structures and political parties, and resulting in a re-channeling of youth voices through social networks, platforms and structures. Speaking to last year's events in Brazil when Brazilian youth strategically attracted attention to issues of concern through social manifestations in the context of the World Cup preparations, Ms. Moema Freire considered that the events represented 'a crisis of traditional ways of participation and representation' with youth clearly conveying that they did not feel represented by political parties. As a result, youth are exploring new forms of political participation outside of traditional political structures and parties, whether it be through heightened volunteerism and community networking and activism, support to national youth policy and national institutions in the development of youth policy, partnering with private sector to support youth activities, etc.

Panelists reflected that while it is important to recognize these new social structures through which youth are expressing their voice, and to consider such avenues of engagement when designing youth policy and programming, it is essential to continue to strengthen formal platforms for participation and youth access to these platforms. At the same time, it is important to better understand the dynamics between political parties and structures on one hand, and social movements on the other hand and the role that youth play within this dynamic.

Political participation, power and trust

Considering the striking statistic that **only 5% of parliamentarians globally are under the age of 35**, it is clear that youth are not adequately represented in formal political institutions, and it is essential to address this bottleneck to youth participation and representation in formal decision making processes and structures, by removing barriers and increasing the number and quality of representation from the youth sector. Ms. Tanghoj spoke to initiatives such as the Program for Young Politicians in Africa that supports young politicians and capacity building at academies aimed to build and groom a new kind of political leadership. Working at a regional rather than national level, the academies groom young politicians in partnership building, dialogue and collaboration, bringing together youth from antagonistic political parties to collaborate around youth issues, while continuously dialoguing with mother parties. Programmes such as this which focus on capacity building complemented by engagement with mother parties to dialogue around the necessity to involve youth into party structures and to address party and discrimination structure raise an important question: **What can those with power do to let youth into the structures?** The question around how to work with power structures that age discriminate and close doors to youth, requires thinking and from a broader context, **consideration of power relations and capacities among stakeholders requires a sound and tailored institutional and contextual analysis in the design of inclusive initiatives, policies and mechanisms that support engagement and participation of youth.**



The need to create/re-establish/strengthen trust between youth, power structures and parties was cited as essential because the lack of trust and democratic elements within political governance are a huge dis-incentive to youth to engage both civically and politically. Concerns were raised regarding the need for more meaningful rather than tokenistic participation; for more democracy within political parties themselves; for opening of doors for young women and other marginalized, vulnerable youth; for less political manipulation and instrumentalization of youth. For example, in the context of elections, it would be important for political parties to have *pre* as well as *post*-electoral programs for youth.

Legal frameworks and reform

Along the rights-based approach to youth and development, and the recognition of the structural barriers facing youth, participants considered linkages between youth participation and other dimensions of governance including legal frameworks and institutional reforms -for example, the need to work on legal reforms and promote a policy environment that advances access to justice, fights discrimination and empowers vulnerable youth segments of the population, and the promotion of youth-friendly legal frameworks that embrace engagement of youth for participation in politics and decision-making.

Evidence-based monitoring of results

Overarching questions that participants deliberated upon included how increased civic engagement and political participation can be effectively measured and to what extent baselines on perceptions (in relation to participation, influence, etc.) versus numbers and figures, may serve as a sufficient evidence-base to inform policy and programming. At the same time, the rise of 'big data' initiatives and mobile analytics, and the role and voices of youth in these initiatives, were considered to have the potential to play an important role in supporting accountability and responsiveness of public institutions. What indicators can measure new forms of political participation such as social movements? How and when do we see success in capacity development initiatives aimed at behavioral changes? How do we systemize evaluation of results in the area of strengthened political participation?. It was also suggested that ongoing evaluations rather than mid-term and long-term evaluations are a good option for programming, along with ensuring that academia and researchers collaborate with practitioners in order to ensure a balance between theory and practice when designing, implementing and monitoring programmes.

In concluding, it was clear from the session that the breadth of strategic entry points for UNDP under Youth Strategy Outcome 2 is extremely wide, spanning from *inter alia*, an understanding of rights and social contract with the state; building foundations of civic knowledge – particularly in the teenage years from 15-18; engaging in all phases of the electoral cycle (and not merely the actual election itself); building capacity and preparing youth for public service and political candidacy; identifying channels and platforms for marginalized youth to express their voices and be listened to; participating in social movements; prioritizing youth voices in national discussions on the post-2015 development agenda; youth mainstreaming; supporting evidence based research to inform youth policy and programming; being involved in monitoring initiatives and holding governing structures and institutions accountable.



WORKING GROUPS: REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

FACILITATORS

FOCAL POINTS ON YOUTH WITHIN UNDP REGIONAL BUREAUX AND UNDP REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRES

Ms. Tasneem Mirza, Focal Point for Youth, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

Mr. Njoya Tikum, Focal Point for Youth, Regional Service Centre for Africa

Mr. Pablo Gago, Focal Point for Youth, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

Ms. Linda Haddad, Focal Point for Youth, Regional Bureau for Arab States

ON BEHALF OF UNDP REGIONAL BUREAU FOR EUROPE AND CIS

Ms. Ivana Savich, Youth Representative of UNDP Civil Society Advisory Board

Ms. Ditta Dolejsiova, Consultant – Member of drafting team, UNDP Youth Strategy

During this session, working groups clustered by region to discuss challenges and priority areas of work with view to developing a forward-looking perspective on youth policy and programming interventions in the areas of civil engagement and political participation (Youth Strategy Outcome 2) as UNDP moves into youth strategy implementation phase. Specifically, the groups sought to make recommendations as to priority areas of work where UNDP should focus and/or intensify its engagement on youth policy and programming at the regional level.

Select priority areas of work identified included:

- Strengthen youth socio/political participation and youth involvement in the framework of decision-making, e.g. through political party inclusion, volunteerism, development of regional and sub-regional platforms, national youth councils and policies, civic education around electoral processes and political mentorship – including for example colocation of youth within emerging institutions, capacity building and training for upstream thought leadership | [AFRICA](#)
- Create an enabling environment for civic engagement and political participation, e.g. through policies and legal framework and political will, capacity building of NGOs, open channels of cooperation between government and youth, creation of structures to facilitate political engagement of youth, leadership skills building, volunteerism strategy and awareness, need to re-build trust and interest of youth to engage in politics which they currently approach with skepticism around corruption and lack of transparency | [ARAB STATES](#)

- Address issues of limited participation of youth in politics and democratic governance due to general distrust in institutions and the effectiveness of legal frameworks, loss of faith due to pervasive corruption, feeling of inability to make a difference or be a means of change, and lack of platforms for meaningful political engagement. Youth in politically unstable or restrictive regimes face additional challenges related to freedom of speech and political voice; significant populations of Asian youth participating in rural-urban migration with limited access to information, justice systems and human rights protection framework, marginalization of youth in remote or mountainous areas, indigenous youth populations | [ASIA AND THE PACIFIC](#)
- Support regional capacity building in formal and non-formal education for civic engagement; create opportunities for South South/ East-East cooperation, sharing of experiences and practices and development of guiding principles for youth policy monitoring; support government to develop participatory approaches and mechanisms with young people and develop UN and UNDP mechanisms facilitating youth participation; facilitate and support social youth led innovations; contribute to the process of transversal youth inputs in public administration, value learning from experience in order to improve the institutional structures in a flexible way; mainstream youth in cross-sectoral policies and strengthen inclusive youth policies | [EUROPE](#)
- Strengthen technical assistance to youth institutes, ministry departments and civil society working on youth issues; strengthen connections and build bridges between government and civil society; support capacity of civil society to put youth issues high on the agenda. Strengthen inter-generational dialogue. Deepen engagement of youth parliamentarians. Support and advocate youth diversity with focus on young indigenous people, afro-descendants, women, LGBTI; deepen linkages between youth platforms and social movements; mentoring; deepen youth public participation and engagement on accountability; strengthen citizen security, particularly for youth-at-risk. | [LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN](#)

Arab States regional working group

Across the working groups, *enablers* of the achievement of these priorities included ICT and social networks and platforms; regional and sub-regional youth networks, organizations and platforms; and data and statistics centers focusing on youth and development in order to inform and promote evidence-based youth policy development.





WORKING GROUPS: SUB-THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS

During this session, working groups clustered around thematic areas of work to identify challenges facing youth in the context of:

- Youth and accountability
- Youth and political processes (parliaments, elections)
- Youth and civic engagement
- Youth and local governance
- Youth and participation in countries in transition, crisis or post-conflict
- Women's empowerment and human rights were mainstreamed into each working group discussion.

Thematic working group on youth participation in countries in transition, crisis or post-conflict

Youth and accountability: there was consensus regarding the need to establish and/or redefine the social contract between people and state in order to better understand the role of people/youth as duty-bearer as well as rights holder, as well as the obligations of institutions in serving the people. Access to information and availability of platforms that





support transparency, accountability and delivery of public services in various sectors, were also cited as critical enablers to an environment of accountability, where youth have an important role as advocates for accountable and responsive governing institutions, representation within public institutions, and as future public and civil servants.

Youth and political processes: colleagues considered that youth are not represented adequately in formal political institutions and processes such as parliaments, political parties, elections, and public administrations; young people are rarely found in formal political leadership positions and in this regard, young women are even more excluded; that young people have been at the forefront of social movements and have contributed to global development dialogues and need to continue to access and participate in political formal processes and institutions to not only represent the interests of youth but also to engage in planning, decision-making and development processes that impact the development and well-being of their communities and nations.

Youth and civic engagement: colleagues reflected on challenges including limited economic and social development in rural areas thus preventing people from engaging in civic engagement activities (in other words, addressing survival issues as a priority); absence of formal and informal networks to enable civic engagement coupled with a lack of overview of formal and informal civic engagement initiatives at the national level and local level, which leads to weak civic engagement and awareness in the country; disinterested government or worse, governments that block civic engagement initiatives (particularly in the advent of an election whereby no voter education or any information campaigns can take place); public media but not social media controlled.

Youth and local governance: the group considered the various challenges that youth face including being seen as 'tokens' within the local government system wherein even in positions of public office, their voices are still not adequately heard or respected; the lack of internship programmes within local government offices which would allow young people to attain necessary skills to be meaningfully employed; not being integral to the development process at the local level in terms of platforms for engagement and providing inputs to decision-makers; lack of clarity as to who within local government represents their constituencies and what their constitutional rights are within the local government.

Youth and participation in countries in transition, crisis or post-conflict contexts: colleagues cited insufficient space and processes for young people to express their needs and also their frustrations; lack of opportunities to contribute to resilience-building, for example participating in and shaping responses to natural & human-made disasters; risk of joining armed / violent groups as they often provide most profitable livelihood option and also attractive social identities, especially for young males. Accordingly, dominant masculinity constructions based on power, violence and dominance are another major challenge for young men and women; insufficient opportunities for political participation, including in peace-building and reconstruction processes; lack of information on employment and education options, on political events and livelihood options.



INNOVATION LABS

PRESENTER

Ms. Jennifer Colville, Policy Advisor, Knowledge, Innovation and Capacity Group, UNDP Bureau for Development Policy

FACILITATORS

Ms. Jennifer Colville, Policy Advisor, UNDP/KICG

Mr. Marc LePage, Knowledge and Innovation Advisor, UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa

Mr. Benjamin Kumpf, Knowledge and Innovation Analyst, Knowledge, Innovation and Capacity Group, UNDP Bureau for Development Policy

Mr. Sherif El-Tokali, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Egypt

Mr. Gert Ceville-Danielsen, Programme Specialist, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre

Ms. Colville opened the session by recalling why innovation is important in order to maintain relevance and how organizations cannot continue to maintain status quo and at the same time, expect different results which are necessitated by the increased complexity and interdependence among development issues that the world faces today. The existence of sectoral agendas and approaches and the need to manage the divergence of interests across sectors requires innovative approaches to working across sectors and more collaborative and adaptive ways to approaching development issues.

Everyone has a different definition of innovation which can range from apps and technology, a different kind of process, platforms such as crowdsourcing, using behavioral insights (using big data to understand behavior) to create policy that influences more productive behavior for society, etc. **UNDP considers the nexus among people, process and technology as the place where innovation begins** and recognizes that innovation implies risk and inherently, a certain element of failure.

*Bokhodir Ayupov,
Project Manager,
Social Innovation
and Volunteerism
in Uzbekistan*



UNDP's principles of innovation include innovating in order to achieve business priorities which means innovating as close as possible to the client; embracing a 'start-up' approach; moving quickly from having ideas to prototyping; continuously scanning the outside environment, adopting ideas from others and testing them in the UNDP context, partnering with others to deliver.

Having reflected on challenges in the area of youth and participation in decision-making and political processes and institutions, participants were divided into five groups with an aim to (1) have exposure to

the initial steps of the innovation process (scan, reflect and ideate) (2) have hands-on experience with various innovation techniques (fore-sighting, service mapping, role playing) to understand development issues more deeply, and (3) develop an innovative solution to a concrete development challenge concerning key outcomes of the Youth Strategy.



INNOVATION PITCHES, FEEDBACK AND POPULAR VOTING

Innovation working group on youth and accountability

INNOVATION BOARD

Mr. Travis Heneveld, UN Accounts Director, Motorola Solutions, Inc.

Ms. Eve Sabbagh, Country Director, BBC Media Action, Tunisia

Mr. Patrick Keuleers, Director, a.i., Democratic Governance Group, UNDP Bureau for Development Policy

Ms. Jennifer Colville, Policy Advisor, UNDP/BDP/KICG

FACILITATORS

Ms. Margaret Chi, Coordinator, Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund, Democratic Governance Group, UNDP Bureau for Development Policy

Mr. Gert Ceville-Danielsen, Programme Specialist, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre

Each of the five groups presented their proposal to an Innovation Board and received questions from the Board as well as from the external on-line youth community. The Innovation Board, Forum participants, and on-line community were asked to consider the following



innovation criteria when listening to and subsequently voting for one's favorite proposal: Clarity of problem statement; involvement of end-user in design and testing; potential impact; measurability of effects; potential impact, measurability of effects, potential for scaling-up and mainstreaming; flexibility in design; buy-in from other partners; ownership of the initiative by at least one UNDP Country Office.

PROJECTS

1. Youth and political participation: **SHEROES**

PRESENTED BY MUNAALROH MUSTAFA ALJALEEL (IRAQ)
AND COLIN SPURWAY (BBC MEDIA ACTION, TANZANIA)

The target audience of this initiative: young women. Young women face challenges in terms of engaging with political institutions and decision making processes, both at national and local levels. Challenges include: lack of capacities, lack of financial resources to run as candidates, legal frameworks that are not gender-sensitive, lack of trust in and knowledge of political institutions, a lack of 'free time' due to multiple roles and responsibilities of women in society and households. Cultural norms and stereotypes further contribute to low levels of representation and participation of young women in political processes.

SHEROES.ORG will provide an interactive platform (combining an app and website) where young women can engage with an on-line community of young women who want to get engaged in politics and/or learn about political processes. The platform provides a selfie, mentor, play and debate corner. **Selfie Corner:** Women take selfies when they engage in real life situations showcasing their negotiating skills and their political development – pictures are aggregated by region / country and combine a story / testimonial highlighting the success / strategy developed by the young women to inspire other to get engaged (stories would mix formal and informal channels of participation. For example: I got elected, I am on the party list, I led a consultation in my village, I organized a demonstration, I am elected, I addressed the local council, I started a petition in my community). The platform further provides incentives to transfer knowledge: when a picture and story are posted, young women can receive a movie – concert ticket, voucher, mobile credit, etc.). **Mentor Corner:** Strong women mentors and role models create their own profile, upload their selfies and provide young women with ideas and useful tips. The corner further provides links to mentors, role models and resource persons to learn from peers, share experiences and strategies, and access to practical knowledge to enhance their communication, negotiating and leadership skills. **Play Corner:** an on-line game is available: young women build their profile and create avatars, and engage on-line at different entry points of the decision-making process to exercise their negotiation and leadership skills. **Debate Corner:** Corner with most trending topics for policy debate affecting young women (i.e abortion, sexual and reproductive health, access to affordable daycare systems), including a voting button (agree or disagree)

When possible, the platform would be combined with face-to-face meetings. The portal could provide a mix of global, regional, national and local platforms. A communication



strategy or campaign engaging national and local radio stations and television shows may enhance outreach to rural areas. Partnership with the private sector will be developed to provide a vast offer of incentives (movie, concert tickets, vouchers, mobile phones).

Question for project developers to further consider: How can we ensure that the initiative will result in impact and not just social-networking?

2. Youth and participation in countries in transition, crisis or post-conflict contexts: **COMMUNITY SELF**

PRESENTED BY LILLA SCHUMICKY-LOGAN (UNDP SOMALIA)

Many young people in crisis, post-conflict, and fragile countries are sharing similar experiences and challenges on supporting the reconstruction of their communities. Often they have no access or starting point to connect to other youth with similar experiences and search for resources that could be utilized for scaling up community rehabilitation. Therefore a network that connects youth to each other, that connects different communities, helps recovery and reconstruction efforts at the level of localities, and provides links to resources, is much needed.

The proposed Global Conflict Management and Response Network (GCMRN) aims to connect youth champions of promoting community self-reliance. Based on a set of criteria, the Board of the GCMRN that is composed of youth champions, private sector, and UN members, will look at communities that have mobilized themselves to support reconstruction and re-establishment. It will identify young champions who have been leading or significantly contributing to these efforts. The idea is to both connect these young champions across the globe to exchange ideas and share experiences and knowledge, as well as connect the network to aid organizations and private sector to provide a platform for submitting proposals and requests for support to scaling up reconstruction and re-establishment initiatives in communities.

The benefit of such a network includes a psychological effect (increased youth confidence and self-perception, diminished feelings of isolation and a sense of belonging to a larger but similar group leading to positive attitude change, being rewarded for efforts which leads to more productivity and positivity that is crucial in crisis environments); resource effect (access to resources, UN / Aid agencies to support evidence based initiatives, simple procedures, quick response to needs; and private sector engagement (best interest and pride to support for PR and marketing purposes, linking private sector to development, part of corporate social responsibility)).

The network will be supported by different actors, including the UN, private sector, NGOs, etc. Members of the network will be able to exchange knowledge and contribute to the reconstruction process, e.g., by making donations to reestablish schools, pay salary for teachers, etc. The network would be particularly suitable for countries in crisis, e.g., in Somalia and Syria.

*Question for project developers to further consider:
What is the motivation of the private sector to support this initiative?*



3. Youth and civic engagement: MODELS FOR CHANGE

PRESENTED BY HAITHAM HASHEM YOUNES (UNDP LIBYA)
AND PHINITH CHANTMALANGSY (UNESCO MOROCCO)

Guided by the motto “Inspiring to Engage”, the project addresses weak civic engagement of youth at the local level resulting in low levels of involvement in community development. The objectives of this project are to increase youth engagement in community development activities and to increase youth capacities to positively influence communities. The project proposes a tiered approach consisting of facilitation of dialogues between different age groups on one hand, and local authorities on the other, on challenges in community development and identification of solutions; and their implementation with the engagement of youth. The project specifically targets youth in disadvantaged, marginalized communities, with low knowledge of democratic and civil concepts, as well as negative perspectives towards community local authorities, thereby necessitating the promotion of motivation to learn and engage through creative means that will create direct links to empowerment.

The project approach comprises a four-step process:

1. This phase will promote broad stakeholder engagement. It will be important to identify prospective young partners among CSOs or within the community at large, as in certain contexts there may be no CSOs in place.
2. This phase will focus on dialogue and consultations involving youth and local authorities, engage groups in consultations on community problems and needs, identify problems, define interventions.
3. This phase will launch action and proposed solutions.
4. Launch wide civic engagement campaign using media products to stimulate community awareness and engagement, and promote and showcase success stories.

Role models will feature strongly at all phases of the project, to advocate and champion efforts and inspire community involvement. Role models need to be recognized, engaged in the identification of needs, consulted in the development of the solution and brought in as partners during implementation, through fostering ideas, mentoring efforts, providing resources and finally showcasing success stories.

Monitoring should be conducted throughout, insuring quality and relevance starting from the identification of partners, identifying issue/s, developing solution/s, implementing project to documenting success stories. To measure the impact of the initiative, baselines for youth participation and engagement in the targeted communities must be available and used as basis for evaluation. Involving local authorities as a partner would encourage them to lead on such initiatives, drawing on the impact and mobilisation of community resource to tackle local problems in a cost effective way.

*Questions for project developers to further consider:
What metrics will be used to measure effectiveness in the short term?
How could this initiative be up-scaled to ensure that results go beyond the initial pilot. How will youth with disabilities be engaged?*



4. Youth and accountability: **YOUTH BRIDGE**

PRESENTED BY MARINA MALKHASYAN (UNDP ARMENIA)

This project proposes to address corruption associated with lack of information and accountability. The team suggested creating a platform with information on rights, laws and policies concerning the public services that are most prone to corruption: health care, education and employment. Thanks to this platform, young people will obtain information on how to protect themselves against corruption. The platform will also allow whistle blowing on cases of corruption and will be connected to other institutions working in these areas as well as to media (e.g., academia, Ministry of Labour, civil society organizations). The problem areas raised through the reporting process will serve as basis for policy formulation. The accessibility and transparency of information on the roles and responsibilities of respective parties in a common space may have a sobering effect for many of those exercising corruption.

The development and testing of the platform will be done by young people. An app might accompany the platform. Young people will find out about the platform from the information included on forms, documents and receipts from the health care, education or employment offices.

The impact of the initiative may be measured at least by the following: (i) young people report that the information provided on the platform helped to protect them from violation of their rights; (ii) the issues reported on the platform reach the policy makers and are included into policy formulation process; (iii) transparency of information regarding the duties and responsibilities of various stakeholders that come together on the same platform can trigger accountability and raise a sense of collective responsibility towards the right-holders.

Once successfully tested by young people, the platform can be expanded and serve for other population groups as well. If this platform is successful in one sector, it can be easily replicated in other sectors. The platform opens possibilities of partnership with a variety of partners both existing and new.

*Questions for project developers to further consider:
How will people be brought to the platform whether it is
an on-line or mobile platform? How is the platform unique?*

5. Youth and local governance: **YOUTH INK IT**

PRESENTED BY LAURISTAN CHOY (GUYANA) AND
MOHAMED JALLOH (RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT, SIERRA LEONE)

Young people are not seen as equal partners and are often used to propel local agendas. Young people are also often seen as tokens within the local government system and therefore their perspectives are not genuinely taken into account. This is exacerbated by the fact that young people are not always aware who represents their constituency. There is no internship programme within many local government bureaucracies so local governments do not have jobs that young people can apply for in order to gain the necessary skills and requisite in order to be meaningfully employed.



Taking into account all of the above, the proposal 'Youth Ink It' attempts to create an impetus for greater youth participation within the local government system through advocating for inclusive dialogue which will develop paths for greater participation by youth within local government. The project will start with a massive local campaign about Youth Ink It on social media, through e-surveys, household surveys, radio programmes, etc. A forum on local governance issues will follow including youth and representatives of local government with an aim to ensure the meaningful participation of youth and an enabling environment for developing dialogue between local government and youth in various communities. The forum will encourage a public commitment by representatives of local government to listen to and take into account perspectives of youth and to work together in defining initiatives that advance youth participation.

The anticipated impact of the project is to determine to what extent youth-designed programmes supported by local governments increase meaningful youth participation. Young people will have a strong role in the implementation of the project and in this regard, it will be important to bring in the data revolution to see how youth can help to monitor the very initiative that they helped to conceive. Monitoring will involve assessing processes, analyzing perceptions (specifically, changes in perception), measuring diversity, etc. and theories of change will be identified for each of these processes. Online tools and mobile analytics will support measurement of the success of the project.

Questions for project developers to further consider:

The project assumes a level of reciprocity from the local government.

How can you assess the local government's ability to 'give back'?

What is the feedback loop four months in project implementation?

And the winner is...

Patrick Keuleers recalled that the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF), which had made a significant investment in the end of 2011 towards supporting more

than 30 country projects on youth, participation and governance over the 2012-2014 DGTTF project cycle, would support the development of the winning proposal up to US\$30K, as well as other proposals with potential, for possible inclusion in the DGTTF pipeline.

The proposal that received the most votes by popular voting was **SHEROES**.

All groups were asked to continue to develop their proposal concept note for further consideration of technical and financial support from BDP.

*Presentation
of the winning
proposal:
SHEROES!*



CLOSING

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Patrick Keuleers, Director, a.i., Democratic Governance Group,
UNDP Bureau for Development Policy

In closing, Mr. Keuleers reflected on the newly approved UNDP youth strategy as an important corporate commitment around which the organization will align itself, and which now needs to be operationalized through action plans at national, regional and global levels, and with the full engagement of youth and various social groups in the design, implementation and monitoring of these projects and initiatives. Mr. Keuleers recalled that UNDP takes a flexible approach to the definition of youth, adjusting to national and regional contexts, and advocating a holistic approach toward social inclusion of youth in all its diversity. Emphasizing the alignment of the youth strategy to the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and the UN Youth System Wide Action Plan on Youth, Mr. Keuleers extended a special thanks to Ahmad Alhendawi for rallying UN partners from diagnosis to strategy and dedicated action to advance the global youth agenda.



*Patrick Keuleers,
Director a.i., Democratic
Governance Group,
UNDP Bureau for
Development Policy*

Several points of discussion resonated through the two day Forum, sending a clear sign to UNDP that these are areas that need priority attention.

There is a need to work more with youth between the ages of 15-18 years, to make sure young people are aware of their rights and duties in their communities, as this knowledge will give impetus to civic engagement. More investments in civic education are essential so that young people fully understand and can realize the practice of citizenship. At the same time, there is a need to learn more about forms of social participation that youth are pursuing in lieu of traditional forms of participation through political structures and parties, which are no longer considered adequate or representative.

Capacity building – in the sense of capacity strengthening and behavioral change, and not limited to training activities- was also identified as essential as the question was raised – beyond training and capacity building, what comes next? Here, more work needs to be done to support an enabling environment and foster opportunities for youth to apply new skills and ways of thinking; to create platforms for communication between youth and political structures. It will also be important to identify role models, local and community leaders, and reach deep into communities to work with marginalized youth.

Throughout, there was a resounding sentiment that change begins at the local and community level, and therefore approaches must be bottom-up and needs-driven, and fully participatory. We should also shine light on and share successful localized strategies and local innovation with bringing results and innovation to scale.



Big data and mobile analytics were discussed as having the potential to transform mechanisms of accountability and monitoring, particularly in the post-2015 development agenda; to make UNDP's work more evidence-based and evidence-driven to ultimately inform policy; to identify whether anticipated behavioral change has taken place.

Across all of these entry points, value-driven partnerships, and a strong intra-sectorial vision among partners, are key.

Reflecting on how to move the strategy to implementation, Mr. Keuleers emphasized the need to develop genuine and innovative partnerships, stressing that UNDP worked hard to engage the voices of youth partners and stakeholders in the development of the strategy and will continue to do so in the implementation and monitoring phases.

A global implementation plan is foreseen that will set the stage for regional and national programming. Given rising expressions of interest, UNDP is already looking into the establishment of a community of practitioners, launch of the strategy and/or a similar event in other regions, and the establishment of a youth support facility to ensure the availability of programming guidance as well as resources in terms of technical expertise, funding and access to knowledge and networks. Advocacy around the new strategy will be equally important and Mr. Keuleers encouraged forum participants to assist in disseminating the strategy to partners (the strategy will be made available shortly in all UN languages) and lobby for broader stakeholder engagement in the implementation and monitoring phase.

UNDP will continue to ensure active involvement in and presence at important global events such as the First Global Forum on Youth Policy to convene in Baku in October 2014, and will continue to actively promote the voice of youth in discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

Thanking all partners involved in the convening of this momentous Forum, Mr. Keuleers closed the event.



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UN System Wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP): <http://www.undg.org/docs/13099/UN%20System-wide%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Youth%20%283%29.pdf>

Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth (OSGEY):
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United Nations Volunteer Programme: www.unv.org

Youth policy (global knowledge base and community): www.youthpolicy.org



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