UNITED NATIONS

SYSTEM-WIDE ACTION PLAN ON YOUTH

SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you for participating in the online survey conducted by the Inter-agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) in July-August 2012 to obtain inputs to the development of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP). Over **13,500 respondents** from **186 countries** participated in the survey and we are very grateful for each and every contribution we received, which proved invaluable to the development of the Plan. We are happy to announce, that the Youth-SWAP has been endorsed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination at its spring session on 5-6 April 2013.

The results of the survey identified young people's development priorities and confirmed many of the approaches adopted by the UN system to promote youth development. The survey results served as input to develop the System-wide Action Plan on Youth. We would like to share the results with you to demonstrate how your proposals helped define the issues highlighted in the Youth-SWAP.

WHAT IS THE YOUTH-SWAP?

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has made working with and for youth a priority of his Five-year Action Agenda, and has called for the development of a System-

wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP). The Youth-SWAP will guide the work of the whole UN system to promote young people's human rights and development needs. It derives its mandate from the World Programme of Action for Youth and other inter-governmental agreements.

The survey conducted in 2012 contained questions on each of the thematic areas identified by the Secretary-General for an Action Plan on Youth: Employment, Entrepreneurship, Political inclusion, Citizenship, Protection of rights, and Education, including Education on Sexual and Reproductive Health. The Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development proposed "Health" as an additional thematic area for the Youth-SWAP. While questions relative to health were already included in the questionnaire, this topic was considered as too important not to constitute a thematic area by itself. Moreover, it was agreed to use the term "civic engagement" rather than "citizenship" since the former is more inclusive, and to refer to "Comprehensive Sexuality Education" (CSE) rather than "education on sexual and reproductive health".

CSE is a broader concept and also addresses issues such as life skills. It is the concept now commonly used within the UN system.

It is understood that the thematic areas touch upon, and leverage the potential and benefits of UN work in other areas affecting youth development, such as sustainable development and climate change and culture among others. Information and communication technology (ICT) is seen as a cross-cutting tool to accelerate progress in all areas of the Youth-SWAP.

NEXT STEPS

The Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development is currently developing an implementation framework for the Youth-SWAP and several regional inter-agency networks have already started the process of developing regional implementation plans for the Youth-SWAP. We will keep you posted on further developments!

BRIEF SUMMARY: MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE SURVEY

Thematic Area	Key challenges and concerns highlighted	Proposed solutions
Employment and Entrepreneur-ship	Lack of job opportunities Education and training do not match the skills required by employers Job without rights and entitlements	Increase training and vocational education Increase entrepreneurship training Easier access to financial services
Education	Poor quality and availability of education Curricula poorly linked to knowledge and skills needed for work	Support initiatives enabling a smooth transition from education to the labour market Promote non-formal and formal education Make education more affordable
Education on Sexual & Reproductive Health	Lack of effective curricula and learning/teaching materials on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) Teachers and workers not adequately trained to deliver CSE to youth	Strengthen content, quality and coverage of CSE Make CSE a mandatory part of primary and secondary school curricula
Protection of rights	Lack of legal framework promoting human rights Lack of awareness about human rights Poverty	Improve access to youth-friendly information about rights and how to exercise them Increase awareness and implement programmes about human rights
Political inclusion	Lack of support and commitment toward young people Ignorance and indifference of people in position of authority Public institutions not leading by example	Promote youth leadership, capacities and skills Work with political parties and other relevant institutions ti improve young people's participation in political parties and relevant institutions
Civic engagement	Limited opportunities for the effective participation of youth in decision-making Lack of trust between youth and government institutions and political parties	Improve the quality of global citizenship though civic education on human rights, civic engagement, gender equality, peace and sustainable development

ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY BY THEMATIC AREA

EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In the area of employment and entrepreneurship, most respondents pointed to a **lack of job opportunities, jobs without rights and entitlements** and to the fact that **education and training do not match skills required by employers**. Many of you identified discrimination as being of particular concern to young people. Among the types of discrimination identified were gender discrimination as well as discrimination based on race, skin colour, ethnicity, religion, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) status.**.**

To promote youth employment you recommended to **improve training and vocational education in the classroom and workplace**. To foster youth entrepreneurship, you suggested **establishing entrepreneurship training and providing easier access to financial services including loans, savings and other youth-friendly financial products**.

The employment and entrepreneurship sections of the Youth-SWAP build on the results of the survey. Its overarching goal revolves around the **promotion of greater opportunities for youth to secure decent work and thus contribute to poverty reduction and social inclusion over the life-cycle**. The promotion of gender equality in the world of work, the development of targeting mechanisms to reach disadvantaged youth and the establishment of platforms for dialogue with and participation of representatives of young people are three features that cut across the measures and commitments of this section (commitments 1 to 4). Initiatives linking education and training with the world of work are specifically addressed in the Education section of the Youth-SWAP.

PROTECTION OF RIGHTS

Most survey participants thought the main priorities related to youth and the protection of rights were the **lack of legal frameworks to promote and protect human rights, the lack of awareness about human rights** and **poverty**.

To promote the protection of rights of youth, you recommended to **increase awareness and implement programmes about human rights,** and **to improve access to youth friendly information about rights**.

Commitment 5 of the Youth-SWAP follows this recommendation and aims to **support governments to take action towards safeguarding and promoting the human rights of youth**. The related measures are increasing the implementation of existing human rights instruments to strengthen the rights of youth, identifying potential gaps in existing human rights instruments applicable to youth, and improving access to information on, for and by young people.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The most important priorities identified by respondents in the area of youth and citizenship were **the limited opportunities for the effective participation of youth in decision making,** as well as **the lack of trust between youth and government institutions and political parties**.

The main solution identified was **to promote and improve the quality of global citizenship though civic education on human rights, civic engagement, gender equality, peace and sustainable development**.

Commitment 6 of the Youth-SWAP focuses on **promoting young people's inclusive civic engagement at local, national, regional and global level**. This involves building capacities of youth organizations and networks, the UN system, and a wide range of stakeholders, including policy makers, academia, civil society organizations, media and the private sector.

POLITICAL INCLUSION

Most respondents thought the biggest challenges related to youth and political inclusion were **the lack of support and commitment towards young people, the ignorance/indifference of people in positions of authority, and public institutions not leading by example (lack of transparency and merit in accessing political participation)**.

The main solution identified **the promotion of youth leadership, capacities and skills,** as well as **working with political parties and other relevant institutions**.

Commitment 7 of the Youth-SWAP ensures **support to young people's participation in inclusive political processes and democratic practices**. This is complemented by commitment 8, which relates to **support to young people's inclusion in decision making and in all levels of development processes**. The related measures focus on creating an enabling environment for young people's participation, promoting their leadership skills and capacities (in particular that of young women), ensuring young people's participation in UN governance and decision-making as well as their participation in humanitarian and peacebuilding initiatives.

EDUCATION

Most respondents thought the main challenge related to youth and education was that **curricula were poorly linked to knowledge and skills needed for work**. **The poor quality and availability of education**, especially for those from the poorest households, was also a major concern.

Making education more affordable while supporting initiatives enabling a smooth transition from education to the labour market was recommended as a solution, as was the **promotion of non-formal and informal education, by emphasizing its recognition and funding**.

Commitment 9 of the Youth-SWAP attempts to address these issues by strengthening the capacity of countries to **develop high quality inclusive education, learning and training policies and programmes for young people**. At the international level, the UN system

can play a leadership role by **influencing the global agenda on inclusive, gender sensitive and quality education for young people** (Commitment 10).

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

The majority of respondents answered that the most important issues related to youth and education on sexual and reproductive health were **the lack of effective curricula and learning/teaching materials on comprehensive sexuality education**, as well as **the fact that teachers and health care workers were not adequately trained to deliver comprehensive sexuality education to youth**.

The main recommendations were to **strengthen content, quality and coverage of comprehensive sexuality education**, including information on family planning and contraception, and to **make comprehensive sexuality education a mandatory part of primary and secondary school curricula**.

Commitment 11 of the Youth-SWAP supports efforts to **provide young people with evidence-based comprehensive sexuality education**. Recognizing that both formal and non-formal education programmes have particular potential and challenges with regard to quality, and teachers may lack training and comfort for teaching this material, **the UN will concentrate on teacher training to deliver effective comprehensive sexuality education**.

HEALTH

Commitments 12 and 13 of the Youth-SWAP focus on **supporting governments to develop and enforce gender-sensitive laws and policies that promote and protect the health of all young people**, as well as **supporting their efforts to improve the capacity of health systems**. These will ultimately contribute to the overall goal of ensuring that young people, on an inclusive, equitable and universal basis, enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

MORE INFORMATION

For further information, please contact us: youth@un.org

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