



Working Together

**Creating a Fabric
of Partnerships for
Sustainable Youth
Employment**

**State of the YES Campaign 2004
YES Mexico**

**YES Campaign (2002-2012)
Education Development Center, Inc.**



inside front cover



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INTRODUCTION

The Challenge

The world population has reached 6 billion. Let us not forget that 5 out of those 6 billion live in developing countries, and that for many of them the great scientific and technical achievements of our era might as well be taking place on another planet. There are at present 1 billion people in the world between the ages of 15 and 24. Eighty-five percent of these—nearly 900 million young people—live in developing countries.

—Kofi Annan, Secretary-General, United Nations
September 1999



Consider this:

- Over the next three decades the global labor force between the ages of 15 and 24 will increase in sheer numbers by another 1.2 billion. Most of this growth will be in developing countries.
- One of the greatest challenges facing the world is to generate productive work opportunities for the young people in developing countries and enhance the skill level of youth in developed countries.
- Out of 6 billion of us, 1.3 billion live on less than a \$1 a day, and 3 billion live on under \$2 a day.

Welcome to the YES Mexico Summit

**By Janet Whitla, President and CEO
Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)**

Since its founding in 1958 as an NGO and a nonprofit applied research and development organization, Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), has been dedicated to helping people of all ages and in all parts of the world to build a sustainable, healthy, and empowered human future. More than 350 EDC projects are now under way in 50 countries. The organization serves as a catalyst for improvement and renewal, with activities ranging from programs in formal and non-formal education, technical assistance, institutional reform, community development, and basic research, evaluation, and knowledge dissemination.

Despite their diversity, EDC projects share a central philosophy: that learning is the basis for human development and that learners must be active, problem-solving participants in the process. We have always held a special commitment to youth and to initiatives that help them acquire and apply the knowledge and skills they need to become productive and active leaders in their communities.

Four centuries ago, the philosopher Francis Bacon declared, “Knowledge is power,” and since then, the struggle to access and utilize knowledge has defined human development in ever more powerful ways. Indeed EDC views access to knowledge as a basic human right. We work to support people around the globe in connecting and learning with one another as they apply knowledge to meet the needs of their communities. EDC values connections and networks that promote dignity and the growth of opportunity and hope.

This set of values and this history of action, combined with our goal to bring people together to develop shared tasks and a shared vision, led to the creation of the Youth Employment Summit Campaign. EDC recognized the urgency of ensuring employment for youth around the world, and the need for a global project that would engage and empower youth, joining them with other stakeholders and policymakers to find practical ways to address this great challenge.

Through the mobilization of key actors, EDC is not only working for positive change for youth around the world but toward a larger mission of strengthening human capacity and possibility for a better future for all people.

This is a learning Summit. We look forward to learning from all who attend, and contributing our own experience as part of an open and ongoing process for addressing successfully youth employment in countries worldwide.



“As EDC has grown increasingly larger and more diverse, I am often asked, ‘What unites the entire organization?’ I think our most fundamental conviction is that learning is the liberating force in human development. It is also the most fundamental behavior, for we are all learners.”

—Janet Whitla



Vision for the Next Eight Years: Building Partnerships and Capacity

Dear YES Family,

It gives me great pleasure to share the first-ever State of the YES Campaign Report with you. It has been two years since we gathered in Alexandria for the inaugural YES Summit; since then, we have laid important groundwork in our decade-long Campaign to fulfill the ambitious goals we set forth in the Alexandria Declaration (see page 12.)

In this report you will discover how the youth-led YES Networks in 69 countries are working innovatively and collaboratively with diverse groups to initiate new policies and programs, and to implement projects. They truly deserve your full support as we intensify Campaign activities and programs in the coming years. The Networks are uniquely poised, as well, to advance the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals, which focus on making fundamental improvements around the world in the realms of health, economy, and education.

Our YES Networks are leading efforts to build sustainable infrastructures in their countries to promote entrepreneurship. It is essential that governments, business, and NGOs offer the skills, services, and other resources our young people need and deserve to become self-employed. We know that we cannot rely on the private and public sectors alone to provide productive jobs for the world's 1 billion young people (14–24 years) and 1.5 billion children (0–14 years). We must help youth create their own employment opportunities and build their own futures.

The YES Networks provide an exceptional model. A key element of the YES philosophy is that we invite, encourage, and require the involvement of local youth. With youth leaders at the vanguard, the Country Networks are driven by inspiration and innovation, as well as a very practical focus on bottom-up strategies that have proven successful. This approach ensures that the actions we help initiate will continue over the foreseeable future.

It is our hope and intention that when the YES Campaign concludes at the end of 2012, we can look back and see the evolution of vibrant, connected, and effective YES Networks—innovative partnerships that have worked to fill gaps in the youth employment services and initiated youth-friendly policies in their home countries.

To achieve these goals, we need to build the partnerships at the global level and fulfill the promise at the country and local level. We need to move past the barriers that keep us from working together, and recognize the inescapable truth that no one person or institution can succeed alone. We need to translate commitment and vision into resources and effective programs. We need to ensure that we listen to the solutions suggested by those closest to the problem. And we need to build the knowledge and capacities of local youth and continue to raise the call to action.

In solidarity,



Poonam Ahluwalia
Director, Youth Employment Summit

Achievements 1998–2004

- Forty consultations held to build awareness, engage youth and other stakeholders, identify sectors for employment, provide training and workshops, and organize Summits, Forums, and YES Networks
- More than 100 in-country workshops and consultations to launch YES Networks, organize and plan country strategies, and run training camps
- More than 45 projects launched by the YES Networks
- Launched YES Academy, a hub for youth employment (India)
- Initiated five pilot projects in several countries (2002–2004)

Goals 2004–2006

- Initiate at least one pilot project in each YES Network country
- Increase private sector participation
- Invite major donors and international organizations to provide short-term internship programs in YES Network countries
- Build global- and country-level synergies with various UN agencies
- Build the capacity of the YES Networks to initiate and implement programs and projects

Guideposts for Action: The 6Es YES Campaign Framework

- **Employability**
- **Employment Creation**
- **Equity**
- **Entrepreneurship**
- **Environmental Sustainability**
- **Empowerment**

BEGINNINGS: THE ORIGINS OF YES AND ITS RESOLUTIONS

The Origins of the Youth Employment Summit

The Youth Employment Summit (YES) began as a response to two powerful and ominous global realities. First, youth populations worldwide are burgeoning while employment opportunities for young people are diminishing. The second is the absence of a coordinated, international effort to address the pervasive problems caused by widespread youth unemployment and underemployment.

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), spearheaded the founding of YES as a culmination of more than a decade of research. In its landmark *Compass to Workforce Development* in 1998, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), EDC identified 20 best practices in workforce development and included a toolkit to help policymakers, donor organizations, and NGOs replicate these practices around the world.

Founded in 1958, EDC is an international nonprofit organization committed to promoting education, public health, and sustainable development around the world. EDC conducts research and implements programs in such areas as early child development, K–12 education, health promotion, workforce preparation, and institutional reform.


After developing the toolkit and conducting regional workshops in Namibia, India, and Peru, the EDC team recognized the need to intensify attention and resources to build youth employment. In too many developing countries around the world, young people had abandoned hope of finding decent employment, and the results were obvious: youth working in low-paying and dead-end jobs; large-scale emigration; and high rates of crime, poverty, and homelessness.

EDC President Janet Whitla believed that the organization could be a catalyst to focus global attention on the destructive effects of worldwide youth unemployment and to lay the groundwork for viable solutions. In 1998, EDC formed a small leadership team to explore the issue, frame the problem, and propose a structure to move forward. The original objectives of YES were to:

- Raise Global Awareness
- Build Leadership Commitment
- Develop a Knowledge Base
- Make a Call for Action

EDC began by forming an Organizing Committee and an Advisory Group made up of world and youth leaders with unique insight into the issue of youth unemployment. With EDC serving as the Alexandria Summit Secretariat, the YES Organizing Committee began laying the groundwork for the September 2002 global summit in Alexandria, Egypt. To prepare for the inaugural Summit, YES conducted more than 40 consultations around the world.

From its inception, YES has held the unwavering conviction that young people themselves are the greatest asset in the struggle for productive and sustainable youth employment. Rather than simply relying on governments and the private sector to create jobs, youth can control their own futures by learning to become entrepreneurs. Young people from more than 60 countries contributed to the development of the YES movement, the Alexandria Summit (2002), and the resulting Decade Campaign of Action. Young YES leaders also initiated and built what was to become the centerpiece of the YES movement: the YES Networks, which have formed in 69 countries.



“The Summit and the subsequent Campaign are designed to do three things: One, build leadership and commitment to action from a wide variety of partners; Two, empower these partners with the knowledge needed to take effective action; and Three, make a compelling call for global collaborative action.”

*—Robert B. Reich,
YES Organizing Committee Member
and former U.S. Secretary of Labor
December 1998*



Voices of Youth Shaping the YES Agenda

One year before the Alexandria Summit (2002), young leaders from 27 countries traveled to EDC headquarters in Boston to plan for the inaugural event. During that planning meeting, they issued this declaration:

“We wish to declare our commitment to the Youth Employment Summit (YES 2002) and its goal of working so that an additional 500 million young adults, especially youth facing poverty, can have productive and sustainable livelihoods by 2012. We endorse YES 2002 because we identify with its vision, mission and objectives and reaffirm that they are modeled in the best interests of the world’s youth.

“We hereby outline our vision for YES 2002 that will launch a Decade Campaign of Action at the Summit to be hosted in Alexandria, Egypt between 11th to 15th September, 2002.

“YES 2002 will be a platform for youth and diverse stakeholders to come together in the spirit of partnership and collaboration as members of the Global Alliance for Youth Employment to secure productive and sustainable livelihoods for the youth of the world. The Summit in Alexandria will be a key opportunity to promote intergenerational dialogue, participation and decision-making for youth employment and other global issues related to it.

“YES 2002 will be a working Summit, where participants will outline and commit to bold Plans of Action, which when implemented, will make a significant difference in the lives of youth everywhere.

“As never before, our voices are being heard and our offer of collaboration is beginning to be accepted. We believe that we are assets to our nations and can contribute significantly to their development; YES 2002 will be a springboard from which we will leap to that ideal towards which we continue to strive.

“We commit ourselves to the Summit’s call for action and support. We recognize our role as partners and accept our responsibility to be accountable for results. We accept a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We endeavor to work for a more just and equitable world, one where sustainability is synonymous with productivity.

“Our planet is plagued and burdened by unemployment, AIDS, environmental degradation, extreme hunger and poverty, acts of violence and terrorism. The Youth Employment Summit is being realized at a critical point in our history. It is a movement whose time has come. As citizens of one world, we need to seize the opportunities it presents to us.

“Let YES 2002 be a Summit remembered for fostering partnerships and networks defined by action and accomplishment.”

Alexandria Summit, September 2002

The Alexandria Summit, hosted by the Arab Republic of Egypt, launched a Decade Campaign for Youth Employment under the banner of “6Es,” six priority areas for action: Employability, Employment Creation, Equity, Entrepreneurship, Environmental Sustainability, and Empowerment. More than 1,600 delegates from 120 countries including 75 government delegations attended the Alexandria Summit co-chaired by Egypt’s first lady Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak and former U.S. President William J. Clinton.

The confluence of world leaders, government representatives, NGOs, and youth organizations at the Alexandria Summit provided a powerful platform for meeting the Campaign’s first objective—raising global awareness of the issue of youth employment. The Summit also provided a model for the unique coalitions that form the heart of the Campaign and for bringing the perspectives of youth into high-level discussions on global economics and policy.



YES’s 6 Es

Employability

Employment Creation

Equity

Entrepreneurship

Environmental Sustainability

Empowerment



The Alexandria Declaration

We the participants in the first Youth Employment Summit (YES 2002) meeting at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, in Alexandria, Egypt, hereby reaffirm our profound commitment to a decade-long global campaign for the creation of hundreds of millions of additional opportunities for sustainable livelihoods for youth all over the world. A paradigm shift on Employment is needed. Quality is as important as the quantity of jobs created. The poor, living on less than a dollar a day, cannot be locked into a life of deprivation. We must move from unskilled to skilled occupations, from low paying to high paying jobs, from subsidized public employment to sustainable productive livelihoods.

We recognize that these goals can only be met if all actors agree to address a number of important issues: peace, fair trade, market access, technology transfer, capital flows and poverty eradication. This will require redoubled efforts from the entire international community, and donors must meet their commitments and give special attention to projects and programs for youth employment. Convergence and greater synergies between different initiatives and programs dealing with youth employment will benefit youth.

While national governments have a special responsibility for according overriding priority to youth employment and for creating the necessary policy framework, we recognize that all segments of society must collaborate to empower youth to become the artisans of their own future.

To that end, we engage ourselves to support vigorous action in each of the following areas:

Employability: To ensure access for all youth to appropriate education and training followed by adequate support during the transition to work, regardless of their location or background. We cannot confront the challenges of tomorrow with yesterday's skills. Educational institutions must show unprecedented imagination and vision, using new tools for new times. They must impart marketable skills, promote self-esteem and shape a worldview that embraces the new, opens up to the other, and rises to the challenge of the untried.

Employment Creation: To adopt those policies that will encourage job-led economic growth, reduce the bias towards capital, and foster the institutional structures that can provide the advantages of scale at both the production and marketing phases of micro-enterprises supported by micro-credit. The corporate sector has a major responsibility in supporting micro-enterprises and self-employed youth through mechanisms of franchising, outsourcing and buy-back arrangements.

Equity: To provide equal opportunities for all to realize their full potential. Education, health and nutrition are fundamental rights for all. Special attention must be given to the needs of the disabled, the rural, and the marginalized groups in society, and above all, to young women, whether in education or when entering the labor force for the first time, and who in many parts of the world still suffer from discriminatory barriers. No society has truly advanced by depriving itself of the talents and abilities of half of its population.

Entrepreneurship: To engender the special creativity of youthful entrepreneurs, who see social and economic opportunities where others only see problems. Entrepreneurs, whether they are working in the villages or in the capital markets, are the visionaries who generate livelihoods for themselves and for others. We need to encourage, nurture and support their quest for the new and the untried.

Environmental Sustainability: To seek sustainable employment opportunities based on attention to water, land, energy, the atmosphere, biodiversity and eco-system management. It would be shortsighted to destroy our environment in the quest for transient employment opportunities.

Empowerment: To harness the uncommon opportunities of the ICT revolution to include the excluded and reach the unreached in terms of knowledge and skill empowerment. The whole constellation of institutional arrangements from credit to resource-use, from marketing to connectivity and content, must be structured in a way that empowers youth in their quest for sustainable livelihoods.

We recognize that solutions to problems must be homegrown and responsive to the particular socio-cultural and economic context. But we can all learn from the experiences of others, and derive strength from our common purpose. Thus, national campaigns through the YES Country Networks must be embedded into a global campaign that will help share knowledge and experience. The Global Knowledge Resource of the campaign should help make the best practices of the few into the common practices of the many.

The cost of inaction on the issues of youth employment is too dreadful to contemplate. We must act now to start the process of creating this better future. We shall act now and in the future.

The goals are inspiring, but the tasks are enormous. To those who ask, can it be done? We say with youth organizations and networks spearheading this global campaign . . . YES!

It can be done. It must be done. It will be done!

The Alexandria Declaration has served as an organizing framework of the YES Campaign for the last two years. As a follow-up to the Alexandria Summit, the YES Campaign Committee held a meeting of 30 members in Vienna in April 2003 to discuss the goals of the campaign. The group agreed to sharpen the focus of the campaign to two central goals:

- Building the capacity of young people to be leaders and entrepreneurs
- Building an entrepreneurial culture to promote self-employment

In December 2003 the Hyderabad YES Regional Forum, held in India, attracted delegates from 44 countries and inaugurated the YES Academy—a hub for youth employment [see page 18].

The YES Campaign Structure

- **YES Campaign Committee and Advisors, including EDC Vice Presidents**
- **YES HQ: EDC's Boston-area office and other YES team members: Regional Coordinators; YES Academy staff based in India; project staff based in Zambia, India, and Georgia**
- **YES Networks: based in 69 countries**
- **Collaborating Institutions**

THE PRESENT: BUILDING A WORLDWIDE NETWORK

The YES Campaign Strategic Approach

The YES Campaign has adopted a three-pronged strategy to achieve the ambitious goals of the Decade Campaign of Action: 1) Outreach and Engagement, 2) Knowledge Building, and 3) Capacity Building.

Outreach and Engagement


Raising global awareness of the challenges facing youth—and the potential solutions—has served as a central conviction of the YES Campaign since its inception. Without coordinated action, billions of youth worldwide face a future without hope or prospects. The YES Campaign organizes global summits in the belief that international gatherings that are attended by donors, policymakers, media, employers, NGOs, and youth organizations have the ability to focus global attention and action on the urgent need for partnerships for youth employment. The inaugural YES Summit in Alexandria, Egypt, demonstrated the effectiveness of this strategy. The event attracted widespread media coverage and served as a catalyst for similar meetings carried out by the YES Networks and other partner organizations. In order to sustain this momentum, the YES Campaign intends to hold a global summit every two years. At the local and regional levels YES Networks hold workshops, consultations, and other events. These events are organized in partnership with governments, NGOs, and youth organizations.

Beyond simply raising awareness of the problem of youth unemployment, YES events are designed to showcase solutions—to be learning events that highlight “what works.”

Each of these events brings together diverse stakeholders to network, engage in dialogue, share effective practices, participate in capacity-building workshops, and build commitment to action.

In a conservative estimate, a YES Campaign event is held nearly every month somewhere in the world, initiated either by a YES Network or its partner organizations.

Since the Alexandria Youth Employment Summit, the YES Headquarters has conducted the YES Regional Forum for South and Southeast Asia in partnership with the government of Andhra Pradesh from December 14–18, 2003. In addition, it has also participated and made substantive contributions to such global events as the GEF Assembly—China; THIMUN—The Hague; UNEP—Kenya; Y Care—London; UN GA’s Committee for Social Development—New York; and Expert Group Meetings in ILO, and UN-HABITAT in Geneva and Nairobi, respectively.



For example, many of the YES Networks have organized high-profile, in-country meetings to raise awareness of the youth employment issues among key stakeholders—such as government officials, NGOs, employers, and the media. Several of these events have been co-sponsored by government ministries. In Iran in 2003, a coalition including the YES Network, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the National Youth Organization, and NGOs hosted the Tehran YES Regional Session including more than 150 representatives from several Middle East and Northern African countries. The event drew attention to regional problems in youth employment. Seventy-five percent of Iranian youth between the ages of 15 and 29 are unemployed, according to a report published by YES Iran, and the average youth income is between \$80 and \$120 per month.

Other YES Networks have employed some innovative strategies to raise awareness of the issue of youth unemployment. In Tanzania, for example, the YES Campaign message was carried to all 149 districts in the country over a 129-day period. Honorable Dr. Ali Mohamed Shein, the Vice President of the Republic of Tanzania, served as the official starter of the “Uhuru Torch Race” at Kaitaba Stadium in Karega Region. Members of YES Tanzania expected widespread response and coverage in the media. “We estimate that over 90 percent of the Tanzanian population will know about YES Campaign—as the race involves almost everybody and is getting good media attention,” reported Kaanaeli Kaale, YES Country Coordinator—Tanzania. “The government’s plan for promoting the YES Campaign is excellent.”

Knowledge Building

Efforts to address the challenge of youth unemployment are often stymied by the lack of information about effective strategies, programs and policies, training and tools, resources, and an understanding of current employment opportunities that are working successfully around the world. The YES Campaign believes that access to knowledge is a basic human right. This principle drives YES Campaign’s actions to produce and disseminate free tools and publications to target groups that have traditionally lacked access to such resources. Since 2002, YES has built a multi-media knowledge bank of “what works” in creating sustainable livelihoods—studies, best practices, field reports, and toolkits.

YES Publications

YES Campaign has commissioned and authored a number of publications over the last two years:

- Research Papers by theme, sector, and region. Since 2002, more than 48 publications have been developed outlining effective practices in key thematic areas, such as renewable energy, water and sanitation, rural development, information and communication technologies, and HIV/ AIDS. Eminent researchers and practitioners have contributed immensely to the knowledge base of the Campaign. At the country level, YES Networks have developed specific reports drawing on national resources and focusing on national issues and needs in youth

employment. These reports are presented in the YES Campaign events and on the YES Web site.

- *YES Network Report*: This Report is a semi-annual summary of the development and achievements of YES Networks.
- *YES Insider Newsletter* and the *Renewable Energy Newsletter*: The Insider is a monthly e-bulletin of YES Network achievements, opportunities, and events disseminated via global networks. The *Renewable Energy Newsletter* is a semi-annual publication developed for identifying innovative technologies, and showcasing practical and feasible initiatives in the sector.
- **Practical Toolkits**: Seven practical, hands-on toolkits were developed for capacity building of the YES Networks. The toolkits focus on everything from leadership building to fundraising to renewable energy entrepreneurship. All of these toolkits are step-by-step guides emphasizing the processes involved in achieving a desired outcome. YES introduced the toolkits at the Alexandria Summit with a series of 17 training workshops co-sponsored with partner organizations.
- **Case Studies of Global Leaders in Employment Generation**: This series of biographies profiles individuals whose outstanding contributions have redefined the development landscape in their field.
- **Video Presentations**: Two colorful videos in documentary style provide snapshots of YES events and workshops.

YES Global Knowledge Resource (GKR)

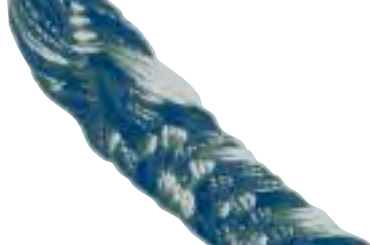
GKR is an interactive Web-based portal for sharing projects, toolkits, training programs, publications, and research on issues related to youth employment. Currently, GKR contains more than 1,200 effective practices in youth employment and more than 60 research papers and toolkits in promotion of youth empowerment and entrepreneurship.

YES Campaign Web site—An On-line Communications Center

The YES Campaign Web site has evolved in the last few years to include several interactive components aimed at facilitating global exchange of knowledge and networking around the issue of youth employment. Sections of the Web site also include designated pages for each of the YES Networks, which provide the YES Networks with an on-line platform for sharing their progress reports, action plans, and other updates. The YES Web site gets more than 5,000 hits per week.

Pilot Projects

The YES Campaign and its partners are implementing a number of pilot programs to enhance leadership and entrepreneurship among youth. Some of the YES Networks have been proactive in taking the lead to form in-country partnerships and to implement new pilot projects, which have the potential to be scaled up. YES Campaign and the YES Networks are currently involved in more than 45 projects in areas as varied as primary education to HIV/AIDS, post-conflict resolution to micro-credit.



For example, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) funded a pilot project on developing youth advocates for employment. This leadership-building program, which was piloted in Egypt, applied lessons from successful youth leadership programs, developed networks, and created hands-on toolkits in leadership and activism for youth employment and entrepreneurship. The project studied the steps involved in developing youth advocates for employment and then applied those lessons and an advocacy training program for 10 youth leaders.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) and World Bank have funded YES to develop an initiative called “Global Promotion of Youth-Led Enterprises in Off-Grid Renewable Energy,” which looks at the use of renewable energy technologies to create sustainable youth employment. One of the key components of this project is the establishment of five youth-led renewable energy enterprises. Each of the five Fellows (India, Malawi, Ghana, Georgia, and Peru) has undergone trainings and has submitted business plans. Four of them have already started their own enterprises.

YES Academy—A Partnership Initiative for Youth Employment

Launched in February 2003, the YES Academy is an initiative to bring all the knowledge- and capacity-building efforts of the YES Campaign under one umbrella. The YES Academy convenes practitioners from across the world to generate new products such as research papers, toolkits, targeted training products in leadership, enterprise development, and opportunities for youth self-employment. The YES Academy draws on knowledge and expertise from institutions around the world and works with YES HQ to disseminate its work.

As a result of the YES Regional Forum in Hyderabad, India, in December 2003, the YES Campaign, in partnership with the state government of Andhra Pradesh, has launched eight projects under the YES Academy in Hyderabad. Several UN organizations and Commonwealth Asia Program are supporting these initiatives to enhance the employable and entrepreneurial skills of the youth in the focal areas of the YES Campaign.

Capacity Building

The YES Campaign is both a global call to action and a country-by-country grassroots movement. Employment and entrepreneurship are locally and regionally grown, with conditions, causes, and resources varying greatly from location to location. Successful solutions bubble up from the local community and flourish when nurtured by national and international support and expertise. The YES Networks are building infrastructures in 69 countries that are responding to very specific local employment challenges. The majority of the YES Networks are led by dynamic youth leaders, in partnership with a multi-stakeholder membership. About 20 percent of the YES Network coordinators are young women. Given support, guidance, and resources, YES Networks can significantly reshape the range of youth employment opportunities in their countries, which in turn will inspire global change.

Each of the Networks has been nurtured and guided by staff and resources from the YES HQ. All of the YES Campaign events are designed to build the capacities of the YES Network coordinators. At these events, special sessions for leadership building and networking among the coordinators are facilitated.

Collaborating Institutions

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Commonwealth Secretariat

Deutsche Bank

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

NIIT Ltd

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Organization of American States (OAS)

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC/DEZA)

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO/UNEVOC)

United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

World Bank

Supporting YES Networks

The creation of viable YES Networks is one of the central goals of the YES Campaign. Early on, during the conceptualization phase of the Campaign, all participants and partners agreed that home-grown, sustainable infrastructures were needed to ensure the success of this initiative. The concurrent, rapid growth of information and communications technologies (ICT) provided a natural venue for savvy young people to lead this campaign, mentor each other, and learn about “what works” via the Internet and other tools.

YES Networks are formed by local youth leaders who recognize their country’s need to address issues of youth unemployment and host consultations with diverse stakeholder groups that include governments, business, donors and UN agencies, educators, and youth. All YES Networks are encouraged to work together, drawing upon the knowledge and expertise of their diverse membership.

The young people who lead the YES Networks and the Campaign are visionary agents of change—true social entrepreneurs. These young leaders are supported by the YES HQ team to identify “what’s missing” to equip youth for sustainable livelihoods. YES HQ helps in developing programs and proposals, connects with donors and other agencies, and provides technical assistance to implement projects.

YES Networks are the cornerstone of the YES Campaign’s outreach and engagement strategy. They are ideally placed to offer strong support to their governments to fulfill the development goals of their countries. YES Network action plans are closely linked to National Development Strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategy papers.

The YES Networks also collaborate on a regional level. For example, the Youth Development Network (YDN), South Africa (which houses YES South Africa), is implementing a Southern Africa regional support plan for the YES Campaign. Funded by the Dutch government, YDN has organized many activities, including a regional workshop for Southern and East African YES Network coordinators in mid 2003.

The YES Networks in the SAARC¹ region (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) came together in Hyderabad in 2003 and signed a Memorandum of Understanding for regional partnerships, which includes the sharing of knowledge and skills, exchange visits, and ongoing communication.

YES HQ has supported Network efforts in a variety of ways:

Building a global coalition

The YES Campaign has worked diligently over the last six years (since the initiative was launched at EDC in 1998) to engage diverse stakeholders at the global level. The engagement of key global partners has helped create a model for YES Networks to emulate at the country level.

¹ India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Maldives

Framing the issue

The YES Campaign helps young leaders to better articulate the local issues to both national and global audiences.

Aligning to global goals

The YES Campaign is promoting the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) among the YES Networks as key areas to work for their countries' development and is supporting the identification of strategies relevant to local socio-economic conditions.

Developing innovative project ideas and proposals

The YES Campaign has identified five focal areas to promote youth employment and is working closely with funders and other partners to launch pilot projects / demonstration sites. Focal areas include renewable energy, water and sanitation, on-farm and off-farm employment, information and communication technologies, and HIV / AIDS.

Supporting fledgling YES Networks

During the fragile Network development phase (which can be up to two and three years), YES HQ staff offers customized one-on-one support, guidance, and technical assistance to YES Network leaders. In addition, staff offers help in the areas of proposal development and review, project development, and implementation.

Supporting Web site development

The YES Campaign has a vibrant site that draws hundreds of hits each day. Each YES Network is provided its own Country Web page on this Web site (www.yesweb.org). This has become a useful tool in sharing information within countries and between Networks.

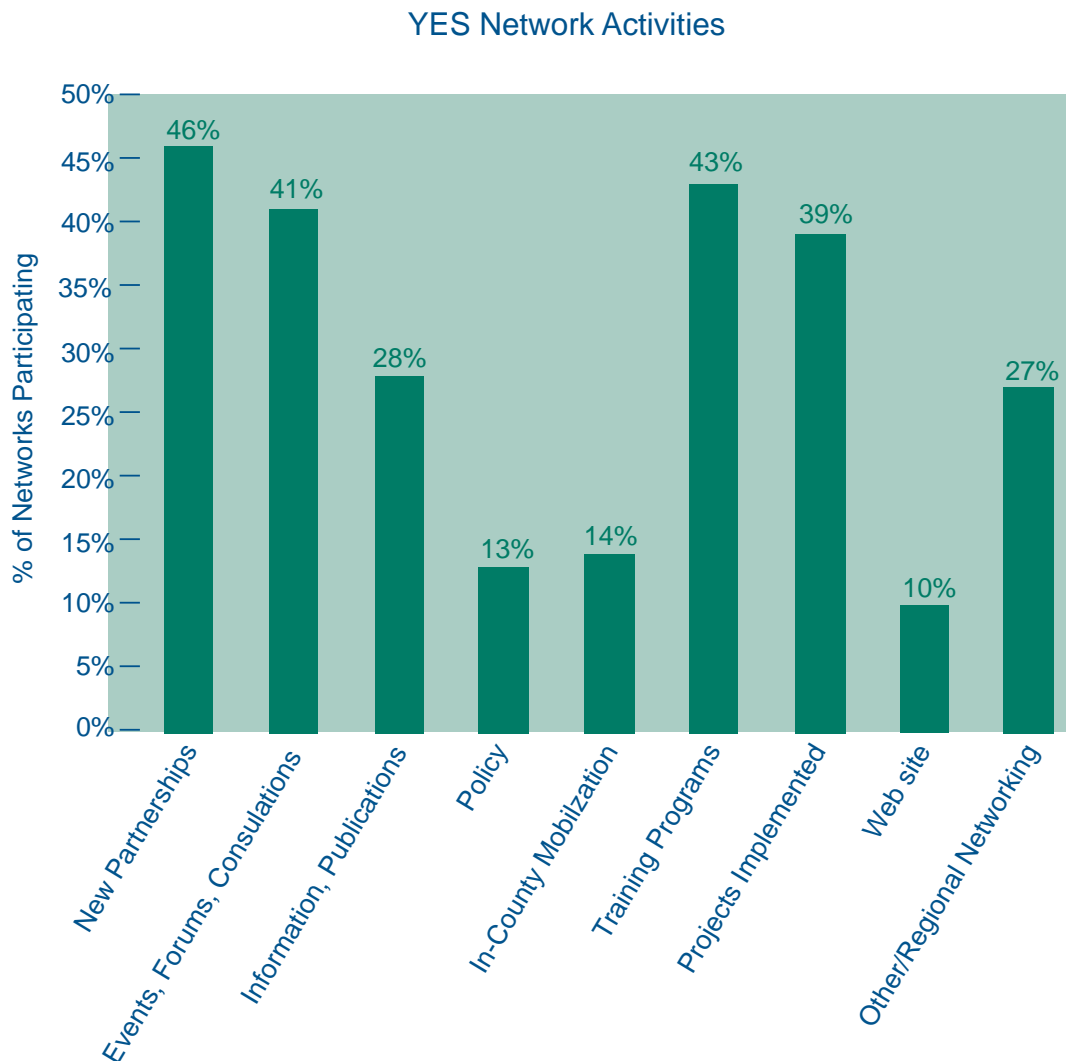
YES Networks in Action

YES Networks engage in many different activities to fulfill the goals of the YES Campaign. These activities range from new partnership development to project implementation. The graph below illustrates the range of activities by category, using the following definitions:

- **New partnership development** refers to formal collaborations formed and carried out by a YES Network.
- **Events and consultations** are activities initiated and managed by the YES Network.
- **Information** refers to primary or secondary research undertaken by the YES Network.
- **Policy and advocacy** is the successful engagement of the local political leadership and government organizations.
- **Training programs** are formal courses or workshops offered by the YES Networks for their members.

- **Projects** refer to field-level programs initiated and implemented by the YES Network, ranging from micro-credit programs to post-conflict resolution projects, renewable energy entrepreneurship, and ICT centers.
- **In-country mobilization** refers to scaling-up activities, such as the formation of local- and provincial-level networks and awareness-raising events.
- **Web site** refers to active maintenance of the YES Network Web sites.
- **Other** includes some of the outstanding regional partnerships of the YES Networks as explained below.

Figure 1. Graph showing the percentage of YES Networks involved in various kinds of activities that promote youth employment.



Examples of YES Network Activities

The capacity and innovation of the YES Networks is best revealed by a review of their activities. Activities from a selected group of countries are described below, sorted by three of the 6Es that frame the YES Campaign: **E**mployability, **E**mployment Creation, and **E**ntrepreneurship. The other three **E**s—**E**quity, **E**nvironmental Sustainability, and **E**mpowerment—are embedded in all programs and cut across all activities.

Employability

Pakistan

YES Pakistan, in partnership with Punjab University's Social Work Department, is conducting a primary research project aimed at illuminating the employment realities facing poor, urban Pakistani youth. The objectives of the study are to determine the socio-economic profile and personal attributes of youth, to assess the magnitude of unemployment and underemployment, to explore factors influencing the employment status of youth (social, cultural, political, and economical), to study the effects of unemployment, to explore job preferences among youth, to record the views of youth regarding their future aspirations, and to explore what measures should be adopted by the public and private sectors to improve the present status of youth with regard to employment. The findings of the survey will contribute to recommendations for designing viable youth employment projects based on local needs.

South Africa

YES South Africa and the Youth Development Network implemented a youth employment program in the Southern Africa Development Community during 2003–2004. The regional program, funded by the Government of the Netherlands, includes primary research, capacity-building activities for young social entrepreneurs, case study analysis of successful youth employment initiatives, a pilot scheme introducing entrepreneurship curricula into high schools, development of education policy advocacy tools, and a Mentoring Program.

Egypt

YES Egypt organized a two-day workshop in July 2003 to discuss the realities of youth with special needs in Egypt. In preparation for the event, Ms. Amira Sobeih, a YES Network member, published a paper exploring challenges facing special needs educators and disabled youth in Egypt: *A Brief Review of Disability in Egypt*. The paper included a survey of current services and the role of government agencies and medical professionals, and presented recommendations in that realm.

Mauritius

YES Mauritius Network, with partners, has embarked on a community-based program where out-of-school youth are provided with weekly literacy, mathematics, and computer courses.

Jordan

YES Jordan offers a scholarship for youth to enroll in a four-month course on environment in an international program sponsored by the U.S. government and various universities.

Swaziland

In May 2003, YES Swaziland opened a computer center for youth, equipped with 40 computers and Internet access. Swaziland Post and Telecommunications Corporation sponsored the center, which is designed to provide ICT training and a critical communications access point to a projected 1,000 rural youth in its first year. The goal of the center is to develop the skills of young people in rural Swaziland so that they will be employable and capable of self-employment in the IT industry.

Bolivia

YES Bolivia, working with the Coordination of Youth Organizations and Institutions (COIJ), supports a youth employment project promoting the use of new ICTs by poor youth in heavily populated neighborhoods of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. The project benefits 6,000 high school youth and offers employment opportunities to young people. YES Bolivia also supports the COIJ by facilitating linkages to the Microsoft Foundation with the goal of equipping a third telecenter in the region.

Employment Creation

India

YES Meghalaya organized a two-day camp in March 2004 to build the capacity of young people to be leaders, to pool their ideas and success stories, and to empower them to create more employment opportunities for their unemployed peers.

Pakistan

The CEO of Energy Solar currently mentors and trains a YES Renewable Energy Fellow on the establishment of a Renewable Energy Enterprise.

Serbia and Montenegro

YES Serbia and Montenegro received a \$15,000 (USD) grant from the Balkan Children and Youth Foundation to establish a functional youth employment network of organizations and institutions in Serbia and Montenegro, and to advocate for greater involvement of youth in the creation of national youth employment policies.

Colombia

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism and the Ministry of the Social Protection of Colombia are working together to construct a Government Bill for Business Creation. Members of YES Colombia consulted on the initial design of the legislation, and they are developing proposals to support its implementation.

Panama

The Foundation of the Movement of the Panamanian Youth Leadership, a cooperative youth organization in Panama, is one of the founding institutions of YES in Panama. From its foundation it has promoted youth training and leadership, the training of young girls and boys in cooperative organizations, and the creation of youth business cooperatives. It has developed an intra-regional technical cooperation with the Agrarian Youth Cooperative of the Association of Cooperatives in Argentina.

Entrepreneurship

Jordan

In 2003, YES Jordan launched a regional program for young entrepreneurs from Jordan and the Middle East. The program began by qualifying a number of youth leaders and guides who would work with young people, 16 to 18 years old, to provide them with business and management skills through the creation of actual small businesses based on creative ideas.

Guyana

YES Guyana, through the Volunteer Youth Corps, is providing Guyanese youth with small business development and entrepreneurial skills, with a focus on information and communication technologies. (www.vycguyana.org)

Argentina

During 2004, YES Argentina supported a program called “Youth Entrepreneurs” that offers technical assistance within the educational system for the promotion of entrepreneurial culture. Together with the City of Buenos Aires, YES Argentina has organized a day of “Learn by Learning” with high school students and also offered technical assistance to the School of Data Processing and Citizenship of the Technological Institute of Balcarce. This project received first place in the education category of the Youth Projects Fair 2004 held during Global Youth Service Day in Argentina.

Peru

In 2003, YES Peru received the Seed Fund for Projects of Employment and Renewable Energies. This Fund was launched by the YES Campaign to provide seed capital and technical assistance for small businesses with market potential in the sector of the renewable energies. YES Peru applied for funds to use biomass for gas generation in semi-urban areas and to introduce solar kitchens in rural areas of Peru.

Azerbaijan

After attending the small business workshops offered by YES Azerbaijan in 2003, a local government official launched a Web services IT company. The company is a partnership with the Municipality Training Center in Baku. The company provided 10 young people with full-time jobs through its first six months of operation.

El Salvador

In August 2003, YES El Salvador co-organized the VI International Entrepreneur Congress with the Entrepreneurs Students Association of the Upper School of Economy and Business (ESEN). Roughly 900 people attended the event, which was designed to promote an entrepreneurial spirit in young people and to create leaders committed to maintaining sustainable development by generating productive employment and capital. The Congress will be repeated in 2004 with a focus on entrepreneurial spirit and corporate social responsibility.

THE FUTURE: CREATING INFRASTRUCTURE TO ACHIEVE THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

YES Campaign Potential: A Practical Approach to Achieving the MDGs

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as outlined in the UN Millennium Declaration, were adopted by the largest-ever gathering of Heads of State in 2000. These goals bind countries around the world together to combat inadequate incomes, gender inequality, hunger, environmental deterioration, and lack of education, health care, and clean water. Countries supporting the MDGs also agreed to reduce debt and increase aid, trade, and technology transfers to poor countries and to reduce poverty by 2015. One of the key commitments made by governments as part of Goal #8 of the MDGs is the achievement of “full and productive employment” for youth.



The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Goal #1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

At the heart of poverty and hunger is the lack of opportunity for poor people to generate income.

Goal #2: Achieve universal primary education

Basic education is essential for promoting socio-economic development.

Goal #3: Promote gender equality and empower women

We will continue to fall short of our goals if half of the world’s population is denied the opportunity to contribute to their country’s development.

Goal #4: Reduce child mortality

Poverty is a major reason for lack of access to health care, maternal care, and early childhood nutrition. Too many families lack adequate water and sanitation, energy to refrigerate medicines, and access to a healthy diet.

Goal #5: Improve maternal health

Improving the health of mothers improves the health and prospects of entire families and communities.

Goal #6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

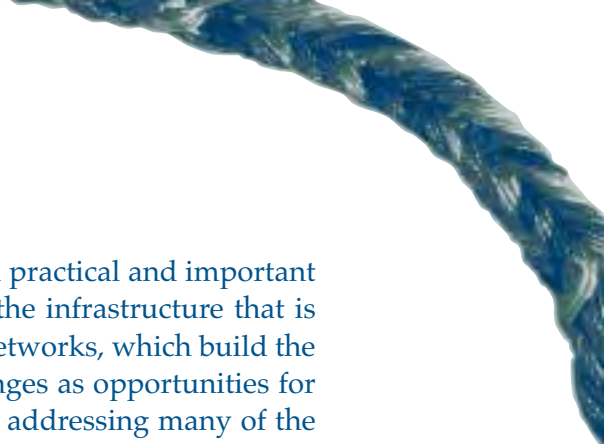
HIV/AIDS is wiping out the primary wage-earners of many families around the world. Youth, and in some cases, pre-adolescent children have to shoulder the burden of generating an income for their families, an almost impossible task without appropriate support systems.

Goal #7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Pursuing development without regard to environmental protection is a doomed strategy.

Goal #8: Develop a global partnership for development

It is clear that achieving these development goals lies beyond the reach of any single institution or government.



In the last two years, the YES Campaign has evolved as a practical and important mechanism to achieve the MDGs—principally through the infrastructure that is being built at the local level by the YES Networks. The Networks, which build the capacity of young people to look at development challenges as opportunities for innovation and employment, can serve as a platform for addressing many of the MDGs. Already, YES Networks are making progress on the MDGs, as evidenced by the Country activities detailed in this report. With the support of critical in-country partners, YES Networks have developed a range of anti-poverty initiatives, including developing micro-credit schemes, creating an entire sandal-making industry, organizing skills-building workshops, and opening rural cyber cafes.

The prior section of this report provides examples of many in-country activities that show the potential power and reach of the Networks as a vehicle for spurring employment, reducing poverty, and laying the foundation for attainment of several of the MDGs. As further illustration of the ways the Networks can provide infrastructure for solving diverse problems, consider Goal #6—combating HIV/AIDS. Many of the Networks have launched HIV/AIDS initiatives in response to needs they have seen in their countries. To these Networks—and to the YES Campaign—the link between HIV/AIDS and sustainable youth employment is inescapable.

YES and EDC’s Health and Human Development Programs explained that link in a report prepared for the YES Hyderabad Forum in December 2003:

“The need for a drastically broader response to HIV/AIDS must be linked with ways to increase the involvement of young people in work-related opportunities for prevention and care activities. The Hyderabad YES Regional Forum aims to identify effective youth employment strategies for use in South and Southeast Asia in five areas, one of which is HIV/AIDS.

“... Both government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) need additional human resources to carry out prevention, treatment, and care programs. In the context of developing countries where economic security is the primary goal for much of the population, youth involvement and long-term commitment to HIV/AIDS work cannot be only voluntary. The essential components of enabling young people to become involved are to identify and develop opportunities in HIV/AIDS work, create greater awareness of those opportunities, and provide skills training and mentoring, including through paid work. In addition, all work settings ideally should have HIV/AIDS policies and programs to protect all workers.

“Youth can help ensure that prevention messages are meaningful to young people, stigma-free, relevant to their daily lives and communicated through effective channels, and that all care takes into consideration the needs of young people and is ‘youth friendly.’ Youth can be included in all phases of research, programme design, implementation, outreach, monitoring, and evaluation. Other important areas of youth involvement are in developing and implementing community needs assessments for determining priorities and community-based services to address

the priorities; carrying out advocacy efforts, such as educating and mobilizing youth to work for changes in services and policies and influencing the media; and serving on decision-making bodies that work on HIV / AIDS policy. Finally, involving young people in programmes against drug abuse and HIV / AIDS as well as assuring access to safe water, sanitation, and food is vital in dealing with the HIV / AIDS epidemic.”²

Here are some examples of YES Network activities designed to address elements of the HIV / AIDS pandemic:

Uganda

From June to December 2003, all YES Uganda district networks participated in the national HIV / AIDS campaign focusing on youth. This campaign also provided seven youth with jobs.

Honduras

The YES Network in Honduras launched an \$80,000 (USD) project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). YES Network member organization Center for Health and Family Assistance (CEPROSAF) was awarded the grant on behalf of YES Honduras to work with persons infected with HIV / AIDS, the majority being youth under the age of 35. The project focuses on building the capacity of people living with, or affected by, HIV / AIDS to create productive and sustainable livelihoods, in line with the goals of the YES Campaign. Activities include vocational and technical training in a wide variety of skills. The 15-month project will also include local authorities, churches, health workers, communities, and families of people living with HIV / AIDS.

Cameroon

In 2003, YES Cameroon partnered with Presse Jeune in Yaounde, Cameroon, to organize an International Training Workshop on Youth, HIV / AIDS, and human rights with support from UNESCO and UNAIDS.

Swaziland

YES Swaziland is working with the UN Foundation on an HIV / AIDS program and with the Leadership for Africa Network on a leadership development program for YES Swaziland and its partners. The Network is also working with the UN Foundation on a training project that will create a series of dialogues where young people will discuss approaches to HIV / AIDS, unemployment, and poverty.

² *HIV/AIDS and Employment: Protecting Young People and Involving Them in Work-Related Solutions*. December 2003. A joint publication of EDC’s Health and Human Development Programs and the Youth Employment Summit.

MOVING FORWARD

The YES Campaign has taken momentous strides in the two years since its inauguration at the Alexandria Summit in the fall of 2002. The journey has encompassed scores of countries, and the progress is substantial. The heart and soul of the Campaign lies in the work of young people around the world—particularly the dynamic leaders who have responded to the Campaign’s call to action by forming Country Networks and launching concrete initiatives. In addition to convening meetings, authoring publications, and raising awareness, these Networks are tackling the issue of youth unemployment directly; they are hiring young people on their staffs, they are creating jobs, and they are starting and nurturing new youth-led enterprises.

Above all, they are providing hope that the seemingly intractable problem of worldwide youth unemployment can be solved. The solutions are well within our reach.

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