

## What is YEP, YEN and YES????



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All these acronyms, what do they stand for? In the UN, there's nothing unusual about acronyms but any newcomer is bound to be overwhelmed and perplexed with YEP, YEN and YES. Interestingly, even amongst the veterans in the ILO, questions abound on what these acronyms mean. So, in order to avoid any further confusion, these will be explained so that after all is said, the synergies between them will be seen...

Let's start in-house. **YEP** stands for the ILO's **Programme on Youth employment**. The Programme operates through a global network of technical teams at its headquarters in Geneva and in more than 60 offices around the world. It provides assistance to countries in developing coherent and coordinated interventions on youth employment. Work in this area includes:

- Data collection on the nature and dimensions of youth employment, unemployment and underemployment;

- Analysis of the effectiveness of country policies and programmes on youth employment, technical assistance in the formulation and implementation of national action plans on youth employment and development of tools and training material;

- Policy advice to strengthen in-country labour market policies and programmes for youth employment and capacity building for governments, employers' and workers' organizations;

- Advocacy and awareness-raising activities to promote decent work for youth with a focus on employment, employability and workers' rights;

- Establishment of strategic partnerships between private and public sectors on youth employment at the international, sub-regional and national levels;

- Promotion of cross-country and global peer networks to encourage better performance and share good-practice experience among ILO constituents and other stakeholders;

- Collaboration with multilateral institutions and other international institutions to ensure policy coherence across national initiatives affecting youth employment.

*Youth employment is a top priority for the ILO in Africa.* It features prominently on the work agenda of the Regional Office based in Addis Ababa, as well as of the different sub-regional offices. A dedicated focal point, Hopolang Phororo has been recently assigned in the Regional Office to assist in the delivery of country-level activities in cooperation with the technical specialists in the sub-regional offices as well as the YEP team and the YEN Secretariat.

**YEN**, is the Secretary-General's **Youth Employment Network**, which grew out of the Millennium Summit where Heads of State and Government pledged, "to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.". The ILO together with the World Bank joined the UN as founding partners. In 2003, the ILO accepted the UN Secretary General's invitation to host the YEN Secretariat and to bring its technical strengths to the network. Since the YEN is housed in the ILO, this could explain the confusion between YEP and YEN and why YEN is erroneously thought of as an ILO programme.

YEN partners bring their specific strengths to the table ranging from political and technical expertise to the convening power and multiplier effect in addressing a common challenge. The Secretary-General appointed a **High Level Panel (HLP)** of experts and practitioners to provide strategic direction to the YEN. The HLP defined National Action Plans on Youth Employment as the YEN delivery vehicle and a broad-based multi-stakeholder approach in formulating them as the YEN strategy. YEN promotes young people as an asset and consultations with young people are instrumental in this work of YEN. The YEN has created a Youth Consultative Group, made up of major international, regional and thematic youth platforms to act as a sounding board for the HLP.

YEN therefore plays an important role in facilitating and sharing information, linking significant initiatives and stakeholders, and capacity building, and filling a key international coordinating role in operationalizing peer partnerships. The YEN is active in 19 Lead Countries of which 8 are in Africa: Senegal, Namibia, Egypt, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Uganda and Nigeria. YEN and YEP are not synonymous but their synergies are strong and their commitment to youth employment is mutually reinforcing.

**The YES (Youth Employment Summit) Campaign** offers a multi-stakeholder model that supports specific country networks that empower youth through capacity-building programs and facilitate access to formal markets. The activities of YES include building infrastructure and network capacity; programs and employment creation; partners and funders; and future initiatives. It has 84 networks divided into 7 regions - Asia, Middle East and Northern Africa, Western Africa, Southern Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, North America, Western Europe and Australia and Latin America and the Caribbean. The YES Campaign complements YEN's policy based effort as it works at the grassroots with youth by empowering them to design and implement tangible programs so that they can become key actors in the pursuit of development goals, including the MDGs. The YES Campaign has also provided an impetus for Lead Countries to move forward in the developing their National Action Plans.

So, with all these acronyms explained, hopefully it is easier to see the synergies and how each entity, whether it is YEP, YEN, or YES working together in diverse ways to address the challenge of youth employment.

For more news on YEN, please visit [www.ilo.org/yen](http://www.ilo.org/yen); for more on YEP, please visit [www.ilo.org/youth](http://www.ilo.org/youth); for more information from the Regional Office for Africa, please send an email to [phororo@ilo.org](mailto:phororo@ilo.org); and for more on YES, please visit [www.yesweb.org](http://www.yesweb.org).

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

YES2006 Kenya

The Government of Kenya and the Youth Employment Summit (YES) Campaign, an Education Development Center (EDC) project that works with countries around the world to find and create sustainable livelihoods for young people held the 3rd Youth employment Summit in Nairobi from 13 to 16 September. The Summit was opened by HE President Mwai Kibaki, who in his remarks cited youth unemployment as the single most serious problem facing youth today. He informed the delegates that his government had made an initial contribution of 1 billion shillings to the Youth Enterprise Fund and encouraged youths to form entrepreneurial groups.

HE President Mwai Kibaki (Republic of Kenya)



The Summit was a capacity building event that aimed to identify targeted approaches to youth employment; to find ways to raise the money needed; and to define strategies for building core capacities in each country to handle their youth unemployment issues. YES included Ministerial meetings, plenary sessions, parallel sessions, open forums and skills development workshops.

The agenda focus was on Creating Markets...Unleashing Entrepreneurship, identifying markets at the Bottom of the Pyramid, markets in eco-entrepreneurship, building trade capacity, building an entrepreneurial culture and mentoring.

About 2000 delegates, from 120 countries, including Jurgen Schwettman, ILO/Dar, Hopolang Phororo, Regional Office for Africa, Angela Kabiru-Kang'ethe, ILO/ASIST and Regina Monticone, YEN

were in attendance. The Regional Office acknowledges Angela's active involvement, support and facilitation of the ILO's participation in the YES.

After attending a Summit of this magnitude, the questions one is inclined to ask are:

1. *What was the outcome of the Summit and what is the way forward?*
2. *What was the benefit of ILO's participation in the Summit?*

The youth came up with the Nairobi Declaration, which challenged their respective Governments to speed up the processes to help them to secure jobs. Thirteen recommendations were made. The first ever "YES African Network" was established and will be coordinated by Kenya. Kenya will host the East African region's secretariat; Cameroon will host the Secretariat for Central Africa, Nigeria for the West African region and South Africa for the Southern Africa region.

ILO's participation resulted in higher ILO visibility on its engagement in youth employment, beyond the ILO's tripartite constituency; the identification of potential ILO partners; and since the Summit provided a great opportunity for NGOs, civil society organizations and other stakeholders working on youth employment to present and share their programmes and projects, this provided the ILO with a rich source of potential good practices. (For more news about the Summit, please visit [www.yesweb.org](http://www.yesweb.org))

### Updates on forthcoming activities

#### **African Development Forum (ADF) V on Youth and Leadership in the 21st Century**

Now that YES2006 is behind us, we have the ADFV to look forward to, which is scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa on 16-18 November. The ECA and the AU are jointly hosting the ADF and about 250 youth are expected to attend.

Three thematic papers are being drafted on *Youth and Economic Development*; *Youth and Social Development* and *Youth and Political Development*. In addition to thematic papers, Issues papers are being prepared and the ILO is expected to make contributions on issues of employment and entrepreneurship through the submission of best practice examples, reports, case studies, etc. ILO's representation at the ADF is to be finalized.

**Studies on Employment opportunities and Working Conditions of Rural Youth** are currently ongoing in Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Liberia. Work is soon expected to start in Mozambique. The studies will provide information and undertake an analysis of the status of rural youth employment and will support a complementary activity towards the development of National Action Plans (NAPs) on youth employment with the main objective of developing interventions for youth in the rural economy. The studies are expected to be completed by the beginning of November.

**A Validation Workshop for a Youth Employment Training Package**, which includes the development of National Action Plans is planned to take place in December 2006. This is a collaborative effort with Turin, the Regional Office and the YEP and will target selected tripartite constituents and youth employment focal points.

**A report on youth employment** will be presented at the Governing Body in November 2006.

If you have news on youth employment activities in your region that you would like to share with us, please send an email to [phororo@ilo.org](mailto:phororo@ilo.org).