
Asia-Pacific Forum on Youth Volunteerism to Promote Participation, Development and Peace

28 October 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

On 28 October 2014, 300 youth and other participants from across key sectors of the Asia-Pacific region convened for a groundbreaking forum at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Bangkok to enhance knowledge and strategies with regard to youth participation in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and to form cross-regional and cross-cultural youth service networks for action in the region.

The “Asia-Pacific Forum on Youth Volunteerism to Promote Participation, Development and Peace” was co-convened by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Global Peace Foundation (GPF) and the Global Young Leaders Academy (GYLA), in conjunction with the 5th International Young Leaders Assembly and with generous support from FK Norway, Peace Corps, Australia Volunteers International and many other partners.

Along with young leaders of Asia and the Pacific, participants included representatives of national and multilateral agencies dealing with youth issues, civil society, development partners and the private sector who engaged in lively debates and discussions on enhancing partnerships with youth to address key challenges in clusters concerning the environment, health, disaster response, peace and youth entrepreneurship.

Following these discussions, recommended actions and commitment from the participants representing over 40 nations were summarized in the “Bangkok Statement.” It aims to empower youth participation and service engagement towards life improvement, sustainable development outcomes and peace at national, regional and global levels.

The Forum launched the Asia-Pacific Peace Service Alliance, a youth and multilateral stakeholders consortia committed to further empowering youth and communities across the region through youth engagement and volunteerism addressing the Forum’s cluster issues on development and peace.

Enclosed is the official Bangkok Statement adopted by the youth delegates and civil society partners at the Forum, which will guide and inspire ongoing youth action to achieve measurable outcomes, in particular inclusive and sustainable development centered on peace. Details and updates on the Alliance will be provided at www.appeaceservicealliance.net and #youth4service.

**Asia-Pacific Forum on Youth Volunteerism to
Promote Participation, Development and Peace**

United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok

28 October 2014

BANGKOK STATEMENT

PREAMBLE

We, the young people, youth-led organizations, civil society organizations, government agencies and other development partners, bound by universal principles and common values and aspirations, have gathered in Bangkok, Thailand on 28 October 2014, at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Youth Volunteerism to launch the Asia-Pacific Peace Service Alliance and promote youth's participation in sustainable development and peace at the local community, national, regional and global levels.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTIONS

Acknowledging youth's diversity in all aspects and their capacity for innovation, young people must have opportunities for meaningful participation in current and future equitable and sustainable development through the following priority areas:

a) Environmental Service

While it is widely accepted that successful solutions to environmental issues span across public and private sectors, with government, corporate and public input, a critical component – youth voice – must be encouraged. This voice includes the utilization of local knowledge and wisdom addressing environmental issues, including access to clean water for marginalized communities, and the restoration and management of important existing water resources.

Today's youth bring many skills to the world of volunteerism through their capacity to innovate, and these skills must be cultivated and utilized to advance environmental activism. Youth fluency in technology and social media platforms provide unique opportunities to promote ap-

proaches to water access, management and restoration, among other environmental issues. Volunteerism must be encouraged in a way that is mutually beneficial to both youth and their cause. As such, providing meaningful and skills-based roles — such as roles in education, Geographical Information Systems and mapping, and media outreach — for youth volunteers is essential to engage them and provide an opportunity to take ownership over environmentalism.

Youth must first understand the realm of environmental issues and be educated on sustainability, ethics, local wisdom, culture and global connectedness. They then must be provided with and encouraged to create opportunities to turn theory into practice and grow as leaders. Finally, youth must have access to meaningful volunteer roles that take a strengths-based approach, as well as whole-hearted support from all sides, starting from their communities and extending through their governments; thus ultimately contributing to global responsibility and effort.

b) Youth Entrepreneurship

We recognize the important role that volunteerism plays in the development of future entrepreneurs. There is a need to identify and address the root causes of youth unemployment. We call for the recognition of unpaid volunteer positions as legitimate work, as volunteers gain practical and useful experience through volunteering, forging social capital and pathways to livelihoods. We encourage the expansion of youth involvement in such work through the creation of opportunities that support volunteers' basic cost of living.

While limited funding and sustainability of civil society organizations remain as significant challenges to youth mobilization, civil society can overcome these with creativity, innovation, partnerships and collaboration. There is a need for more information to develop effective strategic partnerships, and for guidance from young and other business leaders to youth on entrepreneurship. Increased exposure to volunteerism and better matching of opportunities to youth needs are also required.

Significant efforts should be directed to making volunteerism more available to the out-of-school youth who have not completed degrees or formal higher-level education. In addition, student volunteerism should be promoted through school curricula, extra-curricular activities and work site visits, such as to government, non-profit and profit areas.

There are many opportunities for youth to improve their engagement with society through youth volunteerism. Governments, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders should provide youth with guidance, leadership, direction and opportunities, including networking for youth empowerment and engagement in society.

Empowerment at the grassroots level can be achieved through the provision of entrepreneurship training, which has the potential to include contributions by volunteers. This will allow us to capitalize on local resources and promote local champions within our communities.

We recommend that the United Nations Youth Associations Network and United Nations Volunteers coordinate a knowledge-sharing platform on youth volunteerism and youth entrepreneurship, so that youth are able to promote and exchange good practices, including by use of manuals, training materials and videos.

c) Disaster

We note the complex terminology often applied in the context of disasters and call upon international organizations and governments to use lay language for disaster and crisis plans so that we can understand it.

There is a need for more youth discussion on preparedness for both natural and man-made disasters, and risk reduction through education and other youth activities. There is also a need to create awareness about risk reduction and crisis preparedness and the role that children and youth have in both, and to engage children and youth in proactive disaster reduction programmes through interactive education.

A focus should be placed on empowering youth leaders to help pass on the knowledge from within their communities at local, national and international levels and consequently train their peers, families and communities. Schools should be used as institutions of disaster preparedness and response.

Youth who are not included in traditional communities are the most vulnerable and efforts should be made to reach them through targeted non-formal education.

The media coverage of disasters focuses largely on discouraging content, such as worst-case forecasting and fatality statistics; it should lay more stress on progress in relief and rehabilitation operations. Social media and other outlets can help report on progress and also hold stakeholders accountable.

We commit to working to unite youth to draft a children and youth framework for disaster risk reduction. We ask for the help of UNESCO, UNISDR, ESCAP, GPF, the private sector and United Nations member States to achieve this. Further we request all organizations present today to mobilize children and youth as partners for resilience, which means involving young people at every level of disaster preparedness, reduction, response and recovery.

d) Culture of Peace

We are aware that peace is a dynamic and holistic process which must be prioritized for the pursuit of happiness, equity and justice. Culture of peace can be best defined as acceptance, harmony and mutual respect, and recognition of individual and group rights as stated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A primary tool for achieving this long-desired peace globally is cultural understanding through education and building awareness.

Education and equal opportunities are key solutions to end social conflicts. The heart of education is education of the heart. Volunteerism is a mutual learning opportunity that can only be truly successful when a strong foundation of cultural understanding is established. Promoting equal opportunities for all allows peace to be sustainable. When our basic human needs are fulfilled, we are able to create and maintain a global society that is connected through humanity.

Cultural exchange through volunteering is a good practice to build trust and promote peace. Through cultural exchanges people become more connected on a basic human level. These experiences create the ideal environment to share ideas in order to construct a better global society.

e) Health Service

We are concerned that youth in the Asia-Pacific region face barriers to good health that include, among others, domestic and gender-based violence, mental illness and, especially for girls, early marriage and teen pregnancy. Risk-taking behaviour among youth can also lead to substance abuse, addiction and injury or deaths from road traffic accidents. Varying socioeconomic and cultural factors in many countries in the region pose additional barriers to health.

Social stigma, gender discrimination and limited access to accurate information are among the challenges regarding the provision of quality health care as a basic human right. We recommend creating youth-friendly health-care networks, defined by youth themselves, to empower youth to take responsibility for changing unhealthy behaviour to the better and for tailoring and accessing the services available to them.

Governments should enter into multi-stakeholder partnerships to address barriers to health and access to care for youth. We encourage youth participation in community governance to highlight critical issues and increase access to accurate and thorough information, resources and services. Youth participation in developing, implementing and monitoring youth programmes on health is essential to the success of such programmes as preventative measures.

Combining the intellectual capital of youth and the socially responsible goals of global entities, corporations and others would incentivize both volunteerism in the health sector and more inclusive participation in health policymaking.

f) Volunteering and exchange

We recognize that community integration is a vital component of successful cultural exchange – despite the challenges that arise from experiencing new cultures, languages and communities – and recommend emphasizing open-minded exchange and communication.

Volunteer exchanges require reciprocity and balance among partners, and should be supported by an enabling institutional environment, including targeted programmes and financial strategies that allow volunteers to fully participate in spite of social, economic and cultural differences.

Exchanges are strengthened by effective training and support for volunteers. This enables the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for leadership and successful cultural exchange that promotes peace and development.

Cultural exchange is enhanced and facilitated by the opportunity to share the experiences of an exchange with one's home community in a collaborative manner, and such opportunities can

strengthen relationships between youth volunteers, exchange communities and sponsoring organizations.

RECOMMENDED MODALITIES OF ENGAGEMENT

a) Youth empowerment/social media

Challenges in the Asia-Pacific region with regard to social media include: a lack of accessibility and restricted access to social media platforms in certain countries, an excess of social media content and a need for an established online community devoted to volunteerism.

Recognizing these challenges, the Asia-Pacific Peace Service Alliance recommends that volunteer communities in each country develop or use existing action-oriented social media platforms to engage youth in volunteerism, as well as showcase national and regional efforts. Recommended platforms vary among countries, but include Instagram, Pinterest and Tumblr. Instagram is able to capture images of volunteer work, Pinterest follows volunteer activity and Tumblr allows for individual creativity. Using standard hashtags, such as “#youth4service” and “#volunteer”, across social media platforms will promote and link Alliance efforts.

Fifteen volunteers from the youth empowerment/social media session group will shape further development of a social media platform for the Alliance.

b) Corporate social responsibility partnerships

Companies and corporations can utilize their considerable reach and resources to effect sustainable change on local, regional and global levels. By partnering with corporations and corporate charitable foundations, civil society organizations and youth organizations can address issues of participation, funding and sustainability facing their projects. Participating corporations can also contribute to more effective research and knowledge generation around pressing social issues.

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_4911

