



## ✓ In Today's Bulletin

**KENYA:** We Must Create Space For The Youth

**NAMIBIA:** Youth Must Be Prepared For The 4th Industrial Revolution

**NIGERIA:** Reps Want Legal Backing For National Youth Policy

**SOUTH AFRICA:** The Youth Policy Review Process Is A Moment Of Hope

**ZAMBIA:** Empty Long Speeches An Act Of Injustice To The Youth

**ARGENTINA:** "Children And Youth Protection Project" Received US\$ 300 M

**CANADA:** "Neighbourhood Helper" Launched By Youth Group To Help During COVID-19

**CHILE:** 5 Youth Champions Of Escazu Agreement Announced

**JAMAICA:** Victim Services Division Releases Animations To Tackle Youth Issues

**USA:** Children And Teens Worry About Political Issues

**BANGLADESH:** ILO Report On Bangladesh Youth

**MALAYSIA:** Sabah Launches Youth Policy And Strategy

**MONGOLIA:** "Mongolia Poverty Update" Report Published

**PHILIPPINES:** ECQ "Best Time" To Guide Teens, Parents Told

**SINGAPORE:** New Programme For Youth With Mental Health Issues

**CROATIA:** Youth In Rural Areas Must Be Prioritised

**FRANCE:** Gender Matters: A Manual On Gender-Based Violence

**HUNGARY:** IFM-SEI Study Session "Feminists Of The World, Unite!"

**SCOTLAND:** Awards Celebrate Youth Mental Health Work

**SWITZERLAND:** COVID-19: WHO Tells Youth "Youth Are Not Invincible"

**AUSTRALIA:** Half of ACT's Youth Struggle With Mental Health Access

**COOK ISLANDS:** Are You Feeling Safe? Ministry's Deal To Bullying

**FIJI:** Kiribati Launches Survey On Well-being Of Women And Children

**NEW ZEALAND:** Demerit Points System' Will Address Youth Crime

**SOLOMON ISLANDS:** MP Encourages Engagement Of Youths In Development



**AFRICA**  
**AMERICA**  
**ASIA**  
**EUROPE**  
**PACIFIC**  
**INFO**

## ✓ UPCOMING EVENTS FOR APRIL 2020

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
6 April 2020	<b>International Day of Sport for Development and Peace</b>	Melaka, Malaysia
7 April 2020	<b>World Health Day</b>	Melaka, Malaysia
21 April 2020	<b>World Creativity and Innovation Day</b>	Melaka, Malaysia
22 April 2020	<b>International Mother Earth Day</b>	Melaka, Malaysia
23 April 2020	<b>World Book and Copyright Day</b>	Melaka, Malaysia
28 April 2020	<b>World Day for Safety and Health at Work</b>	Melaka, Malaysia



## ✓ KENYA: WE MUST CREATE SPACE FOR THE YOUTH

**Nairobi, 14 March 2020** - SINCE the mean age of Africa's leaders is 77 years, the argument goes, these aged leaders "do not represent the largely young population they serve".

Given the youth demographic bulge in Africa, it is dangerous not to incorporate them into the continent's leadership.

The African Youth Charter, adopted by the African Union Summit in July 2006, defines youth as those between 15 and 35. In Kenya, 75 per cent of the population is below 35 years, while those between 15 and 35 are 36.3 per cent. Democracy and human rights require that such a dominant population gets a substantial share of leadership and the economy.

Article 12 of the charter mandates each state party to "develop a comprehensive and coherent national youth policy". Unfortunately, African countries, Kenya included, are yet to fulfil this mandate.

Kenya's National Youth Council Act of 2009, which endeavoured to establish the normative and institutional framework for youth empowerment, is yet to be operationalised. However, section 55 of the 2010 Constitution sought to protect the youth in certain fields enumerated in the youth charter.

Article 2 guarantees non-discrimination of young persons. There should be no room for generational discrimination.

Article 10 provides the right to social, economic, political and cultural development of young persons. States must therefore encourage organisations to lead youth programmes. Development is not to be done for young people. Autonomy, self-actualisation and self-reliance become key.

Article 11 recognises the right of the youth to participate in all spheres of society. These include elective offices as well as other decision-making forums; engagement in youth advocacy and peer-to-peer programmes for marginalised youth; measures to professionalise youth work; and involvement in volunteerism.

Article 13 emphasises the right to quality education, including formal, non-formal and informal education, distance learning, lifelong learning and community work for young people. Such education must provide skills that guarantee both employability and self-employment.

Article 14 focuses on poverty eradication and socio-economic integration of the youth to ensure they can experience holistic development. The charter enjoins state parties to take measures that guarantee, inter alia, attractiveness of rural areas to young farmers, provision of grants of land to youth and youth organisations for socio-economic development purposes, and access to credit.

Article 15 concerns sustainable livelihoods and youth employment. It boldly asserts "Every young person shall have the right to gainful employment". Further, measures to facilitate youth access to the informal economy are guaranteed. Linkages between the labour market and the education and training system are emphasised and training for youth entrepreneurship is prioritised.

Article 19 provides for youth engagement in sustainable development and protection of the environment and climate action.

Article 20 emphasises youth participation in the modern knowledge-based economy. The charter also supports positive exploitation of youth culture and use of science and technology.

In light of the above, and within the context of the recent debate on constitutional review, what would a Kenyan youth manifesto look like?

The youth agenda including national youth policy should be developed first and foremost by youth-led organisations.

A change of our electoral system to introduce proportional representation can offer space for youth recruitment into elected positions. Youth should target one-third of the elected offices.

Future constitutional review efforts must settle the one-third gender rule, and

the positions must also have at least one third being reserved for female youths. For any new employment within county and national governments, at least half should be young people. They possess the necessary educational qualifications and superior technological skills.

Both county and national governments must rigorously enforce the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities regulations. Of the youth, women and people with disabilities doing business with government, half should be young persons who are male, female and people with disabilities.

The National Youth Service must be re-imagined so that it is also cascaded to the county government level.

Youth and innovation centres should be established in each county. Subsidised technical and vocational training must be re-engineered so that it can become the basis of our cottage industries, manufacturing and modern industrialisation. Graduates from these institutions should be supported to establish businesses.

The internship policy, which was recently rolled out by the national government, should be expanded. Each government project can have interns for its duration or on a yearly basis so that they can learn and earn. Through this programme, both levels of government can enlist at least 20,000 interns per year.



Some of the youth programmes suggested above can be funded through a dedicated youth fund from the 35 to 50 per cent of the proposed county equitable share. At least five per cent should be used to implement the county youth agenda. The national government should also set aside further funds to

support youth policies. Tax holidays for a defined period for youth social enterprises, start-ups and other youth economic organisations is a good strategy for promoting youth business. Our legislators should conclude the review of the

National Youth Council Act, 2009, so that Kenyan youth can have the necessary vehicle to undertake their youth driven agenda. These proposals may seem radical, but to secure Africa, her youth must be secured. And let us remember that

Article 26 of the African Youth Charter describes the responsibilities and duties of the youth – protect family, society, the State and the international community.

[Daily Nation]

## ✓ NAMIBIA: YOUTH MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE 4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

**Windhoek, 10 March 2020** - THE CEO and founder of Elephonic Mobile Technology, Kennedy Liswani (34) has said it is vital for the Namibian youth to be prepared for the 4th industrial revolution to harness the power of current technological advancements.

He was speaking at the Youth and Technology event held at Keetmanshoop in the //Kharas region hosted by the Ministry of International Relations and Corporations. “The deliberate action and a change of attitude will position the youth strategically and give them the advantage to exploit the advantages of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA),” said Liswani.

He further said the labour market of the future would require new skills including digital fluency, creative thinking, problem solving, collaboration, empathy and adaptability. “With these new demands in place, it would be a catastrophic mistake of Namibia not to strengthen her biggest asset: the youth who make up more than 60% of the country’s population,” elaborated Liswani.

At the same occasion, Lefa’s co-founder and operations manager Kalipi Aluvilu said there are youth perspectives on how major socio-economic trends are reshaping the future of the global economy but they are constantly hampered by massive disturbances. “The four most serious national issues according to African youth are government

accountability and transparency/corruption, lack of economic opportunity and employment, poverty-inequality, income, discrimination,” he believed.

Aluvilu mentioned that the youth are driven by social needs – the need to create, impact and exercise their autonomy while staying connected to the world within the realm of both real and virtual communities. “Young people seem optimistic about technology and the benefits it may bring to society at large,” stated Aluvilu.

Lefa has also largely contributed and is using technology to its advantage. Lefa is a shuttle service app requesting application that connects passengers and

drivers. For this to take place, passengers download the mobile application and are required to register by entering a valid cellphone number and email address.

Talking to Youth Corner, Aluvilu said the transportation company has about 40 independent drivers as far as job creation is concerned, especially for the youth.

Aluvilu concluded with encouraging the youth to identify the global, national and local challenges and opportunities that interest them. “Find ways and engage with appropriate stakeholders, make sure you leverage technology to make a social, economic impact.”

[New Era Live]

## ✓ NIGERIA: REPS WANT LEGAL BACKING FOR NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

**Abuja, 21 March 2020** - THE House of Representatives has called on the Federal Government to seek legal backing for its National Youth Policy.

The House Committee on Youth Development made the call after a two-day retreat in Lagos.

The Federal Government

created the National Youth Policy to make entrepreneurship and empowerment programmes create more impact.

The Minister of Youth and Sports, Mr Sunday Dare, while speaking at the Student Entrepreneurship Activity Hub National Competition in November 2019 said the policy was in

line with the mandate of the ministry to correct the misunderstanding of the needs of the youths.

The House committee in a communiqué after the retreat, said national development and integration was predicated on the youths.

The communiqué read,

“Against all odds, Nigerian youths are making very useful contributions to national development. With this in mind, the committee will henceforth deploy its legislative powers and functions to ensure that all national development programmes, policies and projects accord priority to issues of youth development.



“There is no legislative framework for the implementation of the new National Youth Policy 2019. Therefore, the committee will take legislative action to provide a legal framework for youth development to quicken the implementation of the new national youth policy.

“Through legislation and oversight, the committee will ensure the constitution of the National Youth

Development Council, National Council on Youth Development as well as promote legislation focused on the Strategic Thrusts and Policy Benchmarks of the National Youth Policy 2019.”

While noting the progress achieved through the ‘Not Too Young to Run’ law, the committee said there was an urgent need to ensure the inclusion of the youths in electoral and political

processes to aid social transformation and national development.

“To this end, the committee will leverage the ongoing amendment of the 1999 Constitution and the 2010 Electoral Act to advocate for amendments that guarantee the political inclusion of Nigerian youths.”

“Particularly, the committee may propose legislation for

further reduction in the age requirement for the positions of governorship and membership of the Senate, which were not reduced in the previous constitution review process amendment,” the communique further said.

[PUNCH]

### ✓ SOUTH AFRICA: THE YOUTH POLICY REVIEW PROCESS IS A MOMENT OF HOPE

**Pretoria, 18 March 2020** - THE department of women, youth and persons with disabilities has once again undertaken a nationwide review and consultation with regards to the national youth policy.

This process involved many organised youth formations, including the SA Youth Council (SAYC).

The review is an important platform that comes once every five years to give meaningful expression to the African Youth Charter and the African Union Action Plan, both of which underscore the significance of establishing youth policy frameworks across the continent to address the problems faced by young people.

As a result, South Africa is one of 32 countries that have an operational national youth policy framework, with the rest either having no youth policy status or having a policy that is in draft form.

Emanating from these provincial-based reviews of the national youth policy,

relevant youth stakeholders, led by the department, are scheduled to consolidate the submission through a national youth policy consultative summit.

The summit, which was scheduled for March 23 and 24, has since been postponed owing to the Covid-19 coronavirus disaster declaration by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

As an apex youth body in South Africa, the SAYC has a direct interest in the process, outcomes and implementation of critical youth development for the country’s future.

Thus, mainstreaming of youth development policies is an urgent task to respond to many socioeconomic challenges besieging the youth of South Africa.

Young people are the hardest hit by the scourge of unemployment, which stands at 29.2%.

In 2011, National Treasury reported that about 2.8 million South African young people were neither in employment nor in

education and training.

As a result, R9 billion was set aside to address the issue of unemployment through the establishment of the Jobs Fund.

But eradicating unemployment requires sustained economic growth, and it is not clear how the fund had contributed to youth development, let alone burgeoning unemployment, despite its mandate being to drive economic growth.

Furthermore, the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training: Building on Expanded, Effective and Integrated Post-School Education (2014) called for expansion and reconfiguration of technical vocational education and training to enable access for young people to fulfil their potential and contribute to national goals and democracy.

In his state of the nation address last month, the president painted a grim picture for the immediate future of our youth,

reporting that number of youth people neither in employment nor in education and training had since increased to 8.8 million.

To address these broad challenges, government, in the national youth policy (2009/14) committed to place young people’s interests as a national development priority.

In this regard, one of the objectives of that youth policy was to strengthen the capacity of key youth development institutions and ensure integration and coordination of youth services.

In line with this, I argue for a budget increase for the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) to at least R1 billion.

Such increase will, in part, demonstrate serious commitment from the government to the challenges of young people.

In addition, we need to review the NYDA Act, which is narrowly



conceptualised.

The SAYC has long resolved for the expansion of the act, lobbying for a National Development Youth Act instead.

If revised and changed, the new act would concrete steps and recognition of many other young people who drive community and development initiatives that are committed to changing lives of others as expressed by the 2015/20 youth policy.

Furthermore, the Integrated Youth Development Strategy is of utmost importance and must be embedded in the policy to ensure clear guidelines of implementation, and the president must henceforth include it as part of his performance agreements with ministers as it will be absurd to have a policy without clear strategy integrated into youth development.

The 2015/20 national youth policy reported that socioeconomic conditions of young people had improved over the past five years, without providing

details of the improvements that came about as a result of the policy intervention. As the policy undergoes another review this year, with possible amendments to make it durable for a decade, an in-depth analysis is critical to tracking the progress made since the 2015/20 review, and how other social partners have contributed to this noble goal of youth development.

It is crucial that young people know whether or not private sector and civil society played an optimal role in the past five years, and how the issue of resource constraints have been addressed as one of the reasons attributed to the limited role of civil society.

While the New Growth Path positioned the state to be the key driver of employment opportunities and to enhance incentive mechanisms to attract private sector investment, my view is that if youth development is seen and actioned as an integral part of the country's progress and prosperity, private sector participation is essentially non-negotiable.

The private sector needs to redeem itself for having failed to honour the Youth Employment Accords signed in 2013 by all social partners.

I commend the Youth Employment Service programme, which is making progress in most companies locally. The initiative, which was welcomed by the SAYC in April 2018, has given pointed support to small, medium and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) and is crucial, given the pivotal role of SMMEs in any successful economy.

To this end, the Jobs Summit acknowledged that the GDP contribution of SMMEs was estimated at about 56%, and the National Development Plan predicted that by 2030 almost 90% of new employment would be created by the expanding SMME sector.

However, running and sustaining a successful small enterprise remains a challenge for many young black people in South Africa, thus private sector remains pivotal to running incubator programmes,

mentorship, as well as providing finance management and market strategy skills for youth-led SMMEs.

In this regard, industry involvement will curb the failure of up to 50% of start-ups, which according to Stats SA, fold within two years owing to the many intricacies that come with running a business, in addition to limited access to funding and general lack of exposure and inexperience.

The national youth policy review process is indeed a moment of hope for young people.

Once adopted and signed, it is expected that all social partners and civil society will work hand-in-hand to fight the scourge of unemployment, poverty and other social ills ravaging society, young people in particular.

[City Press News]

## ✓ ZAMBIA: EMPTY LONG SPEECHES AN ACT OF INJUSTICE TO THE YOUTH

Lusaka, 13 March 2020 - EMPTY long speeches full of promises but devoid of practical policy measures are an act of injustice to the young people of this country, says Transparency International Zambia chapter president Reuben Lifuka.

Lifuka said TIZ recognises that young people should be fully invested and responsible for attaining a better, prosperous and

corruption free Zambia.

"We are convinced that young people are leaders of not only tomorrow but here and now. What young people require is the space and opportunities for their skills and ideas to come to the fore. As a country we should take stock and evaluate how the youth have contributed to national economic, political and social development," he said in his youth day

message.

"We should equally assess the role of the youth in the fight against corruption which is key to Zambia's development. As the theme 'we take the lead as youth' suggest, it is time that all stakeholders provide leadership opportunities to the youth to excel. We need to harness the vitality of the young people in tackling critical social and economic issues affecting them."

Lifuka hoped that the youth would also join the fight against injustices that the country was facing and not contribute to the moral decay of society.

He said the fight against corruption and poor governance needs the full participation of young people as part of the inter-generational effort to address barriers to a bright future for the country.



“The youth should not underplay the vibrancy of their ideas to eradicate corruption in our land. We further call on leaders to not only organise and support matching events and deliver speeches but to practically demonstrate how they will tap into the positive energy of the youth to bring about positive change in this country,” he said.

“The youth face many challenges including high levels of unemployment, lack of economic opportunities among others. We call on government to prioritise the plight of the youth and invest in youth development programmes. Empty long speeches full of promises but devoid of practical policy measures, is an act of injustice to the young people of this country. Happy Youth day to the young people of this country. We celebrate you and have confidence that you will remain patriotic and play your role in developing our mother land.”

And the Operation Young Vote (OYV) has urged young people to reject any manoeuvres by any politician/political party to attend to youth matters with a focus on handouts and rhetoric.

Executive director Guess Nyirenda stated that the commemoration of the national youth day needs to be given life by critical actions at the level of Presidency or else the celebrations remain as business as usual punctuated with rhetoric and lamentations.

Nyirenda stated that the mere attendance of the

national youth forum or indeed any other function by the Head of State and his reading of the speech written for him amounts to nothing if his passion for the youth was cosmetic. “As OYV, we are of the conviction that a person passionate about something or someone needs no speech to deliver their message or indeed directives across except maybe for the records. However even for the records ones gestures (body language) must conform to what they are reading,” he said.

“We say this because we saw that during the 2020 National Youth Forum held on 11th March 2020 at Mulungushi International Conference Centre, President Edgar Chagwa Lungu read a very nice speech which he should have spoken to. The speech contained among other things empowerment initiatives and schemes the PF regime has embarked upon such as aquaculture, agribusiness, tricycles and ICTs, which we feel the President should have taken advantage of and seized the opportunity to carry along the youth/young people and the entire nation on this trajectory to the ‘Promised Land’,” he said.

“However, the message that was crystal clear was the lamentation by President Lungu (who is not old but youthful to comprehend with youth matters) on why the youth had abandoned government programmes meant for their wellbeing.”

Nyirenda said the lamentations on the youth/young people abandoning government programmes meant for their wellbeing

should not even arise as the Patriotic Front (PF) government has always ensured that all government programmes/project for the youth benefit only those that sing praises for the party such as cadres and not the objective and progressive young people that can contribute to prospering Zambia for the greater good of all.

“Take the example of the Higer Buses and other failed projects. The empowerment of the youth under the PF has been more to do with patronage and political affiliation. We at OYV have noted with sadness the mere fact that there has been failure at both party and government level to take stock of youth concerns since the PF’s ascendance to power but more so even after the launch of the well-crafted National Youth Policy, its Implementation Framework and the Youth empowerment and employment Action Plan in 2015,” he said.

“If we as a people look at the themes that have run since 2015 meant to guide the progression of the youth and their agenda as follows: 2015 ‘The Youth building a stable and sustainable future’, 2016 ‘Youth Champions of Dialogue, Peace, Unity and Economic Emancipation’, 2017 ‘Unity and Innovation for a Smart Zambia’, 2018 ‘Leveraging opportunities for young people through ICTs’, 2019 ‘Zambia Youth: Generation Unlimited’, one wonders what is really wrong with us. Perfect themes but... probably wrong leaders who put politics above everything.”

Nyirenda said OYV remained pessimistic that even the 2020 theme “I take the lead” was a brought in dead theme because of the PF’s strategy of “killing” whoever and whatever is progressive as long as they were divergent from the ruling party.

He also noted that another sad reality was that the youth component of the ministry was overshadowed by the sports sector.

“We still retaliate our conviction of having a standalone Ministry of Youth so as to prioritise youth matters. The continued operation and engagement on youth issues on an archaic piece of legislation is very disheartening and is indicator enough of the non-prioritization of a sector by the duty bearers. It is so unwise to get, impose and use the so ancient National Youth Development Council (NYDC) Act of 1978 on the youth of the 21st century,” he said.

“This is shameful to say the least. While we appreciate the efforts that were done in the past through the Zambia Law Development Commission (ZLDC) to draft a new law – we remain surprised as to what stalled the process. We speculate as to whether it is government’s lack of interest in addressing the plight of the youth.”

Nyirenda recommended that the government empowerment of the youth people be blind to one’s political affiliation and views held but based on objectivity, merit and capacity to contribute to the wellbeing and emancipation

## Africa News



MARCH 2020

of the youth and for the larger good of the economy and society.

“President Edgar Chagwa Lungu appoints for once a minister that comprehends youth matters if the country should witness desired progress in this sector that can be termed a sleeping giant and when awoken would fast-forward the development of our country at a supersonic speed,” he said.

“President Edgar Chagwa Lungu seizes the opportunity to break the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development into: (a) Ministry of Youth; (b) Ministry of Sport and Recreation; and (c) Ministry of Child Rights and Development. This action would profile the youth and children while demystifying the notion that sports is synonymous to youth and children. The action would also bring about youth emancipation hence put into motion this year’s National Youth Day theme of ‘I take the lead’.”

*[The Mast]*



✓ ARGENTINA: “CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROTECTION PROJECT” RECEIVES US\$ 300 M

**Buenos Aires, 26 March 2020** - THE World Bank Board of Directors approved a new US\$ 300 million operation to support Argentina’s efforts to strengthen its social protection system and minimize the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable families.

The additional US\$300 million in financing for the “Children and Youth Protection Project” seeks to improve coverage of family allowance programs administered by the National Social Security Administration (ANSES) and to accelerate the process to include 350,000 children who are still not covered by the Universal Child Allowance (AUH). It will also support the introduction of improvements in ANSES

processes to guarantee continued coverage, especially when a parent loses a formal job.

“We appreciate the support of the World Bank in one of the topics on the agenda of the national government’s strategic priorities, which is to accompany those who have the least. This project advances in that direction,” said Gustavo Beliz, Argentina’s Strategic Planning Secretary.

“Argentina is struggling with Covid 19, which creates new public investment demands. In response to this difficult health and financial situation, the World Bank is supporting investments to protect the most vulnerable population,” said Jordan Schwartz, World Bank Director for Argentina,

Paraguay and Uruguay.

“This financing aims to make the social protection system more inclusive and effective, and to prevent families from slipping into poverty, or assisting them once that has occurred.”

The World Bank has supported the AUH program since it was first implemented in 2009. The program forms part of the broader ANSES family allowance system. This benefit is paid for each child under age 18 whose parents are unemployed or informally employed, or who are independent workers or domestic workers and who earn less than the minimum wage.

Currently, more than four million children receive the AUH benefit and nearly

nine million are covered by the group of family allowances. Participation in the program has increased beneficiaries’ school attendance and fulfillment of medical checkups.

Since 2016, the “Children and Youth Protection Project” has successfully contributed to closing AUH coverage gaps. Initially, over 1.5 million children could not be included in the eligibility process of ANSES programs – today the challenge is to include the 350,000 remaining children.

The additional project financing is a variable-spread loan with a 32-year maturity period and a seven-year grace period.

[Merco Press]

✓ CANADA: 'NEIGHBOURHOOD HELPER' LAUNCHED BY YOUTH GROUP TO HELP DURING COVID-19

**Ottawa, 25 March 2020** - AS the COVID-19 pandemic creates many new life challenges, a youth group is helping offering their services in big cities across Canada.

Through the “Neighbourhood Helper” campaign, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association is offering to help pick up groceries, fill out prescriptions and provide moral support.

Canadians who require assistance are encouraged to call 1-855-HELP811 or sign up on [www.helpingneighbours.com](http://www.helpingneighbours.com).

“It’s very simple,” said Farhan Iqbal, missionary of

the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Canada. “You sign up with some details and we will reach out to you.”

There are branches of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Canada in all major cities, and the group says it is able to provide services to those on the outskirts of the metropolitan areas.

“There are thousands of us across Canada, and even those who are in further away towns, we can send teams,” said Iqbal.

He tells 1310 NEWS it’s crucial for Canadians to come together during this difficult time.

“Our teachings in the religion of Islam are that we

should love humanity, and we should show that same kind of love for all of humanity, especially in these trying times as people are in need.”

The campaign launched Tuesday evening and will run indefinitely as the group monitors the COVID-19 outbreak.

[Ottawa Matters]



✓ CHILE: 5 YOUTH CHAMPIONS OF ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT ANNOUNCED

**Santiago, 11 March 2020** - ON the 2nd anniversary of the adoption of the Escazú Agreement, a groundbreaking treaty recognizing environmental rights in Latin America and the Caribbean, five Youth Champions of Escazú from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines were announced and honored at a ceremony at UN ECLAC Headquarters at 7:30 -9:30 EST.

The Escazú Agreement, adopted in 2018, aims to ensure access to environmental information, participation in environmental decision-making, justice in environmental matters for people in countries across the region, decrease socio-environmental conflicts and protect environmental defenders. Currently, five countries have ratified the Agreement — Guyana, Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Uruguay and more are expected to ratify on the anniversary of the agreement. Eleven countries in the region must ratify the treaty in order to bring it into force and allow implementation to begin.

The five new Youth Champions of Escazú are:

Nicole Becker, 19, from Argentina. Nicole is one of the cofounders of Young People for the Argentine Climate, a FridaysForFuture-aligned movement. She is a media spokesperson and avid writer on climate change, inequality and justice.

Sebastián Benfeld, 19, from Chile. Sebastián attends Alta Monte School in Quilpué, a spokesperson for FridaysForFuture and an avid writer and promoter of democratic rights in Chile.

Kyara Cascante, 16, from Costa Rica. Kyara attends Liceo de Miramar High school and is a member of multiple student networks focused on environmental issues and political activism in Costa Rica.

Nafesha Richardsdon, 23, from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Nafesha is studying law and is the founder of SPARK SVG, a nonprofit youth organization that motivates, empowers and inspires young people to ignite positive change in their communities, with themes of planet, people, peace, prosperity and partnership.

Laura Serna, 23, from Colombia. Laura is an Afro-descendant studying human rights law, environmental law and peace and post conflict. Laura is an active volunteer and has conducted pro bono environmental work at the Legal Clinic of Public Actions at the University of Rosario.

Below is a statement from Carole Excell, Acting Director, Environmental Democracy Practice, WRI:

“The advocacy and voice of youth is critical to ensure the right to a healthy environment. These five young people are being recognized as Champions of Escazú for their leadership, commitment to actively

promote the historic treaty in their country and communities, and dedication to advocating for the rights of citizens and young people across the region.

“The Youth Champions come from Latin American and Caribbean countries that have provided leadership on the Escazú agreement — Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

“The Champions of Escazú have an opportunity to engage on environmental rights with their governments and local communities.

Environmental rights acknowledge the connection between people and the environment, the right people have to live in a healthy environment and the right to participate in decision-making. Young people have an important role in utilizing the provisions of the convention and ensuring greater awareness of the agreement!”

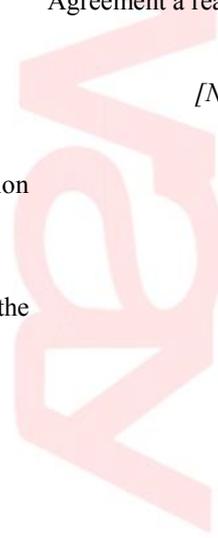
Below is a statement from Andrea Sanhueza, a civil society negotiator who participated in the creation of the Escazú Agreement:

“We received applications from 58 young people from Latin America and the Caribbean and were astounded by their level of commitment to the environment and human rights. Many of them have personal knowledge of the challenges that environmental defenders

face.

“With the Champions of Escazú, we now have five Champions who will help us lead on environmental rights and decision-making in the LAC region. We remain interested in staying in contact with all of the candidates. This initiative would not be possible without the help of Rosario Garavito, from Peru, of the Millennials Movement and Benjamin Carvajal, from Chile, from COY15. Together, with these Champions, we are a step closer to making the Escazú Agreement a reality.”

[News Online]





## ✓ JAMAICA: VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION RELEASES ANIMATIONS TO TACKLE YOUTH ISSUES

**Kingston, 24 March 2020** - THE Justice Ministry's Victim Services Division (VSD) has disseminated four of eight animations to tackle hard issues affecting youth in Jamaica.

The VSD has a mandate to provide counselling and emotional support to victims of crimes and their families.

Created for young people at the primary level (six to 12 years), the animations focus on eight topics, including Bullying, Conflict Resolution and Trusting the Justice System.

Director of the VSD, Osbourne Bailey, told JIS News that included in the population they support are children, who form a large part of the wider group of vulnerable persons because of their age and other factors.

"The idea to produce animation was born out of the knowledge that children do appreciate training in values and attitudes and a wide range of interpersonal complex skills. Animation has the capacity to convey complex ideas in a short time, with colours, pictures and movements that will appease children and can be used to address sensitive issues that children can understand and in turn internalise and be able to use, to take action," Mr. Bailey said.

Other topics addressed include Sexual Assault: Good touch and bad touch, Abduction, Coping with Violence, Human Trafficking and Saying No to Gangs and Yes to the Police.

Mr. Bailey pointed out that topics were chosen based on research done by the

Division on the children they help.

"We found that there are some issues that were current and relevant that children are grappling with, and oftentimes these are things that adults do not readily appreciate that children struggle with. So we came up with eight topics that we believed were relevant for Jamaica at the time and even ongoing," he noted.

"Each animation is between two to three minutes long and because they are short, we expect that children will share it amongst themselves. The combination of pictures, sound, colours and music make it very entertaining to watch," Mr. Bailey explained.

He said that four of the eight animations are done

and will be disseminated through the Ministry of Justice website and social media platforms.

The animations were produced by the Ministry at a cost of \$1.8 million from the Citizen Security and Justice Project (CSJP) III.

The VSD seeks to provide opportunity for healing and therapeutic intervention in order to assist the ministry to balance justice for victims of crime.

The critical complementary functions of the unit include emotional support through counselling and mediation, crisis intervention, special intervention Projects that target specific vulnerable groups and volunteer mobilisation.

*[Jamaica Information Service]*

## ✓ USA: CHILDREN AND TEENS WORRY ABOUT POLITICAL ISSUES

**Washington DC, 10 March 2020** - A new psychological study, published in the journal *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, is believed to be the first to examine youths' worry about political issues, and it suggests that children and teens are worried too. The study also found that the worries experienced by children and teenagers reflect many sides of a political issue; the findings pertain to youth across the political spectrum. It's unclear that children's and teens' worry is a cause for concern, or that it is interfering with their mental health functioning.

Typically, worry about

political issues has not been on psychologists' radars when assessing mental health. Since the 2016 presidential election in the United States, however, Americans' anxiety about political issues have come into focus. More adults are reporting to therapists feelings of anxiety about political issues, and even before the 2016 contest, the American Psychological Association surveyed Americans and found political issues to be a "significant source of stress" for both Republicans and Democrats.

Until now, there has been little, if any, attention paid to youths' worry about

political issues. Realizing this, American University Assistant Professor of Psychology Nicole Caporino devised a psychological measure to gauge how frequently youth are worrying, if at all, and which political issues they are worrying about most. A child clinical psychologist who specializes in child anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder, Caporino leads the Clinic for Youth Anxiety and Related Disorders at AU. The clinic provides assessment and therapy for children and adolescents ages 4 through 17 years old. Caporino supervises a staff of clinical psychology doctoral students who work

with the youth and provide these services.

Over time, Caporino has seen her young patients express worry about political issues, from the possibility of deportation (regardless of citizenship status), to peers being bullied or victimized due to Muslim worship, to the possibility of being "kidnapped" by a political party and separated from family.

"I was interested in finding out if worry about political issues extends to kids beyond those with anxiety disorders," she said. "It turns out that it does. . In our study, it was common



for caregivers to report that their children have worried about political issues.

However, it's not clear from these data that the worry experienced by the average kid is harmful. It may not be a problem that kids are worrying. We know that anxiety and worry, to a certain degree, are helpful because they motivate us to take action to improve what is troubling us."

The study surveyed caregivers of children and teenagers from across the United States. More than 370 caregivers of youth 6 to 17 years old participated. Caregivers identified as independents, Republicans or Democrats. Selecting from a number of worries related to 15 voting issues, caregivers rated the frequency of their child's anxiety. For the majority of voting issues, more than half of caregivers indicated that their child experienced at least one relevant worry. Worries about the environment and gun violence were most common, followed by worry related to the economy, treatment of racial/ethnic minorities, foreign policy and terrorism.

While the study found that both caregivers who self-identified as Republicans and Democrats reported worry, the caregivers of Republicans reported that their children experienced more frequent worry about political issues.

"Youth are worrying about a wide range of issues, and especially those that disproportionately affect their generation," Caporino said. "Although this worry is not frequent, on average,

it appears to be widespread, regardless of caregivers' political party affiliation."

About a quarter of the caregivers surveyed indicated that their child had clinical levels of anxiety. Based on Caporino's analysis, these youth have significantly greater worry about political issues and may be at greater risk for harmful mental health effects from following the news. This was not surprising, Caporino said. One of the hallmarks of generalized anxiety disorder, or GAD, is frequent worry about many issues or events.

Nonetheless, it should signal to parents of children with anxiety disorders that worry about political issues could be an additional stressor.

Therapists will want to take this into consideration and assess for worry about political issues in clinical settings, so that they can help youth manage any worry that is excessive.

For children and youth, generally, Caporino recommends that caregivers talk to their children.

"Talk to your kids to make sure that the information they're getting is accurate, and that they're not worrying unnecessarily because they're making assumptions about political issues they don't understand very well due to their developmental level," Caporino said.

Future studies should survey diverse samples of youth directly about their anxiety about political issues. Studies should also

identify strategies for mitigating the negative impact of political news on youth with anxiety disorders.

*[Science Daily]*

# NEWS



## ✓ BANGLADESH: ILO REPORT ON BANGLADESH YOUTH

**Dhaka, 10 March 2020 -**

Young women lag far behind young men in terms of employment, education and training, as 47% of such women do not belong to any of the three criteria compared to 10% young men in Bangladesh.

They are in the age group of 15-24, says a report of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

“Young women are almost three times more likely to be neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) than young men. The gender gap in NEET rates is particularly large in countries like Bangladesh, where 47% of young women are NEET, compared to 10% of young men,” reads the report.

Quoting the Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020 (GET youth 2020) released yesterday, the ILO says the youth unemployment rate in the

Asia and the Pacific region has risen since 2012 and is estimated at 14.1% in 2020, compared to 13.7% globally.

The report calls for a renewed focus on integrated, gender-responsive labour market policies to address the youth employment challenge.

“Not enough decent jobs are being created for these young people, meaning the potential of millions is not being properly tapped,” said Tuomo Poutiainen, Country Director, ILO Country Office for Bangladesh.

“The ILO has been working with the government of Bangladesh for over a decade with development partner European Union and the government of Canada to ensure that young people get access to the best opportunities, the best training and the best skills.”

“We are currently supporting the government in transforming several TVET institutes into Model TVET institutes so that students can meet the challenges posed by technology, climate change, inequality and demographics. These Model institutes will also partner with employers’ organisations to offer careers guidance and job placement services to all trainees.”

Meanwhile, the incidence of working poverty among youth has continued to decline, there are still around 55 million young workers not earning enough to lift themselves and their families out of extreme poverty (Tk170 a day), it says.

Young people who are employed also face a greater risk than older workers of losing their jobs because of automation, and those with vocational

training are particularly vulnerable, the report shows.

It calls for vocational training programmes to be revised and modernized so that they meet the changing demands of the digital economy.

The GET Youth 2020 report shows that those who do complete tertiary education are less likely to find their jobs replaced by automation.

However, they face other issues because the rapid rise in the number of young people with a degree in the labour force has outpaced the demand for graduate labour, pushing down graduate wages, the report says further.

[Dhaka Tribute]

## ✓ MALAYSIA: SABAH LAUNCHES YOUTH POLICY AND STRATEGY

**Kota Kinabalu, 1 March 2020 -** THE Sabah Youth Development Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and the Sabah Youth Policy have become important references for the state government to introduce policies to develop the potential of young people in all aspects.

Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said Sabah had 1.87 million youths according to the Statistics Department of Malaysia in 2015.

He said based on the Sabah Youth Index (IBS) in 2015, the score was 68.68,

indicating that Sabah youths were ranked moderately based on 12 domains in IBS.

According to him, the domain was free of deviant behavior, health, social relations, self-development, self-identity, self-potential, media usage, education, economic well-being, leisure time and political socialisation.

“Hence, the Sabah State Youth Strategic Development Plan and the Sabah Youth Policy are being developed to enhance the well-being of youths

and to mould them as leaders and catalysts in Sabah’s development.

“These instruments and mechanisms are fundamental in empowering youths as state and national leaders for the present and the future,” he said when launching the Sabah Youth Development Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and Sabah Youth Policy here yesterday.

The text of his speech was read by Sabah Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Jaujan Sambakong.

Also present was State Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Frankie Poon Ming Fung.

Mohd Shafie wants the Sabah Youth Policy and the Sabah Youth Development Strategic Plan 2016-2020 to serve as the main guide in producing positive and active youths involved in youth associations and become agents of change in the community.

[Bernama]



## ✓ MONGOLIA: “MONGOLIA POVERTY UPDATE” REPORT PUBLISHED

**Ulaanbaatar, 26 March 2020** - THE National Statistics Office of Mongolia (NSO) and the World Bank today launched a new joint poverty report, Mongolia Poverty Update, which draws on the 2018 Household Socio-Economic Survey (HSES).

According to the report, the pace of poverty reduction slowed down despite robust macroeconomic growth, indicating that Mongolia is struggling to translate the benefits of macroeconomic growth into improvements in household welfare, especially for the poor.

The report also highlights the uneven progress in poverty reduction between urban and rural areas during 2016-2018. Overall, these were good years for most rural herders as a result of higher livestock product prices. By contrast, urban residents in the poorest group were most negatively affected. Out of all the consumption classes, only the poorest urban households experienced negative real income growth (-1.0 percent, YoY) during

this period due to sluggish wage and business income growth. Higher food price inflation also disproportionately affected urban poor and vulnerable households which spend a majority of income on food and purchase food items out of their own pockets. As a result, the rural poverty rate fell by 4.1 percentage points while the urban poverty rate was little changed from 2016 to 2018.

“This poverty report provides us with the latest updates of poverty status and profile of people in Mongolia and highlights the challenges and opportunities to tackle poverty reduction going forward,” said Ms. A. Ariunzaya, Chairperson of the National Statistics Office. “We strongly hope that the analysis and findings of this report shall serve as reference material not only for policy- and decision-makers, but also for researchers and a diverse range of audiences interested and working in poverty and socio-economic studies.”

The updated poverty profile shows that poverty is most prevalent among low-skilled wage workers, the unemployed and economically inactive individuals, large families and children. Important challenges are also seen in service delivery, particularly with regard to proper sanitation and reliable heating sources.

Mongolia’s education attainment level, particularly among youth, is the highest in the East Asia region, but for women, having a university diploma does not necessarily mean that they can obtain a better-paying job. The gender gap in labor force participation has barely improved over the past decade. Furthermore, despite a great improvement of herders’ welfare level, they remain highly vulnerable to livestock price shocks and harsh winters, which could have a profound impact on their well-being without adequate safety nets.

Mongolia is one of the youngest countries in the region in terms of the

demographic structure. To harness the upcoming demographic dividend opportunity for inclusive growth and poverty reduction, the report suggests that the country will need to create a sufficient number of job opportunities in a wide variety of productive sectors in order to absorb these new workers.

“Monitoring and analyzing quality and timely data from the household surveys will help to track progress to date as well as shed light on where support and policy interventions are most needed,” said Andrei Mikhnev, World Bank Country Manager for Mongolia. “To accelerate poverty reduction and promote shared and sustainable prosperity in Mongolia, investment in children and youth to improve their skillsets to meet labor market needs is crucial, as is promotion of fair and equitable labor force participation for women.”

[Mirage News]

## ✓ PHILIPPINES: ECQ ‘BEST TIME’ TO GUIDE TEENS, PARENTS TOLD

**Manila, 31 March 2020** - THE Commission on Population and Development (POPCOM) is encouraging parents and guardians to maximize the time spent with their children indoors by enhancing family bonds during the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

“The ECQ presents a rare opportunity for parents and their teenage children to discuss matters openly

pertaining to growing up, and perhaps go beyond their usual conversations by slowly building up dialogues about sexuality,” Undersecretary Juan Antonio Perez III said.

POPCOM also warns parents about youth exposure to explicit material online, and advises heads of households to monitor their adolescents’ online activities as teens spend more time with gadgets.

“This makes teenagers potentially exposed to explicit content that may negatively influence their sexual maturation. It may also lead them later to consider early sexual encounters that may eventually result in teenage pregnancy,” the agency said in a statement.

POPCOM raised this concern in view of researches such as the Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality (YAFS4, 2013) study,

which examined the open access of adolescents to online messages through various information and communication technologies.

The study revealed that more than half of Filipino youth (61 percent females, 57 percent males) are exposed to the Internet.

The YAFS4 also cited high tendencies of exposure to pornographic videos among youths from Caraga



(66.7 percent) and the National Capital Region (66.2 percent), while exploring explicit sites are pronounced among the young in the National Capital Region (36 percent) and Zamboanga (33 percent).

The said study also affirmed that the web "offers young people the possibility to discreetly access information on issues that

they may be too embarrassed to ask or talk about because of cultural reasons."

Further analysis of the YAFS4 showed that "young adults who have been exposed to pornography or sexually explicit contents are more likely to engage in premarital sex and to have early sexual initiation, defined as sexual intercourse before age of

18."

"While it is true that obtaining information online and via social media has become the norm, we do not want our young people getting their initial information on sex through the Internet without proper guidance and contextualization," Perez reiterated.

POPCOM added that the

first communication on human sexuality should be between parents and children, instead of interaction by teens over the Internet.

"As heads of families, there is one sort of epidemic where we can try and 'flatten the curve' - that is, of teenage pregnancy," Perez ended.

[Manila Bulletin]

### ✓ SINGAPORE: NEW PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

**Singapore, 5 March 2020 -**

A new programme for youth, including those with a history of skipping school or minor offences, will be piloted in Woodlands.

Known as the Integrated Youth Service (IYS), it will launch in the second half of this year at the community space in Care Corner, a non-profit organisation.

It is where at-risk youths can go for coordinated mental health and social support services in the community, said Senior Minister of State for Health Lam Pin Min in Parliament on Thursday (March 5).

Care Corner will help them strengthen their resilience by providing individualised emotional support, needs identification and peer support services.

Those who need more help will be referred to the appropriate health and social services, said Dr Lam, during the debate on his ministry's budget.

Care Corner will also work with the Institute of Mental Health, the Health Ministry and the Agency for Integrated Care on the new programme.

Dr Lam said: "Moving forward, we will... work with other ministries to address youth mental health needs."

Health Minister Gan Kim Yong had on Tuesday said in Parliament the number of children and youth aged between seven and 18 admitted into public hospitals for mental health conditions was 569 in 2016, 640 in 2017 and 607 in 2018.

He added that hospitals do not track whether an admission is due to attempted suicide.

But based on the Home Affairs Ministry's records, an average of 1,204 cases of attempted suicide were reported each year from 2017 and 2019.

Ms Lee Yi Ping, senior case manager and team leader of the Community Health Assessment Team at IMH, a national outreach and mental health check programme for youth mental health, is involved in setting up the programme.

She told The Straits Times: "The purpose of IYS is to provide support to young people at a timely juncture of their life... so we don't let

their difficulties deteriorate to even more severe challenges in the future." She said that young people between the ages of 13 and 25 go through many developmental changes and transitions, which can be stressful.

"Stress increases young people's vulnerability to a variety of mental health conditions," she added. The behaviour of at-risk youth may also be a reflection of deeper psychological or emotional issues that they are facing.

"Sometimes things like truancy aren't as simple as 'Oh, this young person is being naughty'... If we go deep enough, we may uncover things like they are not feeling accepted, or face bullying in school, or other psychological or emotional distress," said Ms Lee.

She added that current social services for youth are quite "sporadic", many of which focus more on the social aspects of at-risk youth.

While these services help youth build their mental health resilience, not many of them can cater to at-risk youths with moderate levels of mental health concerns,

she added.

Also, Singapore has a number of community services for mental health issues, but "very few are youth-specific ones, so youth may not feel so inclined to go to them, she said.

Ms Lee said all young people, not just those with problems, are welcome at the IYS programme, which may eventually be rolled out elsewhere.

She said: "For a young person who's just curious and wants to know more, or is looking for info to help their peers, this is a space they can come to."

[Strait Times]



## ✓ CROATIA: YOUTH IN RURAL AREAS MUST BE PRIORITISED

**Zagreb, 12 March 2020** - ON Wednesday, Zagreb hosted a two-day meeting where the topic of not only Croatian youth, but youth from across the bloc was discussed. The meeting of the leaders of the Youth Authorities' Administrations in Zagreb is the third in a series of such meetings of the presiding countries of Romania, Finland and Croatia, and a symbolic handover of the presidency to the German delegation was organised at the end of the meeting.

Within the main theme of the meeting, officials discussed the challenges facing today's generations of young people, including disillusioned Croatian youth, and the need to

ensure equal life opportunities for all young people. Although the topic of youth in rural and remote areas is one of the priorities of Croatia's EU Council Presidency, the discussion also included other current issues.

Otherwise, the three-day conference entitled "Youth Opportunities in Rural Areas - How to Ensure Rural Sustainability in EU Countries" organised by the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy brought together youth representatives from EU member states, delegates of the European Commission and the Council of the European Union, national and international youth

organisations and researchers and scientists, as well as youth decision makers.

In her opening speech, Vesna Bedekovic, Minister for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, stressed that Croatian youth and others across the EU living in rural and remote areas needed to be recognised as a priority of Croatia's EU Council Presidency because of the growing inequality between young people living in the countryside and those living in cities.

She added that the desire is to encourage young people to participate in democratic life, to increase their involvement in society and

to ensure that as many young people as possible contribute to the formulation of youth policies. The conclusions of the conference will serve to shape the documents regarding future youth policies.

*[Total Croatia News]*

## ✓ FRANCE: GENDER MATTERS: A MANUAL ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Strasbourg, 4 March 2020** - GENDER Matters is a manual on gender-based violence affecting young people. The manual constitutes a useful introduction to gender and gender-based violence for people who work with young people, by providing reflections on gender and gender-based violence, a background to key social, political and legal issues. It provides practical methods and resources for education and awareness-raising activities with young people.

Gender Matters was first published in 2007, within the Human Rights Education Youth Programme of the Council of Europe. It followed and built on Compass, the popular manual on human rights education with young

people and Composito. Both of these publications make reference to issues of gender, gender equality and gender-based violence.

Gender Matters has been used as an educational resource in numerous educational activities run at the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest.

Translated into several languages, the manual has reached youth groups and youth organisations across Europe, supporting work against the gender-based violence. The growing awareness of gender inequality and gender-based violence as obstacles to the full participation and development of young people needs to be accompanied by up-to-date and accessible educational

resources.

Gender Matters is an important resource in support of the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030 and the Youth for Democracy programme, notably regarding young people's access to rights, human rights education and combating all forms of discrimination with an intersectional approach. (More about Gender Equality and Youth)

This manual is also useful for pursuing the UN

Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5 on Gender Equality, and the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy.

*[Council of Europe]*



## ✓ HUNGARY: IFM-SEI STUDY SESSION “FEMINISTS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!”

**Budapest, 24 March 2020** – THE Feminists of the world, unite! study session co-organised with the International Falcon Movement – Socialist Educational International (IFM-SEI, @ifmse) saw the participation of twenty-seven women and it took place at the European Youth Centre Budapest @europe-an\_youth\_centre\_budapest from 2 to 6 March.

It was an intense learning week for all participants and team, who discussed in depth about feminist intersectionality, identities, oppression and privileges, inclusion, diversity and active participation and a lot more.

Amongst the most important outcomes and conclusions of the study session we count: the creation of a safer brave

space inspired by human rights education values and principles; participants' self-development and feeling of empowerment; the realisation that intersectional feminism is a valid approach in the educational field, requiring though a lot of attention, sensitiveness, honesty and courage from all those involved; and that it is extremely relevant from a policy perspective, as it

brings light into areas of exclusion and disadvantaged otherwise unseen.

We closed the experience with an open space and the development of new projects and ideas that hopefully soon will be put in practice helping to spread the learning points and realisations we developed together!

## ✓ SCOTLAND: AWARDS CELEBRATE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH WORK

**Glasgow, 13 March 2020** – PROJECTS that support young people with their mental health have been celebrated. From a youth project in North Berwick who have succeeded in a 30% drop in referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), through to a programme delivering a 90% reduction in substance misuse in Galashiels, last night's (12 March) National Youth Work Awards ceremony celebrated the outstanding youth workers, many of whom are on the front line of tackling an increasing mental health crisis in Scotland.

These awards come in the wake of new figures last week, which showed the number of children and adolescents waiting to see a mental health specialist has reached record numbers. The National Youth Work Awards celebrates and recognises the positive impact Scotland's 70,000 youth workers have on the lives and mental wellbeing of young people.

Winning the National

Mental Health and Wellbeing Award are Young Movers (YoMo) from Glasgow. YoMo's youth health champions have taken peer education to a new level, building local partnerships to develop issue-based workshops delivered by young volunteers for young people. Its success has been such that the NHS has asked it to provide the youth engagement for the new £47million North East Health Hub, due to open in Glasgow in 2023.

See Me Scotland has been named Youth Work Team of the Year, with one of their colleagues, Rebecca Johnson, picking up Scotland's Volunteer Youth Worker of the Year.

This year, See Me youth volunteers have worked to influence policy and practice areas such as the Mental Health Act Review, a review of SIGN guidelines on eating disorders and making recommendations to the programming board of the world's first emoji-powered jukebox, Feels FM.

Volunteer of the Year winner Rebecca Johnson contributed 700 hours of voluntary work to 1,200 school pupils in North Ayrshire and Borders last year. Rebecca has championed ending mental health stigma and discrimination through one-to-one support and supporting other volunteers across Scotland.

In Galashiels, TD1 Youth Hub – Young Men's Project won the National Youth Justice and Prevention Award for its outstanding work in improving the mental and physical wellbeing of local young men. The project puts a focus on positive male role models and one-to-one support, resulting in a 96% attendance rate, 100% reduction in criminal activity with 90% reporting they had stopped or reduced drug taking.

Martin Lahiffe of North Berwick Youth Project also picked up a national award in recognition of his partnership with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and

North Berwick High School. Martin's dedication to improving the mental health of young people and the power of great youth work has resulted in a 30% drop in referrals to CAHMS and a reduction in unauthorised school absences of 70%.

Laura Sharpe, education and young people's manager at See Me Scotland, said: "Rates of mental health in young people are increasing, with 40% of the school age population self-reporting and 20% experiencing diagnosed mental health conditions. Mental health is a huge issue for young people, but they often feel that it is an issue, which is not taken seriously. Young people would like more opportunity to have open and honest conversations about mental health in environments where they feel safe to disclose or talk about mental health, and we must create these opportunities for them."

Tim Frew, chief executive of YouthLink Scotland, said: "Youth work is one of



our great national assets, and it's clear that this approach is helping many young people who are struggling with mental health, the stats speak for themselves. We need to see more investment in early

intervention and prevention, something the youth work sector is incredibly experienced in and well placed to build on its current success."

[TFN]

## ✓ SWITZERLAND: COVID-19: WHO TELLS YOUTH 'YOU ARE NOT INVINCIBLE'

**Geneva, 21 March 2020** - THE Covid-19 coronavirus can sicken or kill young people as well and they must also avoid mingling and spreading it to older and more vulnerable people, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Friday.

With more than 240,000 cases reported worldwide and a death toll of almost 11,000, each day brings a "new and tragic milestone", WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

"Although older people are hardest hit, younger people are not spared. Data from many countries clearly show that people under 50 make up a significant proportion of patients requiring hospitalisation," Tedros told a virtual press conference.

"Today I have a message for young people: You are not invincible, this virus could put you in hospital for weeks or even kill you. Even if you don't get sick the choices you make about where you go could be the difference between life and death for someone else," he said.

But for the first time, the central Chinese city of Wuhan, the outbreak's epicentre, reported no new cases on Thursday, "providing hope for the rest of the world that even the

most severe situation can be turned around", Tedros said.

Amid global shortages of protective gear for health workers and diagnostic tests, Chinese producers have agreed to supply the WHO, he said.

Arrangements are being finalised and shipments coordinated to restock its Dubai warehouse to ship supplies where they are needed most, he added.

"Air bridges" will be needed to expedite supplies to countries for vital health workers, as many regular flights have been cancelled, according to Dr Mike Ryan, the WHO's top emergency expert.

The WHO has distributed 1.5 million lab tests worldwide and it may need potentially 80 times that for the pandemic, he said.

Ryan, asked about Iran - which is celebrating the Persian New Year as it battles the coronavirus which has killed more than 1,400 people and infected nearly 20,000 there - said that such celebrations need to be modified.

Mass gatherings "cannot only amplify the disease but they can disseminate the disease very far away from the centre", he said. "So they can be very, very, very, very dangerous in terms of

epidemic management."

The WHO has shifted to recommending "physical distance" instead of social distancing to help prevent transmission of the virus, officials said.

"We are changing to say 'physical distance' and that's on purpose because we want people to remain connected," said Dr. Maria Kerkhove, a WHO epidemiologist.

"So find ways to do that, find ways through the Internet and through different social media to remain connected because your mental health going through this (pandemic) is just as important as your physical health," she said.

[REUTERS]





## ✓ AUSTRALIA: HALF OF ACT'S YOUTH STRUGGLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS

**Canberra, 31 March 2020** - Half of the ACT's young people and children say they have problems accessing mental health services and affording mental health services, while over a third said stigma had impeded their ability to get help, according to a new report from the ACT Government.

Three key recommendations were proposed in the Review of Children and Young People in the ACT to address community concerns after concluding "more is required to support children and young people in relation to their mental health and wellbeing".

The report recommended making access to mental health services easier and more affordable, tackling the stigma and fear around mental health, and increasing support for people experiencing moderate to severe mental illnesses.

Children and young people also reported a lack of frontline services to care for people with moderate to severe mental illnesses.

"People give up on treatment and trying to get help because it's difficult, costly and the waits are unrealistic," one respondent between the age of 18 and 25 said.

The number of services available to children and young people should be expanded to minimise waiting times, another respondent said.

The ACT Office for Mental

Health and Wellbeing said they would work towards developing and implementing an Online Youth Navigation Portal for the ACT to link young people with mental health support services and provide online resources to keep children informed about their mental health. The portal is set to be implemented at the start of 2021.

The Office will also work to build on mental health education and wellbeing programs in the Territory, including working with the Capital Health Network to co-design potential solutions and additional support services specifically for people experiencing moderate to severe mental illnesses by the end of 2020.

Half of mental illnesses present symptoms by the age of 14, and 75 per cent by the age of 25, but less than a quarter of young people seek professional help in treating these, says Ben McMullin, the ACT's regional team leader for **batyr** – a not-for-profit organisation focusing on changing social attitudes and reducing stigma around mental illness.

"If we can deliver positive messages about help-seeking behaviour at an early age, we can decrease stigma and we can increase the proportion of people who reach out for help when they need it before things get more complex down the track," he said

"We know from our programs that we can have a profound impact on the way

young people view mental health and help-seeking.

After a batyr program, around 70 per cent of students indicate they would be more likely to seek help if they were going through a tough time."

Tailored mental health support for children and more options for kids at school were concerns expressed in the report, with respondent labelling the current system "a one-size-fits-all education stream".

"Kids with mental illness need better school options and dedicated classroom support. Missed schooling is hard to manage for a child," the respondent said.

Bullying was the top issue for children aged 12, with 60 per cent of respondents saying it most impacted their mental health and wellbeing, while more than a third labelled stigma as an obstacle to receiving support.

But with school kids now studying at home because of social distancing measures, isolation is a new challenge for students to balance in a post-COVID-19 society. To help manage feelings of loneliness and the stress of working remotely, batyr's Chief Happiness Officer, Dr Tim Sharp, said it is now as important as ever to normalise these feelings of anxiety.

"To use a well-known phrase these days, it's OK not to feel OK. That being said, there are definitely strategies that we can all use, including children, to

manage anxiety and to maintain good mental health," he said.

"Working from home can be a real change to people's routines and might disconnect them from their support networks. Being at home and being isolated need not mean being lonely.

"Technology is allowing us to stay connected during this time so be sure to lock in some time for a virtual group chat with your loved ones."

If you or anyone you know needs support you can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or visit [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au).

batyr's Being Herd workshops will now be delivered digitally to continue to provide support and help to young people during the pandemic. More information can be found on their website [www.batyr.com.au](http://www.batyr.com.au).

*[The RiotACT]*



## ✓ COOK ISLANDS: ARE YOU FEELING SAFE? MINISTRY'S DEALS TO BULLYING

Avarua, 20 March 2020 – EDUCATION Secretary Danielle Cochrane says the object was to capture student voice about how safe they feel, being connected, and a sense of belonging.

“We are also encouraging schools to use this data to understand areas of concern and be part of school strategic plan,” she said.

Cochrane says through administrative guidelines, all schools must provide an environment that is safe – physically, mentally and emotionally – and have in place school policies, guidelines and practices that reflect this.

“Schools are not alone in this, with all divisions of the Ministry contributing

support where required,” she said.

For the past two years the New Zealand health provider Attitude has presented to Cook Islands schools with a focus on pro-social behaviours.

These are regular features of the school calendar, Cochrane says.

“Our programmes are also strengthened with the ongoing engagement with non-Government Organisations to reinforce messages of positive behaviour, especially the Cook Islands National Youth Council through their annual campaigns,” she says.

Research and evidence has shown that whole-school

approaches are more effective than one-off programmes when dealing with bullying.

In Rarotonga, this has proven to be true at Tereora College, where students have initiated anti-bullying campaigns.

Principal Tania Morgan said last year’s deputy head girl Tiare Kauvai was the mastermind behind the campaign to address bullying, which involved a student-driven approach, rather than a top-down approach.

Tiare thinks bullying should not be tolerated anywhere, especially not at school. It leads to issues later on in life, she says.

“People who are bullied

carry the weight of the words spoken to them while they were teens throughout their whole lives,” she explains.

“Later on in life, they may be unable to care about themselves and appreciate their own worth, see themselves as valuable in their groups and community, they can struggle to form good relationships with others and are more prone to mental health issues.”

The whole community has a responsibility to deter bullying, Tiare adds.

“Community groups that have positive atmospheres where kids feel wanted and loved play a huge role in a child’s wellbeing.”

[Cook Islands News]

## ✓ FIJI: KIRIBATI LAUNCHES SURVEY ON WELL-BEING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Suva, 10 March 2020 – TODAY, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Government of Kiribati, with support from the Australian Government and the Pacific Community, officially launched Kiribati’s first ever nationwide data, Kiribati Social Development Indicator Survey, to strengthen the country’s progress towards national goals and global commitments to promote the welfare of women and children.

The Survey will support the Government of Kiribati in providing reliable data to measure progress on national priority areas including health, education, nutrition, water, sanitation

and hygiene as well as protection. “I am proud to say Kiribati has achieved a major milestone with this survey, being the first in the region and leading the way for neighbouring Pacific countries. With this, we will be able to prioritise our efforts to focus on the most in need, allocate the resources required to make progress, and plan so that especially all I-Kiribati children are able to survive, thrive and realise their full potential,” said Vice President of the Republic of Kiribati, H.E. Dr. Teuea Toatu.

“The Pacific Island region is particularly data poor. We are proud to be partnering with the Government of Kiribati in taking a step forward to improve this, and

to ensure that we all have the needed disaggregated data to steer our work going forward,” said UNICEF Pacific Representative, Sheldon Yett.

The survey saw teams travel to remote areas by various modes of transportation including boats and planes to reach households for interviews. The survey also marked a first for the country to collect data using innovative digital technology to improve data quality and produce results rapidly following the survey.

“Data on women and youth is commonly very limited, particularly in the areas of reproductive health and gender based violence. The survey results puts the

Government of Kiribati in a strong position to address the health and violence prevention needs of the women and young persons of Kiribati and to move closer to achieving the Government’s development goals. UNFPA takes this opportunity to thank the Government of Australia for their generous contribution which made the survey possible,” said UNFPA Pacific Director a.i., Saira Shameem.

The launch of the Kiribati data survey has paved the way in the region, with Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu already embarking on their own national data collection with support from UNICEF and UNFPA.

[Relief Web]



### ✓ NEW ZEALAND: DEMERIT POINTS SYSTEM' WILL ADDRESS YOUTH CRIME

Wellington, 12 March 2020

- A New Zealand First member's bill drawn from the ballot today seeks to overhaul the youth justice system by instigating a system of demerit points for offences committed by young offenders.

"The 'Youth Justice Demerit Point System' will put an end to the existing situation of perpetual reoffending by youth without consequences," says Darroch Ball, New Zealand First Spokesperson for Law and Order.

Youth will be held to

account for their actions swiftly and early, with tiered levels of consequences depending on the type of crime and the overall number of demerit points they have accrued.

"The system will enable the 'one-time offenders' to learn from their mistakes and be given the necessary support and guidance they need. More importantly, it will ensure those who continually reoffend are held to account and face more serious consequences.

Mr Ball says this type of demerit point system

structure was already effectively used in New Zealand with traffic offences.

"It is a simple system but will be effective against the increasing numbers of youth who think they can get away scot-free and face few, if any, real consequences in the current youth justice system."

[SCOOP Parliament]

### ✓ SOLOMON ISLANDS: MP ENCOURAGES ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTHS IN DEVELOPMENT

Honiara, 24 March 2020 -

LEADER of the independent group Hon Robert Galokale says Solomon Islands needs to engage youths "to utilize their creative talent, develop the country's rich resources and help boost the country's economy."

Speaking in parliament the independent leader says youths are the key demographic for any country, one that should be harnessed to its full potential.

Hon Galokale said the commonwealth youth development index ranks Solomon Islands 76 out of 183 countries. The report provides an overview of the divide in opportunities for young people aged between 15 and 29.

He says 18 indicators are used that collectively measure the opportunities for youth development in five key domains – education,

health and well-being, employment and opportunity, political participation and civic participation.

He says such a ranking means that youth participation in the Solomon Islands in key sectors is limited and does not bode well for any government serious about development.

The MP for South Choiseul says the country must target youths in any initiative, particularly international efforts such as the sustainable development goals, or SDG.

"We must equip our youth with modern skills and knowledge to formulate and implement our solutions to the many problems and challenges facing our country.

"We must endeavour to focus efforts in improving youth development and

participation in key areas such as education, health and wellbeing, employment opportunities and civic and political participations."

[Solomon Times]

## PRESIDENT



HON. DATUK SERI  
UTAMA IR. IDRIS HARON  
(Malaysia)

## VICE PRESIDENTS



MR. MOHAMED M.  
M. SULIMAN (Libya)



MR. MUNKHBAT  
AYUSH (Mongolia)



MR. PREYE KETEBU  
BROWN (Nigeria)



MR. HUSSEIN  
AL-AHMED (Yemen)



MR. BENEDICE  
LOUIS (Botswana)

## SECRETARY GENERAL



MS. EDIOLA  
PASHOLLARI (Albania)

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



MR. MUESEE  
KAZAPUA (Namibia)



MS. LEYLA ISRAFILOVA  
(Azerbaijan)



MR. SESUN JEE  
(Korea)



MS. SIMONE PHILIP  
(Trinidad and Tobago)



MR. MOESTAPA M.  
RADJA (Indonesia)



MR. BELMAMI ABDEL  
JALAL (Morocco)



MS. BLAGICA PETROVA  
(The FYR of Macedonia)