UNESCO Bangkok
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education

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UNESCO Bangkok Press Release

International Youth Day: UNESCO Initiatives Engage and Empower Young People in Asia-Pacific

BANGKOK, 12 AUGUST 2014 – On the occasion of International Youth Day, celebrated annually on 12 August, UNESCO Bangkok highlights upcoming and ongoing initiatives in Asia-Pacific aimed at addressing the needs of young people and celebrating their role as agents of change.

Media, particularly new media, are a pervasive force in the lives of Asia-Pacific youth. Recognizing this, UNESCO will conduct a week-long Asia-Pacific Youth Training on Media and Civic Participation starting 21 August in Bali, Indonesia.

Youth from across the region will gather to share their experiences in new media and learn about how they can use media skills to become involved in their societies and promote a culture of peace.

Later this month, UNESCO is partnering with the government of Samoa and other UN agencies to ensure that young people have a strong voice during the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

With 17 Asia-Pacific countries among the SIDS group, this region will have a strong presence at the conference, which will be preceded by a Youth Conference on 27 August. About 30 youth representatives from the region are expected to attend.

The SIDS conference follows May’s World Youth Congress in Colombo, Sri Lanka and precedes the Global Youth Policy Forum scheduled for October in Baku, Azerbaijan. UNESCO has and will play an active role in both youth-centered events.

UNESCO Bangkok and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) last year released a groundbreaking study on how School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) is having a devastating effect on learners' outcomes. Recognizing the need for long-term measures to address this threat to education, UNESCO Bangkok recently issued a call for proposals for the development of curriculum to address gender discrimination in education settings and school-related gender based violence.

Promoting gender equality is at the core of UNESCO’s mandate. To this end the organization hosted a meeting earlier this month that marks an important step towards integrating gender equality into national youth policies in ASEAN countries.
Nine young people from ASEAN countries gathered to discuss issues facing young women and men as well as transgender youth in the sub-region. Their feedback will feed into a longer-term consultation and technical support process initiated by UNESCO. The eventual aim is to inform more gender equal policy throughout ASEAN.

UNESCO has also been actively promoting the Asia-Pacific Youth Opinion Poll aimed at learning what young people in the region are thinking on issues such as employment, education and sexual and reproductive health, as well as views and thoughts of young people about their futures and the issues they face.

These views will be incorporated into the first-ever joint comprehensive situation analysis of youth in the Asia Pacific region, which is expected to be published by year’s end.

The recently concluded Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference (6-8 August) in Bangkok set out six Regional Priority Action Areas for the region’s education agenda over the next 15 years. While not a youth-centered event, the six Regional Priority Action Areas identified at APREC will shape the lives of countless young people in the region.

In a broader sense, the theme of this year’s International Youth Day, “Youth and Mental Health”, aligns well with this organization’s commitment to working with vulnerable youth.

As our Director-General Irina Bokova said in her International Youth Day Address: “The mental health of young women and men is important for the health of society as a whole. They are a wellspring of ideas for innovation and leaders for positive change. We need to support them in every way in order to build with them inclusive, just –and healthy – societies.”


Global Youth Policy Forum: http://www.youthpolicyforum.org/


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