

YOUTHink – International Youth Think tank

Background

The International Council on National Youth Policy (ICNYP) is committed as an organisation to supporting the facilitation, promotion, implementation and evaluation of national youth policy. Central to this mandate is the active engagement of young women and men as critical stakeholders and their genuine involvement in all these processes. Through a series of international events and networking experiences, ICNYP has identified 14 young people (18-30 years in age) passionately interested in becoming active in an international networking think tank that can provide a consistent youth voice.

Concept

YOUTHink involves the creation of a youth networking dialogue which enables a group of young people across the globe to commit to each other to engage in learning conversations about youth relevant issues; share their experiences, insights and ideas; and contribute their shared knowledge to world forums. Operating through a portal / facebook, the group has committed 2-4 hours per week to global dialogue, debate and idea generation. Their collective views will be conveyed to relevant international institutions and meetings.

Key elements of YOUTHink include –

- Creation of closed portal/ facebook which contains information about the passions, experiences and skills of members, and enables the building of friendships and conversation amongst the group.
- Operation of monthly moderated *Discussion Forums* which allow participants to share experiences, advice and ideas about critical youth issues during a specified two week period, culminating in a summary statement about key points, conclusions and recommended actions.
- Support to participants to explore and establish mechanisms where they can tap into the voices and contributions of other young people in their region, state and/or region;

- Identification of opportunities for YOUTHink members to participate in, and contribute to national and international meetings regarding youth policy and program development.

Participants

Members of YOUTHink are from diverse professional, regional and cultural backgrounds and able to communicate a wide range of perspectives. They are young visionaries who believe in dreams and possibilities and open to take risks and question basic assumptions. The in-depth discussion forum process will go beyond “*how*” and “*why*” and beyond “*what*” to “*what if*”.

Participants are –

- Mature and self disciplined
- Committed to sharing
- Willing to take risks with their thoughts and ideas
- Visionary and creative
- Continuous learners and persistent questioners
- Comfortable with unconventional approaches
- Committed to the ideal of making a difference
- Willing to re examine basic assumptions
- Passionate about new ideas and perspectives

Expected Outcomes

YOUTHink can be better defined in terms of a process rather than a structure. It seeks through robust dialogue to generate new understanding, perspectives and ideas about a wide range of global issues that interest and concern young women and men. It is hoped that participants will benefit from the international and cultural exchange and be able to participate in forums where the voice of youth will be a valued asset.

Initial Dialogue

The first *Discussion Forum* will occur in late May 2009 and focuses on understanding the impact of the current global economic crisis on young people, and possible positive responses.

Coordination

YOUTHink is being coordinated and supported by Peter Kenyon, Chairperson of ICNYP and Director of the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. and Sobia Binte Zafar, a young social entrepreneur and knowledge specialist from Pakistan. Facilitation support is also being provided by Michael O'Meara (Australia), Kamel Nabulsi (Jordan), Andres Morales (Switzerland) and Jean- Pierre Kallanian and Mary Dodman (Jamaica)