

PRESS RELEASE



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Development for youth without youth is destined to failure

While welcoming the fact that the World Bank World Development Report this year focuses on young people, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) is discouraged by the treatment of the contributions made by youth organisations, during the report consultation period, regarding issues of crucial concern to youth.

The World Bank's annual World Development Report (WDR) is a guide to the economic, social and environmental state of the world today. Each year the WDR provides in depth analysis on a specific aspect of development. This year, the report, entitled, *Development and the Next Generation*, centres on the theme of youth – specifically, young people between the ages of 12 to 24. The report focuses on the 'capabilities and transitions in a young person's life: learning for life and work, staying healthy, working, forming families, and exercising citizenship'.

The European Youth Forum has been in regular contact with the World Bank since March 2003 when both organisations agreed on the need for comprehensive, open and transparent consultation in order to guarantee youth NGO input into World Bank processes. The first outcomes of this collaboration were the commitments made at the Youth Development and Peace Conference held in Sarajevo in 2004 which led to the establishment of the Children and Youth Framework of the World Bank. The focus of the WDR 2007 on Youth was the next big step in the cooperation between youth organisations and the World Bank, to which the YFJ contributed at the different stages of the consultation process.

However, in view of the final report, questions must be raised on the way in which input from youth organisations was taken into account by the Bank. The YFJ duly expresses its disappointment with the report in line with the following concerns:

- The report does not recognise young people themselves as partners in development; furthermore, youth organisations - commonly the conduit through which young people take action - are barely even mentioned. Instead, the report boasts of consultations held with over 2000 apparently random young people, suggestive of tokenism.
- Entitling the report 'the next generation' underestimates and undervalues young people: they are not the next generation, they *live now*. There are 1.3 billion young people living in the developing world - the largest-ever youth group in history.
- The concept of 'Youth Participation' which features in the report is largely under-developed in comparison to the solid footing it enjoys within other international institutions such as the Council of Europe.
- Non-formal education is not fully recognised in the report. While brief mention is made of non-formal training, peer to peer education and even non-formal education itself, the complementary role of non-formal education with formal education, and the importance of youth organisations as its main providers, are missing.

"The World Development Report 2007 is largely unsatisfactory to the YFJ as it does not recognise young people as partners in development. This, at a moment when the need to work with youth is paramount given the lack of access to resources and power that they continue to endure," said Renaldas Vaisbrodas, President of the European Youth Forum. "The World Bank needs to make efforts to realise this message within its programmes and through ongoing dialogue and genuine consultation with young people."