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Thank you for supporting young people!

Join Us!!

Earth Focus is a forum for discussion and a catalyst for action for young people of all ages. We deal with issues concerning our environment, community and culture at all levels. Our success depends on you. We invite you all – individuals, groups, schools, organisations, family and friends – to join us by sending articles, news, tips, reviews, suggestions, etc.

The more illustrations, photos, and logos we have the better. So don’t forget to enclose these with your text (on disk please or via e-mail, if possible).

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There are a billion youth (15-24) on the planet, eight hundred and fifty million in developing countries, where the level of infrastructure is inadequate for providing youth with the education, skills and opportunities for work. We know that 3 billion people live on less than $2 a day, and 50% of these are children and young people under the age of 20. This is unconscionable in today's world. We have the knowledge base, the innovative ideas and the means to transform the landscape for poor youth. What we need to build is the will of those who have the power to allocate resources and to provide an enabling environment. We also need to move the disenfranchised and marginalised youth out of the resignation that engulfs their daily lives, and bring about hope and possibility for a productive future.

This can be done. Over the last four years, globally and synergistically, a structure for fulfilment has been created in the youth employment arena. From the highest level - the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network (YEN) initiative, to the YES Global Alliance for Youth Employment to the national YES Country Networks - it seems the world is poised to take the action needed.

YES sees itself in a supporting role to the major players such as the national governments, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations and the World Bank. I am delighted that we all appear to be moving in the same direction and that we admire each other's strength and commitment. I invite you to join us at the Alexandria Summit where together we launch the Decade Campaign to Action! Let us put aside that which separates us and recognise our unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of poor youth with all the passion and idealism we can muster.

As I end I want to leave you with a poem that my mentor Dr M.S. Swaminathan often shares, composed by Rainer Maria Rilke.

Again and again in history
Some special people wake up
They have no ground in the crowd
They move to broader laws
They carry strange customs with them
And demand room for bold audacious actions
The future speaks ruthlessly through them
They change the world.

My prayer is that each and every one of you will recognise yourself in the poem above.

Poonam Ahluwalia
Director, Youth Employment Summit
www.youthemploymentsummit.org
To learn more about the YEN initiative led by Kofi Annan, see www.ilo.org/yen
Dear Editor,

Here in Hawaii, like in many parts of the United States and other countries, we have an “invisible” problem of homeless teens. They are unrecognised and no one believes the problem exists. Runaway teens are often in search of a safe place to stay, a shower, hot meals and access to medical care. When teenagers become homeless, their vulnerability highly increases. They are more exposed to violence, drugs and teen prostitution (another form of child labour). Even more disappointing is what happens when teens go to receive social services from adult homeless shelters - they are often robbed of their few belongings and sometimes even harassed. Homeless teens have few options of where to go and seek help.

As the leaders of tomorrow, we need to recognise this problem and create intervention programmes so that teens will not end up on the street. These are normal, smart and caring teens that deserve a second chance. We need to take action with prevention, intervention and advocating.

On a global level, the United States and Somalia are the only two countries that need to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children. The countries that have ratified this convention support children’s right to education, shelter and medical care. We need to write to the US Congress men and women in support of the document’s ratification and increase awareness within our own communities. It is up to you how you want to make a difference.

Peace and hope,

Rena Reid

United Nations Club at the University of Hawaii at Manoa

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How to Enter:
1. Write your name, age, and address on the back of the photo (or on a separate sheet of paper).
2. Give your photograph a title and include a short description of the scene.
3. Send your photograph (colour or black and white) in size 5x7 or larger to:
   
   Earth Focus
   Bellerive Foundation
   PO Box 3006
   CH 1211 Geneva 3
   Switzerland

- Photos sent by E-mail must be scanned at 300 DPI and provided in jpeg format. E-mail entries to:
  kpeosi@bellerive.org
- Entries will be judged in three age groups: 10-15s, 16-20s, and 21-25s.

*Please feel free to use this space to express your views and opinions on any of the issues we cover in the magazine. Our aim is to give a truly balanced view, and we invite you as readers to join in and help us to achieve this goal.
As industrialisation spreads across our global village, it seems as though the first casualty is jobs. Unemployment is a problem everywhere; no country is immune. The Youth Employment Summit (YES) plans to address the issue of unemployment and will take place from September 7-11 in Alexandria, Egypt. It will give various representatives from Non-Governmental Organisations, education and training institutions, policy centres, governments and businesses the chance to share their ideas on how to attack this serious problem. Of the expected 2000 delegates, half will be youth, which will make YES the largest ever gathering of young people at a Global Summit.

The Summit will be a forum for sharing innovative policies, practices and ideas, and its goal is to launch a Decade Campaign of Action that will include guidelines on how to create 500 million sustainable livelihoods by the year 2012. The Summit will also set up information sharing networks, which will allow people to share success stories and showcase new ideas.

YES is only the beginning. The Summit will be an opportunity to get organised, solidify partnerships, seek media attention, create public awareness and place the issue of youth unemployment on the global agenda. Baroness Shirley Williams, who is on the YES
organising committee, hopes that the Summit will be “a milestone, not a terminus.” The most important part of YES will be what happens after, not during, the meeting.

One of the most exciting things about the Summit is its commitment to sustainable development. YES organisers realise that although youth unemployment is a major crisis, sustainable solutions must be found. In fact, YES is collaborating with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank to promote a renewable energy project. The project’s objective is to develop increased employment opportunities for youth while promoting renewable energy technologies in rural areas.

This link with sustainable development is absolutely key to the success of the Decade Campaign of Action. Many of you know that one of the most frustrating and humiliating things for a young person is to sit around with no money and no way of getting a job. Why should you care about things like the ozone layer and the fate of our rainforests if you do not have a job? Andrew Simms of the New Economics Foundation in the UK has said, “Sustainable Development begins and ends with jobs.” Unemployment really is the most challenging issue that our generation faces, and must be dealt with before we can move on to other problems.

Earth Focus salutes the YES team for their energy, idealism, and commitment to the topic of youth employment and wishes them success in their Decade Campaign to Action!

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Get involved with the YES Campaign to Action!
Visit www.youthemploymentsummit.org/join.html

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**Plan to Change Youth Future**

- Youth encounter setbacks
- Youth establish stampede
- Youth Employment Summit YES!
- Youth are crying worldwide
- For many and true needs
- Yearly evaded shamelessly
- Yanking economic stability
- Yearning enormous sources
- Yelling eradicating scourges YES!
- YES exchanges strategies
- YES engineers solutions
- YES exerts stamina
- Youth and everyone suggesting
  - What a splendid idea!
  - YES!

*By Njoroge John, Kenya*
Did you know that your employment future has been a growing topic of discussion at international conferences? Alongside things like poverty eradication, global warming and healthcare, the topic of youth employment is becoming a major concern for all countries, and large international bodies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) are now moving youth employment up on their list of priorities.

The ILO has focused on issues such as child labour for many years, but the topic of youth employment and all it encompasses did not become a major issue until recently. To find out why this topic is receiving so much attention, I decided to meet with Mr. Takafumi Ueda, ILO’s Technical Co-ordinator for Youth Employment.

Mr. Ueda told me that the ILO really became excited about youth employment after Kofi Annan (United Nations Secretary-General) launched the Youth Employment Network (YEN), which includes representatives from the ILO, the UN, and the World Bank.

So what exactly does the YEN do? Mr. Ueda told me that it focuses on the 4 "E"s:

1. Employability (ensuring that young people are qualified to get a job).
2. Equal opportunities (making sure all young people have the same opportunities).
3. Entrepreneurship (facilitating and encouraging youth in creating their own jobs and businesses).
4. Employment creation (encouraging governments to focus on youth employment and create jobs for young people).

These are the most important concepts that the YEN tries to convey to politicians and all those who are involved in the youth employment sector. However, Mr. Ueda said that many YEN goals are difficult to implement. In a lot of countries, youth employment simply is not a priority.

The YEN cannot implement everything alone and is constantly encouraging world leaders to take responsibility for their youth. Countries must first focus on overall development before working specifically on youth employment. Moreover, Mr. Ueda quite rightly stated that the future of youth is not only in the hands of politicians or adults. It is vital for all young men and women to come forward and propose their own ideas and to create opportunities for themselves and for other young people. The
Decent and Dignified Jobs

In 1998, Juan Somavia was appointed Director General of the International Labour Office (ILO). He is now working with United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Kofi Annan and World Bank President, James Wolfensohn, to promote the Youth Employment Network (YEN). Three students from the International School of Geneva interviewed Mr Somavia about some of the issues addressed by the YEN.

Q: What makes a young person employable?

A: The baseline is education. But young people all over the world know that that is not enough. There are a lot of educated young people who have problems finding a job. Education should ensure adaptability, because nowadays you are going to go through life doing a lot of different things.

There is also a feeling that only university education is really valid whereas, in fact, it is university education that has lagged furthest behind in terms of adapting to reality. There are many other forms of education, in technical and other fields, that can assure your future, perhaps even more effectively than higher education.

Q: Do you think that Internet and Communication Technology (ICT) is helping to bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots, or is the gap simply continuing to widen?

A: The ICT revolution is certainly under way and we may still be in the early stages. Therefore, many more things can still be expected to change. Young people certainly have the advantage because they catch on right away. So certainly ICT does offer gap-bridging potential. It all depends on getting your foot in the door, gaining access to training and then ICT offers a rapid exit from the poverty cycle.

Q: The YEN wants all young people to have access to "decent work." What do you mean by "decent work"?

A: Decent work is the manner in which we have tried to look at these issues through the eyes of people. What do people aspire to, individually: a decent wage, social protection, etc and in terms of ILO issues, job creation, basic levels of social protection, respect for rights at work, non-discrimination, no child labour, no forced labour, and promoting social dialogue.

The decent work agenda is a human agenda, an agenda that speaks to the legitimate aspirations of people. But the way society is organised and the way the world economy is organised is not responding. And that is a fundamental issue of globalisation. Why can't this global economy, in the way it operates, create the jobs that will allow people to lead decent and dignified lives?

Interview by Emily Plaister Tome, 12, England and Portugal; Nisha Khanna, 17, India; and Maya Dominice, 17, Australia and Argentina

Article written by Emily Plaister Tome
For more information, visit www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/targets/youth
Voices of Child Labour

Many people choose to work before the age of 18. For a lot of young people, having a job in the evenings or on the weekends is a good way of making extra cash to spend on going out with friends or to save for college. For others, having a job is necessary to support their family and keep them alive. Between these two extremes lies a large grey area, which is why child labour is so difficult to define and understand.

It is easy to automatically associate youth employment with child labour. There is, however, a significant difference between the two. According to the South African Child Labour Action Programme, "child labour is work by children under 18 which is exploitative, hazardous, or otherwise inappropriate for their age, or detrimental to their schooling, social, physical, mental, spiritual, or moral development."

For this issue of Earth Focus, we had more contributions about child labour than any other topic. Obviously, it is an issue about which many of our readers feel passionate. The following are excerpts from some of your contributions:

"I started working when I was 12 years old. I always wanted to go to school because I used to watch all the neighbourhood children go to school each morning. They did not work and used to play when they were not studying. I asked my mother if I too could go to school, but she told me it was more important for me to work and contribute money to the house than to waste my time studying. When I was 13, I left home and went to a shelter. I found a street children's organisation called Cehaseeru Sangha, where I learned about my human rights, met other children like me, and began to study again. My dream now is to help other working children in the future. Education is the key."

Dinesh, 15, India
“Though restrictions on child labour exist in most nations, many children work. They endure work conditions that include health hazards and potential physical abuse. Their working conditions do not provide stimulation for proper physical and mental development, and these children are deprived of the simple joys of childhood.”

-Ayush Manocha, India

“I am lucky to have parents who can afford to send me to an expensive school. But not everyone in this world is so lucky. Out of the 6 billion people on this earth, half of them live in poverty. In many cases, youth employment has its benefits. For some families living in poverty, having a lot of children means having a large source of income. If a family has five children, then those five children become part of the income rather than the expense.”

-Basma Qazi, Afghanistan

“As deplorable as it is, child labour is still present in many places around the world. Maybe you have seen pictures or heard stories of children working. Maybe you are suspicious that your new brand-name shirt was made by someone your age, but the truth is, child labour is still around. International organisations like UNICEF and the ILO have organised many conventions to address this issue, but they have not worked. Each government should have its own ways of controlling child labour.”

-Valerie Haseltine, France and Teresa Queiroz, Spain

Many individuals and groups have taken a stand against child labour. For example, Iqbal Masih, a Pakistani boy who was sold into child labour at age 5, escaped at age 11 and fought for children’s rights until he was murdered in the year 2000 at the age of 13.

The Global March, which began in 1998, involved people from all over the world marching to an International Labour Organization (ILO) meeting in Geneva. Their voices were reflected in the International Labour Organization’s Convention Against the Worst Forms of Child Labour, and the Global March movement is now fighting to provide education for all young people. You can help stop child labour by becoming a conscious consumer. Think about every product you buy and where it was made. Don’t buy from companies that support child labour!

To get involved with the Global March, visit www.globalmarch.org
To learn more about Iqbal Masih, visit www.childrensworld.org/engiqbal/index.asp
Prepare for a Career, Become a Volunteer!

Imagine a place where you are accepted for who you are, where you learn about subjects that fascinate you and develop skills that you will use for the rest of your life. A place where you can learn about different religions and cultures and take trips to places like museums and theatres. Imagine that this place is your school!

Although schools prepare us for university, many young people do not or cannot pursue a higher education and go directly to the workplace. They need to be prepared and confident for such a change. So we think that volunteer work is an important aspect of the perfect school, and is a good way of facilitating the transition to the world of work.

Our school participates in the International Baccalaureate Organisation’s Diploma Programme. The programme started in 1968 to establish a common curriculum and university entry credential for students moving from one country to another. It comprises a comprehensive two-year international curriculum, available in English, French and Spanish.

In order to take the International Baccalaureate Examination at our school, we must participate in the Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) programme. We each make our own plan of action, and must donate 150 hours each year to CAS. We are free to choose our project, as long as it helps other people. Here are some examples of CAS projects in which we are participating:

Free Voices: an association that works with Bolivian people, especially children who work all day in mines. The association was created eight years ago and has now helped 200,000 Bolivians. Free Voices lends money to families living near mines in the mountains to start sustainable development projects. Once the project becomes self-sufficient, the money is paid back and given to a new project.

- David VonNumers

Jeunesse de Tannay (JDT): an organisation formed in 2000 that works in the small village of Tannay, outside of Geneva. JDT is renovating a building that was lent to the project, where parties and concerts for youth are held. Money made at these events is used to improve the building and pay for future events. In this way, the project is sustainable, and will hopefully be taken over by future CAS students.

-Marc Simon

The Water Point: a place where low-income people can come to shower and wash their clothes. Every two weeks, a dentist and pedicurist come and provide their services for free. Volunteers at the Water Point also offer advice to visitors on where they can eat and sleep for free.

-Lazhar Cader

Illustrations by Marc Simon
Mangoes in Mali: a project that will travel to Djalane, Mali, to show local people how to use mangoes to make jams and chutneys. These products will be sold in shops in Geneva, and all profits will go back to Mangoes in Mali so that future CAS students may continue the project.

-Floriane Esposito

Our CAS projects teach us a great deal about ourselves and other people. We work with people of different ages and backgrounds, which teaches us about tolerance and diversity. From our CAS experiences, we learn to think of other people’s needs before our own, and we have responsibilities that we do not have in a normal classroom.

These experiences make us more qualified to get a job, especially a good job, after school is over. Although volunteer work is far from being the only requirement for an ideal school, we think that is essential for preparing students for life after school, and it is a great way to open your mind!
Across the continent of Africa, job creation is a critical concern for all governments. Earth Focus took the opportunity to speak with several young Africans about the employment situation where they come from.

We spoke with three young people from different regions of Africa: Vera, 19, from Kenya; Lassana, 27, from Mali; and Taona, 22, from Zimbabwe.

Earth Focus: You have all told me that it is difficult for young people to find jobs in your countries. Did your parents' generation have the same problem? How have things changed?

Lassana: In Mali, the unemployment rate is about 60% right now. Since my parents were my age, our population has increased, but no new jobs have been created.

Vera: When my parents left university, the government offered them a job. But the government has not created new jobs since then, so we have qualified people leaving university with no job prospects. We have so many qualified people, but nowhere for them to work!

Taona: It was much easier for my parents to get a job. Until about 7 years ago, our economy was alright. For political reasons, everything has changed. About two-thirds of our economy is owned by western countries. A lot of our economy is based on agriculture, so if the weather is bad one year, the economy suffers. A bad public image has also cut tourism in Zimbabwe. The government is now trying to divide farmland more evenly amongst people, but many of these people do not have the experience or resources (seeds, ploughs) to farm it efficiently.

Earth Focus: Do you see this as a downward spiral or are you optimistic that things will change?
According to Friends of Africa:

❖ 75% of Africa's population is under 30; 50% is under 20.
❖ Most young Africans leave school before the age of 12.
❖ Youth unemployment in Africa is at crisis levels and worsening. In many countries, youth unemployment exceeds 80%.

pen. Zimbabwe is filled with goldmines, but the gold is processed in other countries and then sold back to us as jewellery and other products. We're actually paying for our own resources.

Vera: The same happens with tea and coffee in Kenya.

Lassana: In Mali, we have a liberal government that encourages people to start businesses and create their own employment. The government does not have enough jobs for everyone, so they assist people as they can, but don't always have the money to help financially. If the government could support more people, I think we would see positive change. We might not create huge companies, but self-sufficient businesses that could support a family.

Earth Focus: How do you think the situation will be for your children?

Lassana: The population is increasing, so it might be even more difficult for them. We must keep creating jobs.

Vera: Honestly, I don't know how it will be in 20 years or so. We must diversify and be creative in developing new job opportunities.

Taona: I think that if our generation does not do anything, it will be the same for our children.

Lassana: We must change the mentality of the people. Many people say, 'I've been to university, so there is no way I will clean the streets!' But they must take what they can get, or things will not change.

Vera: I'm very optimistic about my generation. Young voices have been inhibited for many years, but it's getting better now.

Taona: My generation does not have the faith they need to get the job done. They are waiting for someone else to take action.

Lassana: What do you need to get this confidence?

Taona: We need a positive role model.

Vera: It's very easy to be apathetic. Young people in Kenya don't know where to start and we feel like this is a problem that someone else created, so why should we have to solve it? Politics is a big problem, but we must not look at it as a barrier. People are starting to be more optimistic, and with a new government on its way, people could be ready to take action.

To learn more about employment in Africa, visit www.friendsofafrica.net/about/index.html
Breakfast with the Baroness

Baroness Shirley Williams is one of Britain’s best-loved and longest serving politicians. She is a member of the Youth Employment Summit (YES) Organising Committee and has been involved with YES since its conception. I was able to meet with the Baroness one morning and we discussed what has been happening to prepare for the Summit. What I found most interesting, however, was her views on what needs to happen after YES.

The Baroness believes that after the Summit, a core engine of organisations or individuals will be needed to keep YES commitments moving. There also must be a major effort to get governments to export decent work to less industrialised nations. For the Beijing Women’s Conference in 1995, many governments made commitments before the Conference and reported them in Beijing. But those commitments were not enforced afterwards, and although some countries moved ahead with their promises, others stalled or even moved backwards! She said we cannot let this happen with YES. We must have world audits that check progress on following through on promises made.

She emphasised the fact that all resolutions made at YES must be clear, concise and easily adaptable in different parts of the world. The Baroness pointed out, “Different regions have different goals, and as decisions are made, one needs to keep in mind the effective agent who would implement these solutions. It may be the government or the Non-Governmental Organisations, and in some cases, it may be the regional youth movements who commit themselves to achieving these goals, or else hold the effective agents to account.”

I also asked her how we implement the action plans that come out of YES. One example she gave was “best practice replication,” in which communities identify successful local programmes and share them with similar communities. This can be especially effective with environmental restoration programmes. She told me a story of Indira Gandhi visiting Australia and finding a breed of acacia tree that grew in the desert. Upon her return to India, she asked the Australian government to send 2 million of the acacia seeds, which were planted in India’s North-West desert. The environmental regeneration allowed millions of families to resettle there, while creating employment for those working on the reforestation project. Hopefully YES will set up the networks necessary to facilitate similar sharing of knowledge.

The Baroness stressed the fact that young people must be a pivotal part of the whole process. From proposing ideas to implementing them, youth are an untapped resource and are central to the success of any new development initiatives. Young people must remind their governments of the promises that they make and hold them accountable for those commitments to make sure that they are all implemented!
What sort of job would you like? Have you ever dreamed of being an astronaut? What about a teacher, a farmer or even the President or Prime Minister of your country? Our Earth for Us Career Quiz will help you find out what kind of job you might really enjoy!

Psychoanalysts tell us that there are 6 main types of people: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. For this quiz, all you have to do is answer “yes” to the questions that describe you and “no” to the ones that do not. When you are finished, see in what colour you checked the most “yes” boxes, then find out what type of career you might like!
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<th>Do you like to:</th>
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<td>Meet important people</td>
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<td>Operate machinery</td>
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<td>Design clothing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do research</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give speeches</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>Plan parties</td>
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<td>Work for other people</td>
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<td>Play sports</td>
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<td>Figure out scientific theories</td>
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<td>Build or fix things</td>
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<td>Lead discussions</td>
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<td>Be responsible for details</td>
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<td>Play instruments</td>
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<td>Work independently</td>
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<td>Persuade others</td>
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<td>Take photographs</td>
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<td>Make important decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play team sports</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow directions</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now count how many “yes” boxes you checked for each colour.

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See what colour has the highest number, then read the corresponding box to find out your type! You may find that you checked the same number of “yes” boxes in several sections — that’s okay! You may fit into more than one category.

Social (the helper): You like to work with people. Have you ever dreamed of being a detective, police officer or historian? You would also be good at teaching, working in a library, or being a nurse/midwife. You will be happy doing anything where you get to be with other people!

Conventional (the organiser): You enjoy organising things. Have you ever thought about helping people with their taxes or becoming a typist? Maybe you would like to be a cashier or a telephone operator. As long as you get to use your organisational skills, you will be happy!

Realistic (the do-er): You like doing things with your hands. Have you ever thought of fixing airplanes or other machines? What about being a baker or a chef? You also might enjoy being a bus driver, a farmer, or a firefighter — anything active!

Investigative (the thinker): You like to think and solve complex problems. Have you ever considered being a biologist, doctor, or psychologist? Maybe you’ve thought about being a veterinarian or a website developer? You’ll be happy doing anything where you have to investigate problems and come up with solutions.

Artistic (the creator): You love to create things. Have you ever thought about acting or dancing for a living? What about designing clothes or furniture? Maybe you would like to edit a magazine or design a park — anything creative!

Enterprising (the persuader): You love to influence other people with your ideas. Stand back — here comes the next president! You would also be a good lawyer, travel agent, hotel manager, or flight attendant — anything where you get to be the boss or give others advice!
In the early 1990's, Yugoslavia split into 6 different republics. Throughout the ensuing wars and ethnic tensions, everything was slowly destroyed in Yugoslavia. Factories closed, the economy froze, and farmers were not paid for their yearly work by the government, as they should have been.

After a while, everyone turned to the black market. Since a lot of factories closed down, unemployed people needed to make money and started to smuggle in goods to be sold for foreign currency. Even those who still had their jobs started to smuggle goods into the country after work, and when this turned out to be an easier way to make money, a lot of people gave up work and started their "career" on the black market.

These actions influenced young people a great deal. They saw adults who had completed school and held a diploma doing work that almost anyone could do, without any kind of education. So young people began smuggling and selling too. You could find anything on the market, including food, clothes, shoes and washing powder. Young people who left school were negotiating with customs officers at night, selling during the day and had an income at least ten times more than that of my mother, who held a diploma and kept her job in a factory.

When things began to stabilise, these young people were still smuggling. Work chains were established like a real mafia. Thanks to the easy money, the cafes in Yugoslavia were always filled with these young people in fancy clothes, expensive sunglasses, and mobile phones.

In 2000, the communist government was overthrown and our new federal government is trying to stop the black market. Now a diploma and some experience are needed to get a job and earn money. But what about those who did not finish school and became the slaves of easy money? They now sit in cafes, still in fancy clothes, but knowing that their wealth will not last for long. Many of these young people refuse to take action to improve their situation, and are waiting for things to go back to the way they were.

The question is, how will the new government solve this problem? Will the country have a generation of helpless zombies or will someone take action and find a solution?

Csilla Varga, 18
Yugoslavia
To learn more about Yugoslavia, visit www.nutshellnotes.com
Dear Zander,

How are you doing? I'm so sorry that I won't be able to come to England for your birthday this summer. Things have become impossible here in Argentina. Unemployment keeps rising and everyone seems to have lost his or her job.

My dad got fired after working in the same place since he graduated. The company went bankrupt and the 600 people who worked there were out on the streets. He gets a bit of compensation, which will help for the next couple of months, but who knows what will happen after that.

I managed to get a job at a fast-food place and have been working there for two years. I have been saving the money to use for my university fees but I don't get paid much. It's depressing to work for an hour, knowing it isn't enough to buy a happy meal! I know how lucky I am though. My friends at school are all jealous that I even have a job.

The most annoying thing is that I now have enough money to pay for my first year of university, but I have to give it to my parents. They don't want to take it but if they don't we will probably lose our house which would be terrible. I don't see how I'm ever going to be able to pay my way through university now. You know I've always dreamed of being an engineer, having an interesting and rewarding job, my own home, a family and all those kinds of things. How is that ever going to happen if I have to support my parents? The only way is to move abroad. It won't be easy to leave my home and friends behind or to get the paperwork but I feel that if I stay here I'll never stop flipping burgers. There are enough over-qualified people driving taxis in Buenos Aires without me doing it too!

Lots of love,
Marina xx

Dear Marina,

I'm so sorry! The whole situation sounds miserable. Here in Britain there are usually lots of jobs, depending on where you live. Even so, youth unemployment here is double that of adult unemployment. I used to work in the refrigerator section of a warehouse where it was always freezing cold and I got covered in frozen yoghurt most days. At my university in Edinburgh we have a student employment service with hundreds of part time jobs for students. Through that I have managed to get a job. We also have a careers centre that has information and contacts in many different fields. My problem is deciding what I want to do with myself after graduation. Maybe the way we look at careers and work is changing. Instead of doing the same job all our lives, like your dad did, we will have to take the best we can find. Maybe you will have to leave your home to get the job you want but surely the situation will improve. It will probably take a while but I know you'll make it over for my birthday one summer!

Love,
Zander

Alexander Woolcombe, 21, England and Marina Mansilla, 20, Argentina
"A McJob is what we call a low skill, low pay, high stress, exhausting and unstable job."

-Dan Gallin, General Secretary of the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco, and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF).

Would you like a Big Mac? Perhaps a Fillet-O-Fish or a McChicken Premiere? What about a McFlurry?

Sociologist George Ritzer has done research on what he calls "McJobs." He believes that McJobs involve nothing more than a series of simple tasks, done as efficiently as possible. They are so simple and streamlined that there is no challenge for the worker, who has little or no motivation for doing them. The job is predictable, with the worker doing the same thing, hour after hour, day after day until the work is dehumanised. Human interaction is minimal, and the worker becomes part of one big conveyor belt for a nameless company. Even what the worker says becomes scripted: "May I help you?" "Small, Medium, Large or Supersize?"

Ritzer is not against young people working. What he finds frightening about McJobs is that they do not allow creativity, and even try to stifle it. In an interview with One-Off Productions, he stated, "Humanity is essentially creative and if you develop these systems that are constraining and controlling people they can't be creative, they can't be human."

Spokespeople for McDonald's say that they offer a large number of entry-level positions that help young people get a taste of the world of work. The truth, however, is that staff turnover at McDonald's is about 200%-250% each year. It is extremely difficult for young people to move to higher positions, where they would actually acquire useful skills that would make them more qualified for other jobs. Many McJobs are designed to prevent workers from getting promotions, and in a lot of cases, workers leave before they are eligible for their first raise or before the benefits kick in.

McDonald's is not the only company to offer "McJobs." The entire fast-food industry, and most service sector jobs, could be called McJobs. Ritzer believes that if McDonald's disappeared tomorrow, the process of dehumanisation and control would continue by other companies.

A big question is whether society is willing to give up low-priced food and products in exchange for giving up McJobs? Are YOU willing to give up your Big Mac?

Tom Burke, 17, England
To read the full One-Off Productions interview with George Ritzer, visit www.mcs spotlight.org/people/ interviews/ritzer_george.html
Youth unemployment is a growing problem in the Gulf region. The area's massive oil reserves led to quick industrialisation in the last century, which has now left a generation of wealthy youth who do not have the proper training to take over businesses started by their parents' generation.

Part of the problem is education. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia specifically, the educational system is very poor. It does not provide students with real-life experiences, as the curriculum is restricted to books. Schools do not enforce discipline, which is what shapes the attitudes, actions, opinions and personalities of young people.

On top of education, young people's attitudes are shaped by Saudi Arabia's economy and wealth. As half of the world's crude oil reserves are in Saudi Arabia, the country is very wealthy. But the transition from a largely nomadic society to an urban one did not come gradually. The discovery of oil saw major corporations being set up, oil rigs being located, and staff being recruited from abroad, which caused the standard of living to shoot up quickly. The rapid industrialisation caused inflation in prices across the Kingdom, especially in parts still unindustrialised and maintaining a traditional way of life.

Jobs in the oil industry were family-based, and when someone retired, their position was passed on to a relative. That person did not need any qualifications for the job, but since he knew the right people, he got the job. Without the proper connections, you could not find work.

So as a student, what motivation did I have to work, excel, or even bother to study if I knew in a few years the management of this company would be in my hands? Or, if I did study, why bother if the job I wanted went directly to the company president's son?

Experienced foreigners are continuing to come in and owners of oil companies are becoming more aware of the need to have qualified workers. Young boys who were waiting for managerial positions from their family are not getting what they expected.

What Saudi Arabia really needs to do is focus on education, so that the jobs will go to qualified Saudi residents and not only to foreigners. If they do not do this, the next generation will lack both employment and traditional culture!
"Am I a what?!" you may ask. An entrepreneur is someone who starts his or her own business. Right now, there are about 300 million unemployed or under-employed young people, and about 20% of them have the skills to be a good entrepreneur, though only 5% take the plunge. The other 15% never get the chance.

For most of this 15%, the major barrier between them and their own business is money. But, if you consider yourself an energetic, enthusiastic person with good communication skills and an understanding of your local community and its needs, then you are a good candidate for a Youth Business International (YBI) loan.

YBI grew out of the Prince of Wales Trust, based in the United Kingdom. The Trust originally only provided loans to youth in the UK, but when the need for loans in other countries was recognised a few years ago, YBI was born. It now works with young people aged 18-30 in over 30 countries. YBI works directly with local organisations in each country, and every loan application is reviewed by local business leaders who are experts in the community’s needs. YBI has three core operating principles:

1. Work with young people.

2. Provide access to financial support for those who have a viable business proposition but are unable to find funding elsewhere.

3. Provide successful applicants with a volunteer business mentor and full access to the organisation’s local and national business support network.

According to Andrew Fiddaman, Associate Director of the Prince of Wales Trust, to get a YBI loan you must have a good, sustainable idea and the dedication to stick with your project. YBI provides each loan recipient with advice on how to make their business sustainable and a personal mentor who offers both professional and emotional support. Loans, which range from £300 to £5000, must be paid back within 3 years, and the mentor supplies advice throughout this time. At the end of the 3 years, 60% of the businesses are still running and most loan recipients have created employment for other people in their communities and are established enough to work with the commercial banking sector.

Youth Business International has already provided seed funding for over 60,000 projects. If you think you have a good idea and the commitment to be your own boss, contact them!

Youth Business International
15-16 Cornwall Terrace
Regent’s Park
London NW1 4QP
UK
E-mail: youth@pwblf.org
Website: www.youth-business.org
**CHECK OUT** if you have what it takes to be an entrepreneur!

Andrew Fiddaman of Youth Business International tells us that 20% of people have the instincts to be a good entrepreneur. Are you one of them? Answer all the following questions and give yourself 3 points for “Yes”, 2 for “Maybe”, and 0 for “No”. Add up your points and then check your score (but don’t take it too seriously - it’s just a game)!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>MAYBE</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am persistent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When I am interested in a project I need less sleep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When I want something, I keep my goal clearly in mind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I examine my mistakes and learn from them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I keep New Year's resolutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have a strong personal need to succeed</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I have new and different ideas</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am adaptable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am curious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am intuitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If something seems impossible, I find a way to do it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I see problems as challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I take chances</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I will gamble on a good idea even if it is not a sure thing</td>
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<tr>
<td>To learn something new, I explore unfamiliar subjects</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I can recover from emotional setbacks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am a positive person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I experiment with new ways of doing things</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am willing to undergo sacrifices to gain possible long-term rewards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I usually do things my own way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I tend to rebel against authority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often enjoy being alone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to be in control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a reputation for being stubborn</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If your total score is between 60 and 72: **GO FOR IT!!** - start writing that business plan straight away! You have all the characteristics to be a great entrepreneur.

If your total score is between 48 and 59: **You have potential but need to push yourself. You may want to improve your skills in your weaker areas or hire someone else with these skills.**

If your total score is below 37: **Self-employment may not be for you. You will probably be happier and more successful working for someone else. However, only you can make that decision.**
Choo Choo Chow

Looking for an unusual dining experience in the Land Down Under? Try the Junction Express in Port Pirie, South Australia!

The town of Port Pirie was once known as the railway junction of Australia. Trains from all over the continent used to pass through here before moving on to their final destinations. Sadly, the trains today now bypass us, but we have been left with a great memorial to our history: a 1950s passenger train that sits on the platform of the Tourism and Arts Centre.

The train is not just a monument; it is also a training restaurant called the Junction Express. The Junction Express was started by an organisation called On the Rails, which helps young disadvantaged job seekers between the ages of 15 and 21 find employment. At the Junction Express, we are given hands-on experience in the hospitality industry.

Each day we work in a different area of the restaurant (Front of House, Kitchen, Administration or Bar), so we develop many different skills. We learn how to set tables, take orders, present ourselves and serve wine. We are also divided into teams that specialise in promotions, wine appreciation and menu design. On top of this, we have study sessions to prepare for the Certificate I in Hospitality exam.

The Junction Express attracts a variety of clientele, so we are mindful that it is not exclusively a youth space. No horseplay is allowed in dining areas, but we can be loud and excited behind the scenes! The restaurant has regular open hours, and we recently catered our first wedding.

All our hard work has paid off. Last November the Junction Express was voted the best Port Pirie Regional Tourism and Hospitality Business, and it also won the 2001 Chamber of Commerce Regional Business of the Year Award!

Working at the Junction Express has proven that we really are employable and we now have valuable experience that will help us get a job in the hospitality industry. We even have a motto: "Young people learning to work and working to learn." Some of us are seriously thinking about running our own business one day, which we never would have considered before. The Junction Express has helped many of us realise dreams that we never thought were possible.
A New Place of Joy

There are currently 90 million illiterate children in India who have no access to basic primary education (that is 30 million more than the entire population of Great Britain)!

The Anandapuram Slum Education Project tries to tackle this massive problem with a local solution. The project’s goal is to educate street and working children, to make them more employable and give them a chance to rise out of poverty.

The project was started by the Peace Child India field office and Rajendra Kashi, an 18-year-old who grew up in the Anandapuram Slum. The following is Rajendra’s personal story:

"I have lived my whole life in the Anandapuram Slum. Anandapuram incidentally means ‘place of joy’ in Tamil. I went to school until the 7th standard, but when I was 14, I had to work in order to live and help my family. Because I could not stay in school, I now lack the qualifications needed to get a job and am unemployed.

"Some months ago, I spoke with Jagan Devaraj, Peace Child Field Officer. He asked me what I thought would benefit my community and if I would like to set up a project. I was quite surprised, but very grateful for this trust.

"Seeing all the slum children around me working every day for a few rupees, heading for a future even worse than mine, I wanted to give them the chance to go back to school in the evening, after work. In India, poor people are kept uneducated because they provide cheap labour. I wanted to give people in my community the chance to get better jobs.

"To achieve my goal, I gathered a team of my friends who were keen on the idea. We found two teachers willing to volunteer their time and at first, seven students joined. A few weeks later, ten more signed up. Every evening for two hours, young people of all ages now come after work to learn how to read and write.

"However, we have faced many problems because these children also must work all day. Most of them come home just half an hour before the class starts and are too tired and unmotivated to attend. Sometimes, we have to go to each student’s house and convince the parents to send their children.

"The community sees these first students as a test case. If we are successful with these 30 students, more will join over the years. We hope that the students we are educating will go on to become doctors and lawyers and social workers, and be able to contribute back to the community of Anandapuram in their professional capacities."

Jagan Devaraj, 25 and Rajendra Kashi, 18
India
Contact Jagan Devaraj at peacechild@yahoo.co.uk
Stand Up for a Just Cup

What is in your cup? If it is coffee, you are directly connected to millions of poverty-stricken people in developing nations – coffee farmers. Many consumers wake up each day with a freshly brewed pot of coffee, socially drink java in a trendy café, and buy well-known coffee brands in the supermarket, never thinking about the implications of their purchases.

Many coffee drinkers have no idea that their choice of coffee could make a huge difference in the lives of hard-working farmers. The reality is that many coffee-farming families earn less than $3 a day (less than what the average coffee drinker spends on coffee in one day)! You, as a socially-conscious consumer, can do something about this.

Over 30 million small farming families and plantation workers rely wholly on coffee for their livelihoods. While more than 70 developing countries depend on coffee for part of their export revenues, the money is not making it back to the primary producers.

As a student at Villanova University, I, along with a group of many other dedicated, passionate students, decided to start a Fair Trade Coffee campaign after learning about the coffee crisis and Fair Trade from Oxfam America, a non-profit international humanitarian aid organisation. We were shown the benefits of Fair Trade and we wanted our dining services to understand them, too. This is why we feel so passionate about Fair Trade:

International Fair Trade criteria guarantee that farmer co-operatives receive a fair price of US $1.26 per pound. This more than doubles the price farmers have been receiving. At the same time Fair Trade encourages environmentally-friendly practices, since regular coffee production has led to serious environmental degradation. In addition, Fair Trade requires importers to not only purchase coffee directly from certified Fair Trade producers, but also to establish stable, long-term relationships. Lasting relationships guarantee farmers a fair price for many growing seasons and ensure employment for the next generation.

As a result of Fair Trade, the lives of coffee-farming families are improving immensely. One woman from Colombia says, "Before, life was very hard for us, mainly because we could never get a decent price for our harvest. With the income we get from Fair Trade, our children are now well fed and have better clothing. We have also been able to send our children to school and pay for teachers."
But problems remain. Fair Trade is only able to benefit a small number of farmers because the demand for Fair Trade coffee in developed countries is not high enough. This is where we, as young people with a voice to affect change, come in.

At Villanova University we came out on top with our Fair Trade Campaign. Through petitioning and educating the Villanova community, we showed both the students and dining services why our campus should support Fair Trade certified coffee. It is now the only coffee available in student dining halls! Our victory is not restricted to this achievement; it has had a marked impact on the business practices of the third-largest coffee company in the world. Sara Lee introduced a line of Fair Trade certified coffee as a result of student demand at both UCLA and Villanova.

Help millions of people living in poverty and ensure the next generation of coffee growers have stable employment by working to offer sustainable solutions to unjust problems. Look for the Fair Trade certification label the next time you buy coffee. Ask for it in coffee shops, grocery stores and on campuses. Tell your friends and family about the coffee crisis and what they can do. Be a socially conscious consumer. Most importantly, start your own Fair Trade coffee campaign. You can be part of the CHANGE.

Want help organising a campaign to get Fair Trade coffee on your campus or somewhere else? Oxfam America provided much of the information found in this article. Many additional organising techniques and information can be found at www.oxfamamerica.org. Help work for a just cup!

Melissa Wibbens, 20, USA
To learn more about Fair Trade, visit www.fairtrade.org.uk
For decades, there have been calls for young people to be more involved with the United Nations (UN). Have we finally achieved this goal?

In May 2002, over 400 children and young people from across the globe attended the United Nations Special Session on Children, not as observers or guests, but as delegates. The young people who attended the Session as equals to the normal mix of ministers, civil servants and ambassadors, brought with them a much-needed breath of fresh air.

A pre-arranged Children’s Forum allowed the under-18 delegates to meet, discuss the Session’s key issues and agree on a statement that was presented to the UN’s General Assembly. It was the first time young people have ever addressed the UN General Assembly on a substantive issue. In their statement the youth said, "We are not the sources of problems; we are the resources that are needed to solve them. We are not expenses; we are investments. We are not just young people; we are people and citizens of this world. You call us the future but we are also the present."

"We all want a better world for children. But so far, it is adults that have called the shots. Now, we are going to build a better world with children. It's high time that we adults hear what you have to say." Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General

Other highlights included a young person addressing the Security Council of the UN, which was another first.

Having such huge youth participation took time, planning and money, but all of this effort made it a huge success. Careful planning for the past two years by the United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Save the Children ensured that youth participation was meaningful and effective. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF who organised the summit said, "I believe that for the first time in the history of the United Nations, children are not just being seen - they are being heard. The young people have not only been eloquent, they have taken responsibility and shown incredible commitment." Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, commented, "We all want a better world for children. But so far, it is adults that have called the shots. Now, we are going to build a better world with children. It’s high time that we adults hear what you have to say."

The UN has now set a precedent, which may be hard to match. Does this mark a new trend of youth involvement at the UN or is it just a passing fad? Only time will tell, but the signs are hopeful!

Tom Burke, 17
England
Bright Ideas

STAIRS TO SUCCESS

Do you know what eco-tourism is? A group of students in Belarus are not only learning about this sustainable form of tourism, they are getting first-hand training on how to design their own eco-tourism projects and implement them in their country!

The project has been facilitated by the Youth Entrepreneurship Support and Development Center (YESDC), which was set up in 1996 in Minsk, Belarus. YESDC provides young people between the ages of 15 and 22 with hands-on experiences that enable them to develop their personal skills, creative thinking, and understanding of business objectives.

Every year YESDC organises the youth economic festival, "Stairs to Success." Each year a different theme is chosen, and during the festival students attend training sessions and are able to work on their business projects for the chosen topic.

Because 2002 is the International Year of Eco-tourism, students created business projects on that topic. With the help of YESDC activities, students were involved in creating their own sustainable development plans.

Sound like a cool idea? The YESDC is now hoping to network with youth and youth organisations outside Belarus who have similar ideals, so they can share ideas and allow our students to teach and learn from other young people!

Natalia Shappo
President, YESDC
For more information contact Natalia at: yesdc@user.unibel.by

A REFRIGERATOR IN THE DESERT?

Northern Nigeria is a hot dry region where people in rural communities make their living from subsistence farming. With no electricity, and therefore no refrigeration, perishable foods spoil within days. Nigerian teacher Mohammed Bah Abba, motivated by his concern for the rural farmers and his interest in indigenous African technology, wanted to find a practical, local solution to these problems.

His extremely simple and inexpensive earthenware "Pot-in-Pot" cooling device is now starting to revolutionise lives in this semi-desert area. The Pot-in-Pot is simply a small clay pot inside a larger clay pot lined with moist sand and covered with a damp cloth. Mohammed found that egg plants, which normally rot in 3 days, lasted for 27 inside the pot! He started by giving the pots away in rural villages to familiarise local people with the technology, and has now set up five factories, employing many young people who would otherwise be jobless. Rolex has awarded his ingenuity with a Rolex Award for Enterprise, and with the money he has received from Rolex, he hopes to spread the technology far beyond his native Northern Nigeria to desert countries world-wide.
Many youth face difficulties when looking for a job. Most of us do not know where to look, who to talk to, what to do or how to do it. Looking for a job is like trying to find a needle in a haystack. So how do you gather the courage to begin? You must know what your personal talents, abilities and aptitudes are. If you obtain a job and are lucky, your insurance is paid for, but for jobs like construction work, street vending, plumbing and domestic work...FORGET IT!

Indigenous youth in Ecuador suffer from racial discrimination when they apply for well-paid jobs and must resort to working on a farm or selling goods on the street. One proposal is to introduce micro-credit and generate ideas to create productive employment. Sweet dreams, but how do you do that in a country where both employment and morale are so low?

The solution is to give school scholarships so that we can increase our knowledge and have development in different areas. To hell with the argument that we don’t have experience! You only get experience by having a job!”

Hernán Quito, 22, and Jessenia Vaca, 22, Ecuador

This is Abe, a soul in the street, left alone
This is Abe, a child who is supposed to be in school
This is Abe, who could be a pilot but instead is selling newspapers
This is Abe, whose life is painful at the age of twelve

This is Abe, future leader of the country.
He is a pilot, a doctor, a social worker, a man for everyone.
His future depends on our understanding and support.
His future depends on us extending our hand to help him.

Xavier Solda, Philippines
October
17: International Day for Eradication of Poverty
24: United Nations Day

November
16: International Day for Tolerance
20: Universal Children’s Day

December
1: World AIDS Day
10: Human Rights Day

2002

2003
8 March: International Women's Day
12 June: World Day against Child Labour
16-30 August: International Youth Congress: Morocco 2003; Contact: david@peacechild.org
The Iberian Lynx (Lynx Pardinus) is a medium-sized feline, which can grow to be 1 metre long and between 10 and 20 kg in weight. Its habitat is restricted to the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal). Though there are other kinds of Lynxes, such as the European (Lynx Lynx) and American (Lynx Rufus), it is the Iberian one whose existence is most endangered. A census carried out at the beginning of the 1990s put the Iberian Lynx population at about 1200. Five years later, another study showed there were only 500-800 left. Currently, experts believe there is an estimated population of only 200!

Many things threaten the Iberian Lynx. The most serious threats are the destruction of its habitat and the decreasing rabbit population, which is its favourite food. Other causes of death include being hit by cars, being killed by poachers, and getting caught in traps meant for other animals like foxes.

International and national regulations protect this feline. However, the Iberian Lynx appears on the World Conservation Union’s (IUCN) list of endangered species as the most threatened feline species in the world.

Although the countries involved with the preservation of this animal have received millions towards its protection and the European Union environment fund, LIFE, has done a great deal to protect it, the Iberian Lynx’s situation continues to worsen.

The Spanish government recently announced a plan with a budget of 7.5 million Euros for the protection of this emblematic species.

Of all the conservation strategies put forth to protect the Iberian Lynx, the most difficult and ambitious is a plan to breed the animal in captivity. The objective is to create a safe place for the Iberian lynx to live and proliferate. Lynxes from different regions will be brought together so their genetic material will mix and hopefully produce stronger lynxes for future generations.

If governments and society do not take this problem seriously, the Iberian Lynx could disappear within the next 10 years. We cannot let this happen in a developed nation and must use all available resources to find a solution.

David Pedrueza Díaz, 24, Spain
To learn how you can help, visit www.speciessaver.com/ibnlynx.html
Contributions Please!

Earth Focus is looking for contributions for our future issues. We welcome articles, poetry, letters to the editor, illustrations, opinion pieces, drawings, and cartoons. Written contributions to the Speak Out and Focus sections should be 300-350 words maximum and deal with a specific issue. They must be well-researched and will be accepted in English, French or Spanish. Pictures should be mailed or scanned at 300 DPI and provided in JPEG. Don't limit your ideas to the topics listed below — other relevant topics are accepted and encouraged!

Issue 18: Review of the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg
(Johannesburg, South Africa 26 August-4 September)

Issue 19: Drug use and abuse.
Deadline for contributions: 6 December
- Why do drugs attract youth? How are drugs viewed by youth in different societies?
- Should certain illegal drugs be legalised? How do drug policies differ from country to country?
- Different views on illegal drugs and the economy: should countries who export illegal drugs be asked to stop? How will this affect their economy?

Issue 20: Traditions
Deadline for contributions: 6 March
- How is globalisation affecting cultural traditions?
- How is language linked with culture? Does loss of native language mean loss of native culture?
- Third culture kids: how do you choose an identity when you have lived in more than one country?

The Earth Focus Twinning Programme Needs You!

Help us get Earth Focus to schools in need. We are looking for partners in the Earth Focus Twinning programme. Right now we have a waiting list of schools that would like to receive classroom packs (25 copies) of Earth Focus, but do not have the resources to subscribe.

The Nakulabye Junior School in Uganda, East Africa is an example of such a school. It is based in a community that has been seriously affected by the AIDS epidemic, and many pupils at the school are orphaned.

The headmaster, Mr Zimbe Moses, wants his students to have an understanding of a world not clouded by poverty, disease and despair. Mr Moses said, "We don't want to lose hope... We wish to further understand things elsewhere in the world." He believes that Earth Focus will connect his students to the larger global community.

Schools that purchase two or more classroom packs can donate a third classroom pack to a school in need, such as Nakulabye Junior School. If you are interested in subscribing to our twinning programme, please see our subscription card.

You can find more details about the twinning programme and corporate sponsorships at: http://www.oldcitypublishing.com/earth-focus/home.html or contact Guy Griffiths at guy@oldcitypublishing.com

The Nakulabye Junior School in Uganda, East Africa is looking for a twinning partner. Can your school help?
The Rio Earth Summit was a watershed in the history of our planet. It was the moment when humanity realised that its reckless pursuit of material prosperity was wreaking havoc on the natural environment on which all life depends. A work plan called Agenda 21 was agreed - 800 pages long, 40 chapters with 3300 recommendations. Few people read it - but tens of thousands read the summary of it created by children entitled: Rescue Mission: Planet Earth. Diplomats, teachers, children, environmentalists - over 300,000 copies were sold in 20 languages. Now a new set of young people have come together at the International School to assess what progress we have made since Rio. Colourful, provocative, packed with information, RESCUE MISSION 2002 is an indispensable foundation for any study of sustainable development and what the world's governments - and young people - are doing to achieve it. Buy it - and get FOUR FREE issues of Earth Focus.