

YouthActionNet®

a program of the International Youth Foundation

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Focus: Fashion for Social Change

Have you considered your fashion footprint lately, and the environmental and social impact of what you wear? For a growing number of YouthActionNet Fellows, fashion has emerged as a powerful tool for promoting social change, cultural awareness, and earth-friendly attitudes.

"Fashion is fun, creative, and a wonderful form of self-expression," says Australian Fellow Nerida Lennon, "yet the fashion industry wastes tremendous amounts of natural resources and creates pollution through the production process. Waste also happens when we wash, tumble-dry, iron, and dry-clean clothing... Something has got to give."

Nerida broadly defines sustainable fashion as "meeting our own fashion needs without affecting the ability of future generations to meet theirs." She launched "Whispering Threads" to promote consumer awareness of sustainable fashion, while educating the industry about opportunities for creating more sustainable clothing.

Similarly, Benita Singh, who at 21 co-founded [Mercado Global](#) to link indigenous women weavers in Guatemala to U.S. markets, recently launched [Source4Style](#) to connect designers worldwide to sustainable materials. To help spread cutting edge ideas, Source4Style distributes newsletters and reports enabling fashion designers to track the latest

trends.

Fashion also serves to generate greater awareness and understanding of diverse cultures. Long drawn to the people and textiles of Africa, YouthActionNet Fellow Inés Cuatrecasas co-founded [Atelier des mille collines Ltd](#), a social enterprise that creates fashionable clothing and accessories in Rwanda that are sold in Africa, the U.S., and Europe.

Says Inés, "Our goal is not only selling. By designing, producing, and distributing high quality products, we expect to have an impact on the way products made in Africa are perceived."

Learn about these and other Fellows - in Argentina, Cambodia, Mexico, Pakistan, and the Philippines - who are using fashion to create social change. [Read more.](#)

Fellows in the News

Three Fellows were recently honored as [Young Global Leaders](#) by the World Economic Forum: Rajeeb Dey, founder and CEO of [enternships.com](#) in the UK; Reese Fernandez-Ruiz, co-founder, [Rags2Riches](#) in the Philippines; and; and Bright Simons, co-founder of [mPedigree](#) in Ghana. They join a community of more than 700 exceptional young leaders who share a commitment to shaping the global future.

Fellow Updates

Three Fellows also facilitated the closing session of the [Youth@Work: Partnerships for Skills Development](#) conference. Held in Amman, Jordan on February 21-23, the event was convened by the International Youth Foundation and Arab Urban Development Institute. Speakers included **Fida Abu Turkey**, who is working to economically-empower rural women in Palestine; **Ahmad Alhindawi**, co-founder of the Youth for Democracy Network in Jordan; and **Rabee Zureikat**, founder of the [Zikra Initiative](#) in Jordan. The three shared their experiences as young social entrepreneurs and engaged the audience in a lively dialogue around practical approaches to addressing youth employment needs. Both Fida and Rabee are recipients of the [King Abdullah II Award for Youth Innovation and Achievement](#), YouthActionNet's partner in the region.

Ahmad Alhindawi also co-authored a new study, *Working With Youth in the MENA Region, An Introductory Guide to NGO Programming in Support of the Inclusion of Youth*. The guide, sponsored by the [Danish Youth Council](#) (DUF), is designed for DUF member organizations and practitioners working with MENA youth to introduce them to youth work in the region.

Ejaj Ahmad, Founder and President of the [Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center](#), recently spoke at TedXDhaka on the "Work of Leadership." "People have confused the idea of dominance and power with leadership," he said. "When we're in a problem we expect the person in authority to solve it. Leadership is not person-centric, it's work centric... Unless we take ownership, the situation will not improve." View

the [video](#).

Rodrigo Arnaud Bello reports that Techamos Una Mano's work to transform solid waste into housing for low-income families in Mexico was recently highlighted by *La Reforma*, a national newspaper, and on the BBC online. Read the [BBC article](#) (in Spanish) and watch the [slide show](#).

Frank Fredericks, founder of [World Faith](#), recently returned from a trip to Kenya and Nigeria. View a [video](#) of his experience.

Oghenefego Isikwenu, founder of [Women-LEEP](#), was profiled in Nigeria's [Vanguard](#) newspaper. "Youth should stop looking forward to a future that will just be perfect by chance; the Nigeria of our future is the one we build now and for ourselves," commented Fego. "Things do not just happen, things are made to happen; it is not magic.

Henrique Rocha Mendes, co-founder of Batuque Arte, has composed a new song, Música: New Brazil, and produced an accompanying video. [View the video](#).

Naadiya Moosajee, co-founder of [South African Women in Engineering](#) (SAWomEng), an organization that promotes the attraction, development, and advancement of women in the field, was recently appointed to the International Youth Foundation's [Board of Directors](#). Welcome Naadiya!

Deepika Singh, co-founder of Udaan in India, is co-author of a new [study](#) entitled "Action Research on the Impact of Emotional Resilience Curriculum on Children Affected by Communal Violence in Gujarat." The study results have been published in the *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*.

Network News

TURKEY: 2nd Class of Bilgi Fellows Honored at Awards Ceremony

The 10 recipients of the 2011 [Bilgi Young Social Entrepreneur Awards](#) were honored at an awards ceremony in Istanbul in February. The Awards strengthen the personal leadership and entrepreneurship skills of young Turkish leaders, while connecting them to their peers and experts to create a national network of youth leaders affecting positive change. The Awards are implemented by Istanbul Bilgi University with support from the Sylvan/Laureate Foundation. [Read](#) about this year's Fellows (in Turkish).

PERU: Apply for the UPC Champions of Change Award

Premio Protagonistas del Cambio-UPC (UPC Champions for Change Award) is looking for ten exceptional Peruvian youth to apply for this year's fellowship. The fellowship centers around a leadership training course aimed at enhancing the leadership and entrepreneurship skills of young social innovators, while creating an extensive national and international network of social entrepreneurs through the YouthActionNet® Global network. This personalized learning experience, together with a US \$2,000 award to their projects and ongoing



mentoring support, will allow these impressive young leaders to deepen and expand their impact. The Award is implemented by Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas with support from the Sylvan/Laureate Foundation. Applications open on March 22nd and will remain open until June 28th, 2012. [Learn more](#) (in Spanish).

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