

YouthActionNet®

a program of the International Youth Foundation

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Celebrating Youth-Led Social Innovation

YouthActionNet celebrated its 10th anniversary and honored its 2011 Global Fellows at an awards ceremony held in Mexico City on October 4. The Fellows - accomplished leaders of 20 social change initiatives in 15 countries - participated in a weeklong retreat during which they honed their skills in such areas as design thinking and creating lasting systems change.

The Fellows also had the chance to interact with the directors of YouthActionNet affiliate programs from around the globe and engage with their peers representing [Premio UVM](#), the program's national partner in Mexico. The retreat, the kick-off of a yearlong fellowship experience sponsored by the Sylvan/Laureate Foundation, was co-hosted by Universidad del Valle de México (UVM), a member of the [Laureate International Universities \(LIU\) Network](#).

Former U.S. President and LIU Honorary Chancellor Bill Clinton offered his congratulations to YouthActionNet in a [letter](#) distributed to each of the 2011 Fellows. "Over the last ten years, YouthActionNet has led the way in identifying and supporting hundreds of talented young innovators throughout the world," he writes. "These leaders have mobilized their peers in developing forward-thinking strategies to alleviate poverty, improve health, increase educational opportunities, and foster more sustainable lifestyles."

To learn more about the 2011 Global Fellows and their social change innovations, watch the [video](#).

To explore the program's impact on Fellows from years past, the International Youth Foundation's *YOUth* magazine profiles three alumni who have taken their social change initiatives to scale. Says Fellow Nnaemeka Ikegwuonu, founder of the [Smallholders Foundation](#), which

works to increase the productivity and incomes of small farmers in Nigeria, "It [the Fellowship] was my first break into the consciousness of the global community." [Read more](#).

While many YouthActionNet alumni continue to grow the organizations they founded when we met them, others have pursued new social change ventures. In this month's web [Spotlight](#), ten alumni share what they are up to now and how YouthActionNet contributed to their leadership journeys.

Ten-year Retrospective

YouthActionNet @Ten, a new IYF publication, examines the program's impact over time, key trends shaping the field of youth-led social innovation, and bold plans looking ahead. Also profiled are the 2011 YouthActionNet Global Fellows.



[Download](#) the report.

Fellow Updates

Josh Arnold, founder of [Global Awareness Local Action](#) in the U.S., was one of five young leaders to be recognized with a [Wild Gift](#) fellowship. Read about Josh's 20-day wilderness experience in his [blog](#).

Dina Buchbinder Auron, founder of [Deport-es para Compartir](#) (DpC), hosted the 2011 YouthActionNet Global Fellows during their stay in Mexico. The visit, which allowed Fellows to see first-hand how DpC educates children about the UN Millennium Development Goals, was captured on [video](#). Other Fellows had the opportunity to spend time at [Sembradores Urbanos](#), founded by *Premio UVM* Fellow Carolina Lukac, which promotes urban agriculture in Mexico City.

Robin Chaurasiya's efforts through [Kranti](#) to "transform trafficked girls in India into the leaders of tomorrow" were recently chronicled as part of AlJazeera's *Activate* series. [View](#) the 24-minute film, entitled *Revolutionary Daughters*.

Andeisha Farid, founder of the [Afghan Child Education and Care Organization](#), is profiled in a new book, *Hearts on Fire: Twelve Stories of Visionaries Igniting Idealism into Action*. Proceeds from the book, which goes on sale November 8, will support the work of those profiled. [Learn more](#).

Benita Singh, founder of [Source4Style](#), is a recipient of a Cartier Women's Leadership Award. The 2011 Laureates were announced on October 14 at the Annual Global Meeting of the Women's Forum in Deauville, France. Honorees receive US\$20,000 in funding, access to networking and visibility, and a full year of coaching support to help them take their businesses even further. [Learn more](#).

The [Yonso Project](#), co-founded by **Kwabena Danso**, will display its bamboo bicycle enterprise at the United Nations on November 14-18 as part of the [Green Economy Eco-Business Innovation Challenge](#) sponsored by Peace Child International.

Alejandro Zapato, founder of [Portafolio Verde](#), was honored as one of the Ten Outstanding Young Persons in Antioquia, Colombia by Junior Chamber International.

Network News

The winners of the 2011 [King Abdullah II Award for Youth Innovation and Achievement](#) were announced during a special ceremony held at the World Economic Forum at the Dead Sea in Jordan on October 23. The three awardees from Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine will each receive US\$50,000 to support their work and leadership development. All ten finalists benefit from recognition and capacity-building trainings. The Awards are part of the YouthActionNet Global Network.

Congratulations to the first ten winners of the [Premio Protagonistas del Cambio UPC](#) (UPC Champions of Change Award) in Peru! Through their work, this inaugural class of Peruvian Fellows is promoting indigenous rights, protecting endangered wildlife, encouraging greater citizen participation, and advocating for the needs of the disabled. An initiative of the *Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas* (UPC), a member of the *Laureate International Universities (LIU) Network*, the program offers select young leaders training, mentoring, and a monetary award for their social change work. The program is part of the YouthActionNet Global Network. [Learn more.](#)

Meet the 2011 [Young Social Pioneers](#) (YSP)! An initiative of the [Foundation for Young Australians](#), YSP brings 14 of Australia's brightest young minds together every year, creating a dynamic community of change-makers who develop their skills while learning from and inspiring each other. From sparking discussions on social justice issues facing indigenous Australians to promoting sustainable fashion, this year's recipients are leading a range of social innovations. Each receives 12 months of professional training, mentoring, and support for their project, valued at over \$22 000. This year's Fellows join YouthActionNet's Global Network of more than 550 young social innovators in 60 countries. [Learn more.](#)

The European University of Madrid (UEM) held its First Meeting of Young Social Entrepreneurs. Entitled 'All that can be dreamed is real,' the meeting, held from 16 to 18 September, brought together 170 youth who work with the projects of winners of the [UEM Prize for Young Social Entrepreneurs](#), awarded annually to outstanding young social innovators in and around Madrid. Activities were organized so that participants could form ties among themselves and strengthen a local network of youth leading positive change. The Universidad Europea de Madrid Prize for Young Social Entrepreneurs forms part of the YouthActionNet Global Network and is sponsored by the Sylvan/Laureate Foundation.

YouthActionNet's Global Network is poised for expansion in Africa. On October 18, at the UNESCO Youth Forum, IYF signed an agreement with the UN agency to establish youth social entrepreneurship programs in Senegal and Kenya. At least 180 innovative, youth-led, social change efforts are expected to benefit over three years. Both organizations are now reaching out to additional partners and donors to raise funds, with the target date for the start of program activities set for summer 2012.

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