



Insights

WHAT'S IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS

OF THE WORLD'S 20-YEAR-OLDS?

Have you ever wondered what's really on the minds of young people? Here's your chance.

As IYF turns 20, we surveyed 20-year-olds around the globe participating in IYF-supported programs about what excites them, what concerns them, and what gives them hope. We asked them who their heroes are and what they'd like to tell their leaders. From Nairobi to Cairo, Bogotá to Bucharest, their responses paint a picture of what it's like to grow up in a diverse, yet increasingly interconnected world.

What surprised us were how many young people—in the face of growing materialism—rated their family, friends, and skills as their most prized 'possessions.' Parents were often heralded as heroes by their children.

Environmental ills ranked high among youth concerns, along with how to increase access to education and jobs, satisfy growing energy demands, and promote equal opportunities for women.

One of the greatest challenges facing today's youth is being heard. "The leaders don't listen to us," says Mainuddin in Delhi. Pooja, also from Delhi, agrees. "I wish my parents would try to understand and listen to me better."

Where do today's youth see the greatest hope for their futures? Through making education more widely available, investing in technology and innovation, and strengthening community ties. "Knowing we have each other's backs is what makes us unique," says Emily Wanjiru of her community in Kenya. "We swim or drown together. When a neighbors house catches fire, we all put it out."



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I'm most **proud** of having participated in this training, of gaining the knowledge and skills to move forward with my family and being an example for other youth in my community.”

WILMER GARCIA ZURITA
San Ignacio, Peru

EMILY WANJIRU

Nairobi, Kenya



Most treasured possession?

My skills because no one can take them away from me.

Greatest disappointment?

Not getting a university education. It was always my dream but I was not able to go.

Community's greatest asset?

Our sense of community and knowing we have each other's backs. When a neighbor's house catches fire, we all put it out.

Trend you find most exciting?

Technology. We have the fiber optic cable in Kenya now. Imagine all the knowledge we will have access to!

JONATHAN HAMASAKI

Buenos Aires, Argentina



Favorite possession?

The support of my family and friends.

Most promising global trends?

Technology. The growth of NGOs. The fact that more and more young people are finding ways to pursue their dreams.

Issues that concern you most?

Poverty, lack of water, jobs, and consciousness regarding the environment.

HEIDI MARICEL ARMAS

Picota, Peru



Professional goal?

To continue with my studies and create a youth group dedicated to organic agriculture and environmental conservation.

Greatest accomplishment?

My son. He is my engine. He gives me the motivation to continue moving forward.

Greatest challenge facing future generations?

Water shortages. We don't think about those who will come after us. The world is drying up and we just live for the moment.

SAMIA GAMAL HUSSEIN

Cairo, Egypt



Issues that concern you most?

The global economic crisis and our society's point of view regarding women.

Core values?

I never refuse any challenge!

JACK HEGARTY

Latrobe Valley, Australia



Idea of happiness?

When I feel connected to people and my environment, when I feel that reciprocating bond of energy that links me to the world.

Proudest achievement?

I'm proud to have changed the lives of other young people who have been victims of homophobic bullying, abuse, and discrimination.

Core values?

I believe that everyone has the right to be equal in life, love, happiness, opportunity, education, and employment.

MAINUDDIN MALIK

Delhi, India



Your hero?

My father. When he got married he had nothing, not even a place to stay. He has struggled to give his family a decent lifestyle.

Greatest disappointment?

When I was growing up there was no one to guide me. I didn't know what my goals were. I didn't know what I wanted to be. Looking back, I realize how important it is to have direction in one's life. **Y**

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My **heroes** are my parents. They worked so hard to give us a life they never had. Even now that they no longer work, their thoughts are always of us.”

ROXANNE CHEREGI

Bucharest, Romania

