

## **My experience in the development of International Youth Policy**

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I was fortunate to be given an opportunity of attending a workshop on the development of an International Youth Policy from National Youth Policies in process or completed from African countries like Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe and others in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

This was my first experience to participate in discussions relating to the purpose, design, implementation, and evaluation of a National Youth Policy considering Policies which are in existence from other countries or those still in the process of development.

The main highlights were:

- What are the needs of the youths?
- Were the youths involved?
- Do the youths understand what benefits the policy will create for them?
- Are they supporting the development, implementation, and the purpose?

I understood that, the youth policy must address the needs and challenges facing the youth today in their growth and development for a better future.

This is in short the information I brought home to share with my colleagues, youth club members and peers, and the message is: "Let all young people support our country's National Youth Policy as it is one of those in existence and functioning."

My action plan started in Addis Ababa at the National Hotel where I joined a group of youths hanging around the hotel and motivated them to know their rights and responsibilities to design and direct their future.

From our conversation I came to note their problems; they explained that boys only go to school to become taxi drivers while girls get children to earn easy money....what a notion to live for?

This opened a serious discussion of what changes they could as youths make in their lives for a better future , they came up with an idea of teaming up to form a youth club and make their voices heard by those in power and developing programs to generate income.

At home I am prepared to set the pace in our village by forming home-help groups, identifying needy families, girls and boys who are not attending school and assisting them by referring them to the Department of Welfare social workers and to health workers who can assist them.

I have developed a strong will of community development in particular the youths their present challenges and their future lives / careers.

The Youths need mobilization to drive and shape their future.

I thank you!