


# Closure Report

## Open Forum

Santo Tome City. Santa Fe. Argentina

April 2nd. 2005

## Youth Participation & Millennium Development Goals



Youth Participation is one of the pivotal bases of **TakingITGlobal** and the **Scouts of Argentina**. With this aim, both organizations utilize similar methodologies that encourage youth participation at the local level.

The Open Forums (TIG) and Youth Forums (Scouts of Argentina) are methodological proposals that gather youth in order to discuss concrete and relevant themes that concern them and their communities, constituting itself in a "youth space for youth" for an open debate towards reflection and the proposal of actions on issues related to their own interests and motivations.

Organized By:



DEPARTAMENTO de JUVENTUD  
Distrito 3 – Zona 18 Scouts de Argentina

## Presentation



The current workshop has been framed within **TakingITGlobal's Open Forums program** and used developed methodologies of On-Line Youth Work from the Youth Department of District 3, Zone 18 of **Scouts of Argentina**. The latter had place in the city of Santo Tomé, province of Santa Fe, Republic of Argentina, on April 2nd, 2005, and had duration of 3 hours. It was organized jointly by **TakingITGlobal** and the **Youth Department of the District 3, Zone 18 of the Scouts of Argentina**.

The city of Santo Tomé is located 470 km away from the city of Buenos Aires and has a population of 60.000 inhabitants.

20 youth, between the ages of 15 and 27, members of the **Scout Groups Brigadier E.**

**López, Emanuel, Francisco P. Moreno and Madre de los Pobres**, participated in the workshop.

Coinciding with the international launch of the **Youth Website on the UN Millennium Development Goals**, created by **TakingITGlobal** and accessible in <http://mdg.takingitglobal.org>, the workshop focused on exploring the visions, opinions and proposals of youth around two topics intimately linked: **Youth Participation and Millennium Development Goals**.

The workshop was divided in two segments or moments: a first moment of presentation and introduction of the Millennium Development Goals, their origin and characteristics for Argentina, exhibiting objectives and goals. The participating youth received graphic material related to the MDGs as a guide to work in the workshop, provided by **TakingITGlobal**. The second moment had as protagonists the youth who through the chat modality got together in a sort of E-Forum in real time to debate each one of the instructions proposed by the debate moderators. All instructions aimed to encourage reflection and the expression of the youth around their opinions concerning participation and their perspectives with regard to the achievement of the MDG's in Argentina.

The work modality based on "chat" was proposed and designed by the **Youth Department of the District 3, Zone 18 of the Scouts in Argentina**, which is promoting the On-Line Youth Work, after the experience was finished we can say that it resulted in an efficient mechanism that facilitated the free expression of the totality of the participants, as well as enabled to save the complete register of the expressions presented throughout the workshop for later systematization and elaboration of the current report.



## Main Conclusions Generated from the Expressions of Participating Youth

**Summary:** Although expressing a highly negative vision on the viability and hope of reaching of the MDG's in the country, the participating youth believe that there could be a significant advance in some of the objectives. As a critic to the MDG's, they mention the established short term in relation to the results that want to be achieved and see as main barriers for the advance towards development in Argentina both the irresponsibility of politicians and the "society's mentality." Finally, as proposals, they vindicate the value of their participation – which they consider to be underestimated by adults – and "bet" on education, not only of children and youth, but of adults also, in order to change precisely that "mentality".

## The Country Today and the Projection towards 2015: Scope of the MDG's

*"If we depart from such utopian objectives, I believe we will easily feel disappointed or a failure."*

In general terms, the young participants expressed a pessimistic vision on the reality and its possibility for improvement. They see Argentina very distant from the Objectives and manifested to have little expectations regarding their possible fulfilment. The majority considered that the MDG's are utopian for the Argentinean case, identifying as main obstacle their own society culture in general.

Some consider that the MDG's could be reached if the deadlines were extended.

*"These objectives are great but they are unachievable."*

The participating youth considered that the MDG's are unreachable, but advances could be achieved in some goals. They believe that in order for those advances to be significant, a change of mentality is vital, especially of those ruling the country.

They expressed a low consideration of their own capacity to transform reality; they see themselves as insufficient in number to face the great effort that involves improving the current situation. Moreover, they consider that there are difficulties to achieve the unity of people around the MDG's, but that if a significant mobilization were achieved in terms of quantity of people, many things could be done.

The main factor they believe should be worked on as a priority within the frame of the MDG's is that of Education, as a transversal axis and enabler of all the rest.



## MDGs in Argentina: How to achieve them?



*"Bet everything on education."*

They consider that the key to give the MDG's a chance in the country is to work intensely on improving education. According to them, education ends with many of the causes of poverty and contributes to modify unhealthy conducts and the capability of making decisions.

Moreover, they agreed, it is necessary to achieve more awareness since "they cannot be achieved -the objectives- within the current society."

For them, the formula that summarizes "what should be done" is: "Raise Awareness + Education + Encourage Participation."

To work jointly with government is also viewed as an action that favours the achievement of the MDG's.

## Youth Participation: Importance, Incidence and Contribution to the MDGs

*"We are the basis of the society and we have to prove to the adults that we can achieve things if we put our minds to it and that youth is not lost."*

In spite of the negative vision on their capacity to generate change on the actual situation, the participating youth considered their participation to be very important, they define it as "fundamental" and affirm that youth participation builds.

*"Many times our actions don't have the impact that they should because nobody is aware of what we are doing."*

In terms of perception of the impact of their participation, they differentiate two fields, the field of participants and the field of society as a whole. In terms of the field of participating youth, they believe that participation gives them power, it satisfies them personally, it motivates them to take new actions and generates "contagion" among its peers. In terms of the field of the society as a whole, they think society does not value and ignores their participation.



*"We could organize Forums each month on a subject related to the MDG's."*

In terms of what they can do, they highlight activities on education "among peers" and the organization of lectures. They believe that principally they have to make adults aware, who have to change their conducts and mentality.



**About Opportunities and Barriers for Youth Participation.**

*"I think we need to be made aware to achieve what we want."*

In terms of the means that youth have in order to participate, they considered that even if there is a wide availability of the means, they are not enough or they are not properly taken advantage of.

They highlighted the difficulty to access economic means.

*"Everybody's discourse is that we are the future, which is like saying we should not do anything for the time being."*

The identified obstacles for participation were:

- Disorganization.
- The mentality of the current society.
- Lack of engagement of the society in general and of youth in particular.
- Lack of interest of youth to participate.
- Lack of incentives and material resources.
- Difficulty to suggest precise and reachable objectives.
- Generalized individualism.
- Fear of failure.
- Low self-esteem.
- The belief that nothing can be changed.
- Little support from adults.
- Excessively politicized organizations.
- Historical barriers that configure the current type of non-participant society.
- The bad economic situation.



**The Adult World and its Valorization of Youth Participation.**

*"I believe many people do not care about our participation."*



In terms of the perception of valorization of their participation, from the adult world perspective, participating youth responded:

- They consider that their participation it is not perceived by adults.
- Adults underestimate the capacities of youth.
- They are not considered to be capable.
- They do not show interest for their participation.
- They do not provide collaboration.
- Many times, adults forget about youth.

## From Youth to Youth: Adding Efforts in favour of the MDG's

*"While we participate, other youth can see that it is good and may want to learn more about it."*

In terms of how we get others involved, youth responded:

- Participating; this is a way of setting an example, and spreading the word to others.
- Trying to spread the word about what they do, so that more people are aware and can become interested.
- Try to make others aware.
- Spreading is key.

## Follow up

Participants suggested organizing a second Open Forum during the month of May, inviting other youth and Scout Groups of the city and surrounding areas. Also, this new event will be combined with the development of the Youth Forum of the District 3, Zone 18 of Argentinean Scouts, which is organized by the Executive Committee of the Youth District Forum, with the support and supervision of the Area of Youth Forums of the Youth Department.





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