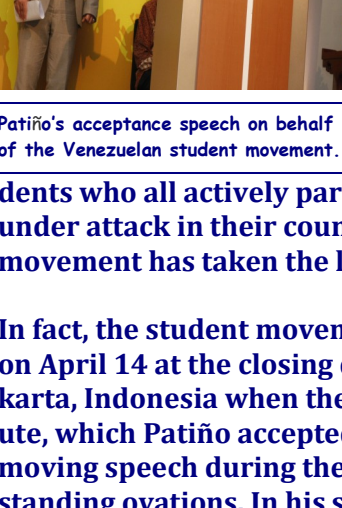




Youth Link to Democracy: WYMD Newsletter

Youth Spotlight: Roberto Patiño



Patiño's acceptance speech on behalf of the Venezuelan student movement.

Roberto Patiño is a 21 year old activist and leader in the Venezuelan student movement, which is composed of students from more than 80 universities and schools, both public and private, that hold a strong belief in democratic values and human rights. Its leadership is chosen through elections, and consists of over 60,000 students who all actively participate. During a time when freedoms are constantly under attack in their country, it is a very crucial time to mobilize, and the student movement has taken the lead in this effort.

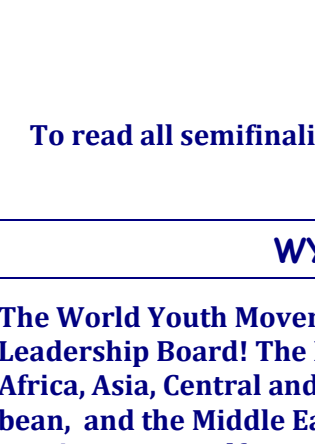


Youth rally on stage after award presentation.

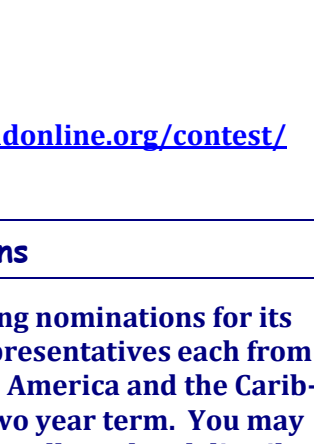
In fact, the student movement of Venezuela's initiatives were recently recognized on April 14 at the closing dinner of the World Movement's Sixth Assembly in Jakarta, Indonesia when the movement was awarded the Democracy Courage Tribute. Patiño accepted on the movement's behalf. Patiño gave an incredibly moving speech during the Democracy Courage Tribute that received multiple standing ovations. In his speech, he emphasized the importance of democracy to Venezuelans, citing that many are unwilling to sacrifice democratic values for greater economic growth. He also asserted that the current political environment has not served to advance democracy due to limits on freedom of expression, and a lack of justice and rule of law. Patiño admitted that public protest against the government in Venezuela is dangerous, but emphasized that the student movement is willing to continue to undertake the risks with the hope of achieving Venezuelan democracy.

Patiño concluded by saying, "Your solidarity is really important... I hope and encourage you...to provide opportunities to meet with other youth in your country and share experiences and learn from each other in order to go back and keep promoting and building the country that we, the young people in Venezuela, dream of." It is critical now more than ever that we continue to show Patiño our support as he has faced tremendous slander for his speech on his return to Venezuela.

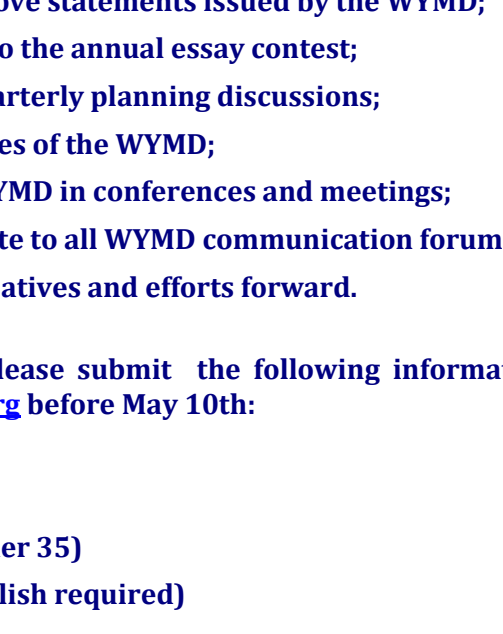
To watch Roberto Patiño's speech, go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?>



Mass student protests in the streets of Venezuela.



Congrats Global Essay Contest Winners!



Out of 15 semifinalists, *Ismail Alexandrani* and *Daria Taradai* were announced as the global winners of the World Youth Movement for Democracy's 2009 annual essay contest. The announcement was made at the John B. Hurford Memorial Dinner at the closing night of the World Movement Assembly and the award was given by Robert Miller of the Hurford Foundation. To read their essays go to:

[Daria Taradai](#)

[Ismail Alexandrani](#)

To read all semifinalist's essays, go to: <http://www.wymdonline.org/contest/contest-winners.html>

WYMD Leadership Board Elections

The World Youth Movement for Democracy is now accepting nominations for its Leadership Board! The Board will be composed of two representatives each from Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa serving for a two year term. You may nominate yourself to run for election. Nominations will be collected and distributed to the network for online membership voting. Responsibilities of Leadership Board members include:

- Review and approve statements issued by the WYMD;
 - Serve as a judge to the annual essay contest;
 - Participate in quarterly planning discussions;
 - Promote initiatives of the WYMD;
 - Represent the WYMD in conferences and meetings;
 - Actively contribute to all WYMD communication forums; and
 - Drive WYMD initiatives and efforts forward.
- To be nominated, please submit the following information, by email, to election@wymdonline.org before May 10th:
- Name
 - Country
 - Age (must be under 35)
 - Language[s] (English required)
 - Relevant experience
 - Why do you want to serve on the Board?
 - What skills can you contribute to the leadership and objectives of the network?
 - What do you envision for the future of the WYMD?

UN Declares 2010 Year of Youth

August 12, 2010, International Youth Day, will mark the beginning of International Year of Youth with a theme of "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding." As effective agents of social change, the UN calls on youth to use their energy and creativity to solve some of the greatest problems facing the world, from building peace in their communities to bolstering economic development. With this renewed focus on the power of youth, we, the World Youth Movement for Democracy, need to ensure that the democracy movement is at the forefront of the issues addressed by youth during the UN Year of Youth. This is our time to show the contributions and achievements of youth towards the progress of democracy worldwide, and an opportunity to urge the UN to recognize October 18th as International Youth Day for Democracy, an issue that the network has been pushing for several years.

It is time to take action! Start thinking of ways to recognize the day and the year! We need to be a collective voice and brand this day with the strength of the World Youth Movement for Democracy! Please send any ideas and suggestions to info@wymdonline.org.

Protection of Youth Activists

At the recent WYMD meeting, members chose to make the protection of youth activists a priority initiative for the network. This protection includes defending those in prison and protecting those facing arrest and intimidation for their political beliefs and actions. New systems are currently being developed to allow the network to respond quickly and effectively to the arrest of youth activists and to monitor the developments of their case.

In just the short time since our meeting, several cases have been brought to the network's attention. In Kenya, 12 youth were arrested after demanding that the municipal government provide the basic public service of land space for garbage disposal. While they have since been released, this continues to be a threat in Kenya, and one that the network must closely monitor. Additionally, the Student Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners in Iran recently reported that youth activist Ali Bikas, who has been in prison for the past 10 months, is suffering from deteriorating health conditions and needs immediate emergency care. Bikas is one of many youth political prisoners facing grave conditions in Iran.

To read the statement issued at the WYMD meeting, go to: <http://www.wymdonline.org/WYMD%20declaration.pdf>



4th World Youth Movement for Democracy meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia. 13 April 2010

Youth in the Philippines: Get Out the Vote

Presidential, legislative, and local elections will be held in the Philippines on Monday May 10th, 2010. To ensure free and fair elections, many active youth groups and organizations are working together to help voters make an educated choice and ensure that everything runs smoothly on election day.

Youth in the Philippines have a particularly important role to play in these upcoming elections. Constituting approximately 40% of the population in the country, youth participation can have a significant impact on the election outcome. President Gloria Macagapal-Arroyo emphasized the importance of youth and their civic involvement, "free and fair elections are important and you the students need to get involved in a positive way in the civic life of the nation."

Internet and new technologies such as cell phones further reinforce electoral communication between youth. Youth Vote Philippines, a network of 14 youth groups and organizations in at least 17 provinces throughout the nation, is working towards transparent elections. [Youthvotephilippines.com](http://youthvotephilippines.com) gathers as much information as possible about candidates in order to provide information to youth so that they can make informed choices the day of the elections. Online and on-the-ground programs and events are ways in which the organization tries to give Filipino youth a voice in the upcoming elections.

Check it out! Opportunities for Youth Around the World

- [CIPE's Youth Essay Contest 2010](#), Deadline June 18th, 2010
- [Youngstars Foundation My Leader 2011 Essay Contest](#), Deadline June 5th, 2010 (Nigerian youth)
- [Atlas Corps Overseas Fellowship](#), Deadline May 15, 2010
- [Freedom to Create Funding Opportunity](#), Rolling Deadline, Three month review process

Web Tools

- The World Bank launched a new data catalog providing access to over 2,000 indicator sources. Go to: <http://data.worldbank.org/>
- U.S. Institute of Peace released a *Peacemakers Toolkit* on best practices of peacemaking. Go to: <http://www.usip.org/resources/peacemaker-s-toolkit>

Youth Democracy Videos

Check out the youth video shown at the opening session of the World Movement's Assembly! Go to: <http://www.wmd.org/assemblies/sixth-assembly/video>

The Bridge Center for Training, Research and Development, lead by young film producers and bloggers in Egypt, recently released Egyptian Human Rights Tube. Videos include topics such as voter registration, sectarianism, and more. Go to: <http://www.egyptube.org>.

"OL!" Movement, a youth group in Azerbaijan that spreads democratic values and progressive ideas through social activism, created an innovative video that encourages volunteerism, optimism, unity, and trust as methods of strengthening democracy. To view the video, go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhLysKbCoaM>

Dear Youth Network,

Our recent meeting in Jakarta gave network members an opportunity to re-energize and strengthen the network for years to come! Many ideas emerged from this meeting such as a network focus on the protection of youth activists and advocacy efforts around the UN-recognized Year of Youth. There were ideas to enhance the annual essay contest with follow-up activities, including issuing regional reports on the general themes of submitted essays. Most excitingly, the network will now have a Leadership Board, and I hope many of you will consider running for election to represent your region, voice your ideas, and to continue to move the movement forward!

Next month, we will have even more details on the new initiatives of the network with the Leadership Board in place. Remember to continue to share the stories of your amazing work to strengthen democracy and to build solidarity, whether through the listserv, Facebook, or by emailing your stories to bethd@ned.org.

Until next time,
Beth Davis
Managing Editor

Staying connected is as easy as 1-2-3!

- 1) Join our new Facebook group: www.facebook.com
- 2) Visit our new Website: www.wymdonline.org
- 3) Follow us on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/WYMD>

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ceciliaa@ned.org or Bethd@ned.org. We are here to support your work in any way possible, whether it is helping out with an activity or connecting you to other activists in your area or beyond!

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#).
Questions or comments? E-mail us at info@wymdonline.org
Trouble viewing? Please use attached PDF version.