

Youth Perspectives on Asia Pacific



Pierre-Éric Langlois is a youth coordinator with Industry Canada. He's working on youth participation in the APEC ministerial meetings.

Q You're encouraging young Canadian entrepreneurs to be active in APEC and CYAP events. What's the payback for them?

A We're looking for dynamic, young business people who have already proven their abilities. We want them to take up a new challenge — exporting to Asia Pacific. But we recognize that to do that, they need access to potential sources of capital, market information and decision-makers in those new markets. That kind of access is the payback for participation in APEC-related events.



Laura McIsaac is a high school student in Sydney, Nova Scotia and one of the Canadian youth delegates to the CYAP Youth Conference.

Q Nova Scotia is a long way from the Pacific Ocean. What interests you about Asia Pacific?

A It's true that Asia is far away but it's going to be the centre of economic development for everybody in the next century. Any knowledge or experience of Asia Pacific is going to be useful for a young person today if they plan to go into business or if they're looking for a job in an export-related industry. I'm especially interested in questions of equality and issues like controlling child labour. Some people say there's not much we can do about it, but I think we have to try.



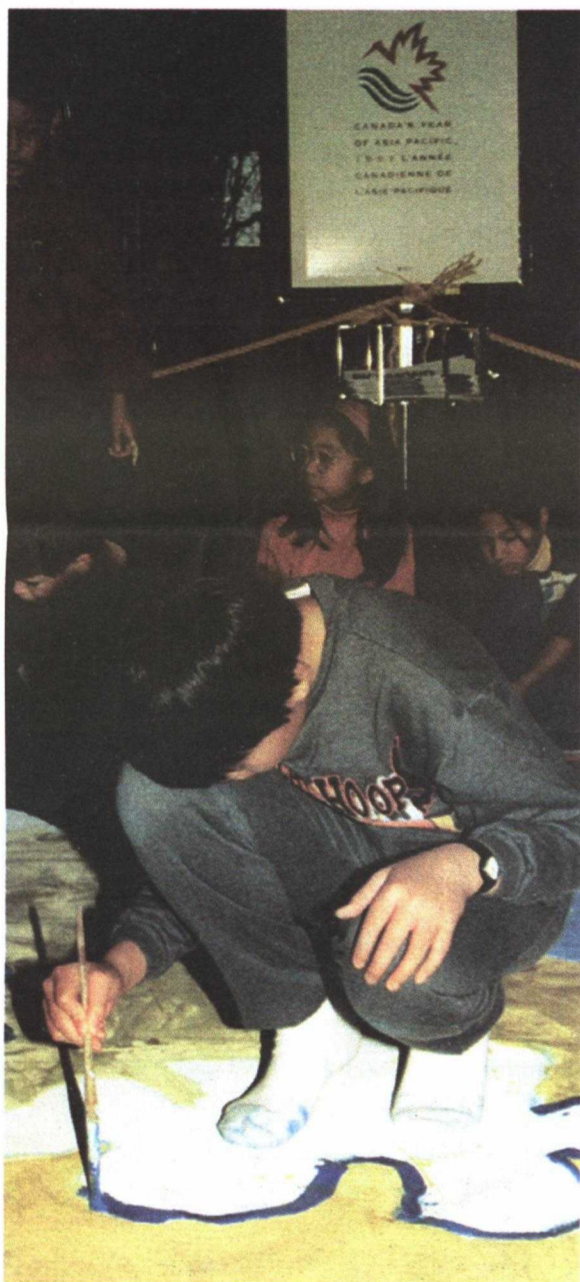
Monica Chan is from Port Coquitlam, B.C. She's a grade 12 student and a delegate to the CYAP Youth Conference.

Q You come from the Canadian province with the closest ties to Asia. Do young people from B.C. already think of themselves as part of Asia Pacific?

A Even though many Canadians with origins in Asia live here, there doesn't seem to be too much awareness about the economic and cultural importance of Asia for all Canadians. That's true for young people, as well. I think we need to work harder at improving relations by getting to know other parts of the world better. I'm really excited about attending the CYAP Youth Conference, then bringing back what I learn and sharing it with others in my community.



World peace mural created by youth from the Richmond, B.C. area, as part of "Kids Guernica," a travelling exhibition of 12 murals by youth from Asia Pacific countries. This community-based public art project was funded through the CYAP cultural program and is on display at the Vancouver Airport.



Aaron McQuaid is a student at Colonel Gray High School in Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Q Do people in Prince Edward Island think of their province as part of Asia Pacific?

A Not yet, but that's coming. The trends are all there for the Atlantic provinces to be more and more aware of Asia and its "Tiger Economies." Right now people think of the U.S. when they think exports. But if you're interested in a future in business like I am, then you have to take advantage of any chance you get to learn more about Asia.



Mokham Rafiq is a grade 12 student in Surrey B.C.

Q Why did you apply to go to the CYAP National Youth Conference?

A Well, I think we're already living in a global village and I want to be part of the "virtual community" they're going to create across Canada with Internet connections. Computers are going to be a big part of my future and multiculturalism is a big part of my life here in Surrey. The conference is going to link these two things — computers and multiculturalism — in a really interesting way.



Canada and the World

Canada figures prominently among countries the world admires most. Most Japanese (92%), Australians (90%), Chinese (87%) and Koreans (85%) would place Canada among the top ten countries they admire most.

(Source: Angus Reid, April 1997)