

WorldLink

A program at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, at the University of San Diego's Kroc School of Peace Studies

Volume Seventeen

Since 1997



Hannah Schnell being helped through an American Red Cross simulation (For story, see 'Struggles in Delivering Humanitarian Aid' on pg. 5)

Photo by J. Bowman

Youth Have the Power to Change the World

Written by Hector Arias, San Diego Early Middle College

WorldLink's 17th Youth Town Meeting introduced the complex, yet fascinating topic "Global Conflicts: Human Impacts, Human Solutions." In our interconnected world, how do our actions and the actions of my government affect others around the world? What impact do my actions have on the 700 other conference delegates sitting in USD's Shiley Theatre?

Student delegates would soon discover the answers to these questions as they considered this year's subtopics: Poverty and Hunger, Global Health, Environment and Land, Human Protection and Peace Processes.

WorldLink high school interns Nicole-Ann Lobo and Freida Aguilar introduced this year's student-selected theme. "As we all know, often the most destructive force and biggest threat to humanity, is the human race itself. However, we are also the most powerful solution!" As teenagers, it is important to be mindful of this reality. Lobo and Aguilar continued, "On your program and tote bag, you will see the visual of a gun. However, there is a knot at the end. The knot represents the idea of putting an end to conflict."

Throughout the Opening Plenary, this visual became much more than just an image or concept. As the Opening Plenary guest panelists took the stage, student delegates began to hear about real-world solutions linked to some of the world's greatest concerns.

The first panelist was Anita Raj, professor in the Division of Global Public Health at UCSD and director of its Center on Gender Equity and Health, who addressed the issue of public health at the population level. Global health is influenced by such varied factors, thus an interdisciplinary approach must be taken. As Raj explained, "Do you love math? Do you love engineering? Global health has ample opportunities."

To further explain, Dr. Raj described a real-life example of the correlation between the fields of global health, environmental science and engineering. *Chulas* are a type of stove in India that produce high carbon emissions, which affect the environment and the community's health. She noted that in this case, scientists and engineers could develop an eco-friendly stove. Global health brings together physicians, psychologists, attorneys and others. Through the realization that every field of study can play a role in global

health, Dr. Raj asked conference delegates to consider one simple question: "How can I affect change?"

The second guest speaker, Annie Kim, joined us from the U.S. Fund for UNICEF, which works to improve children's nutrition, sanitation, and education, as well as provide emergency relief. She highlighted UNICEF's work in Burundi that has provided support and resources to refugees following the country's civil war. Over half of Burundi children suffer from chronic malnutrition or are stunted, which means that a child's body and brain begin to stop growing or developing at a certain age due to high rates of poverty and malnutrition. It leaves a lasting impact on the people of Burundi because malnutrition has the capacity to affect three generations. The civil war in Burundi forced people to spend their days hiding and fleeing from the violence, which contributed to the epidemic of chronic malnutrition.

Despite these challenges, UNICEF began to work closely with the people of Burundi and organize weigh-in sessions. Women were asked to bring in vegetables in order to learn and share recipes of nutritious meals. Starvation and malnutrition also began to reduce through the introduction of plumpy'nut, an enriched

peanut butter paste that only costs 17 cents a bar. Through cost-effective methods and community programs, UNICEF continues to make a lasting impact in the field of poverty and hunger. Like Dr. Raj, Kim believes that everyone can make a difference and play a contributing role towards a world where no child goes hungry.

The final speaker was Sedrick Murhula, a community development worker, refugee activist and youth motivator from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Murhula fled to Uganda in 2007 due to armed conflict in his home country between rebels and armed groups. One of the primary causes for conflict in this region was natural resources. When the violence reached his village, his only option was to flee to a refugee camp in Kampala, Uganda. He was only seventeen years old.

Murhula lived under dire circumstances. His entire family lived in one small, crowded room. He ate once a day and struggled to find work. One day, however, he woke up and decided to

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Letter from the Editor

Hello,

My name is Ian Harkness, and I am the 2014 WorldLink spring intern and editor-in-chief of the 17th edition of the WorldLink Newspaper. First, I'd like to thank you for taking the time to read through this paper, which is the fruit of months of work and a tireless effort by Ms. Debbie Martinez, myself and an excellent team of student reporters and photographers.

This publication is a representation of the 17th Annual Youth Town Meeting, WorldLink's capstone program, which as I've discovered, is an incredible one-day conference with an absolutely astounding impact on all who participate. Perhaps the most powerful aspect of the conference is the intense unification in the face of such diversity. On January 22, student delegates came from both sides of the U.S. and Mexico border, and speakers traveled from all over the world representing a variety of fields. Despite this diversity, a single unified message emerged, as reflected in the title of the cover story: "Youth have the power to change the world."

Representing several continents, a dozen languages and hundreds of different cultures, WorldLink unearths the fundamental truth that youth can overcome the human impacts of global conflict through innovative human solutions. This publication is designed to illustrate a fraction of the event's significance in our local San Diego and Mexico communities, as well as the long-lasting impact it will have on the lives and decisions of the emerging generation of leaders.

Following this year's Youth Town Meeting, the 700 student delegation realized that the conference served as a synthesis of youth and experience, speakers



and students, hope and success. Together, we acknowledged that through questioning, examining and collaborating, we truly can enact global change.

However, this change is not immediate. If we truly want to change the world, we have to act. This publication is a call to action, a call to consider more carefully the effects of our daily decisions and the ways in which we can potentially enrich the world, both globally and locally. It is an unfortunate truth that human protection and peace processes are not on the mind of the average person on a daily basis. It is not often that we consider the struggles people face around the world. The 2014 WorldLink Newspaper is designed to change that.

With this paper, we hope that you will consider the actions you take, but most importantly, we hope that you will realize that your actions have weight. We can enact change. We can better our planet. As youth, we have the power to bring solutions to our world.

Best,

Ian Harkness
St. Augustine High School
2014 WorldLink Editor-in-Chief

The WorldLink program and the annual Youth Town Meeting

The mission of the WorldLink program is to connect youth to global affairs by creating an environment in which young people may consider global citizenship and responsible local participation. WorldLink encourages critical thinking and understanding of the dynamics shaping international policies and global economies, as well as local cultures and concerns.

The annual Youth Town Meeting, WorldLink's capstone event of the year, allows for discussions with leaders, experts, activists and fellow youth from around the world. It calls upon youth to engage in global affairs and add their voices to a civil and responsible atmosphere in which we can build our diverse yet increasingly intertwined communities, with a vision of justice and peace.

2014 WorldLink Press

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Academy of Our Lady of Peace, CETYS Universidad Tijuana, Colegio Baja California de Rosarito, Colegio Ibero Tijuana, Colegio Reina Isabel Real Del Mar, Colegio Reina Isabel Sacramento, Coronado High School, Del Norte High School, Escondido High School, Francis Parker School, High Tech High Chula Vista, Instituto Mexico Americano Noroeste, John Muir High School, La Jolla Country Day School, Mission Bay High School, Muirlands Middle School, National University Academy, Olympian High School, Otay Ranch High School, Preparatoria Federal Lazaro Cardenas, Roosevelt Middle School, San Diego Early Middle College, San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts, San Dieguito Academy, Sierra Vista School - GRF, St. Augustine High School, Sunset High School, Sweetwater High School, The Bishop's School, The Grauer School, Torrey Pines High School and Universidad Xochicalco Tijuana
Participating Youth Organizations: International Rescue Committee Peacemakers and Outside the Lens

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The mission of the WorldLink program is to connect youth to global affairs by creating an environment in which young people may consider global citizenship and responsible local participation.

“Global Conflicts: Human Impact, Human Solutions”

Poverty and Hunger

Global Health

Environment and Land

Human Protection

Peace Processes

The Sessions

Youth: Confronting Conflicts and Creating New Realities

Presenter: Sedrick Murhula, founder and director, Young African Refugees for Integral Development
Moderator: Adrian Estrada (CETYS Tijuana)

UNICEF: A World of Action

Presenter: Annie Kim, global citizenship fellow, UNICEF
Moderator: Maya Lakshman (La Jolla High School)

Waging Peace, Fighting Disease, Building Hope

Presenter: Lauren Kent-Delany, director of educational programs, The Carter Center
Moderator: Joseph Hensersky (The Bishop's School)

Do We Have a Responsibility to Protect?

Presenter: Necla Tschirgi, professor of practice, University of San Diego
Moderator: Yoko Kelly Tsutsui Garcia (IMAN)

International Humanitarian Law: Looking for Justice

Presenter: Christie Edwards, director of international humanitarian law, American Red Cross
Moderator: Lily Greenberg Call (San Diego Jewish Academy)

Building Leadership Communities: A Story from the Congo

Presenter: Efreem Bycer, founding board chairman, Congo Leadership Initiative
Moderators: Erika Zepeda (CETYS Tijuana)

Speaking Truth to Power

Presenter: Wesley Farrow, manager, Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
Moderator: Manuel Mendivil Vidal (CETYS Tijuana)

A Post-Conflict Medical Mission

Presenter: David Joseph, co-founder and overseas director, Northern Uganda Medical Mission
Moderators: Larissa Guerrero Espinoza (CETYS Tijuana) and Angelica Marasigan (John Muir High School)

Peacebuilding Processes During and After Conflict

Presenters: Chris Groth, program officer, and Zahra Ismail, program officer, Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice
Moderator: Carolina de la Torre Martinez (CETYS Tijuana)

Journeys: From Iraq and Saudi Arabia to San Diego

Presenters: Sarah Farouq, youth leader, and Dania al-Kabbani, youth leader, National University Academy
Moderator: Quetzali Altamirano (IMAN)

Human Protection: Implications for Democracy in Mexico

Presenter: Emily Edmonds-Poli, associate professor, University of San Diego
Moderator: Freida Aguilar (SD School of Creative and Performing Arts)

Torture Survivors: Impact and Recovery

Presenters: Rebecca Trotzky, physician, and Sophie Westacott, development and communications manager, Program for Torture Victims
Moderator: Cristhel Rubio Gurrola (CETYS Tijuana)

Global Challenges to Women's Health

Presenter: Anita Raj, professor and director, UCSD's Center on Gender Equity and Health
Moderator: Damneet Kaur (Mission Bay High School)

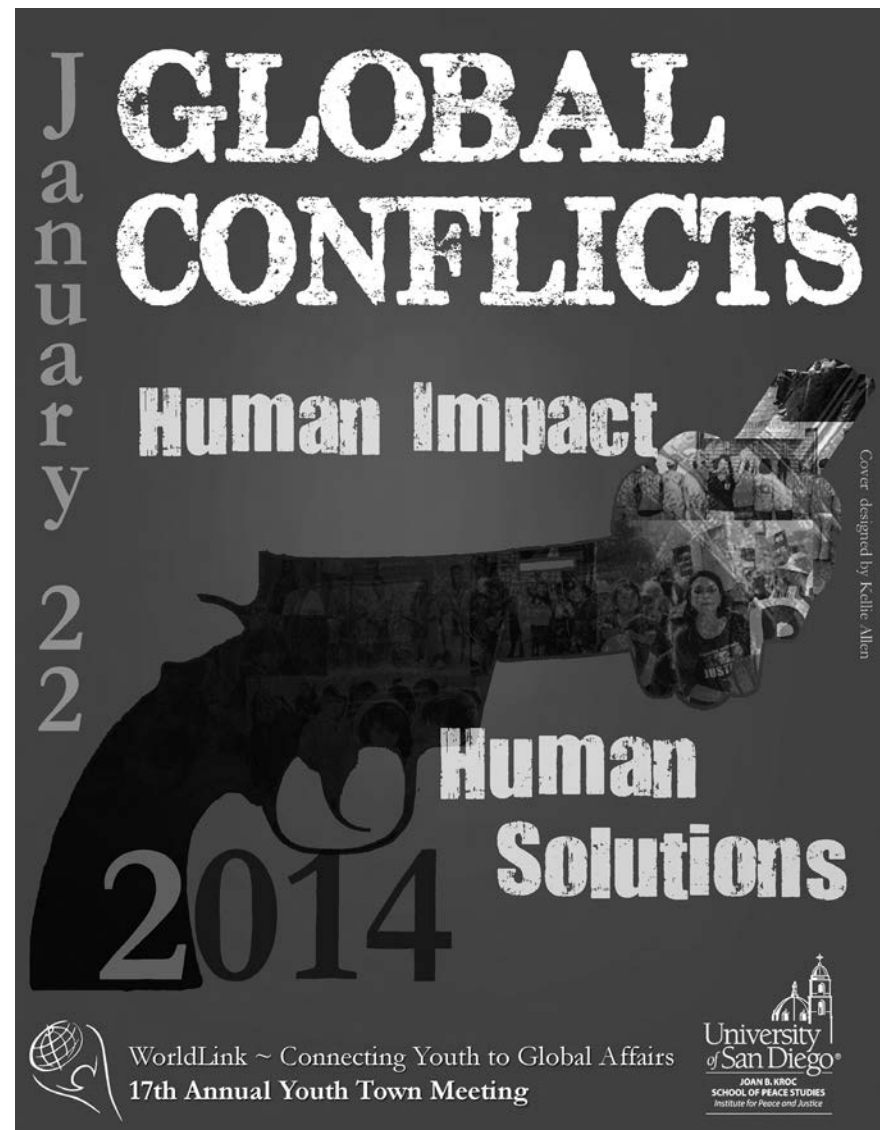
Business, Human Rights and Sustainability

Presenter: Katie Baxter, manager, Qualcomm Inc.
Moderator: Kira Elliott (San Dieguito Academy)

“A Little Step” Towards Human Protection

Presenter: Dee Aker, interim director, Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice
Moderator: Christian Iniguez Figueroa (IMAN)

The Poster



This year's poster was designed by the 2013 WorldLink Fall Media Intern

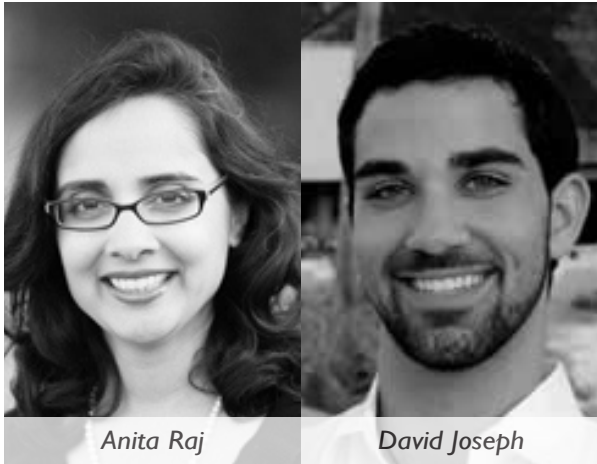


Kellie Allen
High Tech High School

Kellie is currently a sophomore at the Gary and Jerri-Ann Jacobs High Tech High School. She is fluent in French and is learning Spanish and German. Kellie enjoys teaching French to middle school students and volunteering at the International Rescue Committee and the public library. She also helps lead computer workshops and has created online tutorials for computer programs. In addition, she designed the website for an afterschool athletic program dedicated to helping young refugees integrate with the San Diego community through soccer. Kellie hopes to pursue a degree in graphic design, as well as a minor in psychology so she can better understand the causes and effects of conflict around the world. In her free time, Kellie likes to tutor, expand her knowledge of photography and participate on her school's Hall of Fame Robotics team.

Often the most destructive force and biggest threat to humanity is the human race itself. However, we are also the most powerful solution.

– Nicole-Ann Lobo and Freida Aguilar, WorldLink Interns



Anita Raj

David Joseph

Anita Raj, Ph.D, is director of UCSD's Center on Gender Equity and Health and is a professor in the Division of Global Public Health, Department of Medicine. For the past 20 years, Raj has been involved with various community-based organizations working for immigrant rights and against gender-based violence. Currently, Raj has projects related to adolescent girls' early marriage and reproductive/maternal health, HIV prevention and test and treat interventions, sexual violence prevention programs, and immigrant and refugee health. Her current research is based in South Asia, the United States and Russia.

Annie Kim serves as a global citizenship fellow for the U.S. Fund for UNICEF, which works to improve children's lives by providing healthcare and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education and emergency relief. Prior to her position in grassroots advocacy and community outreach with UNICEF, Kim interned for United Against Poverty and Disease and for the Los Angeles office of Senator Barbara Boxer. She has worked with nonprofit organizations, through which she helped stage a free health fair for underserved communities. Kim graduated from Occidental College with a degree in diplomacy and world affairs.

Casey Karr serves as research analyst for the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. The Global Centre engages in advocacy, conducts research and recommends strategies to further the understanding and implementation of the principle of the Responsibility to Protect. Karr's research focuses on populations at risk of mass atrocities in Syria, Burma/Myanmar and Iraq. She holds a bachelor of arts degree from New York University and is currently completing her master of arts degree in international affairs at The New School, concentrating on governance and rights. *Note: Due to unforeseen circumstances, Casey Karr was unable to attend the event.*

Chris Groth is program officer for the Nepal Peacebuilding Initiative at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ). Since 2008, Groth has conducted multiple trainings in Nepal on communication, negotiation and conflict resolution skills, including army integration and community policing. Groth works closely with IPJ partner organizations Sano Paila, Today's Youth Asia and Women for Peace and Democracy – Nepal, groups dedicated to promoting sustainable peace in Nepal. Most recently, he served as a Short-Term Observer for The Carter Center's International Election Observation Mission in Nepal. Groth earned an MA in international relations from the University of San Diego and a BA in social science and sociology from the University of California, Irvine.

Christie Edwards is director of the international humanitarian law team at the American Red Cross. While working with D.C. organizations, including Vital Voices Global Partnership, Women Thrive Worldwide and the Institute for Women's Policy Research, she focused on international human rights, international development policy and gender issues. Edwards also developed a private practice of asylum representation for political refugees, and has published articles on sex trafficking in China and legal advocacy strategies for women's rights in Morocco. She received her JD from Thomas Jefferson School of Law and an LLM from American University's Washington College of Law, specializing in international human rights and gender.

Dania al-Kabbani and **Sarah Farouq** currently attend National University Academy. Al-Kabbani, 17, is Syrian and was born in Saudi Arabia. She moved to the United States with her brother's family in 2012 for better educational opportunities. Farouq, 15, was born in Baghdad, Iraq, but her family sought refuge in Jordan due to the war in her home country. After living in Jordan for 10 years, Farouq's family moved to the United States in 2010. Now having lived in San Diego for a few years, both al-Kabbani and Farouq have an affinity for cultural exchange and value the importance of global awareness among the younger generation.



Lauren Kent-Delany

Sedrick Murhula

David Joseph is overseas director of the Northern Uganda Medical Mission (NUMEM), a community-based organization that seeks to provide quality healthcare for the community members of northern Uganda. His passion for medical equity began when he volunteered for two months in Pader, Uganda, with the American Jewish World Service's Volunteer Summer in 2012. As a UCLA Global Citizens Fellow, Joseph developed, in conjunction with NUMEM, the Rural Emergency Communication System, a cellular-based, solar-powered call box system that will act as an emergency hotline and regular source of medical information for rural community members.

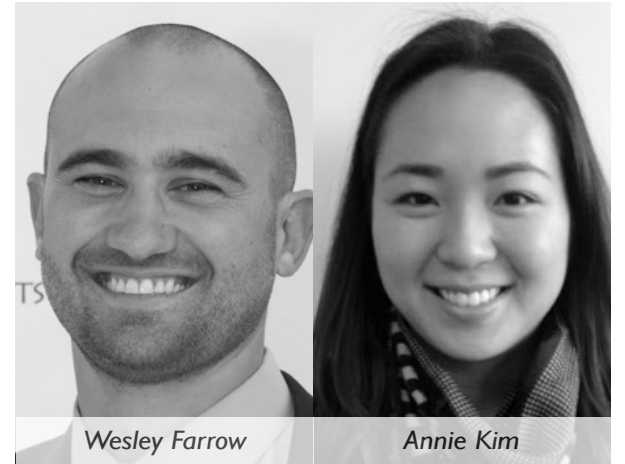
Dee Aker, Ph.D, is the interim director at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ), and founder of the WorldLink program, Nepal Peacebuilding Initiative and the Women PeaceMakers program. Aker is a psychological anthropologist and conflict resolution professional with 30 years experience working with international communities and individuals in transition. She has facilitated training, communications and negotiations for groups and individuals in conflict and transition in Europe, Africa, Central America and South Asia, and is a speaker and co-presenter internationally on intertwined concerns of conflict, gender, media, religion, security, justice and peace.

Efrem Bycer is the founding board chair of the Congo Leadership Initiative (CLI), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower Congolese youth to be catalysts for peace. To date, CLI has trained more than 300 Congolese youth and its budget has grown nearly 30-fold since its establishment in 2010. Bycer also serves as manager of economic development for the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, and was awarded the "2013 Emerging Generation: 25 in their 20s" award by the *San Diego Business Journal*. He received his bachelor's degree in urban and regional studies from Cornell University and his master of public administration degree from the Maxwell School of Syracuse University.

Emily Edmonds-Poli, Ph.D, is an associate professor in the department of political science and international relations at the University of San Diego. Her research focuses on local and state level politics in Mexico, the decentralization and democratization in Mexico and Latin America, the ability of local governments to exercise financial autonomy, and the relationship between politics and media in Latin America. She earned her Ph.D in political science at the University of California, San Diego, an MA in Latin American studies at the University of Texas, and a BA in Latin American studies at Middlebury College. She was awarded a Fulbright-Garcia Robles fellowship in 1998-1999 and a Ford Foundation fellowship in 1999-2000.

Katie Baxter serves as the affirmative action & equal employment manager at Qualcomm Inc., a company that engages with domestic, regional, multilateral and international institutions, trade associations and nongovernmental organizations on subjects including climate change, sustainable product governance and energy efficiency. Baxter communicates Qualcomm's observance of human rights, specifically through the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, through which the company has adopted a Conflict-Free Minerals Policy. Baxter received a degree in psychology from Arizona State University.

Lauren Kent-Delany serves as director of educational programs for The Carter Center, a not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization founded by former President Jimmy Carter. The center seeks to wage peace, fight disease and build hope in a world where people live every day under difficult, life-threatening conditions caused by war, disease and famine. Prior to her position at The Carter Center, Kent-Delany worked in the Division of Campus Life at Emory University for 15 years, and has also held positions at Georgia Tech and Arizona State University. She earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, and a master's degree from Ball State University.



Wesley Farrow

Annie Kim

Necla Tschirgi, Ph.D, is a professor of practice in human security and peacebuilding at the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego. A native of Turkey, Tschirgi received her BA and MA in political science at the American University of Beirut and her Ph.D in political economy at the University of Toronto. For the past 15 years, she has specialized in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, focusing on the nexus between security and development. Previously, Tschirgi served as an in-house consultant / senior policy advisor with the peacebuilding support office at the United Nations Secretariat in New York.

Rebecca Trotzky, MD, is a physician for the Program for Torture Victims, whose passion is to work with underserved and immigrant communities. During medical school at the University of Minnesota, Trotzky was a Fulbright scholar in Venezuela examining social justice transformations in delivery of public health and primary care. Her current research focuses on violence prevention, trauma-informed women's health, post-traumatic stress disorder and social determinants in global medicine. Trotzky earned a bachelor's degree in urban planning and a master's in civil engineering from Stanford University, where she studied juvenile justice systems.

Sedrick Murhula is a community development worker, refugee activist and youth motivator from the Democratic Republic of Congo. He and his family fled to Uganda in 2007. While experiencing the struggle of being a refugee, Murhula founded Young African Refugees for Integral Development (YARID), a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving urban refugees in Kampala, Uganda. YARID helps refugees become self-sufficient by offering English classes, microenterprise opportunities, women's empowerment programs, vocational trainings and uniting youth through soccer. Currently, Murhula lives in San Diego and works for the International Rescue Committee.

Sophie Westacott serves as development and communications manager for the Program for Torture Victims. Most recently, Westacott worked with the UNICEF Tap Project, a nationwide campaign that provides clean water and adequate sanitation to children around the world; and the Rainforest Foundation, a nonprofit organization that has helped protect more than 28 million acres of rainforest and worked with local indigenous organizations towards defending the rights and lands of over 200,000 indigenous peoples. Westacott has studied at the George H. Heyman Center for Philanthropy and Fundraising at NYU-SCPS and will continue her studies in fundraising and corporate social responsibility at UCLA Extension.

Wesley Farrow is the West Coast manager for the Speak Truth to Power program at the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, a multifaceted global initiative that uses the experiences of courageous peacemakers to educate others on issues ranging from environmental activism to political participation. After graduating from the University of Michigan with degrees in economics and psychology, Farrow worked overseas in the nonprofit sector and moved to Los Angeles to work for Teach for America as a secondary special education teacher and administrator. He continues to work in the public school system, and serves as board member for The Ed Agency, Students of the World and Coro Southern California.

Zahra Ismail is a skilled trainer in conflict resolution, with extensive experience in designing and facilitating mediation, peacebuilding and training programs. She has worked with various nongovernmental organizations engaged in community-level mediation, international development, human rights and conflict resolution in countries such as South Sudan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. She currently works as a program officer for the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ), working closely with IPJ partner organizations in Kenya and Cambodia. Ismail holds a BA in human rights and political science from Carleton University in Ottawa, and an MA in peace and conflict resolution from the European University Centre for Peace Studies in Austria.

Educate your peers about conflict, sign petitions, do volunteer activities and refugee outreach, use social media to raise awareness, and when you become the leaders, make informed decisions on how to help other people.

– Christie Edwards, American Red Cross

Youth Have the Power to Change the World

Continued from page 1

take action and change the situation for his refugee community. Murhula began to speak to the community leaders, and through this he instilled in his people a new sense of hope for a better future.

After experiencing the struggle of being a refugee, he founded Young African Refugees for Integral Development (YARID), a nonprofit organization that serves urban refugees in Kampala, Uganda. By providing English classes, microenterprise opportunities, women's empowerment programs, vocational trainings and youth athletic programs, YARID helped refugees become more self-sufficient.

In only one hour, three informed and proactive guest speakers from diverse backgrounds awed their audience with their passion and hope for changing the world. It is incredible to think about the power that we have as individuals, as well as a collective.

WorldLink interns Lobo and Aguilar pointed out, "The United Nations estimates that approximately 61 million children and teenagers our age do not receive an education. Thus, every single person in this room has powerful tools at their disposal that others only yearn for. [...] So take the knowledge and experiences you receive today and make use of it. Make plans, dream big, and make your dreams a reality." By working at the community, national and international levels, youth do in fact have the power to change the world. ■

Struggles in Delivering Humanitarian Aid

Written by Nicole-Ann Lobo, Cathedral Catholic High School

Following the Youth Town Meeting's Opening Plenary, WorldLink delegates quietly sauntered into their first briefing sessions, feeling a bit anxious and unsure. "I had no idea of what to expect from the sessions, but I was still excited to broaden my knowledge on global issues," said Guillermo Penunuri, a sophomore at St. Augustine High School.

Select students had the privilege of experiencing Christie Edwards' session "International Humanitarian Law: Looking for Justice." As director of the international humanitarian law team at the American Red Cross, Edwards focuses on human rights, international development policy and gender issues. She has also published articles on sex trafficking in China and legal advocacy strategies for women's rights in Morocco.

At WorldLink's 17th Youth Town Meeting, Edwards wanted to make her briefing session different from the others. "All day, WorldLink delegates will be hearing people talk and absorbing information. In my session, I want to get interactive and help students understand firsthand the challenges humanitarian workers face," she explained.

Within the first five minutes of the session, students were assigned the role of humanitarian workers and were divided into two groups. Both teams stood in front of an elaborately designed obstacle course, using caution tape that signified landmines and bombs. The conference delegates were instructed to cross over to the opposite side of the room, which represented a neighboring country.



Two delegates working together during a Red Cross simulation. Photo by J. Bowman

Delegates from each team partook in the journey, carrying a box with the Red Cross emblem on it. Upon overcoming the obstacles, the students were haggled by international customs officers who interrogated each of them with difficult questions and spoke in a different language. After enduring the process, only a few of the 'humanitarian workers' were allowed into the country.

With the simulation fresh in their minds, delegates assembled to hear Edwards explain the significance of the activity. "A lot of times when people deliver aid in conflict zones, they are really just going in blind," she said. "Issues like language barriers, enemy suspicion, and stubborn officers just add to the difficulties, and countless aid workers have been detained or even killed in the process."

Edwards continued by explaining the significance of the Red Cross emblem as a universally recognized symbol,

and how the presence of the emblem can make a difference to both the workers and the people in need.

Bringing the intense and eye-opening experience to a close, Edwards asked each student delegate to help out in any way possible. "Educate your peers about conflict, sign petitions, do volunteer activities and refugee outreach, use social media to raise awareness, and when you become the future leaders, make informed decisions on how to help other people."

Many students were motivated by Edwards' presentation, resolving to help others just as she does on a daily basis. "It was informal and very informative, and I learned a lot of things that I didn't previously know," said Alwaled Altaay, a senior at El Cajon Valley High School. "[Christie Edwards] was an amazing speaker, and I am inspired to help people just as she does." ■

Peacebuilding Processes During and After Conflict

Written by Tsion Fikre, Scripps Ranch High School

"Geography is essential," stated Chris Groth as he began his discussion about the Nepal Peacebuilding Initiative at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ). Located north of India, Nepal includes eight of the world's top ten tallest peaks. Nepal's undulating geography, which includes towering moun-

tain ranges, served as a challenge for the government in their conflict against the Maoists, a political party which opposed the Nepalese King. that included demands for ending the monarchy, land re-distribution and an end to social and cultural discrimination. The government, however, did not initially take their demands seriously. On February 1, 2005 a dramatic shift stirred Nepal: the king took complete control by dismissing government officials, and Nepal went offline. Phone lines were cut, the Internet was no longer accessible and the press was censored.

However, it was in the following year that Jana Andolan, a multi-party people's movement, put pressure on the king that led to the Comprehensive Peace Accord and an end to Nepal's monarchy. The post-conflict peace process has focused on three key issues: creating a new constitution, achieving army integration and establishing reconciliation conditions. The most successful of the three has been army integration, through which some former Maoist fighters have been integrated

into the Nepal Army. The Maoists, however, have placed some of their former combatants, including child soldiers, into the Young Communist League, the Maoist party's sometimes violent youth wing. Therefore, it is evident that for a peacebuilding process to be successful, it must continue after the armed conflict has ceased.

Over the past decade, Groth and his colleagues at the IPJ Nepal Peacebuilding Initiative have implemented a "whole community" approach by working closely with "political leaders, security officials, civil society members, women activists and youth leaders from across [Nepal]." Similarly, fellow IPJ program officer Zahra Ismail has engaged in empowering youth to play an active role in mitigating violence and strengthen relations with security officials in Kenya.

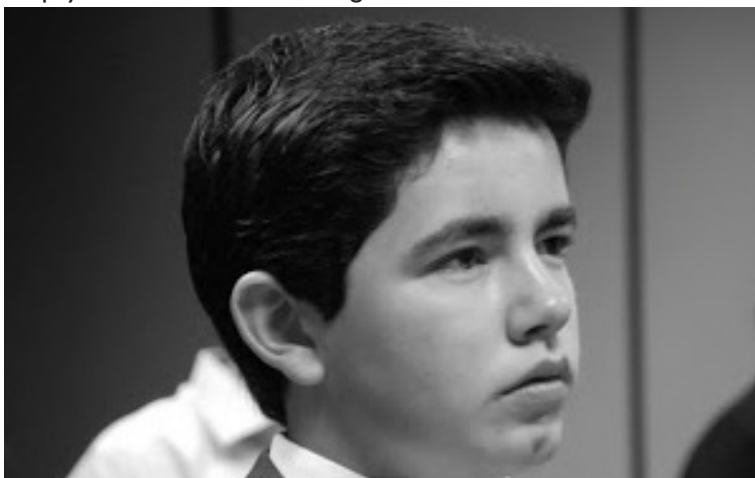
Over 3,600 miles away, Kenya faced its own conflicts. Standing as one of the most stable countries in Africa, Kenya held a presidential election in 2007 in which political leaders played on ethnic allegiances to cause divisions throughout the country. Due to suspicions around the credibility and transparency of the electoral process there were doubts raised about how the votes were counted and why a winner was, amidst all of the confusion, so quickly declared and sworn in.

Violence broke out in Kenya, a country with more than 70 ethnic groups - the five largest being Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin and Kamba. The post-election violence resulted in 1,300 deaths and the displacement of more than 350,000 people. Peacebuilding attempts have focused on the reconciliation between communities and ensuring accountability of those responsible for the violence.

In addition, Ismail shared that the high unemployment rate amongst youth added to the problem. Due to the fact that young people could not find work, several turned to gangs, affiliated with political parties. These gangs were then mobilized to carry out attacks, escalating the level of violence.

Both Kenya and Nepal held their most recent elections in 2013. Kenya's elections in March were "one of the most peaceful" with over 80% voter turnout, and Nepal's election in November was deemed by The Carter Center as a process "conducted according to procedures" that produced credible results.

Peacebuilding is not just a short-term attempt to resolve a conflict, but a long-term process that will establish security and sustainable peace. This process can start at a smaller scale, but often has the power to affect a vast area and population. ■



Ignacio Fimbres listens intently.

Photo by A. Gallegos

tains and low, flat grounds, served as a challenge for the government in their conflict against the Maoists, a political party which opposed the Nepalese King.

The Maoist insurgency began in 1996 and ended in 2006. During this time, the Maoists put forward a 40-point plan

The United Nations estimates that approximately 61 million children and teenagers our age do not receive an education. Thus, every single person in this room has powerful tools at their disposal that others only yearn for.

— Nicole-Ann Lobo and Freida Aguilar, WorldLink Interns

Healthcare Solutions in Northern Uganda

Written by Morgan Chen, Outside the Lens, and Sandra Quiroz, IMAN

David Joseph was only nineteen when he set out to Northern Uganda in 2012 on a crucial trip that would change the course of his life. Before arriving in Pader, Uganda, Joseph expected “an image of poverty, a war-torn image” where he would volunteer for two months and then go back home to continue his daily life. He also assumed that he would meet “people that [he] could never connect with.” But Joseph admitted, “I was completely wrong.”

This trip to Pader became a life-changing experience, not just for him but also for the citizens in Uganda. “I found brotherhood,” Joseph said. “[The image of poverty] doesn’t define who people are. Meeting them, you learn a lot of things about poverty. They were some of the kindest, most ambitious people I have ever met.”

“This is Ben,” he said, motioning to a PowerPoint slide of a young Ugandan man. Ben is a twenty-seven year old doctor who served as Joseph’s inspiration when he co-founded the Northern Uganda Medical Mission (NUMEM).

At age nine, Ben was abducted by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group that has kidnapped children to train as soldiers. Ben had been abducted for one year before he escaped, only to be discovered by LRA again at age eleven. The LRA soldiers shot him twice, which was the punishment for escapees. The wounds weren’t fatal and the eleven year old survived. In the United States, hospitalization and care for gunshot wounds takes anywhere between ten to fourteen days, but Ben remained in the hospital for nearly six months.

Joseph explained, “I tell you Ben’s story because it highlights three im-



David Joseph connects with conference delegates following his session “A Post-Conflict Medical Mission.” Photo by R. Thomas

portant things for me. One, the intensity of the conflict. Two, the resilience and the strength of these people. And three, the lack of healthcare.”

Healthcare in Northern Uganda is split in two – private and public. Most people living in the region cannot afford private healthcare, and although public healthcare is provided for free by the government, it suffers from a lack of doctors and equipment.

Now a doctor in Uganda, Ben described the healthcare situation in greater detail to Joseph. It astonished Joseph that nearly 240,000 people were without medical attention. Government healthcare centers were understaffed, underequipped, undersupplied, and congested. “Two

hundred people are waiting in line to see one doctor,” Joseph recounted.

After witnessing Ben administer surgery on a patient using only candlelight, due to the fact that the electricity had gone out in the middle of the surgery, Joseph was convinced that something had to be done to help improve these conditions.

Upon returning to the United States, he began to send emails to various networks for support. He sent around 400 emails but received less than a handful of responses. That was motivation enough. Joseph did not give up.

In December 2012, he co-founded the community healthcare center NUMEM, which defends healthcare as a basic human right regardless of an individual’s geographic location

or origin. During its first year, NUMEM built a clinic run by solar panels, which was extremely important since the electric grids in Northern Uganda are unpredictable and unreliable. Where other clinics would be dependent on the electricity, NUMEM’s clinic has the capacity to be utilized at all times. It now uses the innovative method of implementing emergency call boxes in the community so that people can connect with the healthcare center faster.

NUMEM is constantly developing new ideas and training local Ugandan medical staff, so that the clinic can provide better service. Its main goal is to offer affordable, high quality healthcare for the people of Pader and other close districts in Uganda. ■

Investing in Tomorrow’s Leaders

Written by Andrea Fimbres Prieto, IMAN



Asking questions. Photo by S. Yang

“Urgency. Every day thousands of children are dying of unnecessary causes. And every day we get closer to the Millennium Development Goal deadline of reducing child mortality by two-thirds by 2015.” –Anthony Lake, executive director of UNICEF.

As we approach the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals, we must ask ourselves of our progress thus far in reducing child mortality. Who helps children in need after a hurricane or a typhoon? Who lends a helping hand to young lives that are forced to work and miss the opportunity to go to school? Who is there for infants dying of extreme hunger, dehydration or disease?

UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund - formerly United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) is a force that helps build a world where the rights of every

child are realized. Created in 1946 after World War II, UNICEF was established in response to a generation whose parents had been killed, and has now expanded to 190 countries.

Its mission as an institution is to advocate for the protection of children worldwide. Investing in classrooms and materials for education, acting against unjust child labor laws, and helping improve health care, UNICEF helps children achieve a better future. UNICEF is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

WorldLink conference speaker Annie Kim is a global citizenship fellow for the U.S. Fund for UNICEF, who graduated from Occidental College with a degree in diplomacy and world affairs. She works to improve children’s lives by promoting UNICEF’s mission in providing healthcare and immunizations, clean water and

sanitation, nutrition, education, and emergency relief.

As reported by UNICEF, in the 1980’s, 36,000 children under the age of five died each day from largely preventable causes. In 1990, that figure reduced to 33,000 per day. In the 21st century, this figure continued to decrease with 26,000 in the year 2000 and 19,000 most recently in 2012. UNICEF’s goal is to reduce this number to zero. With the help of Annie Kim, and others like her, we are well on our way.

After all, today’s children are tomorrow’s parents – women and men who will struggle to provide a foundation of hope, health, and opportunity for their own children. And they are tomorrow’s leaders - citizens focused on shaping their own legacy for the future. Every child, in every society, has the right to a fair start in life. ■

Every day thousands of children are dying of unnecessary causes. And every day we get closer to the Millennium Development Goal deadline of reducing child mortality by two-thirds. – Anthony Lake, UNICEF

A Nightmare in Heaven: Hope for Congo

Written by Andrés Hernández, CETYS Tijuana

It is said that the Democratic Republic of Congo is “a nightmare in heaven.” In the heart of Africa and the home of approximately 75 million people, the Congo contains astonishing natural beauty, with silvery rivers that run along fields covered with the greenest of trees and some of the world’s largest waterfalls. It is a glimpse into heaven, but yet the Congolese have experienced a life of destruction and exploitation.

Conflict and corruption arose over the acquisition of the rich minerals that lay beneath the Congolese ground. As early as 1908, the Congo fell to the regime of King Leopold II of Belgium, which forced the Congolese to give up their land for exploitation to the benefit of foreigners.

Years later, the Tutsi invasion reached the land of the Congo, bringing with it the conflict that became known as the Rwandan genocide. With the invasion of the Zaire region led by Rwanda in 1996, the Congolese confronted their first war, another was to follow in 1998.

In 2003, the M23 rebellion continued the disaster for the Congo, which forced 140,000 women and children to leave their homes. The conflict came to an end just about a year ago.

The Congo has suffered killings, hunger and rape. In consequence to the everlasting hostilities, 5 million people have died in Congo since 1996, and yet, little investment has been made into the protection of its people, for Congo’s wealth has belonged to a government without infrastructure, held in flux by rampant corruption.

Here, in North America, the necessities of an average middle-class family are readily available: there is food available at the market, medicine at the drugstore, water that can be reached with the turn of a handle, and teachers to impart knowledge at schools. Here, we are detached from and unaware of the Congolese plight.

But the situation of the Congolese can be seen in many aspects of the everyday life of our youth. San Diego is one of the cities with the largest num-

ber of refugees. People from all over the world, including the Congo, come to this city with hope of being safe and free. We share the same environment, the same city, the same country, and we should care for the well-being of one another.

Further, we hold, in our belongings, a little piece of the Congo. Some of the metal that has been used to create our cars and mobile phones are likely the product of the bloodshed in the Congo.

However, there are individuals and organizations that are working towards creating change, such as the Congo Leadership Initiative. While building houses in Nicaragua, Efrem Bycer was presented with the opportunity to help with the founding of a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening the leadership skills of Congolese youth. Bycer knew that a project of this magnitude would be no easy task, but he recalled his own experience during his first year of college in New Orleans. It was 2005, the year that Hurricane Katrina hit, leaving houses shattered to the ground and people homeless. During his experience working with residents, Bycer realized that assisting people in becoming self-sufficient would lead to long-lasting change.

“It is not about charity,” explained Bycer. “It is not about giving to people. It is about empowering people to make a change. It is about providing them with skills.” Bycer joined a student group in 2009, which became the Congo Leadership Initiative (CLI) the following year. CLI was created with the vision of a country run by its own people, where ethical leaders serve their communities and country with a strong government.

CLI has implemented educational programs that promote the innovation of solutions and the will to revolutionize. The organization has since trained



Efrem Bycer discusses the Congo. Photo by S. Yang

over 300 students. “It is about the Congolese making the difference,” explained Bycer, “not about people coming in to make the difference.”

According to Bycer, “The leaders we have trained are now creating small businesses and building roofs at their schools.” In addition, plans for the development of these youth programs are underway. “It is all about young people,” remarked Bycer. “We’ve got a whole generation capable of making a difference, one neighborhood at a time. There is something you all can do, and you should feel empowered. For each one of us has the power to make a change, even in the face of adversity.”

So what can you do? Bycer answers this question by providing three steps towards achieving a world of initiative and collaboration:

1. Educate yourselves. Explore everything you can.
2. Tell your friends, tell your family and spread the word about the things you care about.
3. Take a chance towards leadership.

For more information about the Congo Leadership Initiative, please visit www.congoleaders.org. ■

Waging Peace, Fighting Disease, Building Hope

Written by Sandra Quiroz, IMAN

“Human rights is the umbrella of everything that we do at The Carter Center,” – Lauren Kent-Delany.

The Carter Center is a not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization founded by former president Jimmy Carter, which offers five “Peace Programs”: Democracy, Conflict Resolution, Human Rights, the Americas and China. To explain further, Lauren Kent-Delany, director of educational programs, described the organization’s Democracy Program. Through this particular peace program, countries that have recently stepped out of conflict or have not held elections in quite some time invite The Carter Center to send trained individuals into their country to serve as election observers.

According to Kent-Delany, who served as an election observer in the Ivory Coast in 2010, the goal of election monitoring is to make sure “that the process is fair and impartial.” For instance, observers must document if voting is done in private or if someone is coercing the voter. In addition, voting polls must be accessible to everyone, including people with physical disabilities and those who cannot read. In countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, ballots have pictures of the candidates and the political party logos in order to overcome this obstacle. As of January 2014, The Carter Center has sent trained election observers to 96 elections in 38 nations, including Mexico, Sudan, Zambia, Indonesia and Guyana.

However, the “Peace Programs” are just one of the many components of The Carter Center. For instance, its “Health Programs” have also made a significant impact through the protection against neglected tropical diseases, such as trachoma, lymphatic filariasis and schistosomiasis. One neglected tropical disease, in particular, that The Carter Center has helped reduce tremendously is guinea worm.

The disease guinea worm is acquired by drinking contaminated water. There is no known antibiotic to fight this disease. However, as demonstrated by The Carter Center, it can be addressed “through community-based interventions to educate and change behavior, such as teaching people to filter all drinking water.” One solution developed by The Carter Center is a “personal pipe filter,” which is a plastic straw-like device that has a filter at the bottom. Through this, guinea worm rates have been lowered dramatically, and it will soon become the second disease in history to be eradicated, after smallpox.

For the past 32 years, The Carter Center and its many programs have helped advance peace and health in more than 80 countries. Through innovative human solutions like democracy programs and neglected tropical disease prevention, our world gets one step closer to providing greater protection for our fellow human beings. To learn more about The Carter Center and its programs, please visit www.cartercenter.org. ■

A Local Company with a Global Impact

Written by Hector Arias, San Diego Early Middle College

Katie Baxter, a San Diego native, is a graduate of Arizona State University who majored in psychology and who, at the urging of her parents, interned at the Human Resources Department at Qualcomm Inc. What she thought would be a boring desk job turned out to be a career at which she could support and promote affirmative action and sustainability.

On the day of the conference, Baxter explained that Qualcomm’s corporate social responsibility and its ethical compromise with human rights have had a positive impact worldwide. Qualcomm is an S&P 500 and Fortune 500 company that was founded by Dr. Irwin Mark Jacobs. One of Qualcomm’s

core values is that businesses should support and respect human rights, which include labor, environment, and anti-corruption issues. As part of its commitment, Qualcomm became a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact and a member in the Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition.

The company fosters a diverse and respectful employment in all of its manufacturing plants around the world by promoting the elimination of child labor, forced or compulsory labor, and human trafficking. In addition, through the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Qualcomm adopted a conflict-free minerals policy and adheres to working closely with suppliers in regions, such as the

Democratic Republic of Congo, to ensure conflict-free sourcing.

As a technology company, Qualcomm is mindful of environment and land concerns. The company itself is a large producer of electronic waste, but is dedicated to recycling it. In 2012, 100 percent of Qualcomm’s hazardous waste was recycled. Qualcomm’s facilities are LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified and utilize renewable energy such as wind and solar to run its plants.

Qualcomm is much more than the name of a stadium, but a company that is a key player in the tech market that stresses human rights and sustainability in its global business. ■

It is about the Congolese making the difference, not about people coming in to make the difference.

– Efrem Bycer, Congo Leadership Initiative

Los Jóvenes Tienen la Capacidad de Cambiar al Mundo

Escrito por Hector Arias, San Diego Early Middle College
Traducido por Andrés Hernández, CETYS Tijuana

El tema electo para la Reunión Local de Jóvenes de WorldLink este año fue "Conflictos Globales: Impacto Humano, Soluciones Humanas." Dicho tema tiene especial importancia, sobre todo en un mundo interconectado como el nuestro, donde las acciones de una nación afectan a las demás. ¿Cómo es que nuestras acciones y las decisiones de nuestro gobierno afectan a nuestra comunidad y a comunidades alrededor del mundo? ¿Qué impacto pueden tener estas acciones en los 700 estudiantes formando la audiencia del teatro Shiley de la Universidad de San Diego?

Los participantes de la décima-séptima junta juvenil de WorldLink estaban por descubrir distintos aspectos acerca de cuestiones de importancia global. Estos forman parte de los subtemas de este año: la pobreza y el hambre, la salud global, el medio ambiente y la tierra, la protección humana y los procesos de pacificación.

ca a nivel de población. La salud mundial está influenciada por diversos factores, por lo tanto debe tomarse un enfoque interdisciplinario. Según explicó la Dr. Raj, "¿Te gusta matemáticas? ¿Te gusta la ingeniería? Salud global tiene amplias oportunidades."

Para explicar aún más, la Dr. Raj describió un ejemplo de la correlación entre las carreras de la salud global, ciencias ambientales e ingeniería. *Chulas* son un tipo de estufas en India que emiten grandes cantidades de dióxido de carbono que afectan negativamente al medio ambiente y a la salud de la comunidad. Señaló que en este caso, los científicos e ingenieros podrían desarrollar una estufa eco-amigable. Salud mundial reúne a médicos, psicólogos, abogados y a otros. A través de la realización que cada campo de estudio puede desempeñar un papel en la salud mundial, la Dr. Raj les sugirió a los delegados considerar una sencilla pregunta: "¿Cómo es que yo puedo involucrarme en el cambio?"

de la desnutrición crónica.

Pero a pesar de tales desafíos, UNICEF ha colaborado con la gente de Burundi y ha organizado sesiones de pesaje. Se les ha pedido a las mujeres llevar vegetales para aprender a cocinar alimentos nutritivos. Los niveles de inanición y malnutrición también fueron reducidos mediante la introducción del *plumpy'nut*, una pasta enriquecida de mantequilla de maní que cuesta solamente diecisiete centavos cada barra. A través de métodos económicos y programas comunitarios, UNICEF continúa haciendo cambios positivos en la pobreza y el hambre. Como la Dr. Raj, Kim cree que todos tenemos la capacidad de realizar un cambio y que cualquier persona puede unirse a la lucha por un mundo en donde ni un solo niño se quede con hambre.

El orador que cerró la plenaria fue Sedrick Murhula, un trabajador de desarrollo comunitario, activista refugiado y motivador de jóvenes habitantes de

Una Avenida Hacia la Pacificación

Escrito y traducido por Alexis Parkhurst, La Jolla Country Day School

Después de la 17va Reunión Local de Jóvenes donde más de 700 estudiantes asistieron, el programa de WorldLink ofreció un seminario de continuación permitiendo a líderes juveniles a reconectar y hablar sobre la conferencia.

El domingo después de la conferencia, once estudiantes se reunieron en el Instituto de Joan B. Kroc para la Paz y la Justicia con la meta de reflexionar sobre el evento y diseñar actividades para el semestre de primavera. Las actividades ayudarán a promover la paz en sus comunidades locales.

Los facilitadores John Stevenson y Anne Birkel de AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) estuvieron con los estudiantes en este seminario. Como describe Stevenson, AVP de San Diego es un programa de la organización Manos de la Paz que, "patrocina un seminario de tres días al mes en la Instalación Correccional de R. J. Donovan en Otay Mesa." A través de seminarios en las cárceles y en la comunidad de San Diego, AVP utiliza las experiencias compartidas de los participantes del proyecto y examina la manera de reaccionar al enojo, a los prejuicios, y a las injusticias sociales.

Los once estudiantes tuvieron la oportunidad de ver una versión más corta de estos seminarios de tres días. Como explica Stevenson, la reunión después de la conferencia tuvo un objetivo para que "[los estudiantes] puedan experimentar el proceso del seminario y tener una experiencia de aprendizaje positiva para [ellos mismos]."

Una actividad dividió a los alumnos en dos círculos, uno situado en el interior del otro. Aquí, los estudiantes fueron puestos en pares y se les pidió que respondieran a unas preguntas relacionadas a los valores y las prioridades de la vida. Los estudiantes tuvieron un tiempo asignado para hablar sin interrupciones. Lo que fue sorprendente acerca de esta actividad fue que aunque cada persona se salió de su zona de comodidad, se permitió que cada uno se sintiera más cómodo al hablar honestamente sobre temas complejos.

Fue una experiencia enriquecedora para los dos grupos de estudiantes, porque en la vida no es frecuente que oigamos, y realmente escuchemos, los pensamientos de otra persona sin la habilidad de interrumpir. Aún menos a menudo es que, nosotros mismos, podamos hablar sin interrupción. Curiosamente, escuchar es un valor fundamental de la resolución de conflictos.

El tiempo asignado permitió un ambiente libre de estrés, sin la presión de preguntas en medio de un monólogo. A algunos estudiantes les resultó difícil porque como sociedad estamos acostumbrados a ser interrumpidos por otros. "Pensé que era una gran oportunidad y muy interesante," comentó Dakota Barksdale de Roosevelt Middle School.

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Anita Raj explica los desafíos globales de la salud en la mujer.

Foto por E. Kuglen Alvarez

WorldLink líderes estudiantiles Nicole-Ann Lobo y Freida Aguilar introdujeron estos temas. "A menudo, la fuerza más destructiva y la amenaza más grande para la humanidad, son los humanos. ¡Sin embargo, también somos la solución más poderosa!" Como adolescentes, es importante estar conscientes de esta realidad. Lobo y Aguilar continuaron, "En sus programas y bolsas de mano, se ve la imagen de una pistola. Sin embargo, hay un nudo al final. El nudo representa la idea de poner un fin al conflicto."

Los panelistas invitados subieron al escenario. A lo largo de la plenaria inaugural, el visual de esta pistola se convirtió en mucho más que una imagen o un concepto. Los delegados estudiantiles comenzaron a oír acerca de las soluciones reales vinculadas a algunas de las preocupaciones más grandes del mundo.

La primera oradora en dirigir la palabra fue Anita Raj, directora del Centro de Salud y Equidad de Género de UCSD, quien abordó la cuestión de salud públi-

La siguiente en tomar el micrófono fue Annie Kim, una representante de ciudadanía global para el Fondo de Estados Unidos de UNICEF. La organización trabaja para mejorar la situación nutricional, sanitaria y educacional de los niños, además de proporcionar socorro de emergencia.

Destacó la labor de UNICEF en Burundi, en donde se ha dedicado a auxiliar a los refugiados de la guerra civil de este país. Más de la mitad de los niños de Burundi sufren de desnutrición crónica o se atrofian, lo que significa que el cuerpo y cerebro de un niño empiezan a dejar de crecer o desarrollar a una cierta edad debido a los altos índices de pobreza y malnutrición. Deja un impacto permanente en los habitantes de Burundi porque llega a heredarse hasta tres generaciones a partir del primer familiar afectado. La guerra civil en Burundi obligó a la gente a tener que refugiarse para huir de la violencia durante tanto tiempo, que ha contribuido a la epidemia

la República Democrática de Congo. Murhula huyó a Uganda en el 2007 debido a la guerra en su país entre los rebeldes y los grupos armados. Las causas principales del conflicto de esta región fueron los recursos naturales. Cuando la violencia llegó a su aldea, Murhula no tuvo otra opción más que huir a los campamentos de refugiados situados en Kampala, Uganda. Murhula tenía tan sólo diecisiete años.

Murhula vivió bajo circunstancias extremas. Toda su familia vivía dentro de en una pequeña habitación. Sólo comía una vez al día y luchaba por encontrar trabajo. Un día, sin embargo, él se despertó decidido a cambiar la situación de su comunidad de refugiados. Empezó a conversar con los habitantes de los campamentos y sembró la esperanza de un mejor futuro para su pueblo.

Después de experimentar la lucha de ser un refugiado, Murhula fundó la organización YARID (Young African Refugees

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La fuerza más destructiva y la amenaza más grande para la humanidad, son los humanos. ¡Sin embargo, también somos la solución más poderosa!

– Nicole-Ann Lobo y Freida Aguilar, estudiantes de WorldLink

Soluciones en el Norte de Uganda

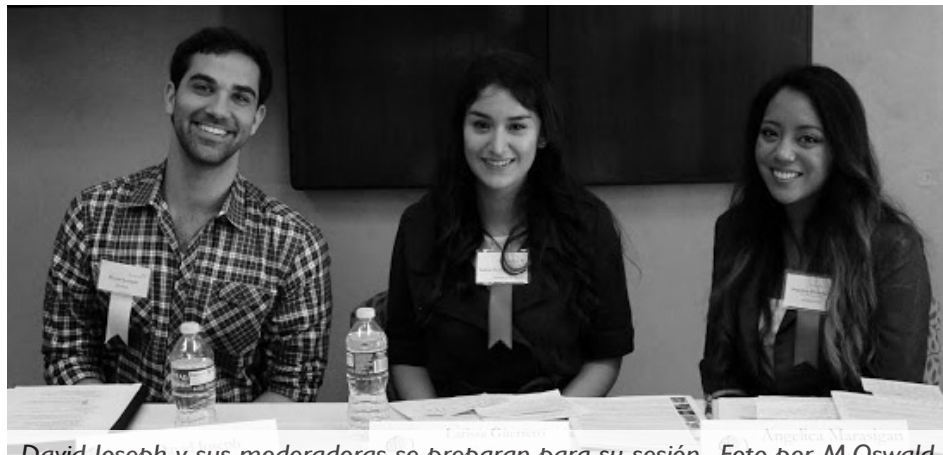
Escrito por Morgan Chen, Outside the Lens, y Sandra Quiroz, IMAN
Traducido por Hector Arias, San Diego Early Middle College

David Joseph solamente tenía diecinueve años cuando viajó hacia el norte de Uganda en un viaje crucial que cambiaría el curso de su vida. Antes de llegar a Pader, Uganda, Joseph esperaba “una imagen de pobreza, una imagen devastada por la guerra,” donde sería voluntario por dos meses y luego volvería a casa para continuar su vida cotidiana. El también asumió que se encontraría “gente con quien [él] no tendría cosas en común.” Pero Joseph admitió, “Yo estaba completamente equivocado.”

Este viaje a Pader se convirtió en una experiencia transformadora, no sólo para él sino también para los ciudadanos de Uganda. “Encontré hermandad,” dijo Joseph. “La imagen de pobreza no define a la gente. Conociéndolos, uno aprende muchas cosas sobre la pobreza. Ellos eran unas de las personas más amables y más ambiciosas que he conocido.”

“Este es Ben,” dijo señalando a su diapositiva de PowerPoint de un joven Ugandés. Ben es un doctor de veintisiete años quien inspiró a Joseph para co-establecer NUMEM (Northern Uganda Medical Mission).

A los nueve años, Ben fue capturado por el LRA (Lord's Resistance Army), un grupo de rebeldes que secuestra niños para entrenarlos como soldados. Ben había sido secuestrado un año entero antes de escaparse, solamente para ser descubierto de nuevo por el LRA a los once años. Fue disparado dos veces por



David Joseph y sus moderadoras se preparan para su sesión. Foto por M.Oswald

los soldados del LRA, el castigo para los fugitivos. Las heridas no fueron fatales y el niño de once años sobrevivió. En los Estados Unidos, hospitalización por heridas de balas dura entre diez a catorce días, pero en Uganda Ben estuvo hospitalizado por casi seis meses.

Joseph explicó, “Les cuento la historia de Ben porque destaca tres cosas importantes para mí. Uno, la intensidad del conflicto. Dos, la resistencia y poder de esta gente. Y tres, la falta de cuidado médico.”

El cuidado de la salud en el norte de Uganda incluye dos tipos – privado y del gobierno. La mayoría de personas viviendo en esta región no puede pagar por el servicio médico privado, y aunque el servicio médico proporcionado por el gobierno es gratis, sufre por una falta de doctores y equipo.

Ahora un doctor en Uganda, Ben

describió la situación de la asistencia médica a Joseph, a quien se sorprendió que casi 240,000 personas están sin atención médica. Los centros de la asistencia médica del gobierno están faltos de personal y suministros, y tienen muchas personas para servir. “Doscientas personas están formadas en línea para ver a un doctor,” Joseph recordó.

Después de ver a Ben hacer cirugía en un paciente usando solo la luz de vela, porque la electricidad falló en medio de la cirugía, Joseph se convenció de que algo se tenía que hacer para mejorar las condiciones.

Al regresar a los Estados Unidos, comenzó a mandar mensajes electrónicos a varias redes buscando apoyo. Mandó casi 400 mensajes, pero recibió menos de cinco respuestas. Esto, aunque no era mucho, era suficiente motivación. Jo-

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Una Empresa Local con un Impacto Mundial

Escrito por Hector Arias, San Diego Early Middle College
Traducido por Sandra Quiroz, IMAN

Katie Baxter, originaria de San Diego, se graduó en Psicología en la Universidad de Arizona y posteriormente, animada por sus padres, se integró al departamento de Recursos Humanos en Qualcomm Inc. Lo que ella creyó que sería simplemente un trabajo de oficina, sorprendentemente, resultó ser una carrera en donde ella podría promover la acción afirmativa y la sostenibilidad.

En el día de la conferencia, Baxter explicó que la responsabilidad social de Qualcomm y su compromiso ético con los derechos humanos han tenido un impacto positivo mundial. Qualcomm es una empresa S&P 500 y Fortune 500 fundada por el Dr. Irwin Mark Jacobs. Uno de los puntos de interés de Qualcomm es que los negocios deberían de apoyar y respetar los derechos humanos, los cuales incluyen trabajo, el medio ambiente y anti-corrupción. Respondiendo a este compromiso Qualcomm forma parte de UNGC (United Nations Global Compact) y EICC (Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition).

La empresa promueve un empleo diverso y respetuoso en todas sus plantas de producción alrededor del mundo, incluyendo la eliminación del trabajo de menores, trabajo obligatorio o forzado y el tráfico de personas. Además, a través de la guía de las Naciones Unidas sobre empresas y derechos humanos, Qualcomm adoptó una política de minerales sin conflictos y se adhiere a trabajar estrechamente con proveedores en regiones como la República Democrática de Congo, para asegurar abastecimiento libre de conflictos.

Como una empresa de tecnología, Qualcomm está consciente del medio ambiente y las preocupaciones de la tierra. La propia empresa es una gran productora de desperdicios electrónicos, pero está dedicada al reciclaje de estos. En 2012, se recicló el 100 por ciento de los residuos peligrosos de Qualcomm. Las instalaciones de Qualcomm han sido certificadas como LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) y utilizan distintas fuentes de energía renovable como el viento y el sol.

Qualcomm es mucho más que el nombre de un estadio, es una empresa clave en la tecnología del mercado que subraya los derechos humanos y la sostenibilidad en sus negocios globales. ■

Invirtiendo en Los Líderes del Mañana

Escrito por Andrea Fimbres Prieto, IMAN

Traducido por Lesley Guarena, San Diego Early Middle College

“Urgencia. Cada día miles de niños mueren de causas innecesarias. Y cada día nos acercamos hacia el plazo del Objetivo de Desarrollo del Milenio de reducir la mortalidad de niños dos tercios para el año 2015.” – Anthony Lake, director ejecutivo de UNICEF.

Acercándonos al 2015, fecha límite para los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio, debemos preguntarnos de nuestro progreso en la reducción de la mortalidad infantil. ¿Quién ayuda a los niños en casos como un huracán o tifón? ¿Quién les da una mano a los niños que son obligados a trabajar y perder la posibilidad de ir a la escuela? ¿Quién protege a los bebés que mueren de hambre, deshidratación, o enfermedad?

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund – anteriormente United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) es una organización que ayuda a construir un mundo donde los derechos de cada niño son realizados. Creado en 1946 después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, UNICEF fue establecida en respuesta a la generación de niños que habían perdido a sus padres. Desde entonces se ha expandido a 190 países en total.

Su misión como institución es abogar por la protección de niños mundialmente. Invertir en salones de clase y

materiales para la educación, actuar en contra de leyes de labor infantil, y ayudar a mejorar el cuidado de salud son unas cuantas cosas que UNICEF hace para ayudar a niños alcanzar un futuro mejor. UNICEF es financiada completamente por las contribuciones voluntarias de individuos, empresas, fundaciones, y gobiernos.

Annie Kim, presentadora en la conferencia de WorldLink, es una representante de ciudadanía global para el Fondo de Estados Unidos de UNICEF, graduada del Colegio Occidental con una licenciatura en diplomacia y asuntos mundiales. Ella trabaja en mejorar las vidas de los niños promoviendo la misión de UNICEF como dar vacunas y cuidado de salud, agua limpia y saneamiento, nutrición, educación, y alivio de emergencia.

Como relatado por UNICEF, en los años 1980, 36,000 niños menores de cinco años morían cada día de causas en



Annie Kim, representante de UNICEF.

Foto por S.Yang

gran parte evitables. En 1990, esa cantidad se redujo a 33,000 por día. En el siglo veintiuno, este número sigue disminuyendo con 26,000 en el año 2000 y 19,000 recientemente en 2012. El objetivo de UNICEF es reducir ese número a cero. Con la ayuda de Annie Kim, y otros como ella, vamos bien.

Después de todo, los niños de hoy son los padres del mañana – hombres y mujeres que tendrán dificultades para proporcionar una base de esperanza, salud y oportunidades para sus propios hijos. Y son los líderes del mañana – ciudadanos centrados en formar su propio legado para el futuro. Todos los niños, en cada sociedad, tienen derecho a un buen comienzo en la vida. ■

Cada día miles de niños mueren de causas innecesarias. Y cada día nos acercamos hacia el plazo del Objetivo de Desarrollo del Milenio de reducir la mortalidad de niños dos tercios para el año 2015.
– Anthony Lake, director ejecutivo de UNICEF

Líderes Juveniles: “Somos el Cambio”

Escrito por Meg Deitz, Mission Bay High School

Traducido por Marthapaola Martínez, CETYS Tijuana

Como sociedad, estamos orgullosos de siempre tener “lo nuevo.” Pasamos mucho tiempo de nuestras vidas tratando “de saber.” Revistas de chismes, video juegos, programas de televisión, y locuras de Internet han creado un entendimiento falso de lo que verdaderamente está pasando en nuestro mundo. Gracias a nuestro interminable deseo por saber y tener “lo nuevo,” como el último teléfono celular, empezamos a olvidar de dónde vienen y quien pudo haber sufrido en su producción.

Sedrick Murhula es una de las millones de personas que han sido víctimas de nuestra cultura de consumo. Murhula nació en la República Democrática de Congo, el país más rico del mundo en cuanto a recursos naturales. Sin embargo, según la organización *The Enough Project*, “Grupos armados [en el Congo] ganan cientos de millones de dólares cada año por el comercio de minerales conflictivos. Estos minerales se pueden encontrar en todos nuestros dispositivos electrónicos,”

que incluyen nuestros teléfonos móviles, computadoras, y sistemas de juego.

Así, debido a la corrupción en todo el país y la explotación por continentes occidentales, el Congo es actualmente uno de los países más pobres y miles de personas han emigrado en busca de una vida mejor como refugiados.

Murhula, como refugiado, pasó su niñez dentro de una habitación de 4x3 que compartía con siete familiares, comía aproximadamente una vez al día, estuvo dos años sin estudios y muy rara vez encontró trabajo. A pesar de las dificultades en su vida, Murhula pudo recuperar su fuerza y esperanza para un futuro diferente.

Las Naciones Unidas les ofrece tres opciones a los refugiados: reparaciones voluntarias, las cuales conllevan el regresar al país de uno; integración, el cual deja que los refugiados consigan la ciu-

dadanía del país proporcionando refugio; y el restablecimiento, el cual permite que adquieran la ciudadanía de un país nuevo. Aun así, no se hacen las reparaciones voluntarias, una integración completa nunca se implementa, y sólo el 1% de todos los refugiados son restablecidos.

Murhula comenzó a hablar de alternativas y las posibilidades de cambio con otros refugiados de la comunidad local. Fundó YARID (Young African Refugees for Integral Development), la cual es una organización que une a los refugiados, los huérfanos y las personas internamente



Sedrick Murhula motiva a los estudiantes.

Foto por K. Allen

desplazadas a través de programas de capacitación y el deporte. Los líderes jóvenes se enfocan en varios asuntos, incluyendo la violencia étnica, desempleo juvenil, salud pública, y la resolución de conflictos.

YARID les ha dado la oportunidad a cientos jóvenes refugiados a fortalecer sus habilidades de liderazgo, ser autosuficientes, y mostrar empoderamiento como, “ahora se llaman con unión e integridad.” Siguiendo su propio consejo, Murhula se ha convertido en un defensor del cambio dentro de la comunidad de refugiados, “Nosotros somos a quienes hemos estado esperando. Nosotros somos el cambio.”

Sin embargo, cuando Murhula comenzó con YARID, su madre murió en un fuego. Murhula sólo pudo describir este momento de su vida con una pal-

abra: desesperación. Sintió que no había manera alguna en que él pudiera ayudar a un mundo que estaba ya condenado a la crueldad. Durante éste tiempo el padre de Murhula decidió empezar el proceso para restablecer a su familia. El restablecimiento parecía ser la única manera en que la familia Murhula podría escapar su infortunio.

A través de esto, Murhula fue obligado a soportar una serie de entrevistas con representantes de las Naciones Unidas donde tuvo que volver a vivir su vida volviendo a contar su historia varias veces. “Ellos te hacen recordar las memorias, las mismas que estás intentando olvidar para poder restablecerte.” Murhula rápidamente se dio cuenta de que para conseguir un futuro tenía que confrontar a su pasado.

Él dijo, “Hay cosas que suceden en la vida, pero la vida continúa. Hay un momento en el que tú debes continuar.” Aunque Murhula fue eventualmente restablecido a los Estados Unidos, él se dio cuenta de que la única manera de dejar los pensamientos negativos en el pasado depende de uno mismo.

Ahora, viviendo en San Diego, Murhula ha continuado su trabajo con YARID. Él cree que esto es lo menos que puede hacer para la comunidad que le dio la esperanza y fuerza para esforzarse a continuar adelante en su vida. Murhula ha dedicado su vida a darle voz a los que no la tienen. Él sigue las sabias palabras de Mahatma Ghandi, “Nosotros debemos ser el cambio que queremos ver en el mundo.”

Debemos ser partidarios de la paz. En los ojos de Murhula, “paz significa comida para los hambrientos y medicina para los enfermos.” Debemos trabajar juntos y apoyar las organizaciones de uno y otro. “Tu edad, raza y género no importan,” Murhula proclama, “¿Quién va a hacer un cambio, si no tu y yo?” ■

Una Avenida Hacia la Pacificación

Continuación de página 8

Sin embargo, la actividad más influyente del día fue a lo largo del seminario, la cual es usada por AVP con frecuencia. A los estudiantes se les pidió presentarse con un adjetivo positivo delante de su nombre (por ejemplo, “Jubiloso John”). Los estudiantes y los adultos fueron abordados con estos nombres a lo largo del programa, que animó a todos en la discusión.

El nuevo sentido de comunidad condujo a una transición natural a la discusión y reflexión sobre la Reunión Local de Jóvenes y el enfoque en los conflictos globales. Es difícil saber de las violaciones de derechos humanos y los conflictos armados. Parece imposible de detener todas las atrocidades que existen en el mundo. Sin embargo, como aprendimos en la Reunión Local de Jóvenes de WorldLink, el cambio comienza dentro de nosotros, en nuestros vecindarios, en nuestras comunidades. Como dijo Mahatma Gandhi, “Nosotros debemos ser el cambio que queremos ver en el mundo.”

Por lo tanto, los estudiantes comenzaron a proponer iniciativas que podrían ser ejecutadas a nivel local en este semestre, sea coleccionando zapatos para niños o la recaudación de fondos para promover proyectos de agua potable en todo el mundo. “La mayoría del tiempo, aprendemos acerca de algo y uno se olvida de él,” explica Steven Franca de St. Augustine High School, un delegado de la conferencia. Franca expresó su agradecimiento por una reunión de seguimiento de este tipo cuando dijo, “Todos deben de tomar lo que han aprendido y hacer algo para contribuir a resolver un problema.” Esto es exactamente lo que ocurrió en el seminario siguiendo la Reunión Local de Jóvenes.

Desde ese día, el grupo de estudiantes se ha reunido varias veces para planificar e implementar iniciativas locales y apoyar más a los jóvenes que están ayudando al mundo. Los estudiantes formaron comités, y han planeado apoyar a las organizaciones locales e internacionales que ya existen, los cuales proporcionan recursos directos a las poblaciones vulnerables.

“Yo pienso que la mejor parte fue que nos unimos para hacer un gran plan,” comentó Yoko Kelly Tsutsui García, una moderadora de la conferencia WorldLink que estudia en el Instituto México Americano Noroeste. “Pude conocer a gente nueva y tener contacto con ellos. Es muy bueno que la gente esté dispuesta a hacer un cambio.”

No hay duda que las actividades iniciales que ocurrieron en la Reunión Local de Jóvenes y en el seminario ayudaron en la implementación de las iniciativas comunitarias, que sirven como avenidas hacia la pacificación. ■

Los Jóvenes Tienen la Capacidad de Cambiar al Mundo

Continuación de página 8

for Integral Development) que sirve a los refugiados urbanos en Kampala, Uganda. YARID ayudó a refugiados a ser más autosuficientes a través de clases de inglés, oportunidades de formar microempresas, programas de capacitación para mujeres, entrenamientos vocacionales y programas deportivos para jóvenes. A través de YARID, Murhula logró un impacto duradero en su comunidad.

En menos de una hora, tres informados representantes y proactivos de diversos orígenes lograron asombrar al público con sus pasiones y su esperanza

para cambiar el mundo. Es increíble pensar en el poder que tenemos como individuos, así como una comunidad.

WorldLink líderes estudiantiles Lobo y Aguilar señalaron, “Las Naciones Unidas estiman que aproximadamente 61 millones de niños y adolescentes de nuestra edad no reciben una educación. Así, cada persona en este auditorio tiene potentes herramientas a su disposición que otros sólo anhelan. [...] Así que tomen los conocimientos y experiencias que reciben hoy y hagan algo de ellos. Hagan planes, sueñen en grande y hagan sus sueños una realidad.” Mediante el trabajo a nivel comunitario, nacional e internacional, la juventud de hecho tiene la capacidad de cambiar al mundo. ■

Soluciones en el Norte de Uganda

Continuación de página 9

seph no se iba rendir.

En diciembre de 2012, Joseph co-estableció el centro de cuidado médico NUMEM, el cual defiende el cuidado de salud como un derecho humano principal, sin tener en cuenta la posición geográfica de un individuo u origen. Durante su primer año, NUMEM estableció una clínica dirigida por paneles solares, que es sumamente importante ya que las redes eléctricas en el norte de Uganda son impredecibles y poco confiables. Donde otras clínicas serían dependientes de la electricidad, NUMEM tiene la capacidad de ser utilizado en cualquier momento.

La clínica ahora usa el método innovador de poner en práctica cajas de llamadas de emergencia, para que la gente se pueda conectar con el centro de cuidado médico más rápido.

NUMEM está en constante desarrollo de nuevas ideas, y está entrenando a más médicos locales de Uganda para poder proporcionar un mejor servicio. Su objetivo principal es ofrecer servicios económicos y de calidad para el pueblo de Pader y otros distritos de Uganda. ■

Tu edad, raza y género no importan. ¿Quién va a hacer un cambio, si no tu y yo?

— Sedrick Murhula, YARID

Solutions to Global Conflicts: Change Begins with Us

Written by Kira Elliott, San Dieguito Academy

For Christie Edwards, director of international humanitarian law at the American Red Cross, this Youth Town Meeting was something of a homecoming. Edwards grew up in San Diego and used to listen to speakers at the IPJ, so in a sense she used to be in the shoes of the 700 students seated in Shiley Theater that day.

Edwards briefly discussed the role and mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). She emphasized that humanitarian organizations like the ICRC never publish

their findings and remain neutral, thus allowing them to have access to areas that other human rights organizations cannot get to. The ICRC, as a result, is able to act as a delivering mechanism for humanitarian aid. She went on to discuss the Red Cross' program Restoring Family Links, which helps those who have left family, friends and loved ones behind in their home countries due to armed conflict.

Edwards then brought the discussion back to youth, highlighting the fact that young people today have amazing opportunities and are counted on as leaders in a variety of fields, be it business or politics. To conclude, Edwards emphasized the importance of youth taking an active role in their communities, as well as educating others about global affairs.

Next up was Lauren Kent-Delany, director of educational programs at The Carter Center. After giving a quick background on The Carter Center, Kent-Delany delved into the principles behind the organization. The Center is built on five main principles: emphasis on results and actions, focus on not duplicating other's efforts, understanding that failure is always a possibility, commitment to neutrality, and finally the belief that people can improve their own lives if given the knowledge, resources and skills to do so.

Kent-Delany introduced The Carter Center's incomparable international

public health programs and their fight against neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), specifically the guinea worm. The guinea worm is a parasite that can be contracted when one drinks water contaminated by water fleas – it mates and lives in the body until the female emerges to lay its eggs. By educating people in high-risk areas and teaching them to filter their water, The Carter Center significantly reduced the number of cases worldwide: 3.5 million cases to 143 cases in a little over twenty years.

Moral of the story? By educating people and providing resources, The Carter Center has shown afflicted populations that they have the power to improve their own lives. On that note, Kent-Delany closed by encouraging students to think ahead about their future, to become active global citizens, and to believe in being able to change the world with a small cost and a lot of effort.

The final speaker was Wesley Farrow, west coast manager of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights. Farrow quickly delved into the heart of the matter, explaining that the Robert F. Kennedy Center is built on three concepts: hope, human rights and the power of the individual.

The RFK Center is structured as a pyramid. At the top of the pyramid is the Partners for Human Rights program, which works directly with human rights defenders around the world such as Stephen Bradbury in Mississippi and Frank Mugisha in Uganda. In the middle are programs that work with communities of leadership; these include the journalism and institutional investors communities. The bottom of the pyramid includes the Speak Truth to Power program, which is "the most important part," according to Farrow.

The Speak Truth to Power program brings stories from the top of the pyramid and creates lessons to teach stu-

dents about what is happening right now in the global world of human rights, and who is working to make the world a more just place. Students are encouraged through project-based learning and inquiry-based research to learn how they can use their own power, resources and connections to make a change in their community.

With that in mind, Farrow encouraged the students of the Youth Town Meeting to seek to change how people see hope. This mechanism of change can be applied to everyone, and as long as hope can be attached to human rights, people have the power to be a part of that change. Change starts with youth and the decisions that we make every day help make the world a better, safer and more just place to live.

Finally, Farrow asked students to close their eyes and imagine the room as a body of water. He then read a quote from Robert F. Kennedy: "Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lots of others, or strikes out against injustice, he or she sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing one another, from a million different directions, of energy and daring, these ripples build a current, which can sweep down the mightiest walls of resistance." Farrow asked students to act upon what they learned at the Youth Town Meeting and to imagine the power of these ripples that exist inside each and every one of us.

It is true – change starts with youth. And after the 17th Annual Youth Town Meeting, students were able to raise their voices just a little louder with the empowerment given to them through new knowledge and awareness on a multitude of global concerns. Students left the Youth Town Meeting buzzing with ideas and new aspirations for the future, dreams that will be realized to make the world a better place. ■



Students before Closing Plenary. Photo by T. Tran

From Saudi Arabia and Iraq: The Power of Education

Written by Nicole-Ann Lobo, Cathedral Catholic High School



Student offers opinion. Photo by M. Martinez

In San Diego and Baja Mexico, youth have access to education and other forums that enable them to stay informed on current events around the world. This message was put forth by fifteen-year-old Sarah Farouq from Iraq and seventeen-year-old Dania al-Kabbani from Saudi Arabia.

These two young women shared their stories of relocation, adjustment and the power of education in today's globalized society. Farouq left her home country of Iraq at the age of ten and sought refuge with her family in Jordan in order to escape the increasing violence during the war. Al-Kabbani is Syrian, but was born and raised in Saudi Arabia. As a minority in her home country, she faced limited opportunities. Thus, she moved to the United States for better educational opportunities. The two eventually met when attending National University Academy.

Although both girls attested to the difficulties in coming to the United

States, such as the language barrier and complications in receiving their visa and green card, they noticed several positive differences. "I really appreciated the different role of women. I was considered equal to men. It felt like I was in a movie," said al-Kabbani. Farouq agreed, "The overall quality of life is much freer. In other countries around the world, women cannot drive, walk alone or even go out at night. This really does feel surreal."

Despite this newfound feeling of security and empowerment, al-Kabbani and Farouq cannot forget their lives in Iraq and Saudi Arabia, nor can they forget the people they left behind. Farouq explains that local youth should be better informed on the current state of events in other countries, in addition to what takes place in the United States and Mexico. Positive change is essential in every country. She goes on to explain, "The change in the world can only come with your own hands. We have to spread what we know so that everyone can do

their part to help."

A conference delegate from the audience questioned this idea and asked al-Kabbani and Farouq how spreading information can actually produce change. A murmur spread through the room, as WorldLink delegates quietly expressed their own opinions and thoughts on the issue. After a few moments, Farouq said with a soft smile, "It may seem as though the word of mouth has little to no power. But that is not true. [...] The more people know, the more they are able to give money and resources, and bring situations to the attention of governments and bigger bodies of people that will be able to help on a larger scale."

Farouq and al-Kabbani are most grateful for the education and opportunities that they have received, and express, "In America, there are so many chances." They both advised the youth of today to take advantage of the gift of education, a gift they attest that not everyone is fortunate enough to receive. ■

It may seem as though the word of mouth has little to no power. But that is not true.

– Sarah Farouq, National University Academy

An Avenue Towards Peacebuilding

Written by Alexis Parkhurst, La Jolla Country Day School

Following the 17th Annual Youth Town Meeting, which was attended by more than 700 students, the WorldLink program offered a follow-up workshop enabling local youth leaders to reconnect and debrief on the conference and its thought-provoking discussions.

The Sunday after the conference, eleven students met at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice to reflect on the event and to design activities for the spring semester that would help further promote peace in their local and global communities.

Students were joined by facilitators John Stevenson and Anne Birkel from the Alternatives to Violence (AVP) Project, a program of the San Diego Hands of Peace Chapter. As Stevenson describes, AVP “sponsors one three-day workshop per month at the R. J. Donovan Correctional Facility in Otay Mesa.” Through workshops held in prisons and in the San Diego community, AVP uses the shared experiences of project participants and examines ways of reacting to anger, prejudice and social injustices.

WorldLink Workshop attendees got a glimpse into these three-day workshops by participating in a shorter version. As Stevenson explains, the post-conference gathering aimed to let “[the students] experience the workshop process and to have a positive learning experience for [them]selves.”

One activity divided the students into two circles, one situated inside the other. Here, students were paired up

with one another and were presented specific questions pertaining to one’s own opinions of life’s values and priorities. Student attendees were each given an allotted time to talk without interruption. What was striking about this activity was that it forced everyone out of their comfort zone, yet it enabled each person to feel more comfortable about speaking openly and honestly about complex issues.

It was an enlightening experience for both groups of students because it is not often in life that we hear, and actually listen to, someone else’s thoughts without being allowed to interrupt. It is even less often that we, ourselves, get to talk without being interrupted. Interestingly enough, listening is a core value of conflict resolution.

The allotted time provided a stress-free environment, without the pressure

of being asked questions in the middle of a monologue. It actually proved difficult for some students to talk for the specific time period because we are so used to being interrupted by others as a societal norm. “I found it to be a great opportunity and extremely interesting,” commented Dakota Barksdale from Roosevelt Middle School.

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Local youth from San Diego and Mexico at WorldLink’s Workshop “Annual YTM: Next Steps.”

Photo by J. Stevenson

Do We Have a Responsibility to Protect?

Written by Andrea Scemanenco, La Jolla Country Day School

Born and raised in Turkey, Dr. Necla Tschirgi serves as a professor of practice at the University of San Diego who focuses on human security and peacebuilding. Through her past experience working at the United Nations, International Peace Academy and abroad, Dr. Tschirgi explained that she considers herself to be a “scholar-practitioner,” someone who is dedicated to both the research and experiment of theory-based models - two important approaches to take in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Throughout her briefing session, Dr. Tschirgi introduced two crucial pieces of information related to global conflict. First, she stressed that conflict is not inherently bad. Conflict itself is natural, however, it is how one deals with conflict that becomes the concern. Using violence in response to conflict is the threat.

Secondly, the nature of conflict worldwide has changed throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. The 1900s were filled with violence, but the violence was primarily between countries, which is known as interstate conflicts. In contrast, more recently, our world has primarily experienced intrastate conflict, or conflict that takes place within a country’s own borders. These conflicts are often a result of opposing

ethnic groups or religious beliefs.

Based on this, it was widely understood throughout the 20th century that countries would settle their own internal affairs. State sovereignty gave countries authority over intrastate conflict. However, as we entered the 21st century, an important question came to the forefront: Do we, as humans, have the responsibility to protect one another, especially in cases where a government cannot or will not protect its own citizens?

At the 2005 United Nations World Summit, world leaders established and committed to the concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), a newly defined way of regulating foreign intervention. Country leaders agreed on the importance of the responsibility to protect a population against gross human rights violations, including genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, when and if a government is unwilling or unable to address these grave concerns.

Although the new concept of R2P has great significance, Dr. Tschirgi argued that prevention is the best means of protection. Understanding the root causes of a conflict and addressing them before violence breaks out is the best way to protect large populations.

When asked by a conference delegate what local youth can do to fur-

ther promote conflict prevention and R2P, Dr. Tschirgi redirected the question back to the delegate, as a true teacher does. Through this, student delegates transitioned from a discussion about history to one about a person’s own ability to impact the world.

Fellow students began voicing their suggestions on how to do this. It became evident that this is what the WorldLink Youth Town Meeting conference is all about – connecting global-minded leaders who will challenge themselves in asking these type of difficult questions and discovering

their own answers.

This lecture was not one that you would hear at school. It was engaging and provoked youth to consider their own thoughts on questions, such as “How can we make people care about these problems?” Together, the group concluded that this can be done by educating others. People are inherently kind, compassionate and concerned beings. And when young people learn and discuss issues such as R2P, we become more concerned about the world around us and can develop real solutions. ■



Delegate thanks Necla Tschirgi for her presentation.

Photo by A. Gallegos

This lecture was not one that you would hear at school. It was engaging and provoked youth to consider their own thoughts on questions.

– Andrea Scemanenco, La Jolla Country Day School

The Conflict of Supply and Demand

Written by Tsion Fikre, Scripps Ranch High School

Until I entered a session with Emily Edmonds-Poli, I didn't have much knowledge of drug cartels beyond the concept itself. Edmonds-Poli serves as associate professor at the University of San Diego's department of political science and international relations.

Drug trafficking is made up of the illicit cultivation, transferring and distribution of drugs, but the problem goes beyond the product. Since the year 2006, it is estimated that over 75,000 people were killed because of the drug war in Mexico, 85 of them being journalists. The ongoing war on drugs still does not have a definite solution. It is a result of the "supply and demand" issue.

When asked if the end is near for the war on drugs, Edmonds-Poli replied, "Unless humans stop being interested in illegal drugs, there is still going to be a black market." The United States, in particular, is a high consumer of the illegal drugs supplied by Mexico.

The drug market can be a catalyst for economic growth, but violence exists at every level of the drug trade. People who are directly affected are terrorized and eventually get desensitized to the problem. The concern for human protection takes center-stage. Citizens lose trust, as authority figures are assumed to be corrupt. Fear takes over.

Drug lords take over small towns, colonize them, and eventually assign "troops" to remain in charge. Extortion becomes the norm and rape becomes



Freida Aguilar with speaker Emily Edmonds-Poli.

Photo by M. Martinez

more frequent. The injustice continues. In some instances, these "troops" will barge into citizens' homes to take the wife away and then demand the daughter.

In what Edmonds-Poli described to be the "balloon effect," drug cartels are driven out of one area but quickly expand to the next. Thus, in place of frustration, people began to take matters into their own hands. With that initiative, they began to arm themselves for defense. The President of Mexico called for their disarming, but local citizens attempted to fight back to claim what was originally theirs.

Their goal is to create a safe environment for their children and to dis-

mantle the fear instilled upon them. The imbalance of power, however, becomes evident here. Cartels are equipped with high-class weapons and deep pockets, which allow them to hover over citizens as a powerful supplier.

As Edmonds-Poli suggested, we often think about human security in terms of "physical" security. But we must ask ourselves, what are the external factors that contributed to the rise in drug trafficking in the first place? What role does the United States continue to play in the supply and demand chain? Ultimately, there are economic and social implications that must be taken into consideration. ■

"A Little Step" Towards Human Protection

Written by Lucy Peritz,
La Jolla Country Day School

My first briefing session began with none other than the founder of the WorldLink program, Dee Aker. She delivered a fascinating talk on human protection and the power of youth, focusing on what it can do in terms of affecting change.

"I often tell people that I live Forrest Gump's life, in the sense that I seem to be in places where things are happening, working with important people or around them," Aker explains. She has worked in regions of political turmoil and conflict, including Kenya, Nepal, Indonesia and Colombia.

In Nepal, Aker has worked with Sano Paila, Nepali for "a little step," which is an organization that builds self-reliant and empowered communities through education and sustainable development practices. One of Sano Paila's main projects is to rescue children that have been trafficked domestically and internationally to India. The children are generally trafficked for labor purposes, with many being forced to work in poor conditions in Indian circuses. The enslavement of children in Indian circuses is an ongoing problem.

To combat the issue of using children as circus slaves, Sano Paila has conducted several rescue operations in Nepal and India. The organization has set up a recovery and rehabilitation program, and it connects the young men and women to circus volunteers from across the world that travel to Nepal to train the youth. This allows the rescued youth to use their talents and skills in a safe and secure environment. Many have gone on to perform for Circus Kathmandu, which is the first ever circus company in Nepal, and unlike some circuses in India, it is a legal and legitimate enterprise. "What they did was really creative," said Aker. "They changed the whole image of the circus."

Sano Paila was founded in 2006 by a group of young leaders dedicated to promoting and achieving development and change in Nepal. This is just one of the many examples Aker shared as proof of the "power of youth." She argued that the best qualities of youth are how fearless and innovative they are.

"Young people are absolutely committed," Aker exclaimed. She has seen youth leaders from the WorldLink program and beyond create profound change. This is what inspired her to establish the WorldLink program seventeen years ago, which is a contribution that has made a lasting impact on more than 10,000 young leaders around the world. ■

Girl Child Marriage

Written by Marcel Hyman, Mission Bay High School

At WorldLink's 17th Youth Town Meeting, Anita Raj, professor in global health and director of the UCSD Center on Gender Equity and Health, conveyed startling information and trends in child marriage and adolescent motherhood, as well as their relations to social and gender inequities.

Child marriage is the act of marrying a girl under the age of eighteen. In India, 45% of girls between the ages of 14 and 18 are married within a given year, which means that approximately 11 million girls were married last year alone. She explained that child marriage is commonly associated to South Asia and Africa, but it is being discovered in places including the United Kingdom and Canada, and increasingly in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Common causes for early marriage and adolescent childbirth are social and gender inequities and social norms and traditions. In some situations, young girls may be living in environments of violence or neglect, or there is a belief that there are limited educational and occupational opportunities for them. Thus, child marriage can be viewed as a gateway to protection, safety and survival. Secondly, social norms and traditions, including dowries and consanguinity, further promote child marriage and young motherhood. In some cultures, the refusal to follow tradition would lead to negative and sometimes violent repercussions.

Furthermore, as described by Dr. Raj,



Anita Raj after her presentation.

Photo by J. Fields

it is important to note that an "arranged marriage is not equivalent to forced marriage." Arranged marriage takes cues from cultural norms, but does not necessarily mean that it will result in a forced child marriage.

The social and health implications associated to child marriage and young motherhood are severe. When married at an early age, young girls are more likely to remain living in poverty, are not likely to continue their education, and may enter an abusive relationship. There are limitations on social mobility and access to important resources, such as adequate healthcare for young mothers. Consequently, there are increasing reports of suicide among girls in child marriages.

A question was posed from a conference delegate, "Can the young girls leave their environment to avoid early marriage?" Dr. Raj explained that it is possible

for young girls to leave their homes, but there is a higher risk of being forced into sex trafficking and an increased chance of abuse. These risks go hand-in-hand with the gender inequities that Dr. Raj described.

Child marriage and adolescent motherhood are fairly new topics of discussion in global affairs, but it is becoming evident that the young generation, boys and girls, worldwide are leading the evolution of thought that stands against this societal norm. Dr. Raj described her youth training and capacity-building programs in the field that include young boys and girls working together to promote girl choice in marriage, as well as contraceptive use in marriage. Through Dr. Raj's informative talk, she continues to pass the torch of knowledge to the next generation of advocates for the reduction of early marriage and childbirth. ■

Unless humans stop being interested in illegal drugs, there is still going to be a black market.

– Emily Edmonds-Poli, University of San Diego

"They will not stop me.
I will get my education
if it is in home, school,
or any place."
- MALALA YOUSAFZAI



"What specifically has Malala done to inspire you?"

Written by Isha Raj-Silverman, Muirlands Middle School

CNN held a nationwide essay contest to meet Malala Yousafzai, a young activist advocating for the universal right to education. Youth between the ages of thirteen and eighteen years old were asked, "What specifically has Malala done to inspire you?" The following essay by Isha Raj-Silverman, a thirteen year old from San Diego, placed in the top 5 and was read by Malala. Raj-Silverman served as a 2014 Youth Town Meeting conference delegate.

I was always told never to slow down my education to let some boy catch up. I never considered, however, what would happen if I hit a red light; if the world didn't let me keep going and told all those boys to pass me. That's what happened to the girls in the Swat district of Pakistan, because of the Taliban. They made it dangerous and then illegal for girls to go to school. For speaking against that violation of human rights, despite the danger, Malala is my hero.

I was driving to Hebrew school

when I first heard about Malala. [I am of Jewish and Punjabi heritage.] I was, ironically, complaining about homework, when I heard on the radio that a girl was shot in the head for advocating for girls' education. She was only three years older than me and was almost killed for speaking up for women's rights, something I do on a daily basis. Then I found out she was from Pakistan, which hit the point home because my grandfather was born there. This girl, Malala, felt similar to me on so many levels. She was a feminist and of similar heritage and age to me; yet when I go to school, I get praise. When she goes to school, she gets an assassination attempt.

My grandfather was born in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan, an area now vulnerable to Taliban rule. He moved to India due to Partition, but had he not, maybe I could have been under the Taliban. I could have been in the same situation as Malala Yousafzai. I am everything the Taliban is against, a feministic, outspoken, educated young woman. People all over the

world say "I am Malala," but I think I really could have been her. I would like to believe that in Malala's circumstances, I too would have tried to go to school and to speak up for the rights of girls' education. I know that I have to fight for all girls to have the education and opportunities I once took for granted.

I am inspired by Malala's story; she is a girl not much older than me who fought opposition with her words and her ideas. As she said in her speech at the United Nations in July, these are our tools to win the battle for girl's education, and I have never seen anyone wield those tools better than Malala Yousafzai. She proves that we can win, and I want to do my very best to wield my pencils and computers and books in a way that will assist her and the fight for girl education in any way I can. Malala is a fighter and one day she is going to be looked at with the same reverence as Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi. We must all become Malala. She is a general, and I hope everyone will pick up their pencils and join her battle. I know that I have. ■

Speaking Truth to Power

Written by Andrea Scemanenco, La Jolla Country Day School

Robert F. Kennedy, brother of President John F. Kennedy, served as U.S. Attorney General and then Senator for New York. As a constant advocate for equality and democracy, Robert F. Kennedy played a key role in the Civil Rights Movement, through his proposal of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which later passed. He supported nonviolence and influenced popular belief in the hopes of achieving world peace and equal opportunity for all.

The Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights established the Speak Truth to Power (STTP) program, which documents the stories of courageous leaders and peacebuilders alike and uses their experiences as a way to educate and inspire people to realize a more peaceful and just world through the advancement of human rights. Wesley Farrow, west coast manager for STTP, described the program as an innovative approach to educate others on a wide variety of issues ranging from environmental activism to political participation. The documented stories can be implemented in classrooms as part of an education curriculum.

To pose an example, Farrow introduced fellow presenter, Sarah Bakhiet, to the briefing session. Bakhiet explained how she incorporates STTP into her lesson plans at La Jolla Country Day School, but in actuality she demonstrated how STTP can be used in any classroom. In her presentation, conference delegates were introduced to Oscar Arias Sanchez, former President of Costa Rica who called for disarmament and democracy in Central America through the Arias Peace Plan, for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987.

What added to the significance of Bakhiet's presentation was her reasoning for using STTP resources in her classroom. Born in Sudan, she was forced to leave her home country as a young child due to political and economic circumstances. Together with her family, she moved to Libya, where she spent her primary school years. Looking back at her positive educational experiences in primary school and beyond, she stressed the importance of access to quality education through programs like STTP.

The program develops methods of teaching that require little to no materials, which would make the curriculum and its practices available to anyone, regardless of socioeconomic background. Applications of STTP help broaden education as a whole, and help target specific social, political and economic issues that everyone, including today's youth, should be aware of.

Bakhiet called her generation the "Generation of Technology," but explained that it is being replaced by a new generation - the "Generation of Dialogue," and this dialogue cannot begin without proper education. ■



Bakhiet talks about her work. Photo by A. Gallegos

Understanding Torture

Written by Marcel Hyman, Mission Bay High School

The topic of torture is one that is sensitive, controversial and can be difficult to discuss due to the political, cultural and emotional complexities. Physician Rebecca Trotzky and development and communications manager Sophie Westacott from Program for Torture Victims (PTV) joined conference delegates at WorldLink's 17th Youth Town Meeting. Together, they addressed these complexities and asserted that there are reliable support programs dedicated to survivors of torture.

Trotzky explained that the Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization PTV has worked with torture survivors from more than 70 countries. The staff provides medical and psychological services, including psychological evaluations and counseling that addresses trauma. In addition, PTV provides legal support through services such as case management, which is a vital part of the relief process for asylum seekers and refugees.

To further explain, Trotzky and Westacott described the challenges associated with working with asylum seekers and refugees. According to UNESCO, "Asylum seeker describes someone who has applied for protection as a refugee and is awaiting the determination of his or her status. Refugee is the term used to describe a person who has already been

granted protection." The unknown status can pose several challenges in receiving services.

In order to better understand PTV and the services it offers, Trotzky and Westacott transitioned the discussion to the concept of torture, specifically the primary reasons torture exists. "There is psychological evidence in the morality of torture," states Trotzky. One may think they are doing something for a greater good, such as using torture as a way to get information, often in a heroic manner. However, both Trotzky and Westacott explained that torture is often different than how it is portrayed in pop culture. In actuality, torture is more commonly used as a form to degrade and undermine an individual or a population.

The rationale of torture sparked an open discussion between the guest speakers and the conference delegates. Students posed questions associated to the reasoning behind torture, as well as the effectiveness of it. Some delegates expressed that the reasoning depends on the moral standing of the person committing torture, and that torture is not necessarily an effective way of retrieving information.

The complexities of torture cannot possibly be examined within a 45-minute session, but Trotzky and Westacott introduced a fascinating discussion that

served as an essential starting point.

As we address the topics of global conflicts and human protection, we must acknowledge the reality that atrocities, like torture, take place in many areas around the world. Thus, it is important that we, as compassionate and well-informed citizens, learn and spread awareness about organizations like Program for Torture Victims so that we can help provide indefinite support to survivors of human rights violations. ■

We must all become Malala. She is a general, and I hope everyone will pick up their pencils and join her battle. I know that I have.

– Isha Raj-Silverman, Muirlands Middle School

Eyes Wide Open: This is Media

Written by Tsion Fikre, Scripps Ranch High School

In collaboration with Outside the Lens, the WorldLink program hosted a screening of *Eyes Wide Open: This is Media*, a film that provides information and tools about how to use media and new technology effectively. The event was held as part of the IPJ Film Series “peaceXpiece.”

The documentary reveals the gradual change in recent years of the way that we receive information. From the seventies, a time at which we relied on television, newspapers and radio, to the more recent years where instant coverage is made available through the Internet and new technology.

Narrated by an unidentified man, the film challenges the viewer to question each piece of information shared through media, including this film itself. Nowadays, there are countless information portals and a multitude of sources presenting news and other information, that it becomes difficult to

successfully identify which sources are trustworthy and accurate.

According to the documentary, “the average American kid spends 7.5 hours a day using a smartphone, tablet or computer, not including texting or talking.” This includes outputting information as well as receiving it, as we are now both consumers and producers of media.

As revolutionary as it may be to create media as readily as we can receive it, it has also become dangerous. As stated in the film, “With great power, comes great responsibility.” Maria Popova, a famous blogger on Brainpickings.org, appreciates the ability to influence her readers. However, she recognizes this power and acknowledges the importance of being a responsible media producer.

In addition to the questions of credibility and reliability of media sources, we also need to consider the loss of

privacy that we are now facing. For instance, when using the Internet, our privacy is sacrificed and serves as a “trade-off” for the services we get. Google makes about \$5,000 a year for each person using its search engine.

So to what extent do we need to monitor what we search for, share and receive? How essential is it to question everything that we read or see on the Internet? As this new wave of media and technology continues to evolve, we may find it difficult to answer these questions. However, we can begin by acknowledging that we are now both consumers of media, as well as producers, which is evident each time we retweet or share a post. By being more cautious and becoming aware of the risks and rewards of 21st century media, we will develop a safer and more responsible relationship with media.

To learn more, visit www.pivot.tv/eyes. ■

An Avenue Towards Peacebuilding

Continued from page 12

However, perhaps the most influential activity was one that lasted throughout the entire workshop, and is frequently implemented in all AVP workshops. As a rule, workshop attendees were required to introduce themselves each time they spoke by using a positive adjective in front of his or her name (for example, “Daring Dakota” or “Jubilant John”). The student and adult attendees were addressed with these names throughout the duration of the program, which further encouraged all who were present to engage deeper into the discussion.

This new sense of community led to a seamless transition to the discussion and reflection on the Youth Town Meeting and its 2014 focus on global conflicts, human impact and human solutions. It is difficult to hear about worldwide human rights violations and existing armed conflict. It seems daunting to attempt to tackle all the atrocities and high levels of grief experienced worldwide. However, as we learned at WorldLink’s 17th Youth Town Meeting, the change begins within us, within our neighborhoods, within our communities. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

As a result, workshop attendees began to propose youth-driven initiatives that could be executed locally this semester, whether it be collecting shoes so that children in developing countries can attend school or raising funds to promote clean water projects worldwide. “Too many times, we learn about something and forget about it,” explains Steven Franca, a first-time conference delegate from St. Augustine High School. He expressed his appreciation for a follow-up meeting of this nature by saying, “Everyone should take what they learned and at least do something to contribute to a particular problem.” At the workshop following the Youth Town Meeting, this is exactly what occurred.

Since the WorldLink Workshop took place, the group has come together multiple times to plan and implement local youth initiatives and to further support what young people are doing to help the world. The workshop attendees formed committees, and have made it their goal to support local and international organizations that are already in existence, providing direct resources to vulnerable populations.

“I thought the best part was that we got to unite to make a big plan,” remarked Yoko Kelly Tsutsui Garcia, a WorldLink conference moderator from Instituto Mexico Americano Noroeste. “I got to meet new people and have contact with them. It’s great that people are willing to make a change.”

There is no doubt that the initial activities that took place at the Youth Town Meeting and the WorldLink Workshop helped lead this group of leaders to their community initiative, an avenue towards peacebuilding that will continue to create positive change for people around the world. ■

Youth Leaders: “We are the Change”

Written by Meg Deitz, Mission Bay High School

As a society we pride ourselves in having the “next new thing.” We spend our lives striving to be “in the know.” Gossip magazines, video games, television shows, and Internet crazes have created a false understanding of what is actually going on in our world. Through our never-ending desire to have the “next new thing,” like the latest cell phone, we begin to forget where they come from and who may have suffered in its production.

Sedrick Murhula is one of millions of people that has fallen victim to our consumer culture. Murhula was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the richest country in the world in terms of resources. However, according to The Enough Project, “Armed groups [in Eastern Congo] earn hundreds of millions of dollars every year by trading conflict minerals. These minerals can be found in all our electronic devices,” which include our mobile phones, computers, and even gaming systems. Thus, due to nationwide corruption, western exploitation and conflict, the Congo is currently one of the poorest countries in the world and has forced thousands of people to leave their country as refugees.

Murhula experienced first-hand the life of a refugee. He spent his childhood cramped in a 4x3 room with seven family members, ate about once a day, spent two years without schooling, and rarely found work. Despite the immense difficulties in Murhula’s life, he maintained his strength and hope for the future.

There are three options for refugees offered by the United Nations (UN): voluntary reparations, which entails returning to one’s home country; integration, which allows the refugee to become a citizen of the country providing refuge; and resettlement, which allows a refugee to become a citizen of a new country. Unfortunately, voluntary reparations rarely occur, thorough integration is not often implemented, and only 1% of all refugees are resettled.

Murhula began to discuss alternatives and possibilities for change with others in his local refugee community. Subsequently, he founded Young African Refugees for Integral Development (YARID), an organization that unites refugees, orphans, and internally displaced persons through skill training and sports. Through this, program participants address issues like ethnic violence, youth unemployment, public health and conflict resolution.

YARID has enabled hundreds of refugee youths to strengthen their leadership skills, become self-sufficient and exude empowerment. As Murhula describes, “They now call each other brother and sister with unity and integrity.” Following his own advice, Murhula has become an advocate for change within the refugee community, “We are the ones that we have been waiting for. We are the change.”

However, towards the beginning of Murhula’s journey with YARID, he lost his mother in a fire. He could only describe this time in his life with one word: hopelessness. He felt that there was no possible way for him to help a world that was already destined for cruelty. At this time, Murhula’s father decided to start the resettlement process for his family. Resettlement seemed like the only answer for the family to escape their hardship.

Through this, Murhula was forced to endure a series of interviews with UN representatives where he had to relive



Sedrick Murhula speaks about creating change. Photo by J. Chen

his unsettling life by retelling his story several times. “They make you restamp the memories, the same memories that you try to forget in order to resettle.” However, Murhula realized that in order to strive for a future, he would have to confront his past. “There are things that can happen in life, but life goes on,” he said. “There comes a time when you must move on.” Although Murhula was eventually resettled in the United States, he realized that the only true way to move on was to allow this change to take place from within.

Now living in San Diego, Murhula has continued his work with YARID. He believes that this is the least he can do for the community who gave him the hope and strength to continue to move forward in his life. He strives each day to give a voice to the voiceless. He follows the wise words of Mahatma Gandhi: “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

We must become advocates for peace. In his eyes, “peace means food for the hungry and medicine for the sick.” We must work together and support one another’s organizations. As Murhula proclaims, “It doesn’t matter what age, race or gender you are. [...] Who is going to make change, if it is not you and I?” ■

It doesn’t matter what age, race or gender you are. Who is going to make the world change, if it is not you and I?

– Sedrick Murhula, YARID



Photo by M. Oswald



Photo by P. Nordland



Photo by J. Fields



Photo by R. Thomas

I would never have imagined in a million years that I would see so many people in one place dedicated to changing the world.
– Paola Vanessa Grijalva Garay, Colegio Baja California de Rosarito

I have become inspired to act and aid those that need a helping hand, whether it is by spreading awareness of issues, or actively participating.
– Vanessa Mendoza Granados, Escondido High School

By seeing these people's actions, I was able to set goals for myself. Maybe one day I will be able to improve my community.
– Ethan Gibbons, Roosevelt Middle School

The speakers told us what we, as young people, can do in our own environment to make this world a better place for everybody. It was very inspiring to know that they started just like us, and that they succeeded in their goals.
– Patricia Martínez, CETYS Tijuana

I want to make a difference in the world and WorldLink made me think about how I can do that.
– Hawa Mohamed, Sweetwater High School

This experience has been unforgettable. I'm quite sure that I will always fight for equal human rights for my brothers and sisters.
– Cesar Ivan Martínez Cruz, Federal Lázaro Cardenas

Today's sessions made me realize that I should be more cautious of what I waste and what I think are "big problems."
– Daniela Sanchez, San Diego Early Middle College

[The Youth Town Meeting] is a day to listen, to investigate, to ask, to socialize and most importantly to remember.
– Arianna Contreras, Instituto Mexico Americano Noroeste

When you have human interactions with people who have actually been refugees, or people who know what it is like to not have free speech, you begin to comprehend the gravity of the situation. This conference inspired me to educate myself about the conflicts that are going on in the world. How can I help without the knowledge of what is going on?
– Nadia Mehretab, High Tech High Chula Vista



Photo by P. Nordland



Photo by L. Guarena



Photo by J. Bowman



Photo by A. Gallegos



Photo by Outside the Lens



Photo by J. Fields



Photo by D. Garcia Ortiz Villacorta



Photo by D. Garcia Ortiz Villacorta



Photo by S. Yang