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, engineers, 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 Kampa La, 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...
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 Saint Augustine High School.

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.

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.

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Participating Youth Organizations: International Rescue Committee Peacemakers and Outside the Lens

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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: Efrem 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 Trotsky, 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. P.h.D. is director of UCSC’s Center on Gender Eq-
uity and Health and a professor in the Division of Global Pub-
lic 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 been working in various capacities on issues related to violence, reproductive rights and reproductive 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 non-profit organizations in 26 countries and she helped stage a free health fair for underserved communities. Kim graduated from Occidental College with a degree in diplo-
macy 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 fur-
nish the understanding and implementation of the principle of the Responsibility to Protect. Karr’s research focuses on popula-
tions at risk of mass atrocities in Syria, Burma/Myanmar and Iraq. She has an M.A. in international relations from Columbia University and is currently completing her master of arts degree in inter-
national affairs at The New School, concentrating on governance and rights. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Casey Karr was unable to attend the event.

Chris Groth is program officer for the Nepal Peacebuilding Ini-
tiative 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, includ-
ing a training to help medium-scale NGOs for a week’s worth of train-
ing with IPJ partner organizations. Sano Pala, 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
Promoting Sustainable Peace in Nepal. Most recently, he served as an in-house consultant / senior policy advisor with the organization founded by former President Jimmy Carter. The
Center seeks to wage peace, fight disease and build hope in a world where people live under extreme difficulties, life-threatening conditions caused by war, disease and famine. Prior to her posi-
tion 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.

David Joseph is overseas director of the Northern Uganda Medical Mission (NUMSPE), a community-based organization that seeks to provide quality health care to 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 NUMSPE, 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.

Deeaker is a psychological anthropologist and conflict resolution professional with 30 years experience working with international communities and individuals in transition. He has facilitated training, communications and negotiations for groups and individuals in conflict and transition in Europe, Africa, Cen-
tral America and Asia, and is a speaker and co-founder in an internationally on intertwined concerns of conflict, gender, media, religion, security, justice and peace.

Ehrem Bycar is the founding board chair of the Congo Leader-
ship Initiative (CLI) which he describes as his wish 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 50-fold since its establishment in 2010. Bycar 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 mas-
ter of public administration degree from the Maxwell School of Syracuse University.

Emily Edmonds-Poll, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the de-
partment 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 Michigan. She was an assistant professor in the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, and a BA in Latin American studies at Middlebury College. She was awarded a Ful-
bright-Narcia Robles-Rose Fellowship in 1998-1999 and a Ford Founda-

Katie Baxter serves as the alternative action & equal employ-
ment manager at Qualcomm Inc., a company that engages with domestic, regional, multilateral and international institutions, trade associations and non-governmental organizations on sub-
jects including climate change, sustainable product governance and energy efficiency. Baxter communicates Qualcomm’s ob-
servance of human rights, specifically through the United Na-
tions Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, through which the company has adopted a Conflict-Free Minerals Policy.

Katie Baxter received a degree in psychology from Arizona State University. Lauren Kent-Delany serves as director of educational pro-
grams for The Carter Center, a not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization founded by former President Jimmy Carter. The center seeks to respond to global disease and build hope in a world where people live under difficult, life-threatening conditions caused by war, disease and famine. Prior to her posi-
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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.

Necia Tschirgi, Ph.D. is a professor of practice in human secu-
rit and peacebuilding at the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studi-
es 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 PhD in political economy at the University of Toronto. For the past 15 years, she has special-
ized in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, focusing on the
exus 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.

Christie Edwards, director of the international humanitarian law program at the American Bar Association’s International Human Rights Law Clinic, is a graduate of the University of California, San Diego, an MA in Latin American studies, and is currently completing her master of arts degree in international relations at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University.

Kabbani and Farouq have an affinity for cultural exchange and
music. Farouq, 15, was born in Baghdad, Iraq, but her family sought ref-
age 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 2007. Necla Tschirgi – an INTERCEPT scholar at the University of
Tehran, and an MA in peace and conflict resolution from the
Center for Inter-American Relations. She graduated from Caltech
with a minor in management at Stanford University, where she studied juvenile justice systems.

Edu cate 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 deci-
sions on how to help other people.

--- Christie Edwards, American Red Cross
Peacebuilding Processes During and After Conflict

Written by Tsiion 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 mountains and low, flat grounds, served as a challenge for the government in their attempt to resolve conflicts with 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 that included demands for ending the monarchy, land redistribution and an end to social and cultural discrimination. The government, however, did not initially take their demands seriously. On February 1, 2000, a dramatic event occurred: a King, Jigdral, a multi-party people’s movement, put pressure on the king that led to the Constitution Peace Accord and an end to Nepal’s monarchy. The post-conflict process has focused on three key issues: creating a new constitution, achieving army integration and establishing recognition of new conditions. The most successful of the three has been army integration, through which some former Maoist fighters have been integrated into the Nepalese Army. The Maoists, however, have placed some of their former fighters in police forces, including international customs officers, into the Young Communist League, the Maoists’ party sometimes violent youth force. Therefore, it was a chance 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 been engaging young people in youth to play an active role in mitigating violence and strengthening 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 largest being Kikuyu, Luhy, Luo, Kalenjin and Kamba. The post-election violence resulted in 3,100 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 among 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.
Healthcare Solutions in Northern Uganda
Written by Morgan Chen, Outside the Lens, and Sandra Quiroz, IMAN

D avid Joseph was only nine 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 escapes. 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 important 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 for 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 stuff, 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

“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.
A Nightmare in Heaven: Hope for Congo
Written by Andrés Hernández, CETYS Tijuana

I t 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 aston- ishing natural beauty, with silverly riv- ers 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 Congo has experienced a life of destruction and exploitation. Conflict and corruption arose over the acquisition of the rich minerals that lay beneath the Congo Basin. Just as early as 1908, the Congo fell to the regime of King Leopold II of Belgium, which forced the Congo to give up their land for exploitation to the ben- efit of foreigners. This is the story of how the Congolese, and specifically King Leopold II, exploited the Congolese people, where ethical leaders serve.

The conflict came to an end just 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. Congo’s wealth has belonged to a government without infrastructure, heavily by rampant corruption. Here, in North America, the neces- sities of an average middle-class fam- ily 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 often blind to the conflicts and unaware of the Congolese plight. But the situation of the Congolese can be seen in the history of our every day life of our youth. San Diego is one of the cities with the largest num- ber of refugees. People from all over the Congo, including the Congo, came to this city with hope of being safe and free. We share the same en- vironment, 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 indi- viduals 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 col- lege in New Orleans. It was 2005, the year that Hurricane Katrina hit, leaving homes shattered to the ground and people homeless. During his ex- perience working with residents, Bycer realized that assisting people in be- coming self-sufficient would lead to lasting change. “It is not about charity,” explained Bycer. “It is not about giving to peo- ple. It is about empowering people to make a change. It is about providing them with skills.” Bycer joined a stu- dent 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 country and community with a strong government. CLI has implemented educational programs that promote the innovation of solutions and the will to revolution- ize. The organization has since trained over 300 students. “It is about the Congolese making the difference,” explained Bycer; “not about people com- ing in to make the difference.” According to Bycer, “The leaders we have trained are now creating small businesses and building rooftops at their schools.” In addition, plans for the de- velopment 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 ev- erything 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. ■

A Local Company with a Global Impact
Written by Hector Arias, San Diego Early Middle College

K aitie Baxter, a San Diego na- tive, is a graduate of Arizona State University who ma- jored 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 sup- port and promote affirmative action and equal opportunity.

On the day of the conference, Baxter ex- plained that Qualcomm’s corporate social responsibility and its ethical commitment to its employees have had a positive impact worldwide. Qualcomm is an S&P 500 and Fortune 500 company that was founded by Dr. Ir- win 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 sign- atory to the United Nations Global Compact and a member in the Elec- tronics 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 Global Compact’s Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Qual- comm adopted a conflict-free minerals policy and adheres to working closely with suppliers in regions, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, to en- sure 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 faci- lities 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

Waging Peace, Fighting Disease, Building Hope
Written by Sandra Quiroz, IMAN

H uman rights is the umbrel- la that 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 and his wife, Rosalynn Carter. Over 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 pro- gram, countries that have recently stepped out of conflict are invited to the Carter Center in quite some time invite The Carter Center to send trained individuals into their country to be 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 observe the “procedures that are fair and impartial!” For instance, observers must document if voting is done in private or if someone is coerced to vote. In this program, 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, ballot papers have pictures of the candidates and the political party logos in order to overcome this ob- stacle. 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 filaria- sis and schistosomiasis. One neglected trop- ical disease, in particular, that The Carter Center has helped reduced 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 devel- oped by The Carter Center is a “personal pipe filter,” which is a plastic straw-like de- vice 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 programs have helped advance peace and health in more than 80 countries. Through innovative human solutions like democracy programs and neglected tropical disease prevention, The Carter Center is 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. ■
Los Jóvenes Tienen la Capacidad de Cambiar al Mundo
Escrito por Hector Arias, San Diego Early Middle College
Traducido por Andrés Hernández, CETYS Tijuana

En nombre de los jóvenes, queridos amigos. 

E l mundo está cambiando. Nuestro planeta, nuestro hogar, está en peligro. Los desastres naturales, la violencia, la pobreza, y la desigualdad son problemas graves que afectan a todos. Pero hay algo que podemos hacer sobre estos problemas: los jóvenes tenemos la capacidad de cambiar el mundo.

En el pasado, los jóvenes han sido vistos como espectadores pasivos de los problemas del mundo. Pero hoy, los jóvenes estamos en la vanguardia de la solución a estos problemas. Estamos en la cuarta generación de participantes en el proyecto WorldLink, un proyecto que nos da la oportunidad de dar un pequeño paso hacia un mundo mejor.

El año pasado, el tema de la conferencia fue la pobreza y el hambre. Este año, el tema es la salud y la educación. Ambas son cuestiones de importancia global. "Un mundo sin pobreza ni hambre es posible," declaró el Dr. Raj, "pero necesitamos un esfuerzo global para lograrlo." 

La conferencia WorldLink es una oportunidad para que los jóvenes hagan una diferencia. Durante la plenaria, los jóvenes tienen la oportunidad de escuchar a panelistas invitados y luego de hablar sobre sus ideas. "Es una oportunidad para que los jóvenes hagan una diferencia," dijo Dakota Barksdale, un estudiante de WorldLink.

Los jóvenes pueden hacer una diferencia. Lo demostraron los jóvenes que hablaron sobre la desnutrición crónica. Para poder estudiar, un niño debe comer una pasta enriquecida de mantequilla de maní que cuesta solamente dieciséis centavos cada barra. A través de métodos económicos y programas comunitarios, UNICEF está trabajando para reducir esta desnutrición. Se han establecido programas de apoyo para niños en todo el mundo, y los más de 700 estudiantes formando la audiencia han aprendido sobre estos programas.

La conferencia WorldLink es una oportunidad para que los jóvenes hagan una diferencia. "Los jóvenes podemos hacer una diferencia," dijo Sedrick Murhula. "Somos los jóvenes del futuro. Nosotros podemos hacer una diferencia." 

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David Joseph solamente tenía cuatro 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 que el solo hecho de ver la imagen de pobreza, una imagen devas-tada por la guerra," donde sería voluntario por dos meses y luego volvería a casa para continuar su vida cotidiana, "no estaría solo en casa. El también asumió que se encontraría "gente con [él] no tendría cosas en común." Pero Joseph admitió, “Yo no 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. Conociéndoles, uno aprende muchas cosas sobre la pobreza. Ellos eran unas de las personas más amables y más ambiguas que he conocido."

"Esto fue Ben," dijo señalando a su diapositiva de PowerPoint de un joven Ugandés. Ben es un doctor de veinte años que inspiró a Joseph para co- establecer DHEM (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 por el LRA (Lord’s Resistance Army), un grupo de rebeldes que secuestra niños por el LRA (Lord’s Resistance Army). Joseph explicó, "Les cuento la historia de Ben porque destaca tres cosas importantes para mí. Lla, 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 ídolos - 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 la falta de médicos 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 niños están sin aten- tención médica. Los centros de la asisten-cia médica del gobierno están faltos de personal y suministros, y tienen muchas personas para servir: "Doscientas perso-nas están formadas en línea para ver a un doctor," Joseph recordó.

Antes 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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Unas Empresas 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 simple- mente un trabajo de oficina, sorpresen-temente, resultó ser una carrera en donde podrían poner en práctica 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 de S&P 500 y Fortune 500 fundada por el Dr. Irwin Mark Jacobs. Uno de los puntos de interés de Qual- comm es que los negocios deberían de apoyar y respetar los derechos hu- manos, los cuales incluyen trabajo, el medio ambiente y anti-corrupción. Re- spondiendo a este compromiso, Qual- comm forma parte de UNGC (United Nations Global Compact) y EICC (Elec-tronic 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 obliga- torio o forzado y el tráfico de perso-nas. 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 con-flictos. 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 electróni-co, pero está dedicada al reciclaje de estos. En 2012, se recicló el 100 por ciento de los residuos peligrosos de Qualcomm. Las instalaciones de Qual- comm han sido certificadas como LEED (Leadership in Energy and Envi- ronmental Design) y utilizan distintas fuentes de energía renovable como el viento y el sol.

Qualcomm es mucho más que el nombre de un estado, es una empresa clave en la tecnología que subraya los derechos humanos y la sos- tenibilidad en sus negocios globales.
**Líderes Juveniles: “Somos el Cambio”**

Escrito por Meg Deitz, Mission Bay High School

Traducido por Martha Paulizada Martínez, CETYS Tijuana

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**Los Jóvenes Tienen la Capacidad de Cambiar al Mundo**

**Continución de página 9**

**Soluciones en el Norte de Uganda**

Continuación de página 9

seph no se iba render.

En diciembre de 2012, Joseph co-estableció el centro de cuidado médico (NLA-MEM), el cual ofrece el cuidado de salud como un derecho humano principal, sin tener en cuenta la posición geográfica de un individuo o su origen. Durante su primer año, NMEP estableció una clínica dirigida por paneles de expertos, que es sumamente importante ya que la red de electricidad en el norte de Uganda son impredecibles y poco confiables. Además, otras clínicas serían dependientes de la electricidad, NMEP tiene un sistema de energía solar que siempre se va a utilizar en cualquier momento.

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**Una Avenida Hacia la Pacificación**

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Sin embargo, la actividad más influyente del día lo pasó al lindo señor, así como su posible relación con el programa. 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 consistía en dos reuniones.

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 destinar todas las atrocidades que existen en el mundo. Sin embargo, como aprendimos en la Reunión Local de Jóvenes de WorldLink, el cambio comienza 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 implementadas 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. “Mayoría del tiempo, aprendemos acerca de algo y uno se olvida de él,” explicó Steven Franca de St. Augustine High School, un delegado de la conferencia. Frances expresó su agradecimiento por la 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.”

Este 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 de socorro locales y nacionales que ya existen, los cuales proporcionan recursos directos a las poblaciones vulnerables.

“Si pienso que la mejor parte fue que nos unimos para hacer grandes cosas,” comentó Yoko Kelly Tatsui, una moderadora de la conferencia WorldLink que está en el Instituto México Americano, un adjetivo positivo delante de su nombre, “Veamos, ¿qué debemos hacer para mejorar nuestra vida y la de los demás? Parece imposible de detener todas las atrocidades que existen en el mundo. Sin embargo, hay algo que podemos hacer.”

— Sedrick Murhula, YARID
Emphasized that humanitarian organizations 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 people in high-risk areas and teaching them to filter their water. The Carter Center significantly reduced the number of cases worldwide from 400 in 2010 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 Farouq, west coast manager of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights. Farouq quickly delved into the heart of the matter, explaining that the Robert F. Kennedy Center is built on three concepts: choices for and 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. The bottom of the pyramid includes the Speak Truth to Power program, which is “the most important part according to Farouq.”

The Speak Truth to Power program brings stories from the top of the pyramid and creates lessons to teach students 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 actions to make a change in their community.

With that in mind, Farouq encouraged the students of the Youth Town Meeting to change how people see hope. This mechanism of change can be applied to everyone, and as long as hope can be attributed 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, Farouq 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 the good we do always has a compounding effect.” Farouq 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 and use their power, while also seeing the empowerment given to them through new knowledge and awareness on a multitude of global concerns. Students left the Youth Town Forum buzzing with ideas and new aspirations for the future, dreams that will be realized to make the world a better place.
Do We Have a Responsibility to Protect?
Written by Andrea Scemanenco, La Jolla Country Day School

Throughout her briefing session, Dr. Necla 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 human beings, 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 further 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 types 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

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

Continued on page 15
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, has 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 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 begin to take matters into their own hands. With that initiative, they begin to arm themselves for defense. The President of Mexico called to 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 dispel 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 populace.

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

M y first briefing session began with none other than the founder of the World-Link 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 volatility, including Kenya, Nepal, Indonesia, and Colombia.

In Nepal, Aker has worked with Sano Paila 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 to 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 Kandahar, 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.

“People are absolutely committed,” Aker exclaimed. She has seen headlines from the World-Link program and beyond create profound change. This is what inspired her to create the “World-Changer” program seven 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

Girl Child Marriage: An Agenda for Change

Until recently, child marriage has been widely seen as a social norm. Young girls are often forced into marriage, as well as contraceptive use and sexual activity, to save their families from poverty. However, child marriage is a significant issue, as it can lead to severe health complications, including psychological and physical trauma.

In Nepal, for example, a country where child marriage is particularly prevalent, girls as young as 12 are being married off. This is not only a violation of their rights as children, but it also sets them back in their education and future opportunities. Girls who marry young are more likely to experience health complications, such as childbirth complications and difficulties with childbearing.

In addition, there is a high risk of forced labor and domestic violence, as girls are often sold to wealthy men. This is a significant problem, as it can lead to a lifetime of abuse and exploitation.

Child marriage is not limited to Nepal. It is a global issue, with millions of girls being forced into marriage each year. The United Nations has called for an end to child marriage, and many countries have implemented laws to protect young girls.

However, there is still much work to be done. Child marriage is a complex issue, and it requires a multi-faceted approach to solve. This includes raising awareness about the issue, providing education and resources for girls, and empowering young girls to make their own decisions about marriage.

In conclusion, child marriage is a significant issue that requires urgent action. By working together, we can end child marriage and ensure that all girls have the right to a safe and healthy childhood. Together, we can make a difference. — Marcel Hyman, Mission Bay High School

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What specifically has Malala done to inspire you?

Written by Isha Raj-Silverman, Muirlands Middle School

Understanding Torture

Written by Marcel Yam, Mission Bay High School

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

I n 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 events were part of the IFJ Film Series “peaceXpiece.”

The documentary reveals the gradual evolution of the Internet and how it has changed the way 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.

Narrows 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 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 emails. This includes outspending information as well as receiving it, as we now both consumers and producers of news.

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. To be “in the know,” Google monitors 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, who is each time we reshare or share a post.

To learn more, visit www.pivot.tv.

Youth Leaders: “We are the Change”
Written by Meg Deitz, Mission Bay High School

A s a society we pride ourselves in having the “next new thing.” We spend our lives striving in having the “next new thing.” We strive for a future that is not your and I?” Sedrick Murhula speaks about creating change.

Murhula began to discuss alternatives and possibilities for change with other refugees; he started a 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.

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,” he says.

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: helplessness. He felt that there was no possible way for him to help a world that was already destined for cruelty. At this time, he realized that he needed to start the resettlement process for his family. Resettlement seemed like the only way to answer 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 his unsettling life by retelling his story several times. “They made you restate the memories, the same memories that you try to forget in order to restate.” However, Murhula realized that in order to survive 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.”

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 their name or her name (for example, “Daring Dra- kota” 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 not want to try and help. It seems daunting to attempt to tackle all the atrocities and high levels of grief experienced worldwide. However, as we attended the WorldLink 7th Youth Town Meeting, the change begins within us, within our neighborhoods, within our communities. As Mahatma Gandhi’s said, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

As a result, workshop attendees began to propose 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 learn and at least do something to contribute to a particular problem.” At the end of 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 help solve some of the problems that are happening in their local communities.

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

An Avenue Towards Peacebuilding
Continued from page 12

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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 organizer from Instituto Mexicano Americano Noroeste, “I got to meet new people and make 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 article that we hope will be published that will continue to create positive change for people around the world. •
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 Martinez 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 Mebrirah, High Tech High Chula Vista