

INTERNAL VOICES

14th Edition
12 August 2011

YOUTH AND THE UN

INTERNAL VOICES

The voice of the United Nations interns
14th Edition

EDITOR

Martin Karlsson

DEPUTY EDITOR

Mariana Ogaz-Palm

EDITORIAL TEAM

Proofreaders: Alexis De Herde,
Andrew Anderson, Kirsten Arnauts,
Nada Al-Omair, Signe Holm-Andersen,
Alice Anselmi, Matteo Lucatello,
Enrico Cellini,
Assistant: Jonas Kambestad Hågen-
sen,

CONTRIBUTORS

Olivia Atsin, David Iraya, Matthew Paff-
house, Scott Sutherland, Caroline Far-
aldo, Esben Hansen, Laura Condrut,
Patrick Fiander, Marian Schreier,
Andres Augustin Martinez Fuentes,
Rachel Friedman, Leoni Ayoub

COVER IMAGE (adapted from)
UN Photo/Martine Perret

IMAGES are predominantly UN Photos
available from www.un.org/photos
or public domain images from Wikipe-
dia. We have noted all sources and
photographers where information is
available. Alternative sources are
noted on the image.

Internal Voices is a 100% UN interns'
magazine giving all UN interns the
opportunity to network, express opin-
ions and share knowledge, points of
view and experiences. Everything from
articles to layout and editing is done by
UN interns. If you want to get involved,
the intern team at UNRIC in Brussels
would love to hear from you!

internalvoices@unric.org
<http://internal-voices.blogspot.com>
[http://www.facebook.com/
internalvoices](http://www.facebook.com/internalvoices)



DISCLAIMER

This publication is created by interns from UN agencies.
The views and opinions presented in this publication are
those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those
of the United Nations.

VOICES

INTERNAL

CONTENT

- ▼ 4
EDITORIAL
- ▼ 5
MEET THE TEAM
- ▼ 6
THE UN CALENDAR
- ▼ 7
GALLERY- 1985
- ▼ 8
INTERVIEW: MONIQUE COLEMAN
UN YOUTH CHAMPION
BY MARTIN KARLSSON
- ▼ 10
MONIQUE IN SOUTH AFRICA
BY OLIVIA AT SIN
- ▼ 12
THE FORGOTTEN YOUTH OF KENYA
BY DAVID IRAYA
- ▼ 14
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
-BREAKING THE CYCLE
BY SCOTT SUTHERLAND
- ▼ 16
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FOR
ECONOMIC PROGRESS
BY CAROLINE FARALDO
- ▼ 18
SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY AND
YOUTH IN THE MIDDLE-EAST AND
NORTH AFRICA
BY MATTHEW PAFFHOUSE
- ▼ 20
YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AFTER THE
ARAB SPRING
BY ESBEN HANSEN
- ▼ 22
INTERVIEW: EDMOND M CLOUGHNEY
UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE IN ROMANIA
BY LAURA CONDRUT
- ▼ 24
MAKE A CHANGE- UNV INTERN
PROGRAMME
BY PATRICK FIANDER
- ▼ 26
INTERVIEW: CLARA DE LA HOZ
THE EXPERIENCED INTERN
BY MARIANA OGAZ-PALM
- ▼ 28
INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY AND
RIO+20
BY MARIAN SCHREIER
- ▼ 30
YOUTH AND THE UN EXEMPLIFIED-
YOUNGO
BY ANDRES AUGUSTIN FUENTES
MARTINEZ
- ▼ 32
GROWING FOOD SECURITY- THE UN
AND SCHOOL GARDENING
BY RACHEL FRIEDMAN
- ▼ 34
STOLEN YOUTH- THE DRUG WAR IN
MEXICO
BY MARIANA OGAZ-PALM
- ▼ 38
CHILDREN AT WAR: WHAT
PROTECTION?
BY LEONI AYOUB
- ▼ 41
INFERNAL VOICES



**MARTIN
KARLSSON**
Editor
UNRIC, Brussels

Nationality
Swedish

It is my first day as an intern at the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels. My supervisor, Fred, is giving me a tour of the office, introducing me to the multinational team and telling me about everything I would be expected to work on, including this magazine. “By the way, do you have any lunch plans?” he asks. “Monique Coleman, the United Nations Youth Champion is coming over for lunch.” I knew from that day that my internship would be a very interesting one.

Many of you who read this magazine, have met Monique during her travels these past months, and I am sure you all would agree that she is a very inspiring woman. It is reassuring that young people have such a charismatic advocate. Because even though there are some reassuring developments, such as the recognition youth have achieved in both the climate change discussions (article on p.30) and recent improve-

ments of the rights of children in conflict (article on p.38), the fact remains that young people are often victims to problems created by earlier generations.

The global youth deserves much more than that. We are the future, and we have the power to solve any problem, if we are given the right tools to do so. Acquiring tools for the future is something we do as interns at the United Nations, and I hope this magazine will inspire many young people to apply for internships within the UN system, or to do another internship (or three more like Clara on p.26), or to volunteer through the United Nations Volunteers (article on p.24) to learn more and contribute more to the UN.

It has been a pleasure to edit Internal Voices and I encourage all UN interns who find the time to get involved in the next edition. Enjoy the rest of the summer, and the 14th edition of Internal Voices!

MEET THE TEAM



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: (back row)

[Martin Karlsson](#)
Intern to the Director (Editor)
[Andrew Anderson](#)
Benelux Desk
[Alexis de Herde](#)
Benelux Desk
[Matteo Lucatello](#)
Italy Desk
[Jonas Kambestad Hågensen](#)
Noric Desk
[Enrico Cellini](#)
Italy Desk

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT (lower row)

[Leoni Ayoub](#)
Greece & Cyprus Desk
[Nada Al-Omar](#)
Nordic Desk
[Alice Anselmi](#)
Italy Desk
[Mariana Ogaz-Palm](#)
UK & Ireland Desk (Deputy Editor)
[Signe Holm Andersen](#)
Nordic Desk
[Gonzalo Perez del Arco](#)
Spain Desk

SELECTION OF INTERNATIONAL DAYS

27 January	International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust
4 February	World Cancer Day [WHO]
20 February	World Day of Social Justice
8 March	International Women's Day
21 March	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
22 March	World Water Day
7 April	Commemoration of the Genocide in Rwanda
22 April	International Mother Earth Day
3 May	World Press Freedom Day
25 May	Africa Day
29 May	International Day of UN Peacekeepers
5 June	World Environment Day
20 June	World Refugee Day
26 June	International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
11 July	World Population Day
18 July	Nelson Mandela International Day
9 August	International Day of the World's Indigenous People
12 August	International Youth Day
19 August	World Humanitarian Day
15 September	International Day of Democracy
16 September	International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
21 September	International Day of Peace
1 October	International Day of Older Persons
2 October	International Day of Non-Violence
14 October	(2 nd Wed. in Oct.) International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction
16 October	World Food Day
17 October	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
24 October	United Nations Day
20 November	Universal Children's Day
25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
29 November	International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
1 December	World AIDS Day
2 December	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
3 December	International Day of Persons with Disabilities
5 December	International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
10 December	Human Rights Day
18 December	International Migrants Day
20 December	International Human Solidarity Day

GALLERY

Internal Voices dug in the UN Media archives and found photo material used for the International Youth Year in 1985, showing a different, but similar, youth of the world.

- 1 Schoolgirls in Nepal
- 2 Kids playing at Legacy, an International Youth Camp held in Virginia, USA
- 3 Taking a break at Legacy, Virginia, USA
- 4 Guitar playing in northern Myanmar
- 5 Palestinian boy and American girl at Legacy
- 6 Sao Paulo, Brazil



INTERVIEW THE UN YOUTH CHAMPION -MONIQUE COLEMAN



**MARTIN
KARLSSON**
UNRIC Brussels

Nationality
Swedish

Topic project
[International Year
of Youth](#)



Known to most of the world as Taylor McKessie, the sporty feminist in Disney's High School Musical, American actress Monique Coleman has an impressive CV. After this year she can add "Youth Champion" for the International Year of Youth, a title she was bestowed by General Secretary Ban Ki-moon at a press conference on 16 November 2010. Travelling around the world ever since, she has been working to realize dialogue and mutual understanding, the theme of this International Year of Youth. When visiting Brussels we managed to ask this busy lady a couple of questions.

What has been your most rewarding experience so far as the UN Youth Champion?

It's very difficult to choose one particular experience to highlight as "most" rewarding! I will say that the global tour has changed my life and impacted me in ways I couldn't have expected. Visiting Kakuma Refugee camp in Kenya, meeting with girls who were rescued from human trafficking in Manila, singing with orphaned youth in Jakarta, and listening to beautiful presentations of refugee youth in Pretoria are among the experiences that will remain in my heart long after this trip is over. As youth champion, I've been able to speak

with youth and hear how they experience the world. The innate wisdom, creativity, ingenuity, and intelligence that I've witnessed from youth gives me hope that they are fully capable of contributing to solving the world's problems. Giving youth a safe space to be themselves and discover their worth is probably the most rewarding aspect of being Youth Champion.



”
**WHAT YOUTH
LACK IN EXPERIENCE,
THEY MAKE UP FOR IN
PASSION**

ABOUT:

MONIQUE COLEMAN

- ▼ Born November 13, 1980 in Orangeburg, South Carolina
- ▼ Had her major breakthrough co-starring in Disney's *High School Musical* (2005)
- ▼ Is also well known for her recurring role as Mary-Margaret on *The Suite Life of Zack & Cody*
- ▼ Finished fourth on ABC's *Dancing With the Stars* in autumn 2006
- ▼ Was named UN Youth Champion on 16 November 2010

What must the UN do to live up to Ban Ki-moon's aspiration that youth should be allowed the possibility to participate in decision-making on local, national and global levels?

We must put actions to those aspirations and as the Nike slogan suggested Just Do It! I believe that the UN is doing amazing work on behalf of youth, but more can always be done. Inviting more youth to attend meetings, keeping them informed with accurate information, and providing

tangible ways for them to get involved are some steps that can allow further participation. Above all, the UN must utilize the assets of youth: idealism, energy, and creativity. What youth lack in experience, they make up for in passion. I think we need to explore some new ideas to old problems and give youth a chance to express themselves in the meetings where it counts.

As young governors at the UN, how can we contribute to the process of making the UN more sensitive to youth issues?

It appears that the UN is already sensitive to youth issues, and as young governors, I believe you are an example of that. I think the best thing that you can do is to be a bridge between the UN and the young people that need to be reached. Use your voices to speak on behalf of those who don't yet have theirs, and don't be afraid to present new ideas or thoughts. The reason you came to the UN in the first place was because you wanted to make a difference in the world, so speak up....think creatively, and use your inside perspective to educate and empower other young people. ▲



MONIQUE IN SOUTH AFRICA



OLIVIA ATSIN
UNIC Pretoria

Nationality
Ivorian

Topic project
[International Year
of Youth](#)



As my internship started in May at United Nations Information Centre in Pretoria South Africa (UNIC), I was extremely enthusiastic, but I did not imagine that one of my most precious experiences would be meeting a UN Champion and being touched by her strong message dedicated to the youth around the world.

The American *High School Musical* actress, Monique Coleman, visited South Africa from 11-18 May 2011 as part of her world tour to raise awareness of the International Year of Youth and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the first-ever UN Youth Champion. Ms. Coleman's programme was organized by UNIC Pretoria, and I was privileged to accompany and assist her and the UNIC Deputy Director, Helene Hoedl, during her visits. Ms. Coleman capitalized on the theme of the International Year of Youth which is Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, by leading discus-

sions that allowed her to connect with youth on a personal level. Embarking on this tour allowed her to travel around the world and understand what young people are experiencing. One of her strongest messages was to encourage youth to be committed to their goals because "when young people are educated, are healthy, avoid early pregnancy and HIV/AIDS; they can be able to fully contribute to their communities". Some other topics she focused on during her interactions were low self esteem, drug and alcohol abuse, academic and employment difficulties, and child labour.

Highlights of her tour in Pretoria included an enthusiastic welcome from 500 students at the National School of Arts; drama, song, dance and fashion performances by refugee youth at the UN Library; a warm welcome from the NGO SOS Children village; meeting more than 1,000 young people in the Gauteng province, and in Johannesburg, a tour in the LoveLife Youth

” WE HAVE TO FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT THE FUTURE BUT THE PRESENT

Centre health facility at Orange Farm. “I am the first youth champion but not the only because all of you are youth champions. This is the international year of youth, we have to hear you and see you” she told the youth greeting her there. “We have to focus on young people because they are not the future but the present”.

Monique Coleman is a fitting UN Youth Champion, because she adapts to different environments and relates to every person no matter the age or other characteristics. “Each and everyone of you inspires me because every single one of you represents hope. You teach me love, you teach me compassion and you teach me to believe in the future,” she said to the Children at the SOS children Village in Pretoria, South Africa.



Ms. Coleman passion, ambition and strength were an inspiration to all. She encouraged the students she met to believe in themselves even when others did not. She highlighted the importance of using social media, and urged them to join her website in order to help her spread the word about the International Year of Youth.

The partnership between Ms. Coleman and the United Nations has proven to be a success, based on the massive mobilisation of students and the response received from them. By sharing her experience as the first ever UN Youth Champion, she highlighted and created awareness on the work achieved by the UN in relation to the youth around the world.



CHINESE PROVERB

Picked by Monique Coleman

- ▾ If there is light in the soul, there will be beauty in the person.
- ▾ If there is beauty in the person, there will be harmony in the house.
- ▾ If there is harmony in the house, there will be order in the nation.
- ▾ If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

She will surely and forever be remembered in South Africa as a UN Youth ambassador and also an incredible and unique individual. She has taught the Youth of South Africa to move beyond inspiration into a part of motivation and I believe she has also accomplished one of her mission as UN Youth Champion which is to help breaking down stereotypes. What I will remember from her is that our situation is determined by our perception. Our perceptions and attitudes make up our lives and a positive attitude allow us to accept defeat in order to live fully. Everything we need is within us. It is always important to understand that the battle is in our minds and that what we think we cannot do, we will not do it. ▴

YOUTH IN SOUTH AFRICA

- ▾ Of the 40,6 million people living in South Africa in October 1996, just over 16,1 million or 40% were youth, i.e. people in the age bracket 14 to 35. South Africa's population is thus relatively youthful, a common feature among developing countries
- ▾ The unemployment rate among all 15- to 24-year-old is 51 percent, more than twice the national unemployment rate of 25 percent, according to the latest South Africa Survey published by the South African Institute of Race Relations.

THE FORGOTTEN YOUTH OF KENYA



DAVID IRAYA
UNIC Nairobi

Nationality
Kenyan

Topic project
[International Year
of Youth](#)



One and a half hours after boarding our flight from Wilson Airport in Nairobi, Kenya, we had finally reached Kakuma, one of the most remote regions in Kenya. As the plane touched down at the bumpy airstrip, I caught glimpse of an old dusty sign that read, 'Welcome to Kakuma Refugee Camp'. Stepping out of the plane and it was a different world, the air was hot and humid, and it felt like someone had tied a giant wash cloth around my head. The dust and heat were unbearable; I could feel my lungs gasping with every breath I took.

Peering from the holes on the barbed wire fence enclosing the airstrip, members of the local community were stretching out their hands, begging for food and water. Here, age is not a

consideration as both young and old scramble for whatever is thrown their way. My colleagues and I are quickly whisked into a waiting vehicle. As we drove away in a cloud of dust, I could not help noticing the boys and girls trailing behind, their innocent faces scared by years of hardship. On arrival at the main refugee camp, we are given a tour of the place and adjacent areas.

My heart sunk as I heard what the locals have to go through to get a decent meal, many of them go for days on end without a bite. The youth dotted the roadsides, seated idly, waiting for the sun to go down, hoping that tomorrow will hold a better promise. I saw children, some as young as five, herding cattle just to get an extra



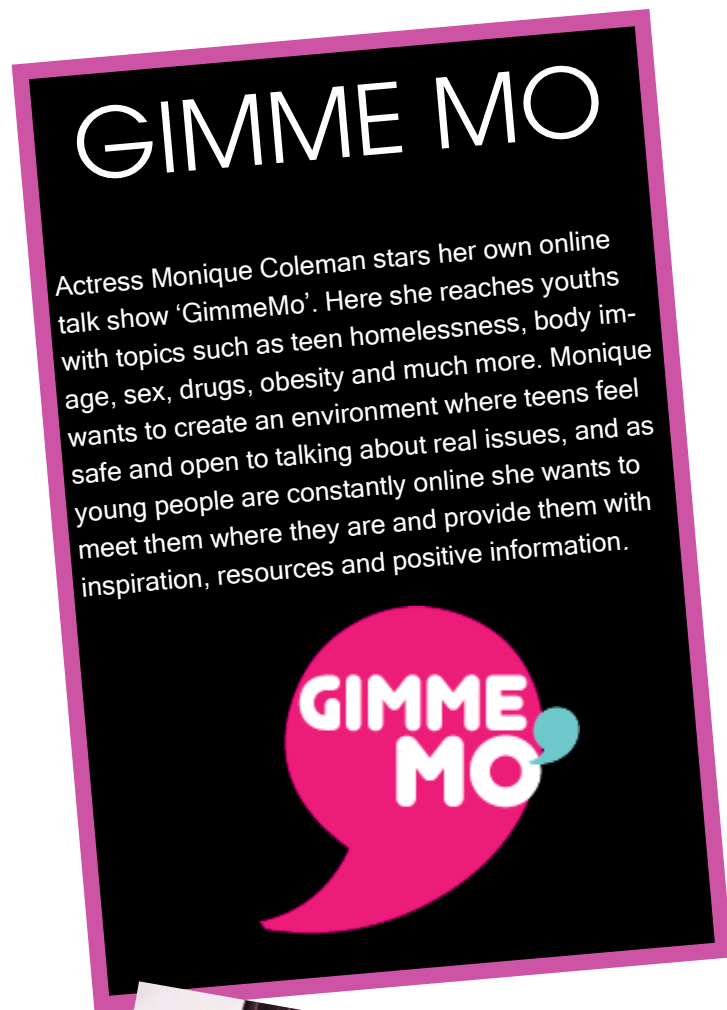
©JN Photo

penny for the family budget.

As the sun sunk behind the hills, I stood there, watching over the refugee camp with remorse and empathy sweeping through me. I was visiting the camp together with Monique Coleman, the UN Youth Champion, to meet the local youth, to listen to their stories and hopefully bring some hope to them. Meeting with Monique, the youth told of the hardships they go through at the refugee camp. Many escaped the war in Somalia, leaving behind their family members, some of whom were killed during the clashes. Most of them have been here for years on end, having to struggle every single day of those years. Many young people there perceived the UN Youth Champion as a saviour, but all she could do was to offering an ear to their struggles and later forward them to relevant authorities.

A visit to one of the primary schools vividly pointed out the government's negligence in the education of its people. Classrooms built of mud seemed to be growing off the ground and with the seasonal flooding most of the walls had been washed away. Gaping holes offered no protection from the dusty winds; studying in such a place was simply impossible. Some of the roofs had been blown off by strong winds and the students had to endure the scorching sun. We visited various vocational institutions put up by local church groups but all we found were vacant classrooms and workshops, lack of donor support and equipment rendered the institutions useless.

As we left Kakuma Refugee Camp, many thoughts hung in my head, the drastic poverty level, the poor living conditions...all the untold stories of the forgotten youth in Kakuma Kenya.



Visit <http://gimmemo.com> for videos, articles and discussions with Monique



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT -BREAKING THE CYCLE



**SCOTT
SUTHERLAND**
UNICEF Brussels

Nationality
Canadian

Topic agency
UNICEF



Today in Europe the Roma population is an estimated 10-12 million, making them Europe's largest ethnic minority. The majority of the Roma population consistently faces high poverty rates, low literacy rates, discrimination and social exclusion. For Roma youth, disadvantages in the education process put both successful



© WFP



Roma girl in Kosovo

© Charles Roffey **CC BY-SA 3.0**

primary and secondary education almost out of reach, leading to a lack of participation in the formal labour market once they reach adulthood. The wasted economic opportunity for communities and the European Union are regrettable. From a social perspective the conditions of the Roma are simply not acceptable in the European Union of the twenty-first century. Given the social responsibility and the current economic situation in Europe, there is an urgent need for comprehensive, successful Roma integration. Roma integration is tied to economic

and social responsibility and this is an issue both the European Union and UNICEF are committed to work on together. So how do they approach such an extensive and complex issue? UNICEF believes that the success of Roma integration rests on the ability to implement Early Childhood Development programs. Early Childhood Development programs target children under the age of five, with the aim of having healthy and socially-prepared children ready to enter the formal education system. Investments in health, education and posi-

tive socialization make for more successful young people as they are more likely to do well once in formal school, leading to improved economic opportunities later in adulthood.

One of the major obstacles to the success of Roma children in school is that they often begin their formal education at a disadvantage. Because they are often unfamiliar with the language, the written word and the culture of education, in many cases they are segregated from their non-Roma peers by being placed in “special schools” for the mentally or physically disabled, when in fact there is no such disability present. UNICEF believes that it is critical to expose children to a pre-school program so that they can discover the rhythms and routines of school. This teaches them the skills they need to ensure that they can begin formal education on an equal footing. Furthermore the UNICEF-EU Early Childhood Development programs include actions such as providing adequate and affordable health care for children, encouraging birth registration, desegregation in education and decentralization of essential services.

Such a large and ambitious project naturally comes with a set of risks and questions about its implementation. The topic of Roma inclusion is a highly debated, politically-charged and contentious issue. There are centuries-old stereotypes, beliefs, and discrimination based on incomplete knowledge or resentment that must be overcome. These perceptions can be barriers to implementing successful programs and proven practices. There must continue to be strong political will to improve the Roma situation all the way from the top of the European Union down to community leaders and civil service providers. These issues bring to light the fact that Roma inclusion is not realizable through an easy

fix and will require partners to work together in order to accomplish this goal.

For the EU, helping the Roma break the cycle of poverty and exclusion is not only a social responsibility but also an economic opportunity. According to the World Bank, full Roma integra-

tion in the labour market could bring economic benefits estimated to be around 500 million Euro annually for some countries. At a time when the European economy is fragile, potential economic incentives can be a good motivator for partners to work together. From a social point of view, Roma children can grow to feel that they are contributing in a productive, structured way to their communities and the European community.

It is the belief of UNICEF that every child has the right to an education regardless of their social background or socio-economic situation and accordingly UNICEF, as well as the EU are fully committed to improving the inclusion of Roma, beginning with children and youth. Targeting young children with Early Childhood Development programs is the essential foundation for successful life-long learning, social integration, personal development and later employability. Pre-school integration and positive socialization has a profound and long-lasting impact which interventions taken at later stages in a child development just cannot achieve. All children have the potential to succeed if they are given a fair start when they enter school. ▲



STATS: ROMA IN EUROPE

Council of Europe estimates, 2010

Largest Roma populations in Europe

Turkey	2,750,000
Romania	1,850,000
Russia	825,000
Bulgaria	750,000
Spain	725,000
Hungary	700,000
Serbia*	600,000

EU total	5,907,800
Europe total	11,256,900

*excluding Kosovo



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS



CAROLINE FARALDO
UNIDO,
Brussels

Nationality
French

Topic agency
UNIDO



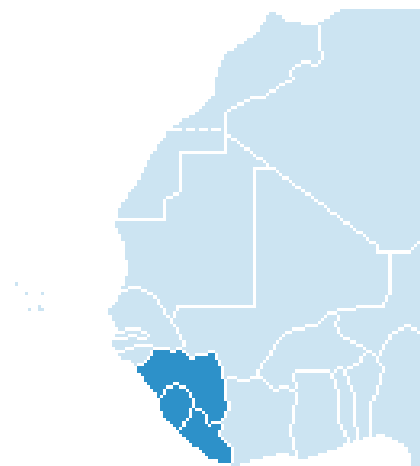
The four countries of Ivory Coast, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, together forming the Mano River Union have one of the youngest and poorest populations in the world. Nearly three out of four people - 71,3% - in the region are under the age of 30. Can a region with such a high rate of young people be a dynamic and wealthy region? This is far from certain. In the region, youth unemployment rates are around 70%. Moreover, young people do not only face the problem of not finding a job, but are often underpaid. Discrimination is based on gender, age and socio-economic background. Youth can only find employment in the informal economy which means low-skilled and unprotected jobs. Young people in the region never get the chance to

prove their value on the labor market, and to contribute to economic growth. There is a clear link between youth and poverty in West Africa.

Youth, the ticking time bomb

What does it mean to be young today in Africa? Vice-president of the World Bank for the African Region Obiageli Ezekwesili sketches the portrait of the typical poor African youth as an 18.5 years old woman: “She lives in a rural area and has dropped out of school. She is single, but is about to be married or be given in marriage to a man approximately twice her age. She will be the mother of six or seven kids in another 20 years”. And there is more and more youth. UNESCO reports in 2011 that the population of the Sub-Saharan Region is very young with 43% of people under 15 years old and this rate is growing fast (2, 4% between 2005 and 2010).

Africa is experiencing a “youth bulge”. In demography, this concept illustrates the high proportion of young people in the population. According to the Deputy Director-General UNIDO, Mr. Yoshiteru Uramoto, 4.5 million young people in the region—aged between 15 and 29 - are seeking a job. In June 2011, this phenomenon has been described by Secretary General of the South African Trade Unions Zwelinzima Vavi as the “ticking time bomb”. Indeed the youth’s overall social marginalization and their lack



The Mano River Union



River meets ocean in Liberia

of education threaten the security of many developing countries. Sociological studies demonstrates that if young people do not consider themselves as active members of societies, they could then develop anti-social, chauvinistic behavior or even a feeling of xenophobia threatening the peace and the stability of a society. Robert Kaplan's book "The Coming Anarchy" describes young people in West African cities as "loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid that is clearly on the verge of igniting". Is this correct? What will be the role of this "lost generation" in these societies?

UNIDO's vision of youth as a precious asset for the future

The way UNIDO approaches this problem is summed up in the 2007 speech of UNIDO Director General Mr. Kandeh K. Yumkella in Accra, Ghana: "If ever a joint, scaled-up effort were necessary to make a real difference, it would be here where the conflict and the resulting weak social fabric are a daily threat to communities and to youth, who are the most precious asset for the future". Youth are seen as a source of value and hope, rather than being portrayed as source of problems. This approach lies at the core of kind of thinking is central to

the partnership between UNIDO, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Youth Employment Network (YEN), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Governments of the Mano River Union and their sub-regional organization, the Mano River Union Secretariat.

Within the joint Multi-stakeholder Programme for Productive and Decent Work for Youth in MRU countries, they aim to enhance the role of youth as a source of entrepreneurship. The approach of this partnership consists of three complementary lines of action: firstly promoting entrepreneurship development, secondly developing access to finance programs to facilitate business starts-up and expansion, and finally improving employment opportunities for enterprises.

CURRENT RESULTS

- ▶ About 5,000 young people have acquired entrepreneurial skills, about 600 young people have acquired basic IT skills
- ▶ 663 jobs were created under the first round of the Competitive Grant scheme, of which 66 per cent for women.

Partnerships for employment

One example of that partnership's success is their work on access to finance. Entrepreneurship among youth is heavily stifled by cultural and institutional biases against young people. The financial sector mostly serves wealthy clients. Business starts-up are rarely served, and especially young people are viewed as a high credit risk. Moreover national funding mechanisms targeting youth businesses are non-existent. In this context, the Multi-stakeholder Programme facilitates the financial incubation of youth and the establishment of loan schemes for youth traditionally excluded from normal financial services. Moreover, in the Competitive Grant Scheme youth civil society organizations were supported to be active agents in assisting youth in innovative ways. Since the launch of the program in 2008, over 5000 young men and women have received entrepreneurial training in combination with professional skills such as plumbing, computer literacy and tie-dyeing of fabrics. By training youth in different productive activities, provide them with the necessary entrepreneurial skills and linking them to financial services, much has been achieved so far.

Progress is noticeable through the many new businesses started by youth as well as an increase in production. Youth, when provided with the necessary training and access to financial and non-financial services have the potential to be agents of change by actively contributing to overall social and economic development. Given policies and plans described above, what can be done to be sure that still exists balance between intentions and resources devoted to youth employment programmes? How can programmes be most efficient to avoid the "ephebiphobia" against the African youth? ▲

SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY AND YOUTH IN THE MIDDLE-EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



MATTHEW PAFFHOUSE
UNIC Washington

Nationality
American

Topic agency
[UNESCO](#)



The revolutions that have gripped the Middle East and North Africa this year originated with the youth of the region. An idea that proved very contagious - that democracy and respect for human rights offer a better prospect for life than an immoral autocracy - began as an electronic whisper, and evolved into the voice of the whole youth, culminating in a broad societal cry for change.

Amongst the many challenges facing these countries in their current or future post-revolution wake is that of ensuring that the voice of those youth protagonists is not lost in the democratic transition. This concern was recently raised in two Washington, DC conferences. Ambassador Edward Walker, a scholar at the Middle East Institute, said that much of the current and expected Egyptian leadership is over seventy and expressed concern that the demands of the youth are being forgotten. A few days later, Executive Director Hisham Fahmy of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt shared the same demographic concern as Ambassador Walker,

UNEMPLOYMENT
TOTAL UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE MENA REGION: 10.3%¹

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT:
WORLD AVERAGE 12.6%¹
MIDDLE EAST: 23.7%¹
NORTH AFRICA: 23.8%¹
EGYPT: 25%²
TUNISIA: 30%²

¹ Data from ILO

² Data from the Economist



© [Magharebia](#) [CC-BY-SA-2.0](#)

while also warning that no-one in the current Egyptian government favors the use of the term transitional.



Baby protester on Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt

© Mike Porterinmd CC-BY-SA-2.0

In line with its aspiration to help empower young people by reaching out to them, responding to their expectations and fostering useful and long-lasting skills, UNESCO has been busy working to bridge this developing gap between youth and government leaders. Drawing on its strength in fostering dialogue and conducting research, UNESCO has pledged to contribute to the democratization process through the mobilization of networks and the instigation of relevant and action-oriented reflection, studies and analysis.

Coordinated with the Year of the Youth, UNESCO Cairo launched a series of seminars to debate youth, civic engagement and democracy related topics. Held on June 9, the first of these discussed the role of youth in fostering a democratic society; coordination and cooperation mechanisms among youth organizations; identified

the challenges, needs and priorities towards full participation of youth in a democratic society; and promoted ethical, democratic principles.

In the keynote speech, Professor Richard Beardsworth urged the attendant youth to continue engaging the population in the desire for democracy and to help construct a civil Egyptian identity so as to ward off the temptation to an undemocratic populism.

At a June 21 round table discussion entitled, “Democracy and Renewal in the Arab World: UNESCO in Support of Transitions to Democracy,” UNESCO Secretary-General Irina Bokova implored the international community to “extend all the support it can bring to these societies undergoing transformation processes.” Conference participants also heartily emphasized the essential role of youth

and the importance of making them a top priority.

It is well known that the real work of a revolution begins after it is finished. Franz Kafka once warned that, “every revolution evaporates and leaves behind only the slime of a new bureaucracy.” This does not have to be the case. If those societies that succeed in their revolution continue to promote human rights and reach out to the youth protagonists who inspired change, then a new democratic and inclusive government can emerge from the myriad of obstacles confronting it. ▲

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AFTER THE ARAB SPRING



ESBEN HANSEN
ILO, Brussels

Nationality
Danish

Topic agency
ILO



Radical change has swept the Arab world. Unpredicted by politicians and pundits alike, the revolutions were sparked by a young Tunisian man trying to make a living as a fruit vendor who could not afford to bribe the authorities. His act of self-immolation resonated with a whole generation's frustration with a state that does not care for them and a job market that will not hire them.

“Employment is a right”

Though oppressive regimes are the real reason of the revolts, large unemployment among the youth is also a major cause for the Arab Spring. If these regimes could have provided decent jobs, it is unlikely that the Arab Spring would ever have happened. Having the prospect of a future career, people often ignored limitations to their freedoms, and focus on their jobs and in supporting their families. The Arab youth's demand for freedom is inherently linked to their need for decent jobs, which is why the slogan of the Tunisian revolution became “Employment is a right”.

The official statistic for youth unemployment indicates that in the Arab countries, one in four under the age of 25 is unemployed. This number only represents people who are actively searching for jobs, as it excludes the people who have given up and those who work less than they want. It is

more likely that every second young person is unemployed. In Tunisia estimates are as high as three out of four.

Youth unemployment is a serious concern for most parts of the world. The International Labour Organisation (ILO), the UN agency that deals with international labour issues, now warns that the world could face a lost generation. This means a loss of potential human capital, as education investments in an entire generation are never put to use. Discouraged youth will lack professional skills for the rest of their lives, which will not only hurt them but also lower the overall potential of the labour force and therefore affect economic growth. Therefore, the problem is not only one for the youth, but for everyone.

Youth unemployment in the Arab world has several characteristics. Firstly, it did not come about because of the global economic crisis. In fact youth unemployment rates did not change dramatically after 2008. But that is little comfort, when they are among the highest in the world anyway. The region has few working women and many of those who had previously looked for jobs have left the labour market all together. Secondly, the region has a striking high share of well-educated youth amongst the unemployed. Unemployment rates amongst highly educated are almost at the levels of the low educated. The

youth and their families become frustrated, when their large investment in education is fruitless. This is a frustration that became evident during the protests, which were dominated by young highly educated people.

Investing in labour intensive programmes

on the 8th of July, the ILO launched a comprehensive strategy for the Arab world. One of the key proposed policies is investment in labour intensive projects like developing village infrastructure. These are usually public work programmes that employ a large share of workers (relative to the investment). They are not intended as long term solutions, as once the projects are finished workers will be made redundant again. Hopefully the projects build enough skills and local consumption for the workers to find sustainable employment afterwards.

Investing in SMEs

The EU has proposed to extend its Small Business Act to the Mediterranean Neighbourhood, as well as ac-



cess to the European Investment Bank. The scheme in particular gives easier access to finance for European Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SME). SMEs are usually strong at job creation, so supporting SMEs in North Africa and the Middle East could potentially limit youth unemployment.

Training the right skills

Marouen Cherif from the Tunisian National Youth Workers' Union (UGTT) called for assistance in training programmes at the ILOs annual International Labour Conference, speaking in front of representatives of the world's governments, trade unions and employer organisations. Skill matching is also an important part of the ILO strategy for the Arab world. But is more education the solution when the unemployed are so highly educated? Employers in North Africa and the Middle East say that the young are well educated, but are lacking specific skills required at the work place in order for the business to expand. Matching better the labour supply with what is needed by employers to hire and expand.

These proposals are all useful, but unfortunately there are no magic solutions to increase employment. As is shown by the massive increase in youth unemployment in the Western world, political and personal freedoms do not guarantee a positive effect on employment.

On a final note, concerning these policies there is also a danger in declaring the youth unemployment in the Arab world a structural problem due to a dysfunctional labour market. It is not given that a supply of the rightly skilled youth will create its own demand from industries. Someone still has to buy goods and services produced otherwise employing new people is pointless. With the current economic climate, that demand is hard to find anywhere. The closest thing there is to a fact on what decreases unemployment, is economic growth concentrated in labour intensive industries. ▲



INTERVIEW- UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE IN ROMANIA EDMOND MCLOUGHNEY



**LAURA
CONDRUT**
UNICEF, Bucharest

Nationality
Romanian

Topic agency
UNICEF



Education is a basic right of children, and a necessity for society to flourish. However, education is far from universal and the quality of the education children receive is very varying. Our colleague in Bucharest, Romania, decided to interview Edmond McLoughney, UNICEF representative in that country, to discuss the challenges facing that country in the area of primary education.

Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes the child's right to education on the basis of "equal opportunity". Has Romania managed to make primary education accessible to all?

Well, there are hidden costs, as you know. A family has to provide the school bag, it has to make sure that the child has decent clothes, then there's the uniform and all the other supplies, books, pencils so on, things that can be quite significant for a poorer family, so there's still a long way to go.

A recent report of the European Commission showed that 53% of the Romanian teenagers have difficulties understanding and reading a text. That is an alarming statistic. What do you think are the fundamental flaws of the Romanian educational system and what would be the solutions?

I think that the quality of the education is poor and this has been demonstrated in the results of the recent

**” BETWEEN 300.00
AND 400.000
CHILDREN OF PRIMARY
SCHOOL AGE ARE NOT
ENROLLED**

baccalaureate exam, where only 44% of the students passed. If you look, as well, at the PISA tests, they show that Romania has been doing worse every time. Education in Romania is in a crisis. So the question is: What can be done? We have to keep in mind that the quality of education comes from the quality of teaching and in order to have good teachers, they have to be well trained. So there need to be investments made in the training of teachers. Because it's not enough to simply have a degree, they have to know how to communicate with the children. It's not enough to stand in front of a class and give a lecture. You have to know the dynamics of learning and the psychology behind it...But there also other things, like the state of the schools. Every school should be managed in a way that involves the pupil. There should be student councils, parents organizations, parents should be able to have a say in their children's education and become more involved, for sure. That could be an incentive for teachers, if parents are more engaged. UNICEF has these standards for education called "Child-friendly schools" and describes

approximately 10 main steps that need to be taken in order to make a school child-friendly, which ultimately will improve the quality of education. But these are not just UNICEF concepts, these are standards that every good school should comply to really and I think Romania has to take these steps and try to apply them, in order to build child-friendly schools that will allow each child to develop and reach their potential.



One of the most disadvantaged categories in our country is still the Roma people. There are still problems here ranging from school drop-out, lack of qualified teachers for the predominantly Roma schools and also the refusal of parents to send their children to school. Can you tell us a little bit about UNICEF's projects for the Roma children?

This past year, the end of the term 2010-2011, we initiated a campaign called "Viitorul incepe la scoala" / "The future begins at school". We picked in the first year 38 communities with the highest drop-out rates and we worked with the Ministry of Education, different partners and, of course, the local communities so that we could do something about this. And we just got the results actually. For the first year of this campaign there's been a 54% reduction of drop-out rate. And for the next year we plan to expand the campaign to 100 communities and we're currently in the process of targeting them. We hope that this will gain a momentum of its own and that the government will put enough money into this particular approach, to expand it to all communities where you have high drop-out rates. The idea is

to show these families that it's in their interest to send their children to school and for their future, as well. It's better to have a well-educated child with a decent job and who will be able to take care of them afterwards, for example. So the policies are there and now it's a matter of ensuring that they work and whether or not they can be implemented more.

Worldwide there are still 72 million children outside the school system. Where does Romania stand as far as achieving primary education for all children by 2015 and where do we position ourselves in comparison to the other East European countries on this topic?

We estimate that there are between 300.000-400.000 children of primary school age that are not enrolled in school and our campaign "Viitorul incepe la scoala" / "The future begins at school" is targeted towards this category, so there is still a lot to be done. As far as relating to the other East-European countries, you will find that the countries with high Roma populations, like Bulgaria, Serbia, Mace-

donia, Hungary and so on, definitely have an education issue there, as well.

You've been in Romania a few years now and I'm sure you've witnessed that our country has experienced a lot of educational reforms. Do you think Romania has learned from its past mistakes or is history repeating itself when it comes to the failures of our educational system?

I know that there have been a lot of changes. I think you really need to get some stability in the whole educational sector, because there's private education and education run by the state, so you do need to have stability and consistency and politics should be kept out of education. Everybody should agree that every child should have access to good quality education. And now, if the government isn't doing its job, then the opposition has a chance to call them to account. So the key to all this would be stability, consistency and also funding. Funding is very important. That includes paying teachers better salaries, that's essential. ▲



Child playing with pigeons in Brasov, Romania

© Adam Jones CC BY-SA 3.0

MAKE A CHANGE- UNV INTERN PROGRAMME

**PATRICK
FIANDER**
UN Volunteers,
Bonn

Nationality
American

Topic agency
UN Volunteers



Maeve Galvin, a United Nations Volunteer (UNV) Intern was sent to Cambodia funded by Irish Aid as a Communications Advocacy Officer for the International Labour Organization (ILO). Her task was to promote the World Day Against Child Labour in Cambodia. As part of the day, ILO developed a ‘child labour free’ logo for companies and organizations that have abolished child labour. Maeve’s role in creating the logo was central. She recruited volunteers and had frequent consultations during the process.

Cambodia celebrated the World Day Against Child Labour on June 12 and the Ministry of Labour declared that the Government was heading towards abolishing of child labour and introduced the logo which was created by volunteers. The statement was backed by commitments to ensure that the Riverside area in Phnom Penh would be free from child labour by 2012. The campaign was very successful, much thanks to the hard work of Cambodian and international volunteers.

“Certainly on a personal level I feel I’ve become more resilient and independent,” Maeve remarks about her assignment. “I have a stronger faith in my own ability and capacity than I did before”. Since 2001 dozens of young people like Maeve Galvin have used



Maeve Galvin with colleagues

the opportunity to volunteer abroad as UNV interns. UNV is sponsored by the Governments of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy, Ireland and Switzerland. The UNV interns get to experience what it’s like working with the UN in the field. Each intern gets the opportunity to evolve professionally and personally, while witnessing the dynamic influence of voluntarism.

The volunteers are assigned to a variety of tasks, ranging from human rights to youth advocacy and environmental protection. Some volunteers work directly for UN agencies, while others are assigned to government ministries or local volunteer organizations. But what is volunteering? Well, volunteering can happen in many ways: formal, informal, local, international, none of which more important than the other. The spirit of voluntarism - a commitment to help others without expectation of financial gain -

is a building block for a better world.

Volunteering and community engagement empower people to change the world from the grass roots up, especially when enabled by strong partnerships at every level. This year, 2011, reinforcing these partnerships is on top of the agenda. It has been 10 years since the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) in 2001, and through

the General Assembly Resolution 63/153 (2008), the United Nations called for this anniversary to be marked across the planet.

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme responded to this call by becoming the international focal point for 'IYV+10'. UNV, through IYV+10, has developed a multi-level campaign, which helps assist and promote global

ence," says Laura Schweizer, a UNV Intern in Nepal with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

"It forces me to reconsider my own way of seeing and doing things and to think outside the box," she continues. "Learning about different cultures helps me understand why things are like they are and to see ways for improvement." ▲



voluntarism. Just about all of the 8,000 UN Volunteers worldwide, including the current UNV Interns, are involved in one way or the other.

What is the impact of volunteering in the personal domain?

The impact a volunteer has on the community they are engaging in, is very significant. But the influence the community or experience has on the volunteer, might be equally valuable.

UNV Interns are given the opportunity to expand their horizons, both personally and professionally. "The daily interaction with my colleagues, who are from all over the world, and with the local community, is a very enriching but also a challenging experi-

INTERVIEW

THE EXPERIENCED INTERN- CLARA DE LA HOZ



**MARIANA
OGAZ-PALM**
UNRIC Brussels

Nationality
Mexican

Almost all the contributors and the members of the editorial team of this magazine are interns. Most of us work for free in the hope of getting an interesting and well-paid job in the future, by using the skills we learn at our internships. It is hard to know what to expect when starting as an intern with a UN agency. We decided to interview a truly experienced intern, Clara de la Hoz, to get some more insights into the possibilities of interning with the UN.

Hi Clara. Where are you working now?

I am currently interning at WFP Paris Liaisons Office.

What do you get to do at your internship?

I work within the Institutional relations division. I assist the Officer in charge with outreach activities to private sector and public institutions in range and Monaco and with fundraising activities for WFP operations and programmes in Horn of Africa.

How long is your internship?

I am staying 6 months (until 31st August, 2011).

What is your background?

I grew up in Barranquilla-Colombia. After the high school I decided to come to France to learn French and



start my studies. After 6 months of French studies at the Sorbonne, I started my studies with a two-year diploma in Sociology, then, I did a BS in Political Science, a Maitrise in Humanitarian Affairs and a Master in Food Security.

How and when did you get your first internship?

In 2008 I was doing my Maitrise in Humanitarian Affairs. In the course of this, I became familiar with different humanitarian issues as such as armed conflict and natural disasters. I was immediately interested in working with natural disasters related topics, and better know implications on populations and humanitarian operations. At the same time, after many years in France, I wanted to go back to my country for a few months and take this opportunity to do my internship. I thought it would be interesting as in Colombia natural disasters take a small place in humanitarian operations compared to the place that



Clara with colleagues and UN General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon

armed conflict takes. So, I wanted to better know the response in terms of natural disasters and the coordination process.

During my research on humanitarian organizations working in the area of natural disasters in Colombia, I noticed that OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) have a great experience in response coordination and vulnerability analysis. I felt that it was exactly where I wanted to do my internship. I decided to call directly the person in charge of natural disasters division and I proposed my CV. A few days later, I received the positive response to my application.

And then you had 3 more internships within the UN?

Yes, I had the opportunity to perform 4 internships within the UN. In 2009, I performed my second internship at WFP Brussels office where I drafted a paper on the response of the EC to the 2008 food crisis. After this internship, I went in Djibouti in 2010 where I worked with WFP CO, and I did a survey on food aid utilization by refu-

gees. Now, I am working at WFP Paris office. The reason I did all these internships is that in France humanitarian studies are usually accompanied with internships, because professional experience in this field is of great importance.

What is the best experience that you have had during your time as a UN intern?

I can't only talk about THE best experience, because each experience was different, positive and rewarding. For instance, my experience in the WFP offices in Brussels and Paris was pivotal in strengthening my background in donor relations and private sector partnerships. On the other hand, my field missions with WFP in Djibouti, and previously with OCHA in Colombia, have allowed me to gain significant exposure to humanitarian challenges on the ground and acquire hands-on experience in food security and project management. This gave me the opportunity to see for myself the impact that the different activities have for the people they are aimed to. But above all, those internships were

also a great and rich human experience.

The worst?

Not any. Even difficult moments have been a great chance to develop and to strengthen skills and qualities such as reactivity, initiative and problem-solving abilities.

What do you think that has helped you to be chosen for all of these internships?

My academic background which includes humanitarian studies, being very relevant for UN activities. Also my proficiency in 4 languages, open-mindedness, and my international profile which can help to bring a new perspective to any issue.

How has doing these internships affected you and your learning process?

My numerous experiences within the UN system have impacted very positively my learning process and my career.

As for my learning process, they have helped me acquire in-depth knowledge and understanding of the vision, objectives and functioning of the UN system and its affiliated agencies as a whole. This would be critical to understand humanitarian response and issues. As for my career, I think that everything I learned and experienced within the UN will be very useful to propose concrete solutions and alternatives and to ensure efficient activities implementation, anywhere I work in the future. ▲

INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY AND RIO+20



MARIAN SCHREIER
UNEP, Brussels

Nationality
German

Topic Conference
[Rio+20](#)



Climate change, youth unemployment and unimaginable sovereign debts –all three examples have put intergenerational equity in peril. In 2012 the international community will convene in Rio at a critical juncture in world’s history to tackle these issues. Will the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20) be remembered for more of the same old habits which put intergenerational equity and even humanity’s mere existence at risk? Or will Rio+20 break with business as usual and come up with a not necessary new, but transformative idea?

The term intergenerational equity is intrinsically linked with sustainable development. In its ground-breaking report “Our Common Future” the Brundtland commission coined the most widely cited definition of sustain-

able development “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” How to strike the balance between the present and future generations if the latter’s voices are hardly ever heard? Apparently, it is not an easy equation to solve.

A surprisingly easy and appealing idea was put forward in Hungary. In 2007 the Hungarian parliament adopted a law establishing a Parliamentary Commissioner for Future Generations which is an ombudsperson. The concept of a parliamentary ombudsperson is based on the Swedish model which was brought up at the dawn of the 19th century. It basically refers to a person who collects citizens’ complaints and then acts on their behalf. Today dozens of countries have established an ombudsperson.



©UN Photo

Mongolian herder supported by UNDP to develop sustainable herding.

son. The core of the mandate is to ensure long-term sustainability, having special regard to a healthy environment for future generations. His competences are roughly divided into three sections: investigation, policy advocacy and strategy-making and research. Additionally, he can open investigations as a result of a complaint or acting on his own initiative. Although most measures of the ombudsperson are non-binding the Hungarian experience proved that his decisions can change legislation or executive amendments.

Beyond his capacity to investigate complaints the Parliamentary Commissioner pro-actively undertakes research in fields which could impact or harm long-term sustainability. For instance, he initiated projects on climate change and well-being indicators. In addition to his research activities he is engaged in policy advocacy. If any legislative act could have an impact on the environment the parliament must consult the ombudsperson on this matter. As ultima ratio he is allowed to call for an annulment of the legislative draft.

What are the benefits of this mechanism for intergenerational equity and in particular youth? First and foremost, an ombudsperson for future generations gives all people, regardless of their age and nationality, a voice. This is of particular importance for young people who often, due to legal restrictions (e.g. voting age), do not have the chance to influence decisions which will affect their future lives.

Secondly, not all societal groups have equal access to information because of lack of money, power or education. The ombudsperson and his or her office can provide citizens with the relevant information through research, fact-finding missions or requesting the disclosure of government data and documents. Last but not least, the es-

tablishment of an ombudsperson for future generations can lead to capacity building. The Hungarian example shows that biannual meetings of the Parliamentary Commissioner with civil society actors resulted in an increased awareness for sustainability issues.

How could world leaders implement the Hungarian example? In Rio 2012 the member states could authorize the

UN to establish an ombudsperson for future generations at the global level in charge of truly global concerns such as climate change. By the same token, they could urge regional entities and countries to follow the global example through creating ombudspersons under their jurisdictions. If Rio+20 should be a game changer then a watchdog for intergenerational equity is a necessity. ▲



Migration due to climate change will be one of the main problems to be dealt with by the world community in the coming century.

YOUTH AND THE UN EXEMPLIFIED- YOUNGO

GUEST WRITER



ANDRES AUGUSTIN FUENTES MARTINEZ
YOUNGO

Nationality
Canadian

Topic Agency
[UNFCCC](#)



On September 28, 2009, the youth climate movement gained official constituency status, on an interim basis, creating YOUNGO. This dedicated group of individuals and youth NGOs are committed to helping the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reach a fair, ambitious and binding global climate agreement.

The movement continues to grow and mature, working at Conferences of the Parties (COPs), interessionals, and throughout the year to influence the negotiations and help lead them to a global climate agreement. The work done during each of these periods is different and faces many diverse challenges.

At COPs and interessionals YOUNGO actively follows the negotiations, prepares and advocates for its positions, highlights issues using acts, and encourages progress towards a credible resolution. As a constituency, YOUNGO meets every morning to discuss issues, receive updates from its many working groups, and approve actions and policy positions. Throughout the week the various working groups also meet to work on the specifics of a policy, plan or action.

During the year, YOUNGO's many working groups coordinate policy development and plan for upcoming negotiations. The main method of com-

munication and collaboration is via e-mails and conference calls. This allows youth from all over the world to bring their knowledge and experience together towards the common goal of stopping climate change. This does not come without challenges; internet connectivity is limited in some parts of the world and balancing time zone differences and language barriers can also prove difficult.

In the short span that YOUNGO has been an official constituency it has achieved successes that it is proud of, most recently regarding climate change education and awareness. Leading up to COP 16 in Cancun, Mexico, this past December, YOUNGO had been advocating for its text to be adopted in this area. With the help of several member states and

CONSTITUENCIES AT UNFCCC

- Business and Industry NGOs (BINGO)
- Environmental NGOs (ENGO)
- Farmers*
- Indigenous peoples organizations (IPO)
- Local government and municipal authorities (LGMA)
- Research and independent NGOs (RINGO)
- Trade Unions NGOs (TUNGO)
- Women and Gender*
- Youth NGOs (YOUNGO)*

** Provisional constituencies to be confirmed at COP17 in Durban, South Africa, 26 November- 9 December 2011*



YOUNGO CONTINUES TO BRING HOPE AND ENTHUSIASM TO THE NEGOTIATIONS

As the next COP approaches, to be held in Durban, South Africa, YOUNGO is working hard to help bring about the climate agreement that is needed to safeguard the future of our planet. Countries need to increase the level of pollution reductions that they have already agreed to. They need to provide greater funding,

especially to the poorer countries in the world, to fight and adapt to climate change. Governments need to increase the transfer of climate friendly technologies. Nations need to halt emissions from deforestation degradation of important stores of carbon like forests, wetlands, peat lands, and grasslands. Finally, negotiators need to recognize and enhance the valuable role that civil society plays in increasing climate action worldwide.



T-shirt politics: No opportunity is wasted to convey the youth's message

a lot of hard work and enthusiasm by youth from all over the world, this text was adopted in Cancun. YOUNGO is also proficient at drawing media attention to the issue of climate change, be it during the various negotiations or for the work they are doing at home. The creative actions seen at the different sessions highlight important issues in the negotiations and often draw the attention of the press, while helping to explain the complex negotiations to those outside of the UNFCCC sphere. Despite these successes, the ultimate goal of a global climate agreement to stop climate change has not been reached and the pace of negotiations can prove a major frustration to the youth who dedicate their time to working to protect their future.

While YOUNGO will continue to push for its policy positions in each of the negotiations, perhaps the message that will shine most brightly is the urgency for an agreement. These negotiations impact the future of all involved and are perhaps most poignant to today's youth who will have to live with the consequences and see their children and grandchildren affected by the decisions made today. Throughout seemingly frustrating negotiations and what can appear to be a bleak picture, YOUNGO continues to bring hope and enthusiasm to the negotiations and an attitude that will help see a global climate agreement reached. ▲



Young climate champions working hard

GROWING FOOD SECURITY- THE UN AND SCHOOL GARDENING



**RACHEL
FRIEDMAN**
FAO, Washington

Nationality
American

Topic agency
[FAO](#)



Youth are the foundation of the future; however, lack of food and proper nutrition during crucial growth years is impeding these leaders of tomorrow from reaching their full mental and physical potential. High levels of childhood malnutrition eventually translate into decreased productivity as adults and economic losses.

In 2010, nearly one billion people were hungry; not the type of hunger you experience when you haven't eaten for a few hours, but the chronic lack of food that leads to undernourishment, a weakened immune system, and hindered growth and development. Women, children, and infants comprise the segments of the population hardest hit by hunger. In developing countries, one in four children is underweight, and annually, undernourishment contributes to five million deaths of children under five. The number of underweight children is especially concerning, as it is an indicator of malnourishment during the period of early childhood development where adequate energy and nutrition intake is critical.

Unfortunately, world food prices are at their all-time high and continue to climb, undermining the ability of the



©FAO/Giulio Napolitano

poorest to feed themselves. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), when people face income constraints, they shift away from nutrient-dense and protein-rich foods (meat, dairy, fruits, vegetables) and choose cheaper, high calorie grains. This may serve immediate energy needs, but does not provide the nutrients necessary to sustain a healthy body.

The UN is addressing the problem of nutrition deficit on several fronts: providing supplements and fortified foods, offering education and hands-on activities, and encouraging development of home gardens to supply the fruits and vegetables that provide essential vitamins and minerals, critical for the development of a well-nourished child. School gardens, however, are a critical avenue for the UN that go a step beyond providing food by cultivating healthy eating habits, teaching life skills, and fostering environmental awareness among youth.

School gardens are characterized by student participation in gardening activities, as well as their use as a teaching tool and source of fresh food. Classroom activities play an important role in reinforcing hands-on lessons from the garden and making the connections between agriculture, science, the environment, nutrition, and business.

ONLINE RESOURCES

State of Food Insecurity in the World 2010

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1683e/i1683e.pdf>

FAO School Garden website

<http://www.fao.org/schoolgarden/>

A New Deal for School Gardens

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1689e/i1689e00.pdf>

Setting Up and Running a School Garden: Teaching Toolkit

<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/012/i1118e/i1118e.pdf>

Various UN agencies are contributing to the surge in school gardens in developing countries. In its School Policy Framework, the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes the benefits of school gardens as a means to improve childhood health and nutrition. World Food Programme (WFP) and FAO's Special Programme on Food Security (SPFS) have partnered with foundations, research centres, and international and local NGOs to implement school gardens as part of the Home-grown School Feeding initiative. The Growing Connection, a subsidiary of FAO, is wholly devoted to fighting malnutrition through gardens.

In theory this presents an encouraging front, but it begs the question of what these programs are achieving on the ground. One example, in which 20 schools in Rwanda created school gardens with support from FAO and WFP, demonstrates the potential vic-

tories school garden programs can achieve. In a country where the growth of nearly half of children under five is stunted, pilot program participants reported more balanced diets, acquisition of gardening skills, and improved overall academic performance.

Outside of the UN system, other organizations are establishing school gardens, as well. These efforts, such as Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity's Thousand Gardens in Africa initiative, present opportunities for FAO, WFP, WHO, and other UN agencies to partner, offer technical assistance, and support these on-the-ground programmes. With those already underway and the potential for further UN involvement, school gardens and nutrition education programmes may play a very real role in raising a crop of healthy youth, and tomorrow's leaders. ▲



STOLEN YOUTH- THE DRUG WAR IN MEXICO



**MARIANA
OGAZ-PALM**
UNRIC, Brussels

Nationality
Mexican

The 20 year-old man bears the number 1447523 on his uniform, his name is Rosalio Reta and he was born and raised in Texas. He is serving a sentence for two murders, although he says that he has killed more.

When he was eleven, he ran away from home and ended up in a youth detention centre from where he was eventually released. He spent time with his friends in the Mexican/American border and it was one of them who introduced him into the world of drug cartels because a brother of his was working for one “and that’s how everything started”, Reta says, “once you are in, there is no way out”.

He killed his first man at age 13. He didn’t like it much, he told police. The guy was tied up and kneeling. Mr. Reta just had to pick up a pistol and shoot him in the head.

By July 28, 2006, one day after his 17th birthday, when Laredo police charged him with the contract killing of Noe Flores in Laredo (USA), Mexican and Texas investigators believed that Mr. Reta had been involved in 30 murders. All were on behalf of the Zetas, the ruthless enforcement arm of Mexico’s Gulf Cartel drug smuggling operation.

Court records revealed a portrait of a group of young American killers who were well-paid to do one thing: kill people that the local Zeta leadership in Nuevo Laredo (Mexico) wanted dead. And they highlighted a group of young killers who followed orders from Mexican drug lords with ruthless efficiency while often behaving like teens with poor impulse control.

Once caught in Mexico, Mr. Reta sought his own extradition. He called DEA agent and Laredo homicide Detective, Roberto Garcia, from a prison in Mexico, saying he wanted to stand trial in Texas for two homicides. He told U.S. investigators he feared reprisals from the Zetas over a botched hit in Monterrey (Mexico’s business capital, and the world’s 63rd richest, now sunken by the violence), a grenade attack on one of the city’s nightclubs that killed four and injured 25. He was



© Cesarbojorquez CC-BY-2.5

Rosalio Reta is an example of a trend that is becoming stronger: the recruitment of young Mexican and American teenagers by drug cartels that take benefit from their age because while standing on trial in Texas, people under 17 cannot be judged as adults. Very often, these young criminals are arrested for working with cartels but are released very fast and they receive little or sometimes no punishment at all.

The concern of the authorities is not only that the Cartels are recruiting young men and women, but that the victims want to be recruited. The lack of opportunities, including the little or no education available to certain sectors of the society, and lack of jobs that pay enough to sustain a good living, is a big factor that almost forces youth to be involved with drug cartels. "From where I come from, *compadre*, there is just a few things you can do as a living and being a member of a cartel is one of them", Reta says. "A lot of people want to be part of it, a lot of people respects me for it."

A similar story is the one of Maria Celeste Mendoza, a teenager born in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas on the border to Texas. She is one of the ten suspected 'hit-men', four teenagers and 2 young women that were arrested on late June 2011 after a shootout between the criminal organization 'Zetas' and the police. Dressed with clothes for combat, and with her face hidden, she described how she was trained by the Zetas to use rifles of high calibre such as Kalashnikov. She also said that she was paid 12,000 pesos (1,000 U.S. Dollars) (three times the national wage average) for working for two weeks. It is not clear if she had already killed anyone at the time of her detention.

Young people in Mexico and US (mostly living along the border with



Mexico) are the main target for cartel recruitment because they are easily tempted of what the drug money can buy and they are easily impressed with the "power" they sustain. The President of Narconon, a non-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of drug abuse through drug prevention, education and rehabilitation, has travelled to several Mexican cities to try to find a way to diminish the problem. He says that the popular idea of a 'real man' in people often includes a machine gun. This idea is fed by the fact that an entire new generation is growing up in small towns that are 'controlled' by cartels. "As the current situation is where the Mexican youth does not have enough options, working for cartels will continue to be attractive for young people".

According to a report produced by several NGO's in Mexico in 2010, between 25 and 35 thousand children and minors have been recruited to take part in the production and traffic of drugs in the past four years, and the age most common to enroll in the Cartels are between 12 and 15 years old. The same document mentions that from 2006 to 2009 between 60 and 200 thousand minors have died in the drug war and around 30 to 50 thou-

sand have become orphans (10 thousand of them only in the city of Juarez). Minors are attractive recruits in Mexico because teenagers under 14 years old have a constitutional right to not responde in a criminal court for their actions, even if they have committed murder, kidnapped and/or tortured.

People are in fear of violence, but at the same time, the concept of "narcos" is now well accepted as part of urban culture. In a country were it's difficult to earn a basic living, especially when you come from the poorest social classes, enrolling in a cartel is a fast way of earning power and money.

The big differences that exist between the social classes are also to blame. Where on one side Mexico has the richest man in the world, according the Forbes list of 2011, one step ahead of Bill Gates, a large chunk of the population struggles with a daily living of less that \$10 pesos (about .80 cents US Dlls) and have no access to basic services (running water and electricity), education, food or fundamental living standards.



General Secretary Ban Ki-moon with Mexican President Felipe Calderón

Many solutions have been proposed by politicians, governments, academics and experts on how to solve a problem that has sunken Mexico and Latin America in a cloud of violence, corruption, ungrowth and death. But nothing yet has been able to tame the spiral of violence surrounding the drug trade. In El Salvador for example, President Mauricio Funes is proposing a mandatory unarmed military service, with the sole purpose of taking the youth away from the reach of drug lords. The program would last for six months and people would learn a way of living and also get a salary for it. In

the northern state of Mexico, Chihuahua, a proposal for enrolling young men who are not studying nor working into the army, is also on the table.

In response to the proposal of taking down the age for being processed as an adult, a Mexican congresswoman said that she considered this solution unfair for the youth because the government has not been able to provide these young persons enough opportunities to access education, a decent and lawful job, and in general, conditions so they can have a healthier life.

According to a report by the Global Commission on Drug Policy, which includes Kofi Annan, former UN secretary-general, , former Presidents/ Prime Ministers of Brazil, Mexico, Greece and Colombia, and former US Secretary of State, George Shultz as members; the global war on drugs has failed and governments should explore legalizing marijuana and other controlled substances. “Political leaders and public figures should have the courage to articulate publicly what

many of them acknowledge privately: that the evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that repressive strategies will not solve the drug problem, and that the war on drugs has not, and cannot, be won,” the report said. The truth is that people who want to consume drugs are already doing it, illegally or not. If these drugs were to be legalized, perhaps the market would control itself, people could stop buying from the cartels since they could grow their own, targeting an important source of income for them. Youth would stop perceiving cartels and the lifestyle that surrounds it as something desirable because selling these drugs wouldn’t be something ‘forbidden’ anymore. In addition, if legal drugs were taxed at rates comparable to those on alcohol and tobacco, the revenues could go directly to finance programs for rehabilitation and youth that could attack lack of education and provide them with opportunities. Also, legalization would eliminate arrests for drug trafficking and save prosecutorial, judicial, and incarceration expenses.



The Mexican Army in a shooting

Sending thousands of youth to prison is not the best idea either. Often called “the University of Crime”, jails in Mexico are not showing to fulfill their ultimate purpose, which to reintegrate the person in the society and fully “reform” the person. Jailbreaks happen on a daily basis. Part of the problem comes from the increased size of the prison population, thanks to the government aggressive policy against criminals and to the lack of enough number of jails and a fast judiciary system. Mexico has 429 prisons and collectively they suffer from a 25 percent of overcapacity. Efforts to put a solution to this problem consists in sending criminals arrested on federal

organized crime and drug charges, to state and local prisons. As a result, many of the most dangerous criminals are doing their time in the facilities that are least capable of adequately controlling them.

Mexico is a country with great natural resources, oil, great tourist attractions rich in culture with a history that includes civilizations such as the Mayans and the Aztecs, and geographically next to the U.S. which provides the country with a strategic position to create business opportunities with one of the biggest economies in the world. These are factors that could be exploited to produce jobs, opportunities and development for the country and could directly or indirectly change the trend of recruitment by criminal organizations of minors and in general, the spiral of violence that is consuming the country.

Either way, people in the US and Europe should not forget that a big share of the drugs that are available come from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and other Latin American countries, and almost necessarily

need to be trafficked through Mexico to reach the United States. A person that consumes drugs is financing this unlawful business which is linked to a list of 21 other crimes such as kidnap, torture, extortion, murder, and human trafficking, among others, which most of the times are used to finance the drug production and traffic, and the victims are in Mexico.

Consumers should be aware that these are real situations happening to real people. Teenagers from poor areas of the country are not the only ones getting involved in the drug war, but boys and girls from families with more resources that are attracted to the concept of power attributed to narcotics. People that have absolutely no connection to illegal businesses and/or drugs, from a middle-class society are being kidnapped and tortured, and not only adults. Children whose biggest mistake is to have a father who is a doctor or a job that allow them to live a middle-class way of living, are being kidnapped outside their schools, tortured as it often happens that fingers and/or ears are chopped and sent to families to pressure for payment of

rescue. The children are only given back in exchange for sums large enough to ensure the indebtedness of their families forever. These kinds of tragedies have now become something that everyone is very familiar with, instead of being an exception to the rule.

The world should become aware of, like it once did with blood diamonds, where the drugs that are being consumed come from, whether they are consumed illegally or legally. A country and a whole area of the world, as Latin America and sectors of the society of the United States, are losing a big share of its young population together with its hopes for the future, because of this war. ▲



A sign in the border city Tijuana, counting the number of casualties in the Drug War

CHILDREN AT WAR: WHAT PROTECTION?



LEONI AYOUB
UNRIC, Brussels

Nationality
Cypriot

“**T**o kill the big rats, you have to kill the little rats” is what was broadcast over Radio Mille Collines during the Rwandan genocide in 1994. It is believed that almost 300 000 children died during those 100 days of violence. The effect of conflicts upon children is undeniably daunting and in truth, during times of war most child casualties are civilians. An important aspect of military activities that often goes unmentioned however is the use of children within an armed conflict. This involves the direct use of children within armed groups, including national forces, but also for other activities during time of conflict and disputes that exposes children to danger.

It is estimated that around 300.000 children are currently directly engaged in hostilities, most of them between the ages of 14 and 18, though the exact figure of children associated with armed forces or armed groups worldwide is impossible to calculate accurately. These children are often forcibly recruited, coerced or abducted, some even below the age of 10. Others volunteer because it is the best and only option for them, but this usually happens under extreme circumstances such as their need for survival or a means to avoid poverty, violence or discrimination often coming from their very own families.

The use of children during times of armed conflict is of course not a new phenomenon, the use of drummer boys during the battlefields in Europe is a prime example of how children have such been involved in armed conflict for centuries. However, with the proliferation of lighter weapons and the easier use of children as soldiers, their sudden exposure upon front lines has become one of the gravest issues of armed conflict, leaving millions injured, killed, homeless or disabled.



**AROUND 300.000
CHILDREN ARE CUR-
RENTLY DIRECTLY
ENGAGED IN HOSTILI-
TIES**

Why protect children?

The challenge that arises in the need to protect children from taking part in hostilities first needs to be addressed through the question: how are children exposed when taking an active part in the hostilities? Of course, the answer seems evident: many of them witness, or even take part in, unfathomable violence. They find themselves being shot at, or captured and detained by the enemy forces, or at the risk of being so. They face lethal

physical violence, sexual exploitation and psychological traumatising. Taking part in the conflict does not only include being directly involved in the hostilities but also transmitting orders, transporting ammunition and/or foodstuffs, gathering information, being used for sabotage. As recently as 2010, it was reported that children were being used for suicide attacks, to plant explosives and transport munitions countries such as Iraq, Somalia and Haiti. In Afghanistan alone, 1396 children were killed or maimed in 2010

(486 killed and 910 maimed). Children are often exposed to situations that will leave them with life-long traumas and insecurities, in addition to the extreme danger their lives are in.

There is also, however, the other side of the coin. The very reason child soldiers are often preferred to adults. With the proliferation of small and light weapons, for example, engaging children in war is easier, thus making the price of war cheaper and the armed forces larger. In the past, children

could not easily use heavy swords and machetes but with an assault rifle such as an AK-47 or M-16, children have suddenly become a match to adults. Children are also easier to manipulate and intimidate, again allowing for cheaper labour, and a greater work force.

How are children protected?

Historically, the law had little to say for the use of children during armed conflict, since despite the evolution of the laws of war themselves after World



© UNICEF/4761/Chiasson

▼ DID YOU KNOW?

The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN for Children and Armed Conflict has claimed the following Six Grave Violations Against Children During Armed Conflict:

- ▼ Killing or maiming of children
- ▼ Recruitment or use of child soldiers
- ▼ Rape and other forms of sexual violence against children
- ▼ Abduction of children
- ▼ Attacks against schools or hospitals
- ▼ Denial of humanitarian access to children



A decorated Soviet Child Soldier

War II it was not until years later that a special form of protection was accorded to children. This first protection came within the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions in 1977 that initially set the age of recruitment into the armed forces at 15. The prohibition of the use of children under the age of 15 in hostilities is also present in Article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (the 'CRC'), which is considered one of the tenets of the international human rights law framework. Article 38 further states that when recruiting, parties should always give priority to persons over the age of 18. This approach has also been echoed through the statutes of the UN-endorsed international war crimes tribunals of Rwanda, Sierra Leone and the former Yugoslavia in addition to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

More recently however, we have seen more international mobility regarding to the participation of children in hostilities, starting with the International Labour Organization's Convention No.182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in 1999 that labelled the recruitment or use children below the age of 18 as one such 'worst forms of child labour'. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1999 also works in this vein. Most

importantly, in 2000 the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in 2000 raised the minimum age to 18 years, while States wishing to continue to recruit before the age of 18 must introduce strict safeguards in that respect. This Optional Protocol furthermore completely prohibits the recruitment or use of children by rebel and/or other non-State armed groups. A more active step by the international community has been Resolution 1612 by the Security Council in 2005 that established the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict but also a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism.

The international judiciary has also gradually responded to the need to protect children in 2004 when in 2007 when the Special Court for Sierra Leone sentenced three militia leaders for the recruitment and use of child-soldiers. Similar steps have been seen when the first ever indictment of the ICC in 2006 was against a Congolese warlord who was allegedly conscripting children into his militia during the country's civil war. Furthermore, the indictment currently being tried at the ICC of Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president includes, amongst other war crimes, the recruiting of child-soldiers. International arrest warrants have also been issued against leaders of the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army for war crimes that include the forcible recruiting of children.

Re-integration?

With that said however, international mobility and judiciary actions do not fully ensure the protection of children during times of war. The effect taking

a direct part in hostilities upon a child does not limit itself only to the time that take they place. New challenges will arise when the child wants to leave and return home, and that still remains one of the biggest questions to be answered. Questions often arise as to whether they can leave, how far away from home are they, and how do they make it back? The even greater question is whom they should return to, how would their return be? In most cases, acceptance and re-integration into the family and society are not easy, if not almost impossible, as things have changed, especially within the child's mind. These are questions where despite positive actions are being taken and re-integration programmes set up, they still remain an evident problem when trying to deal with the protection from the use of children within an armed conflict. ▲

INFERNAL VOICES

ISRAEL: A 22 year old Israeli found a cheque worth 100,000 dollars in the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. The young man decided to keep the cheque, even though it was written out to the administrators of the sacred Wall. He has taken on a lawyer and the case will be decided in court.

(De Morgen, Brussels)

LITHUANIA: Illegal parkers, be warned. The mayor of Lithuania's capital, Vilnius, has been filmed using an armoured vehicle to crush a car parked illegally in a cycle lane. "That's what will happen if you park your car illegally," Mayor Arturas Zuokas, an avid cyclist, says in a clip posted on the Vilnius City website.

(BBC)

USA: In the city of Pittsburg, a man tried to carjack a police officer in civilian clothes. When the officer proceeded to arrest the would-be carjacker, the latter defended himself by stating he was merely playing out a scene of the new Batman film, currently being filmed in Pittsburg, and that the script told him to steal that very car.

(De Morgen, Brussels)



▼ RECIPE: SWEDISH DREAMS

These tiny bites of cookie are something of a Swedish shortbread, buttery and crisp. If you're making them at Christmas time, sprinkle with a little coloured sugar for a festive touch.

- ▼ In a mixing bowl, beat together butter, sugar and vanilla until light and fluffy.
- ▼ Into a medium bowl, sift together baking powder and flour. Gradually add to the butter-sugar mixture.
- ▼ Form the dough into a rectangular log. Cut the log into three pieces.
- ▼ With the each piece, make 24 round, not too flat cookies. Place them fairly close together on the baking tray; these don't spread much.
- ▼ Bake for 15-18 min., until just starting to get golden brown on the edges.

▼ Ingredients:
1 c. butter, softened
2/3 c. sugar
2 tsp. vanilla
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
2 1/4 c. flour

Oven temperature: 150°C or 300°F.

Source: http://www.gretchencooks.com/recipes/1209_Swedish_Dreams

INTERNAL VOICES

THE VOICE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS INTERNS
14th Edition

www.facebook.com/internalvoices
<http://internal-voices.blogspot.com>
internalvoices@unric.org