

NUMBER 28, 2005

# EARTH FOCUS

One Planet-One Community



# RIGHTS

*Religious*  
*Individual*  
*Gender*  
*Human*  
*Trade*  
*Social*

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Produced by Young People for Young People of All Ages



# Earth Focus Millennium Development Goals



I was honoured to participate in the briefing to students of the International School of Geneva on the Millennium Development Goals. The interest of this young group in the activities of the United Nations showed that the future still has the potential to be shaped; to tackle the

injustice of inequality, to eradicate AIDS and poverty, to increase the observance of human rights and to improve the sustainability of our planet.

The Millennium Development Goals, as announced by Kofi Annan are the objectives

towards which we should all be striving to improve our world. Your students, who will soon become professionals themselves, will bear witness to the deadline of 2015. It is only with the work and support of both students and professionals, corporations and governments, the young and the old, and the United Nations, that working together we will be able to meet this deadline.

**Bruna Faldutti**  
**WFUNA Director**

**World Federation of the  
United Nations Associations**



*"A people's movement  
for the United Nations"*



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Earth Focus is a forum for discussion and a catalyst for action for young people. We deal with issues concerning the environment, community, and culture at all levels.

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# LETTERS

## TO THE EDITOR



Dear Earth Focus,  
Hello from those students you  
printed in the last EF!  
They were thrilled to see  
themselves in print AND to own a

copy of the magazine.

It was your article headed PRIVILEGED?

They certainly feel privileged!

Many thanks and the school, Sioma Secondary School in  
Western Province of Zambia looked to receiving Earth  
Focus for their library in the future.

All the best ,

Alison Curtis, Director  
Zambezi Environmental Education Camp  
Sioma, Zambia



EARTH FOCUS

# Religious Individual Gender Human Trade Social

# Rights, Respect and Responsibility

**Rights, Respect and Responsibility – three important words for now and the future of our fellow human beings and everything in our environment – we are all concerned.**

**We hope that some of the information in this issue of *Earth Focus* will inform you and give you some ideas on how to put these words into action for yourselves and all and everything that is involved.**

## **Rights, Respect and Responsibility in Education**

"Education is for life, not only of ours but also of others and of the whole web of life."

It is an honour for me to share my thoughts in front of the most relevant body, for I believe in the traditional paradigm of homes as primary schools and schools as secondary homes.

I would like to congratulate my fellow students for doing such a tremendous job. I hope you hold on to your good convictions.

As a high school student, my talk is to see how far we, the youth, are sensitized and involved in the crucial discussion on sustainable development today.

I see no better time and mandate than now as we uphold the decade of education for sustainable development inaugurated on the 1st of March this year.

The key issues this decade aims at are: environmental protection, water conservation, biodiversity, overcoming poverty, rural development, human rights, peace and human security, promotion of health, gender equality, and sustainable urbanization.

The issue is how far these topics become the centre of our school syllabi. To me Sustainable Development is for the future of life itself. It is vital to the core curriculum. Including sustainable development into our curriculum assures us that our knowledge is relevant to all humanity, "our human family", and interconnected with the earth, "our cosmic home". This demonstrates that our individual futures are woven in a vast tapestry.

Sustainable development expresses knowledge as an ethical dimension. It expands the contours of our responsibility to include the entire interconnected world. It brings within our purview the excluded and marginalized members of the human community. It is my experience that most often these themes become topics of history ("counting the cost of disaster"). Their value at best is merely anecdotal, depending of course on the teacher.

It is time we take an integrated approach and study subjects of humanities with a scientific temper and subjects of science with a human face. Our schools need to induct these themes in compulsory subjects especially in grades 8 – 10, that being a crucial formative stage. Students cannot become responsible decision makers, or catalysts of change, in the future unless they are trained and convinced in the classrooms. Our study methods need to be more empirical rather than textual. We have to put a face against a theme. In doing so, we uphold the value that education is for life, not only of ours but also of others and of the whole web of life.



*Excerpts from a speech made to his fellow students at the recent Earth Focus Youth Debate, by Aditya Manchala, 15, India, Collège de Léman, Versoix, Switzerland.*



# Children's Rights

**O**n November 20th, 1989, the Convention for the Rights of the Child was adopted by the U.N. and opened for signature by the member states. Since then more than 190 countries have ratified the treaty.

The Convention of the rights of the child has 54 articles in all. Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure all children get all their rights.

A convention is an agreement between countries to obey the same law. When the government of a country ratifies a convention, that means it agrees to obey the law written down in that convention.

The convention applies to every human under the age of 18, regardless of the child's or the parents' or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language or political opinions. A few of the rights included in this convention are as follows:

All children have the right to education.

All children have the right to proper nourishment.

All children have the right to decent shelter.

All children have the right to religious freedom.

All children have the right to healthcare.



These are just a few of the rights, but what do they mean exactly? In some countries, children do not enjoy the privilege of going to school that we enjoy. We do not know how lucky we are to be able to go to school and enrich our minds. Take Somalia for example, the adult literacy rate is 24% (compared to Switzerland's 100%), this is amazingly low and it is all because as a child these adults did not go to school and learn the fundamentals of our education, being reading and writing. This is the case in many countries around the world, especially for girls.

We hope that the convention will help to change this situation.

**Ben Year, 9,  
La Châtaigneraie, Geneva, Switzerland**

## Some of the Worst Breaches of Human Rights

- 1.If you are forced to do something against your own will.
- 2.If you are killed (everyone has the right to live).
- 3.If you are abused emotionally, physically or sexually.
- 4.If you are taken prisoner because of your (political) opinions.
- 5.If you are deprived of freedom of thought.
- 6.If you are not allowed to leave your country or seek asylum.
- 7.If you are discriminated against because of your colour, sex, race or religion.
- 8.If you are not allowed to go to school.
- 9.If you are not treated fairly (by judge or by state).
- 10.If you are held in slavery.



### For more information:

[http://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/what\\_rights\\_flyer\\_english.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/what_rights_flyer_english.pdf)

[http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction\\_97.html](http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_97.html)

<http://www.hri.ca/children/ThematicIndex.shtml>



# ANIMAL RIGHTS

## Dolphin Slavery



**D**olphins are being captured all over the world. They are taken away from their families and peaceful surroundings usually at a very young age, to find themselves in amusement parks, circuses and even in cages in a 'dolphinarium'. Some people think that they are objects that people can just sell, or buy, and even destroy if they want to. Even though they aren't human, they do have the ability to communicate with us and the poor creatures have a life and rights like any living thing on the planet. Some rights have been made by the Marine Mammal Protection Act are:

**1. THE RIGHT TO LIFE.** They are to be protected like any other animal and can only be killed in legal and very strictly defined circumstances like self-defence.

**2. THE RIGHT TO LIBERTY.** Dolphins, like any other animal, should not be deprived of their liberty. If they are being captured illegally, they have the right to immediate release. The only legal capture humans have on dolphins, is if the animal is a danger to its surrounding, or if it's for its own good.

**3. THE RIGHT TO PROHIBITION OF TORTURE.** If the animal is deliberately being inflicted with severe pain, it is considered torture and is very wrong. (This can happen if it is being badly trained to do tricks for amusement). Like every one of us, dolphins have a very high sensitivity and are extremely smart, and so we should understand that they are being hurt and that is causing them moral and physical pain.

In my personal opinion of this problem, I think it is so horrible, that it makes me angry just at the thought of people doing that; just because dolphins have no power regarding humans and unfortunately people just think of them as objects, or 'toys'. All the things that happen to them are violations of their rights to be free. Even though dolphins aren't human, they are entitled to life free from fear.

**Rebecca Simon, 14,  
La Grande-Boissière, Geneva, Switzerland**





# A Student's Right

***"Students have the right to experience success in this school".***

Oh dear, here's where problems begin. A sentence like this, open to misinterpretation, is a long time ally of students who cannot cope with schoolwork, or rather those who are simply too lazy to achieve success.

However, this right means that the student has the opportunity to make his own success within school. It does not mean that success is owed to him.

Rights like these, subject to much ambiguity, cause turmoil in the law system today. There will always be some self-righteous individual who will distort the meaning of a law or right to put himself or herself in a persecuted or victimised position. The absurdity of some claims is now routinely ignored. Infringement of a right, no matter how small or ridiculous is clearly an aberration of society and worth taking into account. No doubt promises of a handsome profit for lawyers and winning parties have a hand in this as well.

So much is this the case that good "common" sense is being over-ridden by the bizarre logic of the courtrooms.

Actual severe oppression is certainly worthy of legal protection. The fact that a lazy student's right to experience success is being infringed, though, can scarcely be considered aggression.

**Elliot Grimstead 14,  
La Châtaigneraie, Geneva, Switzerland**

# The Right to Education

Everyone has the right to an education. Without an education, we can get nowhere in life. We need an education in order to survive in life.

Everyday we go to school, most of us whining about the amount of homework we have, or how our teachers and classes are boring, or that we are stuck in a double period class. But what does that matter? We have the chance to go to school yet we still continue to protest! Why are we so ungrateful? Children in less developed countries dream of the fabulous education we are getting and yet we complain at how much we're learning! In some places in the world, children are suffering because they don't have an education. Some children who don't go to school are forced to work hard-labour jobs so that they can support their families. They become child labourers. Without a basic education, children are subject to a life filled with poverty and hunger, labour in agriculture or in an industry (i.e. factories, domestic labour), or sexual exploitation. In the year 2000, 860 million adults were illiterate, according to the United Nations. Also, 130 million children do not attend school, most of whom are females.

We are extremely privileged to have the opportunity to go to school. But school is not a privilege.

***It's a right.***

**Alexis McGivern, 11, Canada,  
La Châtaigneraie, Geneva, Switzerland**

## The Rights of Women and Children

### CHILDREN

I believe that children have the right to education, which includes transport to school and medicine free of charge. I think there shouldn't be any homeless children because they have a right to a loving and caring family. In my opinion, if you make a baby, you are obliged to support it; you should never dump it in an orphanage. Children have a right to friends, because without them they could be depressed, which would lead to drug use and very possibly suicide. Children also need a friend to know that they can trust someone, to whom perhaps they can tell their secrets and with whom they can discuss their problems. They have a right to enough nutrients to keep them healthy. If their families can't afford it, there should at least be organisations that will donate food and drink to the less fortunate.

### WOMEN

Women also have the right to a college education no matter how old they are, but I do think that they have to be smart enough, which they should be if they had a good education when they were young. I'm not saying colleges and universities should be free but definitely cheaper! They have a right to free medicine, which includes pregnancy and birth. They need the medical attention as women in poorer countries are having more and more babies. Just like children, they also have a right to friendship, especially during the time of pregnancy when depression and anger can occur. A friend they can trust would help to soothe them when they get angry. Also, I strongly believe that pre-natal classes should be free so that a woman can feel confident and strong before a birth takes place.

**Tim Schmoll**





# The Suffragettes

## Women Fighting for Rights

A group of Women led by Emmiline Pankhurst had run out of patience by October 10, 1903. They wanted women to be treated equally and have the right to vote, like men. "Deeds not Words" was the motto of the W.S.P.U. (Women's Social and Political Union). They had courage and strength and they knew that however long it would take, they would force the government to right this wrong.

So on May 19, 1905, a group of ten suffragettes went to talk to the Prime Minister in London. The Prime Minister just told them to be patient and the time would come. This was not what they wanted to hear and they were very angry. They wanted their motto to come alive, and soon enough it did. They made campaigns, assaulted policemen and some even tied themselves to railings in front of the Prime Minister's door so that policemen had to unchain them, they made public speeches. Some were sent to jail for three weeks. These brave women had been campaigning since the 1880's for the right to vote.

In 1908 Emmiline was arrested and sentenced to six weeks in prison because she protested on the streets. Later that year a new Prime Minister was elected, Hubert H. Asquith. He never wanted to hear anything about the suffragettes.

The more the suffragettes were arrested, the more the campaigned and protested. In jail, hunger strikes began. Suffragettes refused to eat any food brought to them. Marion Wallace Dunlop was the first to do this after she had been arrested for damaging St Stephan's Hall by writing a Bill of Rights message on the wall. After ninety-one hours of starvation they were let free. More and more women joined the movement and more and more got arrested. Doctors pleaded with them to eat because if they died the government would be embarrassed.

The doctors and nurses started force-feeding their prisoners. This hurt very much because they would put two tubes up their nostrils and pour in disgusting mixtures of egg and milk. The suffragettes had been in the press since the beginning, but now the Daily Mail was full of unpleasant pictures and articles.

1910 was a new election year. The Suffragettes walked into the House of Commons. There were rows and rows of policemen, but some women tried to push through. They all got beaten up and trampled, some ended up with broken bones and bloody wounds; some even died. The headline in the Daily Mail was "Black Friday"

When World War One broke out they decided to stop the violent and bloody fighting and help in the war factories to build arms and protections. All the Suffragettes got released from jail. Finally, in 1917, Herbert Asquith gave them the right to vote because they proved their determination for their cause. They had stood for their rights for nearly 40 years and this is what it had brought them. Now women in many countries have the right to vote.

**Erica Detemmerman 11, Belgian/USA**







# Prisoner's Rights

About one year ago on a family vacation to Sri Lanka, my mother's native country, we visited a prison in the capital city, Colombo. It was the week of the election and there was an anxious buzz in the air. From the car the prison walls came into view. An inscription was engraved on them. It read, "Prisoners are Human Beings." I decided that this meant that we should not be afraid of, or be unfair to prisoners. It was a woman's prison. I was told, and at the mention of this I relaxed. Women are known to be less violent.

My mother's friend, who was seeking to change the situation of the women in this ward, led us through the prison gates and explained to the Warden, in Singhalese, that we were visiting the prison as activists, as was she. At this point I was unsure what to expect. Is the situation here so bad that they need the support of so many people? And as I entered the sleeping ward I realised that there was nothing that could have prepared me for the scene that was unraveling before me. It was a fairly vast room, perhaps fifty metres square, it was filled with women, old and young, sick and healthy, with new born babies and alone, all wearing purple robes, indicating that they had not yet had a trial. My mother and her friend were talking to the warden and the prisoners in Singhalese and proceeded to explain that there are so many little drug crimes for the judge to hear that most women spend the majority of their time waiting in the prisons in remand. Let me explain these drug crimes. In most cases, these women were given the equivalent of fifty cents, by big drug dealers, with the instructions to transport the drugs to a client over a highly patrolled area and often the women would get caught and sent to jail. At least 60% of the prisoners were in prison for such crimes - an amazing amount. My mother's friend and her daughter are activists for the improvement of these

people's situation, however, most people are unwilling to help raise funds for the women in these situations. Visiting the prison certainly helped me understand the needs of the women and I can only hope that they can be helped.

**Anitra Williams, 14,  
Sri Lankan and American**

## Amnesty International

Amnesty International (AI) is an independent and non-partisan, worldwide organisation that campaigns for internationally recognized human rights.

AI's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United National Declaration of 1948) and other international human rights standards.

The main goal of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL is the rejection of: TORTURE, DEATH PENALTY AND VIOLENCE OF EVERY KIND!

By seeking to disclose human rights abuses accurately, quickly and persistently AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL systematically and impartially researches the facts of individual cases and patterns of human rights abuses. These findings are publicized, and members, supporters and staff mobilize public put pressure on governments and others to stop the abuses.

AI receive their money from donors, the organisation has around 1.8 million members from over 150 countries. The national sections are divided in parts called "Adoption groups" made up of 15 – 20 people, who mostly look after 2 prisoners, the national sections report to the International Office in London, U.K. For example, the German section has 20,000 members , 600 "Adoption Groups", with their headquarters in Bonn, in Austria 12,000 members and 115 groups and in Switzerland 17,000 members and 90 groups.

In 1997 Amnesty International was awarded the "Nobel Peace Prize and the German Gustav – Heinemann – Bürger Prize



**Christoph Saga, 11,  
La Chataigneraie, Geneva, Switzerland**





# Fair Trade is a Human Right



Andronachi Alexandra, 15, Romania –  
for UNEP's global art competition.

***"Don't underestimate the power of the vigilante consumer..." Anita Roddick was right when she said that. Even though we might be a small part of the world's population, if everyone takes a stand and buys Fairly Traded products, the farmers and their communities can greatly benefit. We can make a difference.***

Farmers in the Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDC) grow the foods that we consume everyday and they are sent to More Economically Developed Countries (MEDC) where they are sold in supermarkets. Usually, the products we see on the shelves are packaged attractively to appeal to consumers. Therefore, the price of the product, as seen in the supermarkets, is much more than the actual cost of producing the product. Unfortunately, not much of the profit goes to the producers because of the way the products are traded. For example, the bananas grown in Jamaica have to go through a long process to reach the UK. The bananas are cut down and sent to an exporting company where they will be shipped to the UK. Once they reach the UK, they will be sent to packaging companies. After they are packaged, they will go to a wholesaler who sells them to shops. By the time they reach the store, the price would have risen to include all the costs involved in the process. By then, only 10% of the profit is given to the growers.

Farmers should have the right to a suitable amount of profit from the produce that they have grown. They have earned it. Fair Trade is an organisation that ensures that a fair price is paid to the producers and they are not exploited and "robbed" out of their hard-earned money. This guarantees a minimum price to allow the farmer to maintain living standards even when the market price is too low. With a basic living wage, they can do so much more with their lives.

Carmen Gutierrez and her family are good examples of growers who have benefited from Fair Trade. They sell their coffee through PRODECOOP, a Nicaraguan fair trade association. With the basic minimum wage, they are not afraid that the prices will go down. They can now plan for the future. Carman says, "In the past the merchants just came and took the coffee away. They only wanted to make a profit. Now PRODECOOP advises us on how to grow organic coffee and on how to conserve soil by planting in terraces. We get fairer prices too, so we can now afford to buy medicines and send the children to school." They should have the right to receive education and should not be deterred because of the lack of financial resources.

Fair Trade teaches producers and growers how to conserve the soil. They make sure that farmers return the nutrients to the soil and stop abusing it,



so that the land will not become barren. If the land becomes barren, the growers will not be able to grow anything anymore. Once the producers have no crops, nothing to make money out of, they will be stuck in a cycle of poverty and debt. The merchants, on the other hand, would move to another grower and continue earning profits. Fair Trade prevents that from happening. Consumers can then be protected from dangerous chemicals.

We, as consumers, can do some work of our own to help exploited workers. We can try and become vigilante consumers. We could buy Fairly traded products like coffee, tea, chocolate etc. Don't be mistaken, just because the coffee was fairly traded it does not mean that we, the consumers, have to pay more. Fair Trade works directly with the producers and cuts off much of the retail prices, to be able to

return the profit to the producers. The products are bought directly from the producers and this ensures that the benefits of trade go directly to them and their communities.

"Don't underestimate the power of the vigilante consumer..." Anita Roddick was right when she said that. Even though we might be a small part of the world's population, if everyone takes a stand and buys Fairly Traded products, the farmers and their communities can greatly benefit. We can make a difference.

**Shirley Lau, 16, China,  
Suzhou Singapore International School**

# Religious Discrimination

**S**hould we be allowed to wear headscarves in school? We are told that the public has the right to express itself but does this include what people are allowed to wear?

Although many people agree that students should be able to wear religious symbols in school, just as many disagree. A law has recently been passed in France forbidding students to wear any religious symbols apart from small crosses. What does this mean? Are they telling us that only one religion is permitted to be represented? Other people would say these measures were just taken to unite students, but if they wanted to bring students closer together why not ban all religious symbols, including the cross?

Recently in France, two girls were expelled from their school just because they would not stop wearing their headscarves. I thought in the world today we had overcome discrimination, but obviously this shows that we have yet to do so. If students are allowed to wear crosses, why not headscarves?

There is fear that headscarves are dangerous to wear in schools because of the risk of them catching fire when doing science experiments using a Bunsen burner. The French school board also says people wearing headscarves cannot participate in physical



education because they are unable to change into the appropriate kit.

When the government considered these issues, they probably thought the easiest way to resolve them was to get rid of headscarves. The way they reasoned makes me come to the conclusion that they overlooked other considerations, such as what the effects would be and whom the law would affect.

Why are some countries, such as the United Kingdom, able to accept different religions while others, for example France, are not? The government should not have the authority to decide what individuals should wear as long as what they wear is not offensive. Therefore I think students should have the right to decide what should or should not be worn in school.

**Catriona Wingate**

# Children's Rights

Interview with Professor Chris Sidoti, Director of the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

**Some Background Information:** the ISHR does not help children directly but has a heavy involvement with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the ISHR reports on the CRC's hearings on countries positions. The ISHR also does training on the CRC. The ISHR trains in S.E. Asia, they have performed inquiries into children in detention and children's education in Australia.

**Question:** What is the Cultural Perspective?

**Professor Sidoti:** Cultures look at children in many different ways but there are still lots of things in common. All the cultures until the last century considered children as property of a father etc. and that allowed the father to kill his son/daughter, children had no legal status, no independent identity.

In some religions (to parents) children are gifts of God. Adults tend to look at children's rights from the perspective that they will one day become adults. The CRC has attempted to change this by identifying the rights of a child so that they belong to them as children and not as future adults. Different ideas regard different punishments or who are the responsible guardians.

**Question:** Why are there street children?

**Professor Sidoti:** There are many reasons why ... in developing countries, the main reason is poverty. In developed countries its more family dysfunction as this may provoke violence, sexual abuse and family breakdowns.

**Question:** What is the life of a street child like?

**Professor Sidoti:** Very hard and difficult, they have small amounts of money, e.g. in Indonesia kids sing songs and beg to make reasonable money that can help their families. Education, security, stability is some things street kids want but can't get. There are many drug problems. Psychological problems are more difficult to resolve.

Professor Sidoti also told us that the CRC will not accomplish anything quickly or easily, like all human rights treaties it will require political will for implantation, it will need pressure from communities/countries. Cultures need to slowly change their attitudes about children, if they want to do this they need children to know their rights, to know what's wrong, what's right.

We also met Ben Lee, he has been working with street children in Nepal and there are many street children because of the political conflict.

- there is an extreme amount of poverty and life there is very difficult
- children there grow up quickly
- they don't have any awareness of their rights
- they suffer physical and psychological damage
- they lack legal protection

Some children are kidnapped and used as child soldiers, some end up as victims of trafficking in neighboring countries.

**Lanora Feeney, 11, Australian, Signe, 11, Latvian, Tristan, 11 Swiss, Yann, 11 French, Pregny School, Geneva, Switzerland**





# Gender Inequality

**"Women think seven generations ahead"**

**Interview with Mrs. Elly Pradervand, President, The Women's World Summit Foundation**

**Background information:** The Women's World Summit Foundation focuses on rural women as they suffer more from gender inequality than other women because of their poverty. Food is cultivated, produced, harvested by women, in Africa, 80-90%, in Asia 60-70%, in Latin America 30-40% and in Europe 20-25%. Women from all over the world receive only 1% of agricultural credit. In rural developments, all the credit goes to the men. It is difficult for women to emerge as independent, economic people. Women don't get much credit for plenty of things. Everyone is born from a woman, whether they are a boy or a girl so naturally she should help in decision-making as women think seven generations ahead.

**Question:** Is it hard to try and prevent/stop gender inequality and if so why?

**Mrs. Pradervand:** It is very hard. We still live in a system of hierarchy structures, e.g. politic, religious, economic etc. There are less than 15% of women in the parliament, 2/3 of all the work on the planet is done by women but they earn less than 2% of the world's wealth and they own less than 1% of the property.

**Question:** What do you and your organisation do related to gender inequality?

**Mrs. Pradervand:** Our organisation heightens women's equality and tries to empower them. It also tries to implement women's rights.

**Question:** What can we, as children, do about gender inequality?

**Mrs. Pradervand:** The best thing that we can do is learn about gender inequality, grow up and actually do something about it. 52% of the world's population is women, it is impossible to make decisions without them and their creativity, ideas and solutions.

**Question:** What are the effects of being discriminated against?

**Mrs. Pradervand:** Poverty – 70% of the poor people are women, they are illiterate, they are subject to exploitation, they lack health care, food, water, adequate housing etc.

**Question:** Why are men considered better than women?

**Mrs. Pradervand:** I think it is just that educational culture has put men in a position of being better than

women and this has been the case for thousands of years. Men also hang on to this position so it is very hard to change it. Slogan – "A WOMAN HAS TO DO TWICE AS MUCH TO BE CONSIDERED HALF AS GOOD".

**Question:** How is gender inequality connected to other types of inequality?

**Mrs. Pradervand:** It is connected to education, inheritance law, nutrition and the inability to educate children.

**Question:** Is gender inequality better now than in the past and how can it become better in the future?

**Mrs. Pradervand:** In Europe it has decreased a lot over the years but in other places it has not changed. It could become better in the future if women learn about their rights, demand for decision-making and know their status.

**Question:** How many countries agree with gender inequality and how many don't?

**Mrs. Pradervand:** In several Islamic countries, gender inequality is still present. Every country agrees to gender equality but legislation does not always allow it. 170 countries have signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) but it really doesn't change things overnight.

**Question:** Do different countries deal with gender discrimination in different ways?

**Mrs. Pradervand:** Yes, they do. There are quota systems that some countries follow but that others don't. Quota systems ensure that at least 40-50% of the government in each country is women. Many people criticize the quota system.

**Question:** Is gender inequality sometimes connected to religion and culture, and if so how?

**Mrs. Pradervand:** Yes, of course, it is very connected. In a religion there is a pope, priest, imam, etc. who dictates to everyone else. Hierarchy systems have helped humanity to be where it is today but it now needs to shift into equality.

**Nandita Kaza, 11, India,**

**Ahmed Nicfolaisen, 11, Norway, Ali Ghakkour, 11**

**Libya, Katia Ivanova, 11, Russia,**

**Pregny School, Geneva, Switzerland**



# Racial Discrimination

An Interview with Dr. Nathalie Prouvez, Secretary of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Office of the High Commission of Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland

The office of the High Commission of Human Rights: in 1965 the office of the High Commission of Human Rights adopted a treaty, the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, which means that 170 countries have agreed to respect that treaty. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) checks regularly on those states

The definition of racial discrimination is: when people are judged by their race, colour, ethnic descent or national origin – for example the Romas, also known as the Gypsies, suffer from severe racism. The Roma kids have been in schools for the mentally handicapped in Russia, since they don't make money they don't have nice houses. Education is a major tool in racial discrimination for example the low castes, also known as Dalits (in India), have to sit at the very back of the class and they don't get break when others do.

In Sweden they have a problem with the Sami people (sometimes known as Lapps), these people essentially breed reindeer, the reindeer have to



move to graze the grass in the north of Sweden and now some people are putting up electric fences and hedges to block the reindeer from eating their grass. Turkey joined the convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination very recently and the United States joined in 2001.

**Dunni, 10, American and Nigerian, Melisa, 11, Turkish and British, Ashraf, 11, Sudanese, Ben, 11, Italian, Amanda 11, Swedish**  
Pregny School, Geneva, Switzerland

**[www.unhchr.ch](http://www.unhchr.ch)** is working for children's rights, their survival, development and protection)

UNICEF is trying to give girls education in, for example Ghana, Peru, Sao Tome, Senegal and Vietnam. These are some of the places that UNICEF has helped most.

Today, it is 60 years since the United Nations made the rule that men and women have equal rights and 30 years since they decided that 8th March should be Women's Day.

## How Did Racial Discrimination Start?

Racial discrimination has existed for centuries. It emerged when different peoples and races first came into contact with each other, for example when the Spanish discovered the new world and when the first settlers of the United States came into contact with the Native Americans.

Maybe racial discrimination represents the bad side of human nature, how people react and get frightened when they come across others who are different from them either in skin colour, religion, nationality, culture or gender.

**Melisa Fati, 11, British and Turkish**  
Pregny School Geneva, Switzerland



# Native Americans

**N**ative Americans were the first people to live in North America, they originated in South America but lived all over the Americas. The Native Americans were discriminated against in many ways and still are because they lack education, money and qualifications. Some Native Americans live traditionally and live on special reserves.

One of the most infamous examples where Native Americans were discriminated was **The massacre at Wounded Knee**. In 1890 the US army shot down 300 Indian men, women and children because they participated in a ghost dance in which, they believe, they enter a new world only inhabited by Indians.

## Native Americans Fight Back

In the 1990s Native Americans protested against the use of Indian derogative nicknames and images by staging consumer and sporting events boycotts targeting American companies that used Indian images and nicknames for sports teams and food and drink. One famous example:



Chief Crazy Horse – an Indian chief is on a bottle of malt liquor meaning that Indians get drunk easily.

**Melisa Fati, 11, British and Turkish,  
Pregny School Geneva, Switzerland**

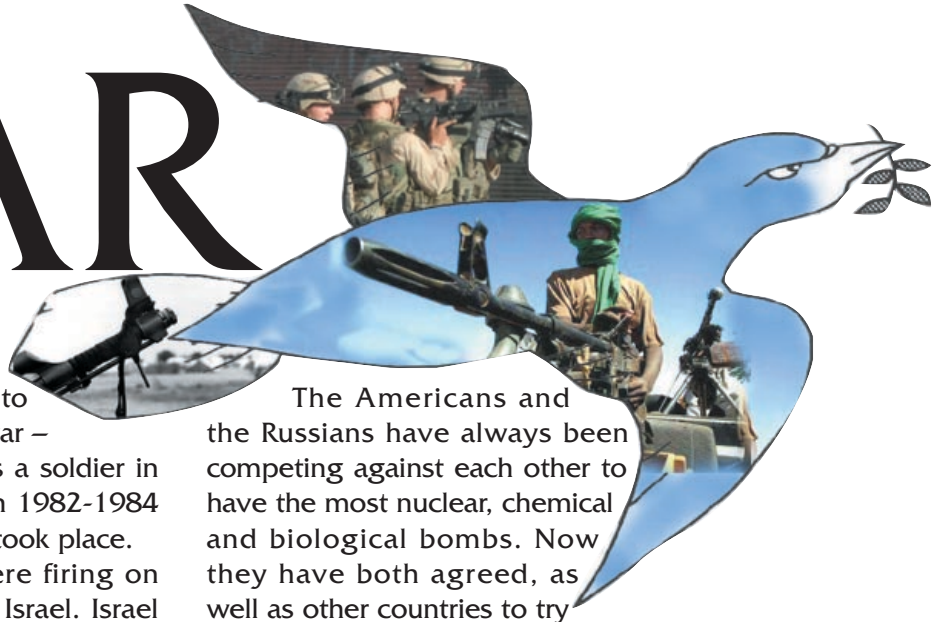
## Why Does Racial Discrimination Exist?



Have you ever asked yourself, why are some people racists? We believe that there are several reasons for this. Some people think that babies are born with hate, thus when they grow-up they discriminate against other people. Others think that as children grow up they develop racism. Racism can build up from watching T.V. or listening to the radio. Some shows might show a black man and a white man fighting. Whichever one is the villain they will favour the other race. Some parents are also racists. They teach their kids to hate. For example countries in the Middle East and Asia some parents teach their children to hate the western world. These kids then teach their own children and so and so forth - the cycle of discrimination never stops.

**An opinion from Pregny School  
Geneva, Switzerland.**

# WAR



**Our interviews:** we got the chance to talk to two different people about war – The first was: Mr. Shaaltiel who was a soldier in the war between Israel and Lebanon 1982-1984 were the three years when the war took place.

Some people from Lebanon were firing on some small villages in the north of Israel. Israel asked them to stop but they did not do so and just continued, that was when Israel went into Lebanon and the war started. The Israelis were then at war with an organisation called the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (P.L.O.), who were living in Lebanon at the time.

Mr. Shaaltiel was eighteen years old, the youngest age to be in the Israeli army. The war mainly took place in the south of Lebanon. The Israelis almost got to the capital Beirut. They were exactly ten kilometres away when the war stopped. During most of the war he carried a gun called a Kalishnakov, a machine gun that weighs five-six kilos.

As in World War II and some other wars, they were given a kind of can/tin, which contained food. This some cooked food, vegetables, some fruits, water and other things. They sometimes only got ten minutes of sleep a day. Sometimes they never got any sleep for a whole week. The way they slept was a tough way. They had to lie on their backs and they put their heads on each other's shoulders as a cushion instead of laying their heads on the ground or on a rock.

They had to take turns to sleep, one person always keeping watch for the others but before they could sleep they first had to find a safe and quiet place.

The second was Tim, an American Diplomat, who works at the American Embassy, right across from Pregny. His work is trying to make sixty countries agree on different things to do with weapons and rules of war. The Americans have their own rules and some other countries have theirs.

The Americans and the Russians have always been competing against each other to have the most nuclear, chemical and biological bombs. Now they have both agreed, as well as other countries to try to destroy five or more bombs by 2012.

The following countries are the countries that have the weapons:

1. U.S.A.
2. Great Britain
3. France
4. India
5. Pakistan
6. Israel (but they do not admit it themselves)
7. North Korea (no-one really knows)
8. Russia
9. China

North Korea is the only country that people expect has the right materials to build them, but no one knows if they have already. It is a very closed country and not very many tourists have ever been there. Lots of civilians are said to die of hunger, they do get food from their neighbours, South Korea and the U.S. and Great Britain.

Iraq has been accused of having nuclear weapons, after the Gulf War they promised not to build any bombs.

In 2003 the U.S., U.K., Japan and some other countries went into Iraq and tried to stop President Saddam Hussein that was when the war started in Iraq.

**Edouard, 11, French, 11, Danish, Ivan, 11, Chinese/Spanish and Shannon, 11, Thai**



# What We Learned from a Leading Expert on HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa

**D**r. Alan Whiteside grew up in Swaziland where he attended Waterford-Kamhiaba College. From 1983 to 1998 he was with the University of Natal's Economic Research Unit. He established the Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division in 1998 and is currently its Director and Professor at the University of Natal. His main research interest is the economic aid and development impact of HIV/AIDS. He founded and edits the newsletter {AIDS Analysis Africa}.

Prof. Whiteside has published many books on this subject, including {AIDS: the challenge for South Africa} (Heard Publications, 2000) co-authored by Clem Sunter, and {AIDS in the twenty-first century, Disease and Globalisation} (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) written with Tony Barnett.

On the 13th January 2005, the 13th grade geography students of the International School of Geneva were enlightened by a captivating talk by Prof. Whiteside. For one and a half hours the passionate Professor enthusiastically spoke about the situations and consequences of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. In some places in Africa the life expectancy is as short as 29 to 35 years. "If you knew you would die before the age of 28, would you work or go to university?"

The talk addressed the epidemic and its social, demographic and economic consequences. Using recent statistics and precise graphs, the students were actively informed of more than just the perceived problems of the disease in these regions. Less obvious political, psychological, economic and social consequences were highlighted, as well as important future projections, showing the shocking imminent future of AIDS victims. Prof. Whiteside was able to answer elaborately any question posed to him, based on his 20 years of first-hand experience. He gave us up-to-date facts and concerns, along with aid efforts and drug distribution acts. The audience was touched by his presentation and walked away thinking about the situation in Africa and how each individual can help to prevent the spread of the disease, whether it be by volunteer work in the areas most in need, or simply by looking after oneself.

Prof. Whiteside left us all deeply touched. It was emphasised that prevention is the priority. There is no doubt that everybody in the room was thinking

how he or she might help. Prof. Whiteside spent as long answering student's questions as he did giving his presentation, making the talk very personal and helping students to be involved in an area that they are extremely concerned about. HIV/AIDS is an issue that must be faced – its scale is mind-blowing. Through the presentation students comprehended the sadness and failures of the situation but were also told of success stories, giving glimmers of hope and encouraging us to make a difference.

This talk made students realise how privileged they are, opening their eyes to the effects of HIV/AIDS on the people surrounding them and gave them some ideas of the ways in which they could help with one of the most serious health issues in the world today.



**Dr. Alan Whiteside,  
AIDS Expert**

**Julia Zolande Aline, Nicola Arnell, Alyson Ash, Dianna Beran, Divy and Deborah, Aryna Dzynbynska, Subhashi Nanayakkara, Arundhoti Nandi, Veronika Reichenberger, Melissa Ringwood, Marianne Sangster, Alexandra Schniders and Alasdair Wood, Grade 13, International School of Geneva, Switzerland**



# Orphans Because of HIV/AIDS



and sexual exploitation, than children orphaned by other causes. Because they are infected with AIDS, these children do not receive any healthcare as it is assumed that it is untreatable and so often disregarded. Girls, especially, are more likely to drop out of school and to be drafted into labour, as they are socially and economically more vulnerable.

Children find themselves taking on parental roles and are plunged into economic crisis and insecurities by their parent's deaths and struggle without services or support systems

in impoverished communities, their inheritance is denied as is their schooling.

## What can be done?

Education and support of these children, especially the girls, about HIV/AIDS and how to protect themselves from –it, is essential.

## For more information

<http://www.avert.org/aidsorphans.htm>

<http://www.unicef.org/aids/>

**Deandra Corinthios, Nuria Richard, Stéfanie Fréel, La Grande Boissière, Geneva, Switzerland**

**T**here have been at least 15 million orphans left behind because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Eighty percent of these live in Sub-Saharan Africa (although not restricted to this area).

## Orphans – due to HIV/AIDS

*(2001 survey - in all likelihood these number have risen)*

South and South East Asia	1.8 million
East Asia and Pacific	850.00
Latin America	330,000
Caribbean	250,000
Middle East and North Africa	65,000

As numbers increase due to adults dying of HIV/AIDS, an increasing number of orphans will grow up without the essential parental love, and will be deprived of basic rights such as shelter, food, health and education. Typically, half the people with HIV become infected before the age of 25, developing AIDS and dying by the age of 35, leaving behind a generation of children, who then depend, mainly for economic support, on their grandparents who should depend on their own children. Or, the households are child-headed. These children are at a greater risk of illness, abuse

## Africa *(a poem)*

Africa is the second biggest continent in the world.  
Funky are the costumes.  
Rhythmic is the music.  
I would like to go there.  
Countless amounts of different animals.  
Africa is an interesting country.

Alexis McGivern





# Darfour

## Shall We Watch As History Repeats Itself?

**T**he situation in Darfur has been on going for about 2 years, during which time an estimated 1.2 million people have been displaced and 400,000 killed. What we recognize as torture, rape, arson, theft and brutal slaughter are considered commonplace and during this 2 year massacre the United Nations has refused to classify it as genocide.

### History

Land acquisition has always been problematic in Darfur but has never resulted in all out war between tribes. The various ethnic groups inhabiting Darfur have lived relatively peacefully up until the last 3 years. Two rebel groups formed (the Sudan Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement) in response to a regime imposed by the government that was suppressing Africans living in Sudan. To combat the rebel groups, a pro-Arab militia group began to raid villages and target Africans. This group has been linked to the Sudanese government, although they deny it. The Sudanese government admits to allowing "self-defence militia groups" to be formed, but the Janjaweed are accused of "aiming to cleanse areas of black Africans". This is a crime of genocide but when a team from the United Nations went into Darfur they pronounced that war crimes had been and were being committed but that it was not an intentional attempt to wipe out an individual ethnic race.

### Present Circumstance

Refugee camps have been established but accounts of women leaving to search for water and being raped or killed are flooding in. The Janjaweed often raid the camps and an estimated 90% of the female population has been raped. Food and water are not available and the camps are not secure by any means. Reportedly, government aircraft have carried out air raids, dropping bombs on villages. Ceasefires have been reached but broken quickly, the situation worsens by the day.

### What is being done?

The United Nations has referred the case of Darfur to the International Criminal Court but has not classified it as genocide. Colin Powell, recently U.S.

Secretary of State, has been quoted as referring to it as genocide and the U.S. strongly believe that genocide is taking place in Darfur. A report has been published which lists crimes such as "killing of civilians, enforced disappearances, destruction of villages, rape and other forms of sexual violence, pillaging and forced displacement, throughout Darfur". This report has been rejected by the Sudanese government and branded as slanderous and incorrect, while the rebel groups, fighting the Janjaweed, claim that the report does not even begin to uncover and expose the truth. Refugee camps are being set up but poverty is going to strike hard in the next few years as nothing is being provided and camps are not protected.

### Whose responsibility?

- Whose responsibility does it become when thousands of people are dying?
- Should the international community intervene?
- Why has genocide not become a thing of the past?
- Why have mistakes not been learnt from?
- Should the United Nations be a more prominent figure in global affairs?
- Whose duty is it to ensure that goals are met?
- Should negligence towards them be reprimanded?
- Are we making the most of the resources that we have access to?

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS!  
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT OBLIGATIONS?

**Rose Rea, 16, La Grande-Boissière,  
Geneva, Switzerland**



# Female Circumcision

Following the article in *Earth Focus* Number 26, Africa, here is personal testimony and a more in-depth explanation of Female Excision (Female Circumcision/Female Genital Mutilation).

***"I was genitally mutilated at the age of ten.... I was taken to a very dark room and undressed... I was then carried by two strong women to the site for the operation. I was forced to lie flat on my back by four strong women, two holding tight to each leg. Another woman sat on my chest to prevent my upper body from moving. A piece of cloth was forced in my mouth to stop me screaming...The pain was terrible and unbearable... I was badly cut and lost blood... I was genitally mutilated with a blunt penknife...After the operation, no one was allowed to aid me to walk. The stuff they put on my wound stank and was painful... Each time I wanted to urinate, I was forced to stand upright. The urine would spread over the wound and would cause fresh pain all over again... I was not given any anesthetic in the operation to reduce my pain, nor any antibiotics to fight against infection. Afterwards, I hemorrhaged and became anemic. This was attributed to witchcraft. I suffered for a long time from acute vaginal infections..."***

***Hannah Koroma of Sierra Leone***

Each year, 2 million girls suffer the same fate. Right now, over 140 million women worldwide are living with the disfiguring and dangerous results of this practice. Significantly, female excision is forced primarily upon infants and adolescents, rarely is it performed upon women of eighteen years and older. In most cases, female excision is not the result of an adult woman's free, informed and mature consent, but rather is a practice upon young girls by adults who were similarly forced to undergo this life-altering procedure when they were children.

Female excision is an issue that crosses geographic, religious and cultural boundaries. Although practiced primarily in Africa, female excision also exists in the Middle East and parts of Asia. A region's cultural and ancestral background characterises which one of the three types of female excision is performed. Sunna circumcision, the removal of the tip of the clitoris, and/or the prepuce, is said to be the least painful of the three. clitoridectomy, the removal of the clitoris, the prepuce and the adjacent labia is most frequently performed in urban areas, whereas infibulation, the most extreme form of female excision where a



clitoridectomy is performed and then the vulva is sewn up, is most common in rural areas.

Whether performed in rural or urban communities, female excision poses extreme health hazards, many of which are unavoidable. Immediate physical effects include shock, hemorrhage and infection. Possible effects of both clitoridectomy and infibulation include intermittent bleeding, abscesses, tumors of the nerves and death. In the case of infibulation, where only a small opening, the size of a matchstick head is left open, urinary tract infections, reproductive tract infections, urethra, kidney and bladder stones, and infertility are possible side effects. Due to the physical changes made by infibulation on a woman's body emptying a full bladder can take up to seven hours



and menstruation up to 4 weeks. The majority of excision rituals are performed by local village women, or witch doctors, under non-sterile conditions.

The effects of female excision are only a prelude to the difficulties an excised woman must face. Infibulation, the most degrading form of excision, causes sexual intercourse and birth to be not only very painful but also dangerous. Moreover, sexual stimulation/enjoyment is extremely changed for there is no clitoris, making orgasms unlikely. Even worse, before penetration is possible, the vagina needs to be either cut with a sharp tool or ripped through forceful penetration. 15% of Sudanese women have reported cutting necessary for penetration on their wedding night. After sex, re-infibulation, re-sewing of the vulva and the application of local herbs, takes place for two reasons, to guaranty faithfulness and to make the wife "tight" again for her husband. Re-infibulation also takes place after childbirth.

Amidst the pain and extreme health dangers connected with female excision, one must ask why? Why would any culture permit, let alone force, such a practice upon girls. According to Mrs. Njeri, a Kenyan defender of the practice, "Circumcision makes women clean, promotes virginity and chastity and guards young girls from sexual frustrations by deadening their sexual appetite." An Egyptian woman further explained, "We are circumcised and insist on circumcising our daughters so that there is no mixing between male and female..." Another, frequently expressed view is that the labia and clitoris are male parts of a woman's body and therefore their removal enhances a woman's femininity. This kind of attitude and way of seeing the sex roles is common. If a



powerless child is forced to undergo such pain, degradation and disfigurement then, as responsible global citizens, we must protect the most vulnerable members of our society and forbid the practice.

Female excision has been practiced in African societies for thousands of years. It is part of a woman's belonging to and acceptance in her culture and society may have to respect a woman's decision to undergo excision.

Nevertheless, whether the cultural justifications are valid or not, the decision to be excised is one that has such drastic personal consequences that it should only be made by un-coerced mature woman. Undeniably, female excision has deep cultural roots; nonetheless, the practice is barbaric resulting in pain and mutilation. It should be understood that notwithstanding the pain and mutilation, society might have to respect an adult woman's decision to undergo excision because it is so deeply rooted in culture. It is the responsibility of society to protect those unable to protect themselves. Whether the cultural justifications are valid or not, the decision to be excised is one that has such drastic, personal and lasting consequences, that it should be made only by mature, un-coerced, women. We should recognize that the imposition of female excision upon girls under the age of 18 constitutes an assault on a child and should be banned worldwide.

**Hannah Fregolle and  
Morgan Lafferty, 17, U.S.A.,  
Research: Gavin Yerxa, 17, U.S.A. and  
Pieter Boerma, 17, The Netherlands  
La Grande-Boissière, Geneva, Switzerland**

## Migration Poem

'Someone please help me'  
As I look around and search for  
A place that I can call my home  
I have no friends, no family  
I feel so alone  
From place to place I move around  
Searching the street  
For a city or town  
That will take me in  
And not persecute me

For my religious beliefs  
I don't ask for much  
Just respect  
To live a life of liberty  
What am I? A refugee  
Someone please help me.

**Alicia Allen, 15, USA/France and  
Hana Tabusa, 15, U.K./Japan**



# Food at School

**O**ur school is called Boni Consilii Mabamba Secondary School. It is a girls school and is situated in Kibondo District, Kigoma Region in Tanzania. This school is comprised of students from Form 1 to Form 6. The students sleep and get their meals at the school. The food we eat is not cooked by students, but is prepared by the cooks who are men employed by the school.

At our school, we usually take porridge at 9.30 a.m. every morning, which is made up of ground maize. At lunchtime, we have ugali. This is also made of maize, but maize that has been turned into flour. The flour has been put into boiling water and stirred until it becomes stiff and hard, which is then eaten as ugali. We usually take it with beans, which are sometimes mixed with vegetables, like cabbage and salad vegetables. The oil used in cooking is palm oil.

At 6.30 p.m., we take the same meal. In general, we eat like this everyday, except on Sunday evening, when we have rice and beans, and Saturday evening, when we have small fish or beans with ugali or with cassava (the thick roots of a tropical plant which can be eaten raw or cooked).

We students at Boni Consilii appreciate these



meals because they contain almost all the nutrients needed by the body, they are not expensive and they are naturally obtained.

**Leonía Kagoma, 21, Tanzania, Boni Consilii Mabamba Secondary School, Tanzania**



## Country

I know a country, of which I love  
A good country, full of harmony and peace  
Good leadership, is within this country  
Can you tell the name of this country?

This country is on the African continent  
Well situated in the eastern part  
Together with two neighbours, they make East Africa  
Can you tell the name of this country?

How beautiful is the country  
Conducive environment, with a good climate  
You can't believe the wonders of this country  
Can you give the name of this country?

Second deepest lake borders its west  
Second largest lake is found in the north  
Second highest mountain is also in the north  
Can you tell the name of this country?

Without fighting, it got its independence  
Twelfth of December, in Nineteen Sixty-One  
Obviously this country is a peaceful country  
Can you tell the name of this country?

Not only geographers, but also students  
Don't be lazy, look for this country  
Make an investigation into this country  
Where possible, you are most welcome.

**Paschazia Mezese, 18**



# Recipes From Kenya

Recipes from *The Little Kenya Cookbook*, put together by 7 students and their teacher, from Collège Claparède, Geneva, Switzerland (Facultative class – 'English World-Wide'). The proceeds from the sale of this book are going to the action 'One Child, One Tree' a Maasai Educational Discovery in Narok, Kenya.



## MAHARAGWE

Spiced red beans in coconut milk.  
Makes 4 – 6 servings.

1 cup dried red kidney beans (can use tinned)  
2 medium yellow onions, chopped  
1 – 2 tablespoons oil  
2 – 3 tomatoes, chopped  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons turmeric  
3 chili peppers ground into a paste (over 1 1/2 teaspoons of cayenne pepper)  
2 cups coconut milk (tinned, or extracted from dried).

**Cover** in a large pot the dried beans with water and simmer until they are just tender (if you are using tinned beans, drain the beans and rinse them).

**Sauté** the onions in oil until they are golden brown.

**Add** the chopped tomatoes, turmeric, peppers, salt and coconut milk and cook together.

**Serve** over rice.



## CORN BREAD

Can eat with honey or jam; or can serve with a stew or soup, makes 4 – 6 servings.

2/3 of a cup corn meal (fine polenta)  
4 teaspoons baking powder  
1 cup wheat flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1 egg, beaten  
2 tablespoons melted margarine  
1/2 cup milk

Heat oven to 350° F.

**Sieve** the corn meal, flour, baking powder, sugar and salt into a bowl.

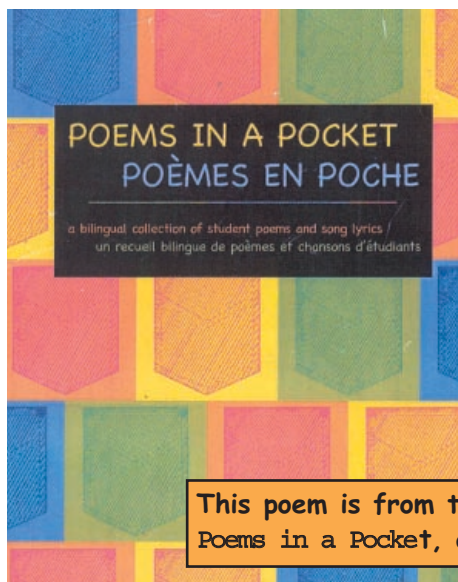
**Add** the beaten egg, melted margarine and enough milk to make a stiff mixture.

**Mix** well together and spoon it into a greased loaf or cake tin.

**Spread** the mixture evenly and cook the bread for about 25 minutes.

**Leave** it to cool before serving.

**With thanks to:** Idriss Air- Bouziad, Natacha Borsa, Kelsey Cook, Marina Corsini, Juliette Descombes, Laetitia Ovaknine, Céline Rothlisberger et Joy Kündig



This poem is from the soon-to-be published  
**Poems in a Pocket, a Book of bilingual poems.**

# RIVERS

Gushing through mountains  
And out into lakes,  
Connected to fountains and swallowed by caves.  
Smothered in richness of crystal clear water.  
These wonderful waters that we dare not slaughter.  
Out from the lakes they break into streams,  
Joining the waters that slither and scream,  
But what is this, it seems as a potion?  
But no, I don't think so, for it is the ocean!

**Jonathan Granger**  
Austrian, English, 5th-English



## Fanny, My Special Friend

My special friend is very important to me. She knows how to listen to me and understand. She is very honest with me, telling me the things that are important to her. She is a loyal friend whom I can trust. She is a loving and caring. When I have a problem she helps me solve it. She is calm and never raises her voice. She is great fun when I am bored. Sometimes we have fights but she always talks to me and explains why she was mad. When I am sad she calms me down and talks to me. She is a very sweet girl, very peaceful and comforting. She's creative and amusing, always laughing. We have a lot of fun things in common, she loves working, reading and playing the piano, even her name is almost the same as mine.

Fanny is the best friend that I need.

**Tiffany, 8,**  
Les Marronniers, Geneva, Switzerland



# United Nations Millennium Development Goals

During the end of the 20th century, leaders from around the world realised that the fight against poverty could only be won through a concerted approach. The policies designed to combat it must not only focus on reducing absolute poverty, but also on improving basic education, gender equality and health care to ensure equal opportunities, and fostering a spirit of co-operation and environmental consciousness to ensure that the hard-earned success will be sustainable.

These are the aspirations that led to a series of UN-supported conferences in the 1990s, culminating in the signing of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 by 191 member states. In doing so, all the sovereign states of the UN agreed to individually contribute to reach the following objectives by 2015:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education

3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

However, it was unclear how these ambitious targets were to be met. The most recent progress reports by the UN suggest that many countries are lagging behind; Sub-Saharan Africa is regressing in many fields, and progress is unequal in other parts of the world. It seems that only Latin America will be able to achieve these goals by 2015.

Sebastien Arnold, 17,  
La Châtaigneraie, Geneva, Switzerland.

## Tanzania

### Millennium Development Goals

Tanzania is a large country in Africa, twice the size of California, but it is one of the poorest countries in the world. The population of Tanzania is 36 million people. The United Nations' Millennium Developments Goals aim to reduce poverty and improve health and education. There are 8 goals for the year 2015 and this year Tanzania and many other countries are taking stock of their progress.

#### Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

In Tanzania, it will be hard to halve the percentage of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, because the Tanzania's economy would need to grow by 4-5% every year. Poverty means living on less than one dollar per day. Tanzania is an agricultural country, and many farmers have small plots and suffer from drought or poor soil. The government plans to spend



more time helping the most deprived regions, which are mostly drought prone. Above all, Tanzania needs markets for their products and good roads to transport goods and people.



School children from the Ngudu-Kwimba, Mwanza region Tanzania have just received their copies of *Earth Focus* which were provided by our generous corporate sponsors.

### **Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**

It will be difficult to reach universal primary education by 2015. If only more schools could be built, it would be possible for education to be more far-reaching. Also, very few children move from primary to secondary school, especially girls. Parents have too little money to support their children and the quality of primary education is too poor.

### **Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower for women**

Equality between men and women in basic education is not a large problem in Tanzania. The gender gap becomes clear when secondary school enrolment occurs, because most girls drop out of school at a higher rate than boys. Pregnancy is one cause. Many families in Tanzania consider girls' secondary education to be a poor investment, given that girls get married and leave home. There are very few female members of parliament.

### **Goal 4: Reduce child mortality**

Statistics show that Tanzania's under-five mortality rate is high, as much as 15% of children die before their fifth birthday, and has actually increased during the nineties. There are many causes. Poor health of the mothers leads to a low birth weight; water and sanitation is poor, diarrhoea is common; mosquitoes are everywhere and malaria is common; health services are often far away and pneumonia can be deadly.

### **Goal 5: Improve maternal health**

In Tanzania, the major causes of maternal deaths are unsafe abortion, anaemia, high blood pressure (eclampsia), bleeding after birth and infections. Progress towards reducing the maternal mortality

rate is slow because there aren't enough hospitals, and many facilities lack basic equipment and supplies and qualified midwives. There are also harmful traditional practices which they are unable to stop because they have become traditional.

### **Goal 6: Ensure environmental sustainability**

Tanzania has a rich natural environment with some 23% of its territory established as protected areas to conserve its biodiversity. The challenge is to increase public awareness of environmental issues, but there are clear signs that the government's recent efforts to increase public awareness about the importance of environmental management and conservation are bearing fruit.

### **Goal 7: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

In Tanzania there are 1.6 million people living with HIV/AIDS, and 160,000 deaths happen each year because of HIV/AIDS. Thousands of children become orphans because their parents die. Many now live with their grandparents. There is a great lack of awareness of such devastating diseases. Since the country is a developing country, the economy is not strong enough to buy and sell medicines for treatment or promote awareness campaigns which demonstrate, for example, condom use and other methods of preventing diseases. 95% of Tanzania's population between the ages of 15- 49 are generally aware of HIV/AIDS. However, if they are infected, they are not aware of having the disease. In order to change the situation, all people must know how to avoid the disease, protect others and get treatment when needed.

### **Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development**

In order to promote global development, all countries need to help each other to reach certain goals. There are several areas which need help in developing, but this requires a global partnership and help from other countries, especially rich countries. The economies can only provide jobs and more incomes for poor people if global markets open up. Health and education systems can only improve if aid is given to countries like Tanzania. Only then will the country be able to deliver services to everyone, men and women, rich and poor, which will help prevent disease and the spreading of disease.

**Inge Boerma, 16, The Netherlands,  
La Grande-Boissière, Geneva, Switzerland**



# The Environment and a Poem for the Earth

Nazli Deniz Ersoz, 10, Turkey - For UNEP's global art competition

The Earth gives us food, clean air, water and with the Sun these are the things we need in order to have a good life. Instead, we treat the Earth as our dustbin. Because of people who litter, cut down trees and don't replace them, don't recycle and don't use cleaner fuel, acid rain and global warming increase.

Because the trees take in carbon dioxide (from the air we breathe out) when they are cut down the carbon dioxide goes back up into the atmosphere. The problem is that the carbon dioxide prevents the heat from the Sun from going back up to space. Global warming increases because the gases we burn cannot escape and that makes the earth warm up so that natural disasters caused by climate change happen more frequently. Not only does pollution harm the earth it can also affect humans, air pollution can cause diseases like cancer, bronchitis, emphysema and asthma because we breathe in dirty air.

A quarter of medicines are made from rainforest plants and if you cut them down and don't replace them that medicine is lost forever. In Europe over 50 million tons of paper a year is used and forests are not replenished. People in different countries are taking action to stop forests from being destroyed, in Australia people buried themselves in the ground to stop the loggers' trucks from reaching a forest.

The ozone layer that is around 20 km above earth, is a blue gas that cleans water and smells like garlic.

It's there to prevent the full heat of the Sun's rays from hitting the Earth, so it is safe to be in the sunshine. Pollution can make a hole in the ozone layer, allowing more Ultra Violet rays to penetrate, causing skin disease and affecting climate and plants.

Three quarters of the Earth is water. Much of that water is being polluted as a result of dumping rubbish, making the water unsafe to drink and killing living things.

Ways to help:

- Take showers instead of baths
- Recycle
- Use Cleaner Fuels
- Use public transport
- If you cut down trees replant them
- Plant extra trees
- Don't litter

**Melanie Adamsons, 12, Canadian,  
La Châtaigneraie, Geneva, Switzerland**

## THE EARTH (a poem)

The Earth is our future our past our present  
It begins our life and ends it  
It gives us joy and sadness  
It's the reason that we live right now  
Yet it is slowly being destroyed  
Because of us



# Child Abuse

In the United States, a young girl was chained to her bed for literally five years until the police were notified. A New Zealand toddler was physically abused by his angry father and suffered a skull fracture, which resulted in death after the decision to switch off his life support machine. These horrific stories are two of the many cases of child abuse that are happening all the time around the world. Child abuse and neglect is defined by the American Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act as, "at a minimum, any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm." Physical, educational, or emotional neglect is the failure of parents or caregivers to provide a child with basic needs. An example of emotional abuse would be a case such as tying a child to a chair for a long period of time or, more specifically, any acts of failures by a parent or caregiver that has caused or could cause emotional, behavioural, cognitive or mental disorders. Physical abuse is causing any physical injury to a child, which may or may not be intentional. Sexual abuse is any inappropriate sexual behaviour with a child (laws vary worldwide).

Thankfully, most children never have to encounter abuse, though it does happen to a significant number and for this reason must be publicised. Americans in general are aware of child abuse because of media attention. However, there are still many unreported cases, not only in the United States, but all over the world. Concern has been raised in New Zealand lately over under-reporting of child abuse from doctors and teachers. In the United States, the death rate due to child abuse and the number of reported child abuse cases have increased significantly. Many children are left with physical and psychological scars as a result of child abuse each year; scars which remain as adults. Children are also often too afraid to tell someone they are being abused, feel they have no one to tell, or are ignored when they try to explain their situation. There are organizations in many countries which help to prevent child abuse (UNICEF as a worldwide example), however there is only so much that they are able to do.



Educating parents, caregivers, and even children from an early age seems to be the only real solution to the problem, and many governments are making an effort to provide information to people responsible for children and children themselves. Child abuse can and must be prevented, but the problem must be publicised before it can be stopped.

If you or anyone else you know of is being abused you must inform someone you trust, or use a telephone book to find the contact details of an organisation that will help you. If someone tells you that he or she is being abused, treat the complaint seriously and make sure they receive help.

If you live in the UK, and need help, you can call **CHILDLINE UK** at 0800 1111. It is the UK's national helpline for children and young people in trouble or danger.

**Katy McDonald,  
La Grande-Boissière, Geneva, Switzerland**



# Walk for Aceh

**B**andung International School, West Java had a "Walk for Aceh". A number of students from both middle and high school participated in order to raise money for Aceh through sponsorship. The walk was arranged for a long term project in which BIS will help in the reconstruction of a school in Aceh and establish a relationship with the students there.

A long strenuous walk amongst the beautiful hills of Bandung got all the students and some teachers to push themselves to the limit. We ended the walk with a barbeque to conclude a successful experience.

**Meera Narayanasamy, Grade 10**  
**Bandung International School**



# Earth Week & Unity and Diversity Day

**O**ur theme for this year's Earth week celebration was "Global Warming and the Kyoto Treaty ". It was an interdisciplinary unit that involved a few subjects such as Social studies, Science, Art, P.E, etc. For each subject there were activities including, for Social studies, research and interactive games into Global Warming and the Kyoto Treaty. In Science, students were studying about the greenhouse gases and the carbon cycle.

For Unity and Diversity day middle school and high school students were divided into groups. Each group had to make up a name, logo, jingle, slogan and skit to promote awareness of Global Warming and its impact. Groups also created a B.I.S treaty. The BIS treaty focused on what our school community needs to do to reduce the impact of Global

Warming. It will be ratified by the Environmental Club and Student council.

After eating the different varieties of delicious international food there were cultural performances from all corners of the globe. Students from grade 7 & 8 then took elementary students and taught them several cultural interactive games from all over the world.

Once again our Unity and Diversity Day / Earth week was a big success !!

**Sharon Schumacher, Gr.8**





# The India Project

## Background

The India Projects were started in 2002 by Kate and Dave Harrison at the La Châtaigneraie campus of the International School of Geneva (Ecolint). The projects are located in and around Kodaikanal Hill Station- in the eastern Ghat Mountains of Tamil Nadu state in southern India. The students who participate take part in a variety of fundraising activities before the trip to support the projects. They pay for their own travel costs and accommodation. The group usually comprises students from grades 10 and 11 at both la Châtaigneraie and La Grande-Boissière providing a unique opportunity for students from different campuses to work together.

## The Projects

We work together with the Betsy Elizabeth Trust - a local non-profit organisation which runs the three crèches that we support. The crèche concept was started by the Trust with the opening of the Grace Kids Centre in 1990.

The crèches provide day-care, nutritious food and basic education for young children thus allowing their mothers to go out to work, often as farm labourers, and so earn precious income for their families. Older children are then freed from caring for younger siblings and can attend school and local teachers, together with other school staff, gain employment.

## Childcare and Education

Children at the crèches are fed three nutritious meals each day including fruit, vegetables, milk and eggs. At home they have little to eat other than rice.

Songs, rhymes, dance, stories and group games are taught to the children by a trained teacher. Older children are also taught to read and write.

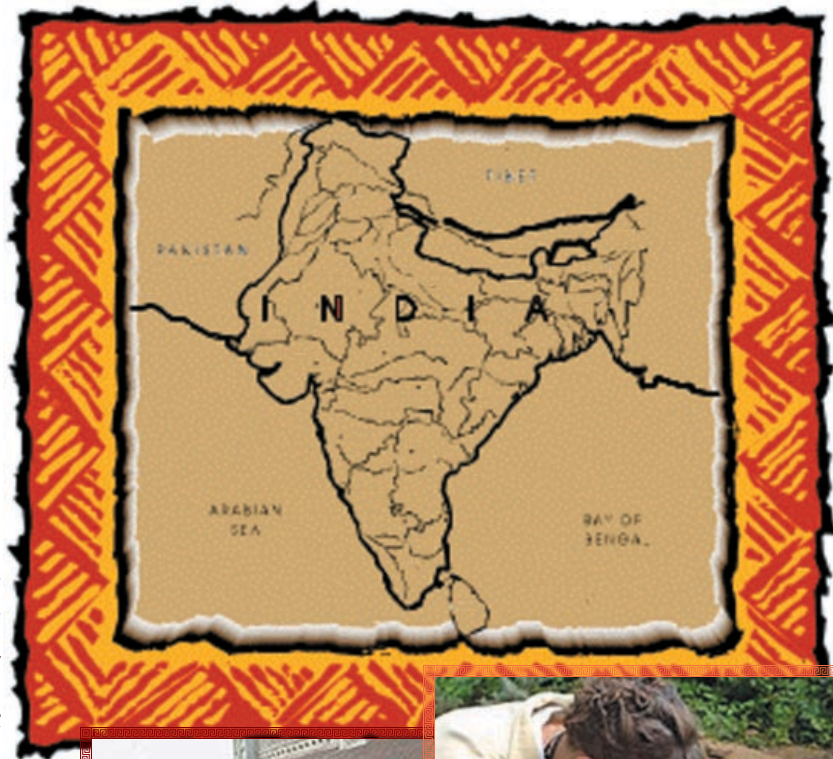
The children are instructed in basic hygiene such as bathing, washing hands after toilet use and washing their hair. Parent seminars are conducted

once a month on health issues such as clean drinking water, treatment for dysentery ( the main cause of death in children under the age of 5 in the area), childbirth, nutrition and vaccinations.

## New Projects

These projects were initiated at all three crèches in 2005:

- Monthly measurement of children's height and weight which is very important for monitoring diet. The information is displayed on a large chart within each crèche.
- Organic gardening of beet and tomatoes – using a natural combined fertiliser / insecticide / fungicide. The recipe is based on one traditionally used by Indian farmers in the plains of Tamil Nadu state.
- Working with crèche children to produce quilt designs. These will be sold by the trust to raise funds.
- To provide foam mattresses for all crèches for the children to sleep on during their afternoon nap. Coconut mats on concrete or mud floors do not keep out the cold.







### Little Lilies Crèche

This crèche is in the village of Palangi, about 5km from the town of Kodaikanal. It was opened after considerable hard work by students from the International School of Geneva in 2002 providing day-care for 25 children. Since the last visit, a new kitchen has been built to increase classroom space. Most funds for rent, staffing and maintenance are raised by Ecolint students. Some money is received from other donors.

Students this year painted all the interior walls of Little Lilies (some beautiful murals)- a constant need when the walls are plastered with mud. They also constructed a fenced area for chickens that provide eggs for the crèche, and funded the construction of an additional storage area currently being built to free up classroom space.

### Peach Tree Crèche

This crèche is also in the village of Palangi. It was opened by Ecolint students in 2003, and now provides day-care for 35 children. Funds for rent, staffing and maintenance are raised entirely by Ecolint students. We are delighted that after the opening of the Peach Tree the local government made the decision to provide clean piped water to the crèche and the surrounding village houses.

Students this year constructed an outside covered walkway to protect the children from the monsoon rain when they use the toilet - this is especially important since many children may have only one change of clothes in addition to their school uniform. The construction of a swing and permanent painted hopscotch grids on the roof of the crèche has encouraged the children to exercise more.

### Grace Kids Centre

This crèche is in the hill station of Kodaikanal. It was the first crèche opened by The Betsy Elizabeth Trust in 1990, and now provides day-care for 50 children. The centre is funded mainly by outside donors.

The trust asked us to fund and construct some play equipment for the children - an empty yard does not provide many incentives for children to exercise. The result: construction of two swings, a slide and a sandpit.

### Sheep in a Jeep

Students from the International School of Geneva worked on this centre in 2002. The factory and shop produce and sell textile products to the many tourists in Kodaikanal Hill Station. The centre provides a safe haven for single women who have been rejected by their families and/or husbands for various reasons, and a way for them to be financially independent.

No work was carried out on the centre this year, since it is now self-sufficient.

### Thamaraikulan (tribal village)

The villagers are supported by a local non-profit organisation called ACT (Action for Communities of Tribals in India), but receive little or no help from local government.

Fruit trees planted by Ecolint students in 2002 have grown five metres, and are now producing fruit for the village.

Students this year donated clothing to the villagers and agreed to fund the cost of a teacher for the village school for a year - education is essential if levels of health, hygiene and literacy are to rise.

### Where the money goes (\$1 = Sfr. 125, €1 = Sfr 1.50)

<b>Funds raised by Ecolint students:</b>	<b>SFr 11,935</b>
<b>Rent, salaries, food etc. for peach tree and little lilies up to May 2005:</b>	<b>SFr. 2,936</b>
<b>Peach Tree crèche-building materials etc.:</b>	<b>SFr. 459</b>
<b>Little Lilies crèche - building materials etc.:</b>	<b>SFr. 408</b>
<b>Grace Kids centre- building materials etc.:</b>	<b>SFr. 397</b>
<b>Tribal Village - teacher's salary for one year:</b>	<b>SFr. 655</b>

### Funds remaining

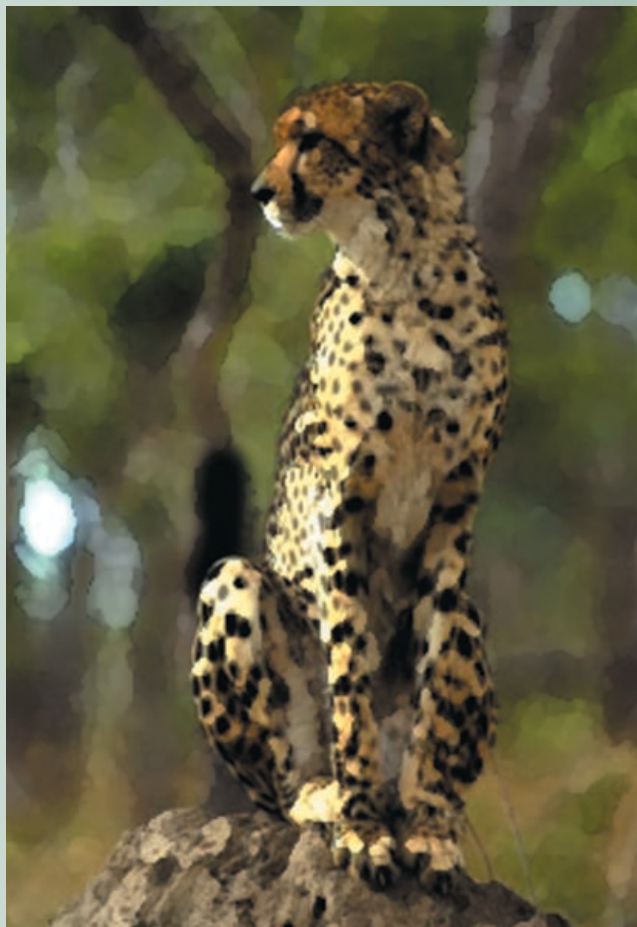
These remaining funds will be used to pay for any unexpected costs that come up over the next year. About SFr. 6,000 will be used in rent, salaries etc for the crèches over the coming year.

# What if you were wiped out from this planet?

**Y**ou probably would not want that to happen would you. Well some animals have no choice, because they cannot just stand up and protest. They are hunted until there is no one left. For example, the cheetah almost died out only a few decades ago. It did not have any natural predators before the humans started hunting it, so that is probably why it dropped in numbers so quickly. Environmentalists just saved it by setting up protected areas for it to live in. It was hunted for its valuable fur that became a luxury garment because the cheetah was very rare.

The cheetah is now much more abundant than it was when it was close to extinction. It lives in the savannas of Africa. The cheetah is the fastest land animal in the world. In its short but extremely fast "dashes" for its prey, it can reach 110 km/h. It hunts mostly antelopes but also other animals. The cheetahs hunt in non-dense groups. They behave a little like the lions, in the sense of group behavior. They hunt and kill their prey by slowly walking towards a big group of, for example, antelopes and surround them. The leader cheetah then springs up and runs towards the middle of the herd. All the other cheetahs in the group also do this when they see the leader do it. The result is that they all spring towards the big herd of prey at once. They will all target the one prey that the leader attacks. Then the five cheetahs attack that one animal at the same time, it makes it almost impossible for the cheetahs to fail. When the cheetahs have shared the kill, they normally go and rest in a shadow of a tree.

This little story of the cheetah is just one of the many endangered species. About 100 species become extinct every year, if you count all the tiny mosquitoes and bugs, of which there are millions of species. Even if you do not count all these insects, there are still many birds and mammals that will become extinct every year. All species that become extinct can NEVER come back! Therefore, the only way to conserve them, and let our next generations experience these great animals, is to help them survive. To do this there are several ways to contribute.



First of all, you can contribute in your own area. You can recycle waste so that you pollute less. You can also influence others to adopt a more environmentally friendly life style. You can join in animal rights protests and make your voice heard in society. You can write letters to governments, asking them to improve on endangered animal protection. You can also join and/or contribute to organizations that help endangered species. These organizations use different methods to save animals. Some try to buy land and safe keep that land for the benefit of the endangered species by making it a nature reserve. Others just help gather money for other organizations.

**Oskar Weigl, 13,  
Stockholm International School**



## Help the Giant Pandas Retain their Habitat

**T**he Giant Panda used to live in peace, eating bamboo but because China has become over populated and crowded there is so little space left for the pandas they might soon be facing extinction!

These animals are about 150cm in length, can weight up to 110kg and their average lifespan is 20-25 years. They are herbivores and their diet consists of different types of bamboo. Did you know that a panda can eat 12 to 18kg bamboo a day?

The Pandas live in the Southwest China to the east of the Tibetan plateau, where they have a habitat that is only about 1,200 m and 3,400 m in size. The Pandas used to live in river valleys that were at lower elevations but now the humans have taken over these places leaving the Giant Panda a very small habitat, which is the reason the specie is becoming extinct. There are only 1,600 individuals in the wild left! But that is not the only reason why



The Panda is getting extinct, The Pandas breeding season takes place only from March to May, which means they don't have a lot of time to breed so that the population does not increase much during breeding season.

Because the region where the Giant Panda lives is shared by the Panda and 400 million people, whose ancestors have utilized the region's natural resources for millennia. These people need the panda because it attracts tourism, and if the panda were to survive the protection of its habitat will ensure that people living in the region continue to reap the ecotourism benefits for many generations.

The solution to this problem would be to create a national park or a nature reserve so that the Pandas could live in peace like they used to.

**Jannika Tynkkynen, 13.  
Stockholm International School**

### The Tortures of Animal Testing – a poem

We smother them in gloss,  
We act like we're their boss.

We pencil their eyes thick,  
Their cries sound so sick.

A mascara that doesn't clog,  
It is worth the life of a dog?

Suffering mice,  
We do every test twice.

A lady's foundation that looks matte,  
Causes the torturing of a poor cat.

When you're having a smoke,  
Think of a beagle starting to choke.

All animals - small or tall,  
Have a right - the right to fight.

**Lucy White**

# Book Reviews

## Voyage De Reve/Journey Of Dreams

### A Bilingual Collection Of Poems And Lyrics



Art Gecko-Harmony Editions,  
Prangins, 2005 (52pp.)  
Suisse (ISBN 2-9700507-0-6)

Andrew Hampton Pickens was born in Geneva in 1991. He is a student at the International School of Geneva and is bilingual in French and English.

Andrew was awarded the "Young Hope" poetry prize at Meyrin's Artemis Cultural Centre, Switzerland, in November 2004.

His poems have been published in Britain, France and Switzerland. His poem "You and Me" was selected as a finalist in a French poetry competition and will be published in the French journal, "Isis."

The poem, "**A Rock To Kick Around**", is taken from his book 'Voyage de Reve' which is being sold in aid of the Charity: SOS Street Children in Vietnam.

### A ROCK TO KICK AROUND

There lies a rock,  
Right there below.  
We shall not know what lies under it.  
It knows.

A soft, but sharpened rock  
We see just a rock with a personality.  
Darkness is often known as fatal  
But brightness brings a rock to its battle.

We live a life kicking  
And throwing these rocks we don't know well.

So, here is something that might give  
You a kick or a flow.

Rocks might be dull, but they have  
A personality that might make you glow.

For more information please contact  
**Earth Focus:** nicola@earthfocus.org

### Human Rights Book



## The Cage

By Ruth Minsky Sender

I read a book called *The Cage* by Ruth Minsky Sender where human rights are violated.

It was one of the books the new high school I will be attending next year recommended I read. I'm really glad they recommended it because

I find the stories of World War II survivors very interesting and inspiring.

In the book the main character is a Jewish girl called Riva, who lives in the Lodz ghetto in Poland. She lives there with her family and other Jewish families. Everyday she has to witness her close friends being deported. There is also a shortage of doctors and medicine and Riva's own family begins to deteriorate. One day, though, Riva and the little family she has left were rounded up, deported to Auschwitz and separated.

Throughout the book Riva is beaten and deprived of her freedom. She is forced to work night and day with a lack of medical care and proper meals. Riva was deprived of her right to life, movement and religion. She was held as a slave and subjected to torture.

Christine - La Grande-Boissière, Switzerland

## Coming Soon in Future Issues

### Issue 29

#### Globalisation and Biodiversity

Contributions by end September 2005.

#### Brave New World

(topics such as genetics, future developments in transport and city life)

Contributions by early December 2005.

#### Sport and Fashion

Contributions by early February 2006.

#### Schools and Students

Contributions by end of June 2006.

#### Tourism

Contributions by September 2006.



# The most remarkable places on Earth are also the most threatened



[www.biodiversityhotspots.org](http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org)

Visit the award-winning environmental science  
web site by Conservation International