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EARTH FOCUS

One Planet-One Community



A Brave New World

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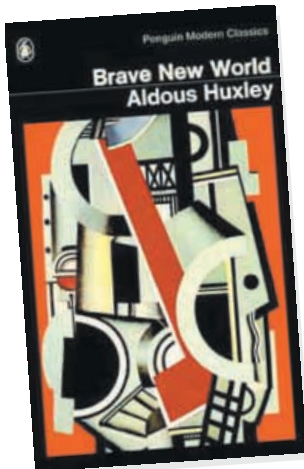


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Produced by Young People for Young People of All Ages

Brave New World



Editor's note,

The title of ***Brave New World***, a book that many have read as a classic of the 20th Century was chosen as the theme for this issue, bearing in mind that with the developments in technology and science our lives are changing rapidly, in most societies. We all know that our parents saw changes and our generation has quickly become used to communication technology that did not exist a short while ago. Many young people take this technology for granted and are now searching for a different way for the future.

In many of these articles the main theme that is motivating the writers is that—you can make a difference—however small, we can each help the planet in some way to be a better place for us and for future generations.

We hope that this issue of *Earth Focus* will make you feel a member of the team and give you ideas for being part of the Change.

Never have there been such amazing opportunities for progress in the world: inexpensive telecommunication and computer technologies shorten time and distance, and create all sort of new products, markets and ways of doing things. Science is making big leaps forward in biotechnology, neuroscience, nano-technology, advanced materials, and in many other fields. And the world is becoming more democratic (fewer authoritarian governments) and more balanced (absolute poverty has begun to drop significantly for the first time since 1820).

Yet we're entering into a brave new world where our planet's future suddenly raises some giant question marks. Just think: at the current rate, the planet's 6 billion inhabitants are using up the equivalent of 1.25 planets—by consuming energy, throwing waste into the environment, destroying plant and animal species, tinkering with the climate, and so forth. But in 50 years, some 9 billion people, living by yet higher living standards than today, will use the equivalent of almost 3 planets. Yet, as we all know, we only have one little planet to go by....

That's where your generation comes in: you must help create the new politics and the new planetary management methods that will do something about all this, and fast.

First, we need new politics where we are first planetary citizens, second national citizens, and third only local citizens—not the other way around, as now. It's your generation---the network generation—that can initiate this reversal. Mine does not have the right mindset to do it, I think.

Second, it's also your generation that can seriously improve on how we manage the planet with its endless possibilities, yet increasingly finite resources. The planetary management system we have in place

We must develop new instincts and politics across the planet, whereby each of us is first a global citizen, second a national citizen, and third a local citizen. Right now, we have it the other way around.

It's for these two reasons—the need for new, out-of-the-box methodologies and for a new mindset—that I am excited about the experiment started by some distinguished international schools. I can think of few educational projects as worthy of support.

today fails to solve most urgent global issues (just think of global warming, AIDS...) mostly because of a serious clash. This is the clash between the territorial perspective and short-term electoral cycles of the planet's 200-odd nation-states; and the non-territorial, long-term nature of the most urgent global issues we're facing.

But there are new approaches to surmounting this clash (I wish I had more room to get into them...), and I'm convinced that it will be your generation that will turn them into reality.

So in a way, you have quite a responsibility in this brave new world. Besides school, make sure you keep track of global issues by reading the important articles about them in the newspapers. And use your school years to prepare yourselves to be bold and creative on behalf of the planet...it surely needs it.

Jean-François Rischard

*Jean-François Rischard is the author of **High Noon: 20 Global Problems, 20 Years to Solve Them** in which he expresses his personal views on the future and documents the most urgent global issues of the decades to come. He has talked about the book and its ideas in some 50 TV and radio programmes in the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as at many international gatherings. His book is also available in French and German.*



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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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Summary of *Brave New World*

Brave New World is one of the most influential and powerful novels written in the 20th century based on a "dystopian society" (a "nightmare world").

Six hundred years into the future after "Ford" (AF—after Henry Ford's introduction of the Model T, the beginning of mass production) human life has been entirely industrialized. Humans now live in a totalitarian state controlled by the Government and its heads. Furthermore, universal happiness has been achieved. The new controllers have fabricated an ideal society through the means of clever brainwashing, the control of reproduction, genetic engineering and a drug named "Soma" that gives total pleasure and a sense of self-fulfillment. All members of

society are happy consumers. This involves buying new things, participating in various sport activities and enjoying the freedom and pleasures of sex with all. The main character, Bernard Marx, however, is probably amongst the few that see things differently. While enduring solitude and feeling unsatisfied with what life, the new life, has to offer, Bernard longs for freedom and the need to somehow break-free from the shackles of society. During his one-week visit in one of the remaining "Savage Reservation" in New Mexico, where the old and forgotten "imperfect life" still continues, Bernard suddenly realizes that his life is about to change...

**Axel Sursock, 17, Switzerland,
La Grande-Boissière, Geneva, Switzerland**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What Young People Have Done to Make a Change in Santo Domingo

Dear *Earth Focus*,

We received the magazines and are reading them with the help of a translator!

Cevima and Sabamar of the European Union organised a workshop in our community. After this experience, we felt the need to create a team that would work on the subjects that were discussed about the environment. The team is about 30 young people. We held a clean up and awareness day, distributed brochures and talked about the importance of caring for the environment to the local population. We also went to the local authorities to ask for an official to fine people who threw away litter in places other than the recuperation centre opposite the school.

Thanks to the help of many young people, we managed to integrate the values of protecting the environment through leadership, community teamwork and our own will.

We also had the kind help of some foreign students!

We also organised a reforestation campaign on the sides of the roads surrounding our area, for this we had the support of the local authorities.

Our latest project is to put up messages to encourage care for the environment in the school park so that students may support us in our efforts.

If you want to know more, please contact David Eduardo Batista Cevima (Sabamar) C/o of *Earth Focus* - address on masthead or email to nicola@earthfocus.org

David Eduardo Batista Cevima (Sabamar)





From a Small School in Uganda

Dear *Earth Focus*,

There is still a long way for developing countries to develop. Uganda is a former British Colony that became independent in 1962, it is referred to as the 'Pearl of Africa' and is located in East Africa. In our country we have many of the problems of the developing world, sadly poverty means a lack of education and we need to be educated to develop and assist the future generations and ourselves.

In Iyolwa, sub county Tororo a few individuals have started a private secondary school called 'Helping Hands Senior Secondary School'. The school is two years old, a mixed day school with a building of four classrooms and an office. We have eight teachers and 230 students, the school fees are U.S.\$50.00 per term but sometimes our students drop out as there are financial difficulties at home.

We are developing a programme to help the school, the students and others. This is the income generating activity of fish farming, we have made 20 fish ponds. The income generated will go to help orphans, mostly due to HIV/AIDS, and the disadvantaged students who wish to receive secondary education.

If there is any school that would like to give us other ideas we would be most grateful, all developing countries need a lot of help so that they can move a step forward.

**Joseph Odulla, Headmaster,
Helping Hands School in Tororo, Uganda**

Please contact *Earth Focus* who will put you in touch with Mr. Joseph Odulla, Headmaster of the Helping Hands School in Tororo, Uganda, East Africa.

Dear EDITOR,

I am a Cameroonian citizen of age 23. I am very interested in the development of youth in general and the African youth in particular. I am the Founder and President of a local youth organisation of 50 members over here in Buea, a small town found in the southwest province of Cameroon.

We try to help our community by carrying out small developmental projects that require mainly manpower, since we are unable to provide finance to carry out real projects.

One of our goals of linking with the world and other youth groups is to learn and share ideals on how we could operate better.

I happened to lay my hands on number 15 (2002) of your magazine *Earth Focus*, and was very grateful that such an idea existed, so I decided to start participating immediately.

I am very grateful for your ideas to promote youth. More grease to your elbow!

Foy Franklin Njoh, Buea, Cameroon

Our Tomorrow Lies in the Hands of Big Corporations

Who will solve the problem of constant climate change and deliver solutions that can help clean up the state of our planet?

"The answer", says US Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman, "lies in the hands of the private sector."

Does the Private Sector Hold the Reins?

During the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate that took place in Sydney, Australia, Mr. Bodman suggested that governments should help global businesses adopt clean and reliable technologies. The Partnership's goal is to ensure that these new forms of « clean » technology should alone, when created and exported to several economies in Asia, help reduce greenhouse gas emissions that disperse into the atmosphere.

Nevertheless, many observers who attended the meeting pointed out that companies or governments are not likely to adopt a policy involving these technologies due to of high costs. Furthermore, they believe Mr. Bodman's environmental policy will not survive due to the fact that the Partnership has not put forward any form of financial incentives, which means that there is no reward for companies which reduce their carbon output.

Why would a business adopt more expensive technology in the absence of financial incentives? "I believe that the people who run the private sector, who run these companies -they too have children, they too have grandchildren, they too live and breathe in the world", was Mr. Bodman's reply. "And they would like things dealt effectively; and that's what this is all about," he continued. The U.S. Energy Secretary also added that: "Those of us in government believe it is the job of government to create an environment such that the private sector can really do its work."

Governments set rules that deal with health and safety and other fields. They are now putting their interest within climate change. Real emissions are

derived from companies and industries. Though the policy's focus is mainly on reducing coal waste, Mr. Bodman also mentioned the role of nuclear power. Industry must take the first step towards a sustainable, clean and healthy future. They should be able to say to the rest of the world that in 50 years' time, our emissions will not be 50% higher than now. They must « embrace » new technology and use it wisely and not excessively.

Neither the U.S. nor Australia is taking responsibility for the climate change they have caused or will cause in the future. The Asia-Pacific Partnership has brought together all six nations: Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and the United States. The Partnership aims to bring economic growth as well as reducing gas emissions. Some suggest the policy will have little impact without the presence of any financial incentives. Other environmental groups believe the policy will persuade other nations away from the Kyoto Protocol process.

Authors Note: Costs, as well as financial incentives, should not be the issue during this time in our lives. Nevertheless, greed takes over everything in this case. Money is power and without it man loses himself. In actual fact, one can only hope that this meeting will be approved by all staff members and, hopefully, change the face of our earth in the near future; the Partnership's final decision will be the factor that affects our destiny.

Axel Sursock, 17, Switzerland, La Grande Boissière, Geneva, Switzerland



European Council of International Schools Conference



Marika Sciumbata, *International School of Milan, Italy*



Ines Gramegna, *International School of Luxembourg*



Philip Gerken, *International School of Dusseldorf, Germany*

At the European Council of International Schools Conference in November 2005 three students each made an appealing speech to the audience of 3000 people. Present were: H.R.H. Prince Edward, representing the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme, Mr. J-F. Rischard, author of *High Noon* and an audience and members of the teaching profession. We would like to share some excerpts of this exiting and inspiring day.

(The students had had the opportunity to meet and discuss with Mr. J-F. Rischard before they wrote their speeches).

The three speakers were: Marika Sciumbata, International School of Milan; Philip Gerken, International School of Düsseldorf; Ines Gramegna, International School of Luxembourg.

The following is a synopsis of their speeches.

We live in a cynical world where history and media imply that there is no hope. but the Global Issues Programme has proven to us that nothing is impossible, not even changing the world. Two years ago, we had a vision to support an Ethiopian school in need of aid. That vision has become a reality. **Nothing is impossible**, not even changing the world. We know, we have begun to do so.

However, it will be impossible if we stand isolated in our own solitary corners, facing the wall and with our back to the world.

All of our schools' mission statements focus on a

world in which we **all** must act as GLOBAL CITIZENS. The challenge is to become more aware of the issues which divide people and the commitment needed to implement teamwork and cooperation in order to strive to reduce inequalities between nations.

Some statistics

Over 20% of all children in the world do NOT have access to basic education

More than 3 million people died from AIDS in 2004

Half the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day.

We have to resist the temptation to accept these problems, as being part of the 'way things are': the permanent, unalterable state of affairs.

Mr Rischard has stated:

*"....our difficulties belong to the future, but our means of solving them, and our politics [and may **WE** add, our education], belong to the past. Yet, never have there been such **massive** opportunities for improving the human condition. So it's not a problem of lack of means or lack of solutions: it's a problem of methodology and mindset".*

In response to this, international schools provide local as well as outreach projects which give students not only the possibility to become aware of the different



cultural realities we share, but also practical experiences in developing countries, such as teaching in local schools or working in orphanages.

External organizations such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme recognise and encourage these endeavours, thus contributing to moulding us into mature young adults, part of a global community.

We are well aware that we face severe problems, which will have direct consequences if we do not act. We need the structures and guidance within the curriculum, as well as in our service projects, which will help empower us to implement solutions.

It is you, the teachers, tutors and educators, who must continue to promote an open-minded, global approach, encouraging us to put our ideas and ideals, into discussion; thus putting into practice the potential contribution we, as a network of international schools, **can** make to help solve the world's increasing problems.

Are we, the young people, ready to take the responsibility and commit ourselves not only to the developing world, but also to the future? The answer to this question is a resounding **YES!** We ask you, as international schoolteachers, to take the responsibility to create even greater opportunities for us to widen our political and cultural awareness.

Passion is the driving force of real commitment to all of those activities that will make a difference in the now, and in the tomorrow of the people whose lives we strive to improve – AND WE HAVE THAT PASSION!

This passion provides us with motivation and initiative, thus generating the impetus to make the most of our lives by creating the foundation for a better future.

Coming together to share our initiatives and our human resources requires **OUR PASSION and YOUR HELP.**

As Mr. Rischard affirmed, the onus of change is NOT, on the politicians, it is on the educators of today, and the educated of tomorrow.

The students of today will be the doctors, educators and politicians of tomorrow. Raising awareness of global problems today is the corner stone to making our contribution, tomorrow. It is this awareness that must be instilled in us from day one in order to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

Today's issues require solutions, which are increasingly difficult to implement; the challenges appear insurmountable but we believe that we accomplish in proportion to what we attempt. Do YOU?

The Global Issues Network is an attempt to link international schools across Europe with the aim of developing an awareness of global problems. The program is all about getting young people at international schools involved in understanding the problems of today and recognizing the problems of tomorrow. It is all about creating a sense of compassion in young people, creating not only consciousness but also conscience. **It is all about motivating young people to take action.**

We remember our first Global Issues Conference. Walking in through the big glass doors of State Street Bank in Luxembourg, entering the spacious conference room, the chairs arranged in a large circle just as in a business meeting. We felt intimidated and apprehensive: intimidated because we did not know what to expect and apprehensive because of the extent of the problems we would have to deal with. Yet, there was something inspirational about that conference as well: the fact that everyone there shared the same concern for the world and that everyone who came was keen on making a difference. After introducing the 20 global issues discussed in Mr. Rischard's book, **High Noon**, we divided into five subgroups, each representing one of the problems we believed to be the most critical: Education for all, Poverty, Global Infectious Diseases, Environmental Issues, and Water Scarcity. Each network represents a separate area of focus, but as we soon discovered, they are all interlinked. Attempting to solve one problem, would affect all other four networks as well.

Although passionate and committed, at first we lacked a focus, a common goal. Only by defining measurable goals can we achieve results. We decided to sponsor a school in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. To make this possible, the Global Issues program began working with the African Children's Education Trust, an NGO established in 1991 by Mr. David Stables, an NGO that has already worked in Tigray for eight years.

During our first year, we provided the Aderak School with cement floors, new desks, and blackboards. These minor improvements not only led to the enrolment of 500 more students, but also began to involve the entire Aderak community, as it mobilised the people of the area to support the school. We have not just helped one person or one school but we have managed to transform the Aderak community itself. The Global Issues Network enabled us, a group of passionate international school students, deeply concerned with the problems facing the world of today, to achieve our goal of tackling global issues on a personal scale.

Yet, the Global Issues Network is about far more than simply raising money. It focuses on promoting an awareness of global issues, on instilling a sense of urgency. Thus individual schools and their Global Issues Networks not only raise funds, but, more importantly, raise consciousness. Within this cooperative network, each individual school represents one thread, always



connected to the others.

When the Global Issues Network started, it involved five international schools across Europe. Now, the programme consists of eight international schools, including the Western Academy of Beijing. We are working towards building a global network, encompassing international schools around the world and living up to our name. As individuals, there is limit of what we, the students of today, can achieve to improve the world of tomorrow. Only by establishing a functioning network of concerned students at international schools are we able to accomplish our goals. Only by thinking and acting globally can we make a difference. **Only as a determined and passionate group, can we go beyond knowledge and work on implementing solutions.**

Unlike most organisations, the Global Issues Network enables students to decide on a course of action. After all, we are the generation which will sooner or later have to resolve the global issues affecting today's world and which will influence that of tomorrow. **It is up to us to overcome short-term thinking and to work on long-term visions.**

You have taken the first step in global awareness by joining the international schools community. Your schools sponsor numerous outreach programmes that are changing lives in developing countries. We must do more. If we consider ourselves international schools, we **MUST** consider ourselves responsible for making these more than just "international", but "global", with links to other schools.

The international schools resemble the pieces of a global puzzle, unique, but indispensable to the big picture. The big picture should be schools working in tandem. **Imagine what could be accomplished if schools worked together by merging the power of similarly minded students** through the cooperation of all of you, teachers? United we can tackle anything we can achieve everything. We are pursuing GLOBAL issues, and therefore they must be attacked GLOBALLY. It is our responsibility and the responsibility of all of you in this room, our educators and mentors, to support us in our pursuit. **If together we confront the problems of today, we can build a world we want to live in tomorrow.**

Although what we have said may seem philosophical, the opportunity to bring together our international schools is on your doorstep. We as representatives of the Global Issues Network, invite you to join us at the March 2006 conference in Luxembourg, where we, students, teachers, can share ideas. The Global Issues Network and specifically this March conference, is much more than any ordinary community service programme. It provides the perfect occasion to enable students to speak directly with the experts, such as Mr Rischart and important NGO representatives, on existing issues. We propose to deal with the issues of tomorrow with the means of tomorrow, or in Mr.



Rischart's words: "create an electronic global town meeting". This conference will provide an opportunity to forge these links.

Let us give you an analogy: if global issues were a torrent, rushing down at terrifying speed, then as we speak its waters would have accelerated. A footpath of uneasy, dangerous stones, the only link between the two banks, developing and developed countries, would represent the failed government attempts that only supply a minute and insufficient aid. Since they fail to address problems directly, the water level is rising. The footpath is being swallowed up, disappearing beneath the surface. At this point, no link will connect the two sides. Of the people wanting to cross, a majority will keep to the bank, endlessly seeking another stone path. But we, as in the example of our Aderak project in Ethiopia, have constructed a sturdy crossing, joining the two ends - Europe and Africa. Similar to any bridge constructed of stone or steel, ours has two-way traffic: changing a community while developing our global awareness. It is a win-win situation: we defeat the torrent of global problems and we build a bridge of mutual understanding. A lasting bridge...

You, as our teachers, share our responsibility for the future. We hold incredible potential to change the course of history... Let it not slip through our fingers.

Mr. Rischart's book, *High Noon*, compelled a group of teachers to found the Global Issues Network, to enable students of diverse backgrounds to actively engage in conferences, which create the opportunities to develop our passionate engagement with social and political issues from an international perspective. The Global Issues Network permitted us to understand that we must come together to resolve issues that are an intrinsic component of modern society in which disparities between nations are greater than ever.

For more information please contact:

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And: <http://www.global-issues-network.org>

The Global Issues Network Conference

March 23-25, 2006 in Luxembourg

The Conference

The conference consisted of three main parts.

The first part consisted of lectures and presentations by various key figures in global issues development and various non-governmental organisations. From an academic point of view, the main keynote speaker Jean François Rischard, a *Luxembourgeois*, was most enlightening. He spoke about the content and themes behind his book *High Noon: 20 Global Problems, 20 Years to Solve Them* (see Editorial Page). He was able to grasp the full audience as his intelligence concerning the social and environmental issues flowed freely from this very talented public orator. It was an incredibly impressive display of wisdom, knowledge, and experience, which was further projected in the conference as a whole.

Another keynote speaker, who was aimed at inspirational talk rather than an academic lecture, was Claire Bertschinger. She was an International Red Cross nurse during the Ethiopian famine of 1984 and was charged with the task of deciding who could and could not be saved. Her inspiring personal story showed the miracles which a single individual can conjure. Her story is told in the book *Moving Mountains*, which she recently wrote. She also worked further in Ethiopia, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and other war zones. She was awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal and it was, in fact, she that inspired Bob Geldof to organise Live Aid. Her story was one which motivated all of the participants of the conference to reach beyond the horizon, making the conference all the more a greater success.

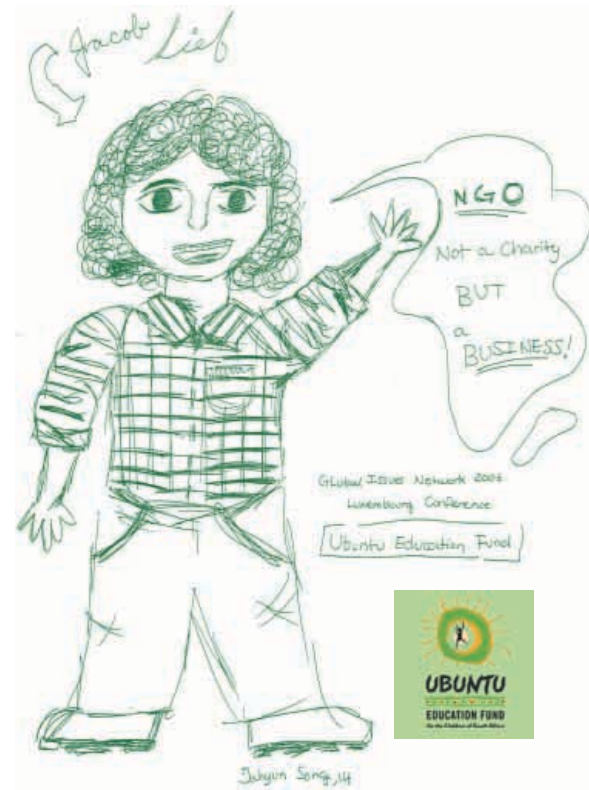
This was a conference where youth were able to express their views on issues affecting the world in which we live and discuss how to help.



Jacob Lief, co-founders of Ubuntu Educational Fund.

Jacob Lief, went to South Africa as a student, the teaching job arranged for him did not work out and he met Mr. Banks Gwaxula, in Zwile Township, who took him on as a teacher in his school, in their partnership of student from North America and resident of a poor township they are the co-founders of Ubuntu Educational Fund in 1999. They shared an abiding belief in the power of

education. They took decaying infrastructures and now have libraries and computer centres and health projects for



many thousands of young people. Some of the first children who inspired them are now graduating from high school.

Ryan Hreljac, started collecting money for a well to be built in Africa when he was six years old. His teacher told the class that people needed wells in Africa so he started collecting his pocket money and from friends and family. They have since built many wells with the Ryan's Well Foundation. (Ryan Hreljac—The Dandelion Project, Ryan's Well Foundation and Project Tanzania—this issue p.)

There were other very interesting presentations from various Non Governmental Organisations who presented how they are dealing with issues facing the world today. Each school make a presentation, game or activity to share with their fellow students, this was fun - from making paper bags to calculate what they would earn in an Indian village and how far their money would go—or not to survive for a day.

The second part of the conference concerned massive participation by the involved students. Two themes were chosen and there was continuous debating between the *for* and *against* parties. The themes selected where: "Global warming is a problem that cannot be solved" and "Nations should accept more immigrants".

The Global Issues Network was set up by various international schools in Europe and has turned into an international organisation, where youth discuss and try to devise solutions of issues facing the world. This conference will be repeated next year. It is strongly encouraged that students around the globe take initiative and encourage participation in conferences such as this one.

**Yannick van der Zee,
the Netherlands/ Belgium,
International School of Geneva**



Comments

Long has it been that I have been able to obtain so much feedback from a single experience. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity for my voice to finally be heard concerning global issues. My perspective on various subjects has been focused and the various presentations, notably those of Claire Bertschinger and Jacob Leaf, inspired me as a human, confirming the notion that one person can make a difference. Then there were the presentations, specifically those of the International Criminal Court and J-F. Rischard, which introduced me to various ways in which I can bring forth my ideas.

I felt that our group was most successful, having great debating skills, ideas, and most importantly; unity. This confirms the idea that, when working together, aims can be reached faster, more efficiently, and, in this case, in a sustainable way.

This is the first conference we have ever been to and it has been a great experience. We met the most amazing people and they have really inspired us, we need to take immediate action on the world's global problems. This three-day experience has helped us realise—how we can make a difference in the world.

Students from Anglo-American School of Moscow

Reports from the Conference

Claire Bertschinger—the nurse who inspired Live Aid, recounted her experiences with the Red Cross in Ethiopia and elsewhere, helped us understand that one person can make a difference.

The story of a normal women from England, Claire Bertschinger, has led to extraordinary things and touches the hearts of hundreds and thousands, including the ones of the students at the GIN conference this march. Claire spoke inspirationally and from the heart conveying the lives of the people she worked with, making them seem much closer and much more human. She spoke of her own academic struggles and also the heart rendering decisions and life saving treatment she had to put into action every day.

Her descriptions of the kindness of the African people she worked with were particularly touching, she explained how they gave her gifts that seemed so simple to her; yet like gold for them.

Imagine seeing thousands of children every day and being expected to choose which ones live and which ones die. Bob Geldof once said, *"In her was rested the power of life and death"* and though Claire had to let many children die, she saved many others at her own expense. She is a true hero and an example of not only a global citizen but a human one.

**Emily Gaskin, 14, England,
Anglo-American School of Moscow, Russia.**

Thank you Claire Bertschinger

When I first heard about global issues, I was extremely interested in the conferences and student meetings. However this morning, Claire Bertschinger influenced me forever. Her life's experiences were very touching and depressing. She definitely made the conference worthwhile, if I had only come to the GIN to hear her speak I would have gone home a changed person. I think she was extremely influential because, her speech was personal, by making it personal and talking about her past she made it persuasive. She was brave telling everyone about her experiences, had she not, it would have just been another speech another boring conference.



Claire Bertschinger

**Darran Mallace, 15, Scotland U.K.,
International School of Prague, Czech Republic**

To influence Sir Bob Geldof, to influence warlords, that is incredible. But to influence a little boy named Kiros that is amazing. Claire Bertschinger did this, and so much more.

To have the choice, to choose who lives, and who dies, to play god must be something that haunts you for the rest of your life. But to then "come back", and face it, overcomes every thing. It must have been a journey that led her around every corner, through every battlefield, and to help her everyday of her life. She helped so many people in her life, and showed them what she does. She influenced people everyday of her life, and today, she influenced me.

**Thomas Schankler, 14, England/USA,
International School of Prague, Czech Republic**

HIV/Aids

We walked into the room, did not think that HIV/AIDS could be so important or moving. After sitting, watching, learning and talking we realized what HIV/AIDS is about. The film opened our eyes, we saw, people dying, people sick. Before we had our blinkers on, now we are looking at the world of every person, every individual.

We learnt about people, who suffer from AIDS and are neglected in their societies. We, as responsible citizens, should go forward and help the HIV victims, and spread happiness among them.

**Berit Härle, 14, Germany and Shweta Shekhar, 14, India,
The International School of Bremen, Germany**

Ryan's Well Foundation

Everyone Can Make a Difference

Water is the most abundant compound on this planet covering 75% of the Earth's surface. Out of this 97% is salt water. Another 2% is locked away in ice caps. This leaves only 1% of fresh, accessible water to share amongst 6 billion people. The water distribution over the nations is unequal leaving millions of people living on less than 6 litres a day. In the western countries the average person uses about 143 litres a day so the contrast is incredible. 1 out of 8 children die each day from lack of water. That's roughly 6000 child deaths a day.

At the age of 6, a young boy named Ryan Hreljac was motivated by his first grade teacher to make a difference. He wanted to build wells in Less Economically Developed Countries, or L.E.D.C.s. Ryan was told that the well would cost around \$70 but the cost to drill the land would be over \$2000. Nevertheless, he worked hard doing chores and organising fundraisers at his school and within four months he had saved enough money to build his very first well, in Tanzania.

Since that day, 5 years ago, Ryan has opened his own foundation, the Ryan's Well Foundation. With the help of his supporters his organisation has build over 100 wells in just as many countries. Ryan has provided clean water for hundreds of families in the poorer countries of Africa all before his 15th birthday.

Ryan Hreljac is proof that everyone can make a difference in the world, however big or small. If a 6 year old boy can then so can you.



**Lorna Mckinlay, 15 and Claudia Strassburg, 15,
United Kingdom, College du Lemman, Versoix, Switzerland**

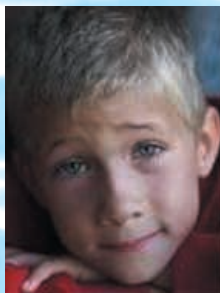
Ryan Hreljac

The Dandelion Project, Ryan's Well Foundation and Project Tanzania

I am 15 years old, a year older (and two heads shorter) than 14-year-old Ryan Hreljac. At the age of six, he saved up over \$2000 to fund a well for an African community with no clean water source.

Over the next 5 years, he created Ryan's Well Foundation and so far has funded over 210 wells in 10 countries, 8 in Africa and 2 in South America.

Ryan has already accomplished so much, in his fourteen years of life. He is an inspiration to all of us, if not, a little bit intimidating. Watching Ryan's power point presentation and listening to his workshop, 'Water Awareness—The Dandelion Project', made me realise that it does not matter how old you are, where you come from, all that counts is that you care and not only want to make a difference but actually do something to make a difference.



Students for the International School of Düsseldorf (ISD) are making a difference, just like Ryan. Project Tanzania started out as a Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) opportunity, a way for International Baccalaureate candidates to get all the required

CAS's hours required, by going to a remote village in Tanzania for 3 weeks to teach the locals to read and speak English and ultimately to assist them in passing their Form W exams.

I was inspired when I heard what they had done –are doing for the people of Tanzania. To go to Africa during your vacation to teach and help people you do not know, to share in their culture and learn how they live makes me want to make a difference.

That is why I joined the Global Issues Network: to know people, ordinary students that have seized opportunities and helped to make the World a better place. That is what I want to do.

**Marlene Hermann, 15, Germany, International
School of Prague, Prague, Czech Republic.**



Coming Soon!

A World Without Water

The Endangered Essence of Life

Water is a clear, colorless liquid. It is everywhere; underground and above, in people, in air, in lakes, in flowing rivers and ice. And yet, it is running out. The Aral Sea, in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, is expected to disappear in 15 years, the Great Lakes, in Canada, are being acidified daily, the Sea of Galilee, in Israel, can be walked on, Lake Chad, in Africa, is reduced to 5% its former size, the Colorado River, in America, no longer reaches the sea and neither does the Yellow River in China. As these seas shrink and lakes disappear, the UN has warned that by 2025 two out of every three people in the world will be facing water shortages.

Why Are Our Taps Running Dry?

The main cause is that although there is a lot of water, it is finite. And people are not. The population escalates and with it, the demand for freshwater. Climate change has an effect too; temperatures are increasing as well as evaporation resulting to more droughts, floods and storms. Large scaled irrigation, production of energy, war, tourism and trade all play a part in water shortages.

Finding Solutions

Around the globe, countries struggle to find different ways to solve this progressing problem. Each place, rural or urban, rich or poor, has its own particular solution.

In Sudan, people are experiencing water shortages due to lack of adequate technology and primitive ways used to manage water. But now villagers in South Sudan obtain clean, drinking water from the use of wells. These wells were drilled at the expense of OMNI (Operation Nehemiah Missions Water). They use solar power—a free energy source in Africa. A gallon (1 gallon approximately 4 litres) of water can be pumped per 2-3 minutes but the cost of exploiting groundwater is very expensive (approximately \$6686 per well). However, only rural areas can do so. With each pump, the water table falls. If lots of wells were built in the middle of a city, the city would eventually sink!

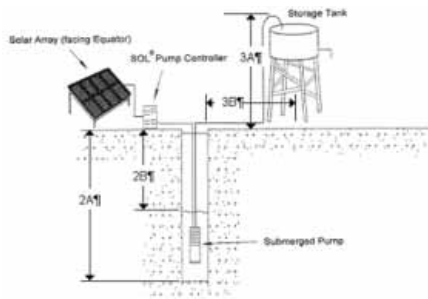
1895 kilometers away, Israel is coping with



desalination. Desalination is any of the processes that makes freshwater (by removing excess salt and other minerals in the water – Reverse Osmosis RO). Throughout the years, the country has been planning and constructing a desalination project. The project includes sea intake, outfall, two pumping stations, storage, and 2km pipeline to Regional Carrier. It has been a success. An RO seawater desalination plant in Gaza, which produces 16 million gallons per day, is able to distribute good water to the entire region. By 2020, the quality and amount of water will match those of World Health Organisation standards, alleviate the water deficit in the Gaza groundwater aquifer and reciprocate the people's demand. Nevertheless, desalination takes a lot of energy and leaves a mountain of brine (salt waste).

Some countries that cannot afford the costly technology, are trying to use a different tactic: demand-side management. Thailand, for example, is now putting all its efforts into conserving water. Freshwater is transported according to the amount of the people; wastewater is controlled and regulated. Water becomes a tradable commodity, reminding the people of its value as well as enforcing effective usage and reducing pollution.

Solutions are not always for the better. An example is India's Narmada Valley Dam Projects. The Narmada River flows through three states: Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. The government built some 3,200 dams, which were



In a world threatened by global warming, maybe solar power can help solve an expanding water crisis? Right: a solar and wind-driven desalination plant. Left: a model for a solar-powered well.

supposed to bring electricity and water to areas of the country suffering from drought. Instead, it brought more problems to the country. Vast areas of land were flooded, forcing 1.5 million people from their homes. The agricultural soil was degraded, only 50 megawatts of electricity were produced and the evicted could no longer make use of the River.

What can YOU do?

Everywhere anytime, there are many things a person can do to help prevent water shortages. They can be large scaled projects or little ones. These range from a farmer altering irrigation practices, a government finding ways to re-use water and protecting the country's water to a student like you:

- Collect rainwater from gutters (Place barrels or containers at the end of each gutter, store the water and use it to water your garden or plants)
- Install low-flow showerheads (It reduces water flow from an average of 5 gallons per minute down

to about 2 gallons per minute. This can save over 5,400 gallons of water per year, which is 86427 days of life - considering you only need 8 ounces (1 ounce is 30 grammes) of water per day)

- Take a quick shower instead of a bath (saves up 20 gallons of water)
- Make sure no taps leak (a leaky sink can waste 50 gallons of water in 24 hours)

Your actions may seem trifle today but what would you do when no cool, fresh water runs out of the tap? Conserving water saves money, energy and the foreboding question from becoming reality. If one person can save gallons of water in a day, then millions can do much more.

**Phapit Triratpan, 14, Thailand,
College du Lemman, Switzerland**

Editor's Note

Have any of our readers been affected by a lack of water in your country? Write us and tell the world your story and what we can do about it or what you and your people have done for it.



Our position statement at the Global Issues Network Conference in Luxembourg was that Global Warming is a problem that cannot be solved. as long as countries put national interests above global responsibilities

The Kyoto Protocol

Has not been ratified by every nation, including two powerful nations, U.S.A and Australia.

This combined with lack of enforcement of the 5% agreed (which would be a drop in the ocean when we need a 60% decrease in greenhouse gases for 2015).

Even if we were to cut emissions fully the effect of global warming will continue a long period.

Estimated Life of Greenhouse Gases

Carbon dioxide (CO₂): 50 – 200 years

Methane (CH₄): approx. 15 years

Nitrous oxide (N₂O): approx 120 years

Ozone (O₃): several weeks to months

CFCs: 50 (CFC11) to 500 years (CFC 115)

HCFCs: 1.5 (HCFC123) to 22 years (HCFC142b)

Halons: 12 (Halon 1211) to 110 years (Halon 1301)

If education is not changed radically and immediately we will have the same problems for the generations to come. The effects on a local group, a country, a region and the world will be catastrophic.

Action Plan

1. Responsible countries should immediately strengthen any protocols dealing with emissions and actively encourage all other nations to participate in these initiatives. "We the People" should name and shame all non-cooperative nations.

2. Countries should commit to aid (money, technology and information) to encourage sustainable development in developing economies.

3. A network of schools through the Global Issues Network could communicate worldwide to start the naming and shaming of nations.

4. Our schools could share the examples of Switzerland with other people and schools worldwide.

We will share the knowledge of the experience we have gained in this meeting in Luxembourg and inspire the teachers and other students in our schools to take action. Here are some ideas that you can put into action:

- Improve our re-cycling actions.
- Reduce school parking spots.
- Reduce water waste.
- Better control of heat and ventilation
- Buy local and seasonal produce

**Representatives for *Earth Focus*,
Collège du Léman and La Grande Boissière,
International School of Geneva, Switzerland**

African Child

Who will cry for the African child?
Who while in the womb felt the high sun's intensity,
Who while in the womb was carried to the forest to search for food,
Who felt the weight of the heavy wood their mother carried home.

Who will cry for the African child?
Who cried so much having been born in Africa,
Who happens to be born hundreds of miles from the hospital,
Who did not even have all the necessary vaccines.

Who will cry for the African child?
Who at five had the last hug from their own parent,
Who did not even have a single toy to play with,
Who cannot be proud of no injury at five?

Who will cry for the African child?
Who cannot have the basic needs of clothes, education and good shelter,
Who is left with only corporal punishment to be corrected,

Who cannot discuss or share the views of the parents.

Who will cry for the African child?
Who no longer inherits 'parents' but
Whose future is to be borrowing parents,
Who studies so hard just to have enough knowledge to be unemployed.

Who will cry for the African child ?
Who is a victim of discrimination and corruption,
Who has no human rights,
Who has no place in decision-making even with his own fate.

Who will cry for the African child ?
Whose only job opportunity is to be a child soldier,
Who is exposed to wars, strikes and revolts.
Who are specimens for political experiments.

Who will cry for the African child?
Who is never free from the malaria parasite.

Who is HIV's most fertile ground
Who can never be labelled as healthy.

Who will cry for the African child ?
Who is being taken for granted,
Who does not have control even over their own life.
Who even at 30 has very little hopes of surviving out of their parents' household.

Who will cry for the African child?
Who makes the world laugh but the world makes him/her cry.
Whose hope for greener pastures to Europe and America are blocked, since they serve as a sample to show how strict embassies are.
Who has gone short of tears to cry for themselves?

Who will cry for the African child?
A GOOD CHILD HE/SHE TRIES TO BE

By Foy Franklin, Cameroon

Climbing Kilimanjaro When You Are Blind...

Kilima Njaro means "shining mountain" in K-Swahili, the native language in Tanzania.



Need captions

The Mountain, 5,895 meters (19,340 feet)

Kilimanjaro, located near the Kenya-Tanzania border, is an extinct volcano that is one of the most massive of its kind. With its summit, Uhuru Peak, on a crater rim called Kibo you can get a spectacular view of the 1.5-mile wide crater. In the centre of this crater there is a dip of about 600 feet filled with sulphurous ashes. Kilimanjaro towers above the Great Rift Valley, which is said to be the possible birthplace of humankind.

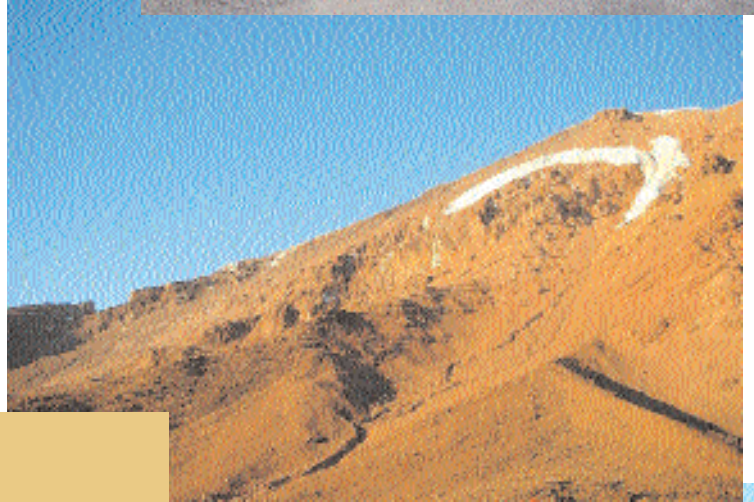
Over the summer of 2005, I had the opportunity to climb this wonderful mountain. Not just to reach the summit but also to help 8 blind climbers do so as well.

The Group

An accomplished blind athlete called Erik Weihenmayer decided to organize a climb up Kilimanjaro for blind adults to experience things that they would otherwise be advised not to experience. Erik, however, knew that being blind is not a handicap. Erik Weihenmayer has climbed all of the seven summits (the highest peaks on each of the seven continents). The only blind climber in history to do so and one of less than 100 sighted. He lost his eyesight at the age of 13 and has become a role model to sighted and blind. Erik Weihenmayer has helped the blind of all ages to "reach for the sky" and accomplish more than some sighted men could accomplish.

Consisting of 8 blind men and 19 seeing, this was one of the largest groups to climb Kilimanjaro. The purpose of the sighted was to guide the blind and that is exactly what happened. For every blind man, there was a sighted man in front and one behind giving directions. This system worked out to the benefit of the blind and the sighted as 5 blind and 17 sighted summated the mountain.

**Sebastian Polman, 17, U.S.A.,
La Grande-Boissière, Geneva, Switzerland**



Need captions



Tsunami Relief Project



How one school helped

Together with the Tsunami Relief Network, the International School of Bangkok (ISB) started the Tsunami Relief Project, to help those people in Thailand who not only lost their beloved but also their possessions, some say they even lost themselves. The Tsunami had drastic consequences, some even rest unresolved until this today. Houses were destroyed, basements flooded, cars dragged away by the sudden rush of water and people injured and killed. Of course, people could do nothing against it, it was a natural disaster but that does not mean we cannot help those who were affected, nor does it mean we cannot prevent it from happening again. It is like a door, the earth has opened and yet another door for scientists to explore.

The Tsunami was a major destructor, not only did it ruin, it also left its mark. Tourism in the area will never be the same again. Fishing is scarce because the fish have been washed away, just like the local fishing boats.

The ISB and the Tsunami Relief Network have contributed greatly. They helped rebuild a school with remarkable speed. They helped by arranging a games nights, bake sales, they sold wristbands, they organised a jump-a-thon and all to raise money for the school. Alas, not all problems were solved, they have often run across the problem that there is a shortage of local teachers. Of course, they also have solutions for this, they

brought in teachers from different places of Thailand, even foreign teachers. The community has done a lot, especially with the Garage Sale, that raised no less than \$10,000 U.S. They also put donation boxes around, in which people could donate supplies, money, food and clothing.

With this story of how a school has acted to help we see that every little bit can help.

**Anne-Laurien van Zooven, 14, Netherlands,
Collège du Leman, Versoix, Switzerland**



Bananas

Bananas were first mentioned in the year 600 BC in a Buddhist text. Alexander the Great went to the Indian valleys where he found a strange plant that had yellow moon shaped item on it. He picked one of them and tasted a banana for the very first time. (Do you think he ate the skin too?). Alexander thought that it was delicious and picked some to take back home with him. Everyone thought that they were wonderful so they kept on eating them. Later on they found out that bananas are not fruit or vegetable. Bananas are part of the herb family, the Musaceae which is a cousin of the orchid. They do not grow on trees. The plant has a palm-like aspect and has large leaves with overlapping bases that look like a trunk.

There are many amazing varieties of bananas. One variety is the plantain. The difference of this type is that instead of them being covered in a yellow skin they are covered in a green skin. People eat the bananas cooked in tasty dishes in tropical countries where they grow in abundance. Bananas are grown in most tropical countries or in green houses but need specific conditions. They need to have enough sun and enough water just like other plants. Bananas cannot live for a long time if there is a strong wind, drought, flooding, not a lot of shade, saline soil. They should be grown 200 meters above sea level.

Many people in the world eat bananas and there are several reasons why they are healthy. Bananas consist of 23% carbohydrate for only 0.2% fat, 0% cholesterol, as well as proteins, magnesium,



selenium, iron, a lot of vitamins and sodium. All of these are good for your body. Bananas a common part of many people's daily lives.

**Anna Blachut, 13, Polish/Swiss and
Nilüfer Münier, 13, Netherlands/UK,
La Châtaigneraie, Geneva, Switzerland**

CONTEST

Win an Earth Focus Class Pack

(25 copies of **Earth Focus** 4 times per year).

Please right us an article and submit to our editor at: amurray@earthfous.org. Open to individual or class articles:

Topic:

"Which Banana is the Fairest of them all?"

Some ideas for you to use:

1) The impacts and effects of banana production on: the environment, Humans, Working conditions, Trade

2) The initiatives that have been taken for change, either positive or negative.

3) What you think? What you feel?



Feckless Felling of Forests



A forest in Brazil where a huge part of its trees have been cut down. Brazil has lost more than twenty-six thousand square kilometres between August 2003 and August 2004.



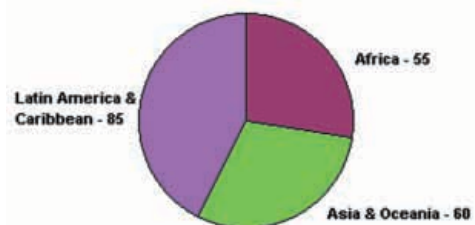
Deforestation is extremely bad for the environment. Deforestation has reduced indigenous forests by one-fifth so now only 21% of the Earth's land surface is covered by these indigenous forests. Consequently 12 million hectares of forest have been destroyed because of deforestation. If this situation continues, the result by 2050, would be that all of the moist forest that we have at present will be gone, apart from isolated areas such as Amazonia, the Zaire basin and a few places with reserves and parks. Some countries such as Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Costa Rica all risk losing their tropical forests by 2010 if no action is taken to stop it. As of now, 10% of tree species are threatened with global extinction.

Forests in Lesser Economically Developed Countries have been shrinking by approximately 1% per year and 20% of tropical rainforests have been destroyed since the 1960's. For example, Indonesia has lost 50% of its forests since 1985.

One of the major causes of deforestation is when people clear the forests and woodlands for farmland to grow crops to feed the growing population and when trees are cut down for firewood and for building materials. Some countries allow removal of forests to make space for cattle, as they have nowhere else to keep them.

There are two major consequences of deforestation. The first outcome is 'the carbon cycle'. Forests act as a major carbon store because carbon dioxide (CO₂) is taken up from the atmosphere and used to produce the carbohydrates, fats and proteins that make a tree. When forests are cut down, and the trees are burnt or are left to rot, carbon is released. This then means that too much carbon dioxide is in the Earth's atmosphere and forest fires increase, which makes the situation worse.

Tropical Deforestation 1980 - 1995
(millions of hectares)



source: adapted from FAO, 1997

The second consequence is soil erosion, which leads to landslides and flooding which are both increasing worldwide.

The amount of forest lost in Brazil is an area larger than the size of Israel.

Worldwide, the total area of forests lost between 2000 and 2005 was 36.5 million hectares (which is 7.3 million hectares a year!)

One way in which the world could curb deforestation and slow down global warming is that, when people cut down the trees, new ones should be planted to replace them so therefore people use the wood that they need and they will not run out of wood when it is needed as it has been replenished. This practice is currently being used in, for example, the Jura Mountains.

Another way in which we can help keep the amount of deforestation low is by recycling the paper that we use instead of throwing it away in the bin. This will not only stop a huge amount of deforestation but will slow down global warming.

**Bryony Palmer, 14. UK.
College du Leman, Switzerland**

What is Poverty?

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY

What is poverty? Poverty is having to walk kilometres to get one glass of water. Poverty is having a job that does not pay you enough money to feed your family, or not having a job at all. Poverty is living on the streets or living in a cardboard house. Poverty is also having a lot less than others, or having nothing at all. Poverty is not having enough food to live on.

Poverty is everywhere even in France, USA, U.K., just some places have more of it. Poverty has been going on for a long time. It cannot be stopped, but it can be helped. We have the knowledge and the opportunity to help the world out of poverty. It just takes a little help from everyone.

Due to poverty there is disease, conflict between countries, terrorism, malnutrition and starvation. Nearly half the world lives in poverty, with 800 million people suffering from hunger. In China 200 million people are living in absolute poverty and in Africa 5.5 million people live on less than \$1 a day.

There are many ways to stop poverty. There are charities such as; Oxfam, UNICEF, Save the Children Fund, and many more.

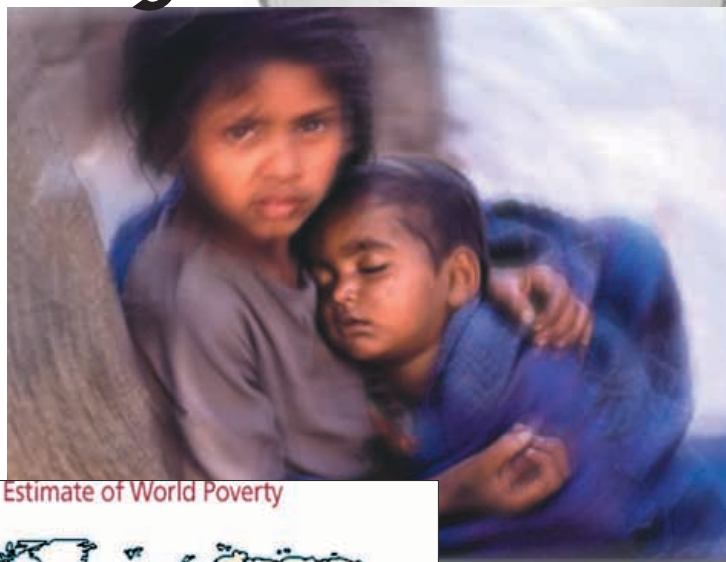
Make Poverty History and One are both a type of charity, except that they ask for your voice and not your money.

One is famous in all America, and it is famous because many celebrities have joined it to help. Some of their signatories are; Brad Pitt, Penelope Cruz, George Clooney, Kate Bosworth, Cameron Diaz, Antonio Banderas. Make Poverty History is famous in the U.K. and Canada. Bono, from U2, is one of the helpers. To show your support for Make Poverty History you can buy a white wristband.

Another way to help is to sponsor. Sponsoring a child is helping him/her to live. A bit of money a day keeps a child alive and allows it to live a close to healthy life.

Poverty is increased everyday. There are many things to blame for it.

One of them is the third world debt. Poorer countries are in debt to richer countries. The richer countries should cancel the debt seeing as they have enough money to keep their country in a good state. The debts make the poorer countries fall in more poverty as they only borrowed to help their country financially.



In many poor countries there is not enough money to buy medicine and so people with sicknesses or diseases die. Every year 11 million children

die before their fifth birthday. Many adults die from sicknesses, leaving their children with nothing. This leads to children having to live on the streets and beg for food.

Another big problem in poorer countries is HIV and AIDS. Because of there are not many contraception methods available, HIV and AIDS are being transferred quicker. Also because there are few medical facilities, people cannot be given something to ease their pain and so they usually die a long and painful death.

If we do not reduce poverty, solving other problems will be harder. If we start to help poverty we can help the world through its difficulties, and then start to focus on the other problems. Make the world a better place for the next generations to follow. We need your support. One person can make a difference to change the world for the better!

**Giulia Wyss, 14, Switzerland/UK,
College du Leman, Switzerland**

What have you done to help poverty? Write us for the next issue. Let your voice inspire others to do the same!

Climate Chaos

...GLOBAL WARMING

Since 1860, the Earth's temperature has risen by 0.6°C, and is predicted to warm by between 1.4 and 5.8°C this century.

Sea levels have risen 10-20 cm since 1900, most glaciers are retreating, and bird migration is beginning to change. This is all occurring because of global warming, which is an average increase in the Earth's temperature, and therefore causes changes in climate.

The Earth's temperature is rising due to the greenhouse effect. This is the rise in temperature that the Earth experiences because certain gases in the atmosphere (water vapor, carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, and methane, for example) trap energy from the sun. Without these gases, heat would escape back into space and the Earth's average temperature would be about 16°C colder, however many developed countries are now releasing too many greenhouse gases, causing major problems, especially for the developing and poorer countries that do not emit as much pollution. For example, current U.S. energy plans will increase greenhouse emissions 25% by 2010, which could contribute to creating 150 million environmental refugees caused by factors such as extreme weather, drought and desertification. Bangladesh is an example of such disasters.

In 2001, 170 million people were affected by disasters, 97% of which were climate-related, such as floods, droughts and storms. In the previous decade more than 100 million suffered drought and famine in Africa, a figure likely to increase with global warming. As well as this, according to a recent study, at least five small island states are even at risk of ceasing to exist.

The Earth's temperature is going to continue to rise, as well as the related problems, which include:

- Human health, because more hot days increases the possibility of heat related health problems.
- Ecological systems being altered due to a rapid change in climate.
- Sea levels rising, as glaciers will melt and the water will expand. This leads to flooding, decreasing drinking water quality and erosion.
- Crops and food supply may decrease because of drought.

Greenhouse gases are emitted into the air from

doing normal daily things such as watching the television, turning on a light, driving, washing clothes and listening to the radio. These need to be reduced for a better future for all of us.

As countries are now becoming more aware of this serious situation, some are beginning to use different ways to produce renewable energy that does not harm the environment. Wind power is already being used in the UK, as they have 1,000 wind turbines, and water-power (hydro electricity) generates 20% of the world's power.

What Can We Do?

Global warming is a big problem, however, there are many simple and little things that we can all do to make a difference in helping cut greenhouse gases:



- Re-cycle glass bottles, jars, newspapers, magazines and tin cans. Save them and take them to local recycling centers.
- Re-use plastic shopping bags and envelopes.
- Persuade your parents to have a compost heap.
- Use paper on both sides
- Buy products that do not use much packaging.
- Only fill the kettle up with the amount of water you need to boil that time.
- Do not leave the television, computer or radio on standby.
- Switch lights off when you are not in the room.
- Cycle to places!
- Have showers instead of baths.

**Emma Palmer, 16, United Kingdom,
Collège du Léman, Switzerland**



We Need to Breathe

Perhaps if companies that cut down parts of forests knew how horrible the result of continuous deforestation is, they would be more sparing of the trees. A limit to the number of square kilometres of trees that are cut down by each company per year could be set to keep the level of deforestation under control.

What Can You Do?

In order for the trees to be saved, people all over the world must realize how close we are to losing our wood and oxygen supply. Posters, fliers, and public demonstrations could influence people to take part in saving forests all over the world. Teachers could be convinced to educate their students about the danger of deforestation so children all over the world would grow up being aware that deforestation is deadly.

The planet depends on the young people of today. Children cannot sit back and watch the world be destroyed. Deforestation must be stopped, or there will be no future.

**Maya Grodman, 14, Sweden/USA,
College du Léman, Switzerland**



We need a detailed caption for this photo. Who is speaking and what is he talking about?



REACH OUT

Projects to Help Others

Earth Day Nature Walk

Sponsored by the Environmental Club of Bandung, Indonesia

Bandung International School Environmental Club celebrated Earth Day with a nature walk event, on the top hill of Dago Pakar Bandung, Indonesia.

This event aimed to remind students, teachers and parents about the importance of Earth Day and to enjoy a walk in the beautiful countryside.

We walked through some villages and also went into some parts of the forest. We saw many plantations while walking and saw villagers bringing cabbages up to eventually sell at the market.

At the end of the walk we enjoyed a Barbeque lunch, it was a delicious end to our hilly walk. Our Earth day celebration is a reminder of the importance of protecting our world!

**Sabrina Lubis Jensen, Grade 7, Indonesia,
Bandung International School, Indonesia**



How a Little Help Can Do So Much Good

Two Schools in Geneva Working on Humanitarian Projects

We are a group of students from two Geneva high schools, English Worldwide College Claparède and College Emilie Gourd. We meet once a week during the school year (September to May) and find humanitarian projects and raise money for them. This year we have had two major projects in Nepal and in Tanzania.

Nepal

High in the Himalayan Mountains in the villages of Marpha, Mustang and Thak there are children whose families are too poor to buy pencils, books and school uniforms.

With a bakesale and a Nepalese meal we raised enough money this year to send FOUR village children to school for FOUR years each. Here are some pictures of one of the girls we sponsor (Chhairo) receiving school supplies.



Message pour Mme J. Kunding et son groupe
'English Worldwide', College Claparède 23.10.05

We were very happy to know about and to take part in English Worldwide Programme (EWW) conducted by madam Joy Kunding.

We are Students of Shree Tanabal Secondary School studying in Grade nine (9). We study various subjects in our School. Among them we study English too. We have been studying English since 4 years. It is very interesting and very important language even in Nepal.

We live in a remote village called 'Marpha'. It is a small & beautiful village lying in the lap of Mt. Shaulagiri and Nilgiri. Our village is famous for its production of Apples. My village lies at the height of 2600 metre from sea level. Most of the people follows Buddhist Religion therefore we find many Buddhist monasteries in our place. Please send us some information about the city 'Geneva' and your School.

Looking forward to hearing from you.
Students of Grade nine (9)
Shree Tanabal Secondary School

Tanzania

Our second project this year was for a leprosy camp outside the town of Mwanza, Tanzania, on the shores of Lake Victoria. This camp is a special place as the older people have leprosy, many of their children have died of AIDS and so they are now looking after their grandchildren (who do NOT have leprosy). There are about 250 people (not counting the children) who live in this camp.

Two years ago, a road was constructed into the



The school now has a toilet facilities.



Vumilia's skin has no melanin pigment. Exposed to the sun can be very painful.

camp and the construction company built a "school" for the children. Last year "English Worldwide" bought furniture, school supplies and uniforms for the children. Then we raised money for a pit latrine which was built beside the school.

However, we noticed that one girl, Vumilia, is an albino, and Sr. Anna Brigitta in Tanzania told us of her special problem. There are actually four albinos living in the leprosy camp, as they have no where else to stay.

It makes the **Earth Focus team** proud to see young adults active and responsible in making our world better for all. Thank you 'English Worldwide' for the example that you have shown us to model after.

If you would like to contribute to 'English Worldwide' or to contact them to gather ideas to better create similar projects, in your own school, then please contact *Earth Focus* for further information.

True Facts

There are about 15,000 people with leprosy in Tanzania.

There are about 17,000 albinos in Tanzania.



Vumilia with school class (above) in 2005.



Celebrating a successful fund raiser at the "red Party".

Vumilia's skin has no melanin pigment, so her skin is too sensitive to sun, so it is always red and burning. Her parents have already died of skin cancer. We thought that perhaps we could help her (and the other albino children in the camp) with special creams and medicine and clothing, and a trip to the hospital in Mwanza or even Dar Es Salaam if necessary.

Our "Red Party" after school was a huge success and we had live music, food and drinks, and a tremendous raffle (with great prizes given by many Geneva shops). We made 2,600 CHF which has been sent to Mwanza for medical help for Vumilia, Brother, Pilli, Agnes and her 4-month old baby – who are all albinos. Until next year!

Photographs thanks to Joy Kundig.

Alice, Céline, Daniele, Elisa, Juliette, Marina (X2), Marjorie, Marlène, Natacha, Noemi, Romain, Sarah, Talia, Vicky & Joy Kundig of "English Worldwide" College Claparède & College Emilie Gourd, Geneva, Switzerland

Water for Schools

A Student Project in Nepal in Association with the World Conservation Union (IUCN)

A hot mid-morning welcome from Kathmandu airport, as we finally arrived at our long awaited destination... Nepal. Since October 2005 preparation had gone into this Humanitarian Project that fourteen students and five adults were taking part in, gifts for the children had been prepared, hotels and flights booked, and after what seemed like forever we had finally arrived.

As soon as we walked out of Kathmandu Airport the humidity hit us, along with the twenty or so pushy Nepalese suitcase carriers, who latched on to your suitcase hurried away with it and stuffed it into the nearest taxi and then demanded a dollar. As the first image we received of this new country it was overwhelming and slightly stressful, we were told we would have to get used to this, for it happens everywhere. After a bumpy taxi drive through the main streets littered with people from previous demonstrations, holy cows and piles of rotting rubbish we arrived at The Hyatt Hotel, something which clashed with the humanitarian work we were doing, because the Hyatt is Kathmandu's most amazing hotel situated just five minutes from the beautiful temples, however surrounded by poverty and pollution. It did strike me as strange that we were staying in the lap of luxury when people around us have nothing at all.

After we had settled in the hotel, we took a bus journey to the orphanage to meet the children, give out their gifts and generally spend our first afternoon with them. It all went really well, the children were amazing, and really sweet. Later that afternoon we had our first Nepalese meal cooked by 'the mother' of the orphanage, an amazing cook and a caring mother to all the fifty-one children!

One of our projects was to help install a clean water system in the school. In association with The World Conservation Union (IUCN) I was involved in a 'Water for Schools' project that helps raise awareness of the value of clean water with the children. I gave out ten cameras to different children of different ages and



invited them to take photos of things to do with water such as: brushing their teeth, washing, drinking, swimming. The photos came back a success with a few finger shots as the children discovered a camera for the first time. From the feedback I received the children thoroughly enjoyed this project they had been assigned and could not wait to receive copies of the photos in the

post from Switzerland. The project helps everyone appreciate the value of clean water – a thing we so easily take for granted.

Along with four other girls, we spent one night at the orphanage with the children and played original Nepalese games with them into the night. It was the one night where we felt we really bonded with these children, and they accepted us with their whole heart. Overall, this humanitarian project was a success; spending two weeks with fifty-one amazing children had a huge impact on my life. The generosity and love that these children portrayed towards us as a group was memorable. This experience was an amazing opportunity and utterly life changing. To feel so accepted in a culture in so little time was a gift that I would love to relive over and over again, I am extremely thankful I got this chance and I am hoping to return in my Gap Year abroad.

**Elise Jeanrenaud, 16, United Kingdom,
La Châtaigneraie, Geneva, Switzerland**

Schools Lacking Water Affect Children's Health and Future

The World Conservation Union's "Water for Schools" Campaign Investing in Children, Water Resources and Education

Approximately 20 percent of the world's population does not have access to safe drinking water, leaving them vulnerable to disease and food insecurity. In addition, almost half of the world's population lacks adequate sanitation, which directly impacts human health and environmental sustainability. Water-born diseases kill more than 6,000 people per day – mostly children.

It is time to act – act in a concrete and practical manner. Schools provide the ideal ground to make a difference – for those who teach and for those who learn – the entire community benefits. High drop-out rates due to disease or inability to attend class, lack of awareness raising material and sanitation in schools, all combine in depriving the next generation with education that is critical for their development and a pathway to a healthier and prosperous future.

Making Schools and Children Agents of Change

The promotion of a safe water supply and basic hygiene in schools allows children to become the agents of change within their families and communities. Behaviour learnt at school on the critical importance of safe water, hygiene and conservation of freshwater ecosystems can lead to rapid improvements in health conditions and a reduction in school absenteeism. Providing water and sanitation services to schools is an important first step to engage children and communities in improving their water security and upholding their role as guardians of healthy and vital river ecosystems.

Call to Action: Water for ALL Schools by 2015

Initiated by The World Conservation Union (IUCN), 'Water for Schools', will form a network of organisations at the local and regional scale that delivers safe water and sanitation to schools whilst providing schoolchildren with basic water, environment and hygiene education.

The primary aim will be to provide '1000



The Water for Schools Campaign aims to bring together a network of organizations and partners that deliver safe water and sanitation to schools and assist in bringing basic water and hygiene education to teachers. Its target is to provide all schools with safe drinking water by 2015 as part of helping reach the UN Millennium Development Goals.

schools with water in 10 countries by 2008'. To kick-start the Water for Schools initiative, a number of schools in Guatemala, Mali, Ghana, Lao PDR, and Tanzania are being put forward as tangible examples where work will be carried out. Through working with schools and strengthening the 'Water for Schools' network, practical experiences will be gained on delivery and scaling-up the approach to reach all schools by 2015.

Join The World Conservation Union (IUCN)

- Become a partner in the 'Water for Schools' initiative. Share local and global expertise and knowledge on delivering water to schools and educating children on water and sanitation issues.
- Financial support to help achieve the target of Water for ALL Schools by 2015
- Online Donations: www.waterforschools.net

For More Information Please Contact:

Claire Warmenbol
"Water for Schools" - Water Programme
The World Conservation Union (IUCN)
Rue Mauverney 28, 1196 Gland, Switzerland
+41.22.999.0188 – claire.warmenbol@iucn.org

The Art of Recycling

A Primary School's Contribution to the Environment



During the month of April we organized Art Week in the primary school at the Grande Boissière campus at the International School of Geneva, Switzerland.

This year's theme was the Art of Recycling.

We were happy to have the assistance of two artists and art teachers from the secondary school, Mr. Sabah Salman and Mr. Momar Seck, worked with two of our classes and shared their knowledge.

With the collaboration of the parents, who were numerous in responding to our call to collect and send us material to recycle and the help of our teachers, we developed true works of art from plastic bottles, soda cans, cardboard boxes, woodchips, paper and toilet rolls, etc.

The children's work was exhibited in the main entrance hall of the primary school.

Suzana Boni-Salman
Art Teacher and Coordinator
International School of Geneva, Switzerland

Comments from Visiting High School Students from Les Marroniers, Geneva, Switzerland

I was very impressed with the primary school art exhibition, it gave a great new perspective on recycling. I was especially impressed with the birds made out of bottles and blue fur, I do not think any of us could have thought that up!

Gabi C.

All the things were made out of recycled items such as old egg cartons, toilet paper rolls, old food packages, soda cans, bottle caps and popsicle sticks. I liked the dragon made out of toilet paper rolls and egg cartons which was

hanging from the ceiling. Some of the objects were so well made I could not tell they were made by primary students.

Gabi B.

The bottles made into fish were fascinating. The bottles were cut in about half and then had feathers inside and outside, they were very creative and imaginative, I would never have thought about doing something so colourful.

Emma H

I saw aliens, rockets, hens and nests, wire sculptures, masks, wood collage, sculpture in 3D, paper weaving, 3D tiles, spinning decorations, the magic spider web, rainbows and fish. They were all made from recyclable materials—food boxes, wire, bottle caps, wooden sticks, plastic bottles, papier-mâché, tissue paper, egg boxes, paper plates, stray paper scraps, beads, paint, tin cans, foam shapes and much more...

Naguib Z.

The idea of making men with leaves from Nature mixed with recycling material is a good way of respecting Nature. This activity must have been great fun to do.

Marine O.

My favourite was the rockets because they were brightly coloured and as they were suspended one could imagine that they were going to the moon!

Salomé C.



Emilio Barreto

and *The Art of Silence*

Emilio Barreto, was imprisoned in Paraguay, in 1965 at the age of 25, for being labeled as a 'communist'. He suffered 13 years of unjustified imprisonment and torture. Through his power to 'remain sane', he brought theatre and the magic of imagination to the other prisoners. The following is a meeting with Emilio Barreto and his story that he shared with students at a campus of the International School of Geneva.

During La Châtaigneraie's Ecolatino week, we had the privilege to host Emilio Barreto, culminating in a performance of *The Art of Silence*: a powerful and moving play about torture in Paraguay. Emilio Barreto was born on 22 May 1940, in Paraguay.

Emilio Barreto came from a working class family, with a strong social conscience and involvement in social activity and workers' rights. Emilio began studying acting and worked with various theatre groups, learning design skills with masks, which he later developed into an art form. At this time General Alfredo Stroessner was the dictator of the country after a successful coup in 1954 and he remained in power until he was overthrown in 1989. Emilio's studies were interrupted by the political situation and he constantly found himself having to move or change his name so that he could continue to study.

At the age of 25 he married Nimia Baez and just four months later both he and his wife were arrested by the military police. After questioning and some months of imprisonment, Nimia was released. Neither was charged, yet Emilio remained imprisoned for the next thirteen years, classified as a prisoner of the state and therefore 'a communist'. During those thirteen years Emilio was tortured on various occasions, imprisoned in a 'calabozo' (a cell approximately four by two and a half metres, with no window, from which he was allowed out once a week and which he shared with up to 12 others, at times including women, children, even babies. He was imprisoned for a number of years and finally moved to a concentration camp outside the capital. The torture he suffered was repeated and graphic,



Emilio Barreto In His Own Words

(In prison) We began to tell stories, we played at who could lie the most, to see whose lies were the most imaginative. It was practically like writing, creating stories, creating novels, and we began to form stories. I remember that once a Paraguayan peasant began to tell us stories that wouldn't finish for seven or eight days. He told us his stories, because we had nothing else of which to speak. And otherwise we realized we would lose our wings, our sense of imagination.

I turned prison into a university. I always tried to extract the positive part from it. Theatre, in a way is just like prison, not merely an entertainment. It must elevate the person, develop universal values, solidarity, honesty, integrity, a love of work and respect. We were heaps of people piled on top of each other, having to carry out our physiological necessities in milk jars... and yet still we made poetry—even though we were not allowed pencil or paper. Yet still we recited, we gave monologues, some dialogues, in that way we passed the days and the years.

brutal both physically and psychologically. To give an example: he was repeatedly submerged in the 'pileta': a bath of putrid water, human waste and vomit in which prisoners were beaten in their stomachs to force them to open their mouths and swallow. He was beaten by metal whips, whips with nails at the end, metal rods... fire hoses were turned on inches from his ears and an electric cattle prod was applied to all orifices of his body in turn. Perhaps one of the worst moments that he often recalls is when they drove him into the wilderness and made him dig



his own grave and lie down in it. They then began to fill it and at the last possible moment, as he was suffocating they removed him. No official reason was ever given for his arrest and neither was one ever given to explain his release. As a result of this torture, he is

been blinded in one eye, deaf in one ear, his kneecaps are all but destroyed, he has lost a testicle and has needed various operations, some of which are still to be performed but will have to wait for financial reasons.

Throughout his imprisonment Emilio used his theatrical training to 'remain sane'. With other prisoners he invented games, gave mini-shows, gave puppet shows using his thumbs and a torn T-shirt and he continued learning and developing his mask-making skills. On his release Emilio returned to the theatre but in a very different way. Influenced by his experiences, he founded a theatre of the oppressed which he continues to use with the deprived, with street children, homeless people, prisoners and people in the countryside. He usually works for nothing, believing that the most important thing is to educate and empower, to prevent the same atrocities from ever happening again.

He refuses to live in bitterness over what has happened to him explaining that were he to do so 'he would remain in prison' and 'life is too precious and beautiful not to love it and cherish the freedom

it rings'. His philosophy is that many of those involved in the atrocities he experienced were merely doing their job, many from fear and ignorance. Whilst he is strongly aware of the responsibility others have and have never paid for, his belief is in constructing a future not being destroyed by the past. His wife, who visited the prison every day of his incarceration whether she was allowed to see him or not, works with him in many of these projects and supports all of his work.

After the play had finished Emilio took questions from the audience and he was asked whether he minded reliving his imprisonment every night onstage. He replied that it was a crucial form of therapy and that he was happy that people were being educated through his work. The actor who played the younger Emilio told us that it was a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to play alongside the real person. Emilio also told us that the survivors from the prison still meet regularly and help each other through the inevitable bad times. Emilio also worked with students from the Theatre department during the week and they found this to be a unique and immensely rewarding experience. All those who were in the audience that evening will never forget the power, the sadness, yet the hope that Emilio Barreto brought to our school.

**Todd Davidson, 16, United Kingdom,
La Châtaigneraie, International School of Geneva**

Rwandan Genocide

A Witness of the Horrors of 1994 Tells About his Experience

In your global awareness class, we have had the fantastic opportunity to have an inside look on the genocide that happened in Rwanda. A witness of the horrors of 1994 came to our school to tell us about his experience.

It is one thing to learn about the genocide in papers and documentaries but it is another to hear it from someone that it has affected forever.

Living in Kigali, this Hutu man was married to a Tutsi woman, who worked for The United Nations Children's Fund—UNICEF. By the time the massacre had begun, he was already the father to three children. He and his family had no choice but to leave and hide in neighboring countries. They lived in a constant fear of having their Rwandan papers discovered. (Eventually, they later were

granted asylum in France). What we tend to forget, as outsiders, is that the pain did not end with the genocide. He told us how one night, he was finally able to contact a Rwandan friend; it was a conversation of tears, where they both remembered all the friends and family they had both lost.

To hear this touching story made us realise what other hundred thousands of people had to go through. We hope that other schools around the world will one day get an opportunity similar to the one we had, for we are the adults of the future and knowledge is the key to prevent these nightmares from becoming reality ever again.

**Alexia Bedat and Sibylle Chatelain,
La Grande Boissière, Geneva, Switzerland.**

Write to us and tell what you think about genocide and what might be possible to prevent it in the future.

Monk Seals

Threatened with Extinction

There are certainly many people who, like me, have been on holiday to the Mediterranean; however, I have never set eyes on a monk seal. Until recently I did not even know that seals used to be indigenous to the Mediterranean. In earlier times thousands of these animals swarmed the whole of the Mediterranean region and the adjoining Atlantic coasts of Morocco and Mauritania, all the way to the Azores and the Canary Islands. Today, only about 450 monk seals remain, living miserably in small groups around the Greek and Turkish Aegean, in the south of Turkey, around the Madeira Island and along the coasts of Mauritania. There are various reasons why the Mediterranean monk seals are ranked amongst the twelve most endangered species worldwide.

The Problems

Due to industrial fishing, our seas' fish stocks have shrunk to a mere 10% of the original! Because of this, less and less remain for local fishermen, seals, dolphins and other sea dwellers. Additionally, many monk seals destroy fishermen's nets while hunting for food. Since this poses a further financial burden, it often happens that the monk seals, considered to be notorious fish thieves, are pursued and shot.

A further serious problem is their continuously decreasing habitat. Tourism in the Mediterranean is booming. New hotel resorts continue to line the coasts and the number of tourists on land and sea is constantly on the rise. Monk seals learnt a long time ago to retreat from the open, and for them, dangerous beaches. Presently they are no longer safe in their own caves; they are constantly disturbed by divers and day trippers. This causes a problem, especially when they are rearing their young, since the Mediterranean monk seals are particularly sensitive to disturbances at this time. Growing up is not easy for a young seal; while learning to hunt for its food, it also has to be constantly on guard for man-made dangers such as dragnets, plastic refuse and ship propellers.



The Possibilities

It is obvious: the problems are acute and something must be done! Help starts in small ways and all of us can contribute.

On the one hand, it is important that we respect the sanctuaries in Turkey and Greece where the seals' birth caves are. However, it is important that tourists are informed accordingly on-site. On the other hand, we should reconsider our consumption of sea fish. The best we could do, is to buy local fish. Additionally, we should inform ourselves on which sea fish species are being heavily over-fished. Thus we can contribute to curtailing the decrease in the already precarious fish stock situation.

Furthermore, we should support people and organisations whose expertise is utilised on-site.

This forms the basis for the joint involvement of The European Nature Heritage Fund (EURONATUR) and OceanCare on the Mauritanian Atlantic coast, where the last large colony of Mediterranean monk seals is found. Momentarily, there is still sufficient food and





the caves are difficult to access, thus providing the necessary protection. Five years ago, an agreement was reached with the local fishermen according to which they agreed not to fish in front of the seals' caves. This has considerably contributed to the seals' protection. Ever since, the population at Cap Blanc has not only remained stable, but is even increasing. Last but not least, this is also due to the

Spanish conservationists and the local rangers who regularly check on the seals' caves and their surroundings. This engagement is made possible mainly by EURONATUR's donors. Due to this positive development, the animals will soon need a larger habitat and therefore enlargement of the protected area is planned.

A lot still has to be done, but without active support and financial aid, many projects will not be feasible. The Mediterranean monk seals' situation is alarming. This is why it is important for people to learn to assume responsibility for the environment—because everyone can do and achieve something!

**Melanie Schär, Switzerland,
University of Bern, Switzerland**

For further information:

www.euronatur.org
www.oceancare.org

Poems in a Pocket

Sport & Poesie/ Sports & Poetry



Sport & Poesie/ Sports & Poetry is a bilingual (French And English) book of poems by students from the International School Of Geneva, La Châtaigneraie Campus.

"Just like sports, poetry is an art capable of generating in each of us, a multitude of positive and intense emotions. Whether one is an amateur or a professional, the poet can be just as sports-minded and is often guided by his heart. That's why sports represent an extraordinary school for life!", said Adolf Ogi, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Sports in the Service of Development and Peace.

"Indeed, one learns to manage the euphoria of victory with modesty, to overcome defeat without shame, to integrate into a team and win over the confidence of one's team players, to respect the adversary and the rules of the game as well as to better understand one's limits."

For those wishing to join future *Poems in a Pocket* collections in many languages, please contact:
Dr. Mary K. Weed, Harmony Editions (Promoting Young Talent) En Combes, Luins, VD 1184 Suisse
T + 41-21-824-3454/+41-76-390-5099
marykweed@yahoo.com

LE RAP DU SPORT

(a mixture of French and English)

Le sport, ça make bouger the corps,
Le sport, c'est super awesome cool!
Le sport, you have to give d' l'effort.
Le sport, on nage inside le pool!
Le sport, there are des millions...
Le sport, everyone has le sien !
Le sport, on win des médaillons...
Alors, c'est quoi le tien ?
Move ton corps et make da move!
Rentre dans le groove...
Rentre dans le groove...
Alors come with us and shake it up!
Rentre dans le groove...
Rentre dans le groove...
La nage, le horse riding,
Tout ça c'est trop bling bling!
Le ski, le snow et le hip hop
Ça c'est ce qu'on appelle le top !
Move ton corps, pat make da move!
Rentre dans le groove...
Rentre dans le groove...
Alors come with us and shake it up!
Rentre dans le groove...
Rentre dans le groove...



**Roxanne Osuna,
Erica Detemmerman,
Tatiana Garcia Vilaplana**

Learning to Ski

On the slope, skiers snake silently
Punctuating their reeling dance with a thrust of the poles;
Confident and serene I glide towards my goal,
While above my head the chairlifts rise
On their journey to the celestial realm of Helios,
Noble guardian of his mischievous sheep.
Around me, white, blue and green in a whirling farandole
Which beginners' laughter and tears do but enhance;
Downward into the golden valley I caracole,
Keeping my balance so as not to leave the dance;
Then it all gets too fast and my skis go awry
Eyes sparkling, cheeks scarlet and heartbeat strong,
My legs cross and I fall, but my spirit is high
For tomorrow I'll be back for the wind and its song.

Catherine Meng Wu



Photograph by Mary Weed

The Runner

Pounding feet on gravel sea, sweet
dusk air to fill your wake.
A rhythm achieved like no other,
sounds stridently through the day.
Chest heaving, oxen-strong, you'll take
Flight, as last vestiges of day pass your way.
Streaming sunlight from above, warms
your face in reddish glow.
Your smile, gold in the fading day,
urges you ever onwards.
Even the clouds gather to watch the show,
Your sole, shining figure surging on forward.
Hearken! A ghost crowd cheers your name,
A phantom stadium calls you to fame
As running wraiths appear to jostle your side.
It's time. Break away from their pallid pace.
Make haste! Prove yourself for honour's sake,
For time waits for none, and the day is nearly done,
And your pounding feet lie second to none.
Neck to neck, eye to eye, race on.
O'er the horizon, chasing the dawn,
You cross the finish at infinity's edge.
For you the race ends here, it's done.
Yet the wraiths run on, blank eyes blind
For they will race for all eternity.
The vision fades, ghosts melt away,
And you are left in the soft-dying day,
Awed by the fate of those running wraiths.
They run in the face of an impossible goal,
Neither afraid, nor weary of soul.
You shiver now, for night grows cold.

Bayu Pangestu

How Tsunami Victims Are Managing

A Trip to Aceh

During the Easter break in April 2006, a group of students from Bandung International School of West Java Indonesia – B.I.S., were sent to Aceh on a community service trip with an aim of helping the Fajar Hidayah Orphanage, which was set up in Aceh to help the Tsunami victims. The children living there had either lost one of their parents or both. Having lost one, or even all, their family members to the Tsunami, the children seemed to be sharing a bond of fraternity towards one another. No moment in the future can compensate for what they witnessed during the Tsunami of 2004 but now they had each other.



A satellite image of Aceh before and after the tsunami.

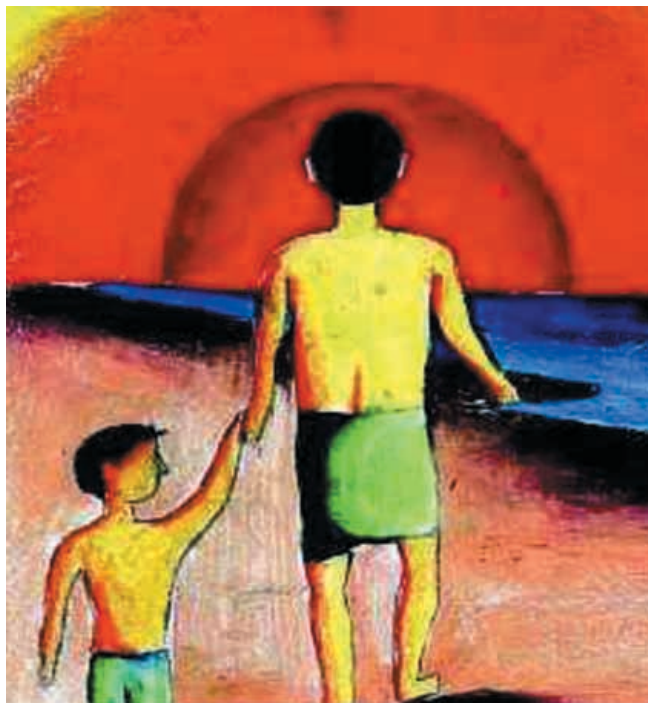
When you know something, and it is too unbelievable or hard to accept, you can easily deny it, but when you see it, you cannot deny anything, except the fear and compassion that keeps emerging.

The chance of being able to go to Aceh has been one of the most fulfilling events of my life. I knew that Aceh had suffered one of the most tragic misfortunes, yet I never knew that the obliteration of lives and destruction of earth, that I had seen on television and heard from news, would appear before my eyes. When you know something, and it is too unbelievable or hard to accept, you can easily deny it, but when you see it, you cannot deny anything, except the fear and compassion that keeps emerging. I went to Aceh because I saw it as a great opportunity to help. Deep down I was determined to do anything to help those that have lost just about everything but their lives.

During our first days in Fajar Hidayah we were welcomed warmly yet shock accompanied us, both from the culture and from the ruins. The children there, ranging from the age of 5 to 15, were strict Muslims. The way they dressed, studied, and behaved strongly reflected their religion. The cultural shock was only temporary though, as we had quickly gotten used to it, and had started to learn from their different ways. Here is a passage from a journal I have written, called "No More Tears to Cry" which gives a clear idea of how we felt.

"It's a plain room with two windows on two sides of the wall, and a fan on the ceiling, that keeps twirling nonstop. Unfortunately the light doesn't work in this room, so I'm writing this using a lantern. I got a bit of a shock when I entered the corridor of Asrama Putri. The girls were strewn all over the floor, some of them their legs overlapping. There were flat mattresses on the floor, but not enough for all of them. So, there would be two shared by one, and due to the natural movements during sleep, they were uncomfortably thrown all over each other. Some of their hair lay piled on top of their faces, hiding their features, which we wouldn't have seen anyway, since it was dark. Making our way through the corridor was uncomfortable and somehow, I felt insecure. I don't know why, but as soon as I entered the room I felt this unfamiliar foreign type of feeling overtake me. I guess I could define that as shock."

What we saw in Aceh cannot be described in words. Ranging from half a house standing, to only



tiles stranded on the ground, we could clearly see what a loss they had suffered from the devastation of the Tsunami. We were most astonished by a power station ship, which had been moved five kilometers by the Tsunami from its original position. It was a huge ship on land, standing as some sign of dominance, with no sign of water nearby. We were most touched, however by what the driver of the Fajar Hidayah bus showed us. Having lost both his family and his house to the Tsunami, here is a passage about him from the journal.

"I would have never guessed it was a house. It was completely destroyed with nothing but some of the tiles of the floor visible. I didn't like what I saw at all. The things I have seen in Aceh, I never even knew they existed. He didn't seem to care though. He pointed at each place saying what it used to be with no sign of sadness. "I lost 40 members of my family in here," he had said. A white piece of cloth with red polka dots on the ground caught my attention. It looked dirty and ragged. "What is this?" I had asked. "Oh, this is my sister's shirt." He replied. No longer being able to hide my curiosity I asked, "Pak Salman, when you see all this don't you feel like crying?" "I don't have anymore tears left to cry," he said, with a faint, sad smile crossing his lips. No more tears left... Images of the expressionless faces of the girls that had told me their stories started to pass before my eyes, images of their laughing faces, images of every face I saw in Aceh. They didn't get over it, they were forced to."

In Aceh the children, had a direct way of telling their stories without any sign of sadness. It had seemed as if they were telling of someone else,

ranging from having swum in the Tsunami to having been saved by clinging to a tree. What Ella, a young teenager, said affected me most. When I asked her if she was sad by what the Tsunami had done, she replied, "No, I feel proud for Aceh. I'm happy that Aceh is getting stronger." I was awed at how she did not cry over what she lost, but instead felt proud over the recovery of her city.

Overall, I really enjoyed the five days I spent in Aceh. I had such a profound experience teaching English to the kids from the orphanage. They're fast learners and possess good humour, which sets a positive atmosphere in the class. The day at the beach with the orphans was also unforgettable. Their ringing laughter and smiling faces that day, showed that the Tsunami had not taken happiness

completely away from them, and all they needed was a new start. The walks with the girls during our spare time indicated that their way of socialising and having fun coincided to mine, if not exactly the same. All this shows that they have put the happening of the Tsunami behind them, and that they are moving forward, living for the future. If there were anyone who should be rewarded for strength and bravery, it would most definitely be them. We all agree that going to Aceh was one of the best opportunities ever given to us. We are looking forward to going back and wish all the best for Aceh as they continue to recover.

**Mounia Belmouss, 16,
Bandung International School of West Java**



We are All Unique... That's What Unites Us

Thanks to their creativity and a good team spirit, the pupils of class 7 French A won the first prize (secondary level) of the competition "Difference, What Is It?" This competition was organised by the Human Rights International Film Festival on Human Rights.

The prize giving was held on 21 March at the United Nations, Geneva..

Following various activities and class discussions, the students concluded that our differences enriched us and brought us only positive aspects. Finally that we are all unique that that is what unites us.

Bravo to all the students of Class 7 French A of the Campus des Nations, International School of Geneva.

Student Comments

"The teamwork was fantastic. We talked and encouraged each other. It was a really enriching experience and I hope that I will have another experience like that in my life"

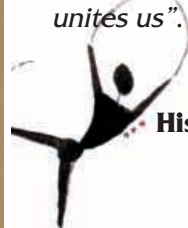
Anya Lindstrom

"At the United Nations I felt I was quite an important person to have this luck. I really liked all the speeches and I was very proud of our class".

Nandita Kaza

"We looked at our work with pride. In front of us was an enormous poster on Human Rights which said: "We are all unique and that is what unites us".

Nicholas Fedson



**Lynn Grant
History-Geography and French Teacher
International School of Geneva**

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