A youth introduction to the Millennium Development Goals

PREPARED BY YOUNG DELEGATES TO THE 2nd WORLD YOUTH CONGRESS,
CASABLANCA, MOROCCO - AUGUST 16-28, 2003
under the leadership of Peace Child International & the Moroccan Youth Forum
From 16-28 August 2003, the Kingdom of Morocco welcomed over 800 young people to the 2nd World Congress of Youth under the Presidency of His Majesty, King Mohammed VI to explore the most effective role for young people in the achievement of sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals. It also explored the theme of ‘action for tolerance and solidarity.’

This important international event was organised as a partnership between Peace Child International and the Moroccan Youth Forum. It was honored with support from the United Nations system (in particular its Cultural, Development, Children’s and Population agencies,) the European Commission, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the World Bank, l’Organisation de la Francophonie, the Association of Economic and Social Organisations, and the World Summit of Youth for Peace.

This Congress brought together young people from all continents, religions, cultures and races in an open forum of reflection and action around the Millennium Development Goals. The Casablanca Declaration, the major outcome of the Congress, calls for greater recognition of the role that young people can play in achieving these goals. In 54 countries, most of them in our continent, Africa, incomes are declining and the Millennium Goals are slipping ever further from our reach. The debates, sometimes heated, proved to everyone that the international community must do more to reinforce a dialogue between civilisations and work towards a world where genuine, selfless solidarity between all peoples is the norm.

This magazine, like the Casablanca Declaration, outlines the vision of young people on what needs to be done to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is an alarm call to the world’s decision-makers to take account of the important role that young people can play in all future efforts to achieve sustainable human development.

Driiss Guerrraoui, National Coordinator, 2nd World Congress of Youth, Morocco 2003
What are the MDGs?
An introduction to the Millennium Development Goals set by the UN to be achieved by 2015

poverty
primary education
gender equality
child mortality
maternal health
HIV/AIDS
environmental sustainability

Are there topics that all of these goals have in common?
Yes, they are all working toward universal human rights.

Whose responsibility are the MDGs?
Everyone in the world should work toward achieving them, in a global partnership
It’s as if everyone is invited to -

Kofi’s party

What can young people do?
Yes. The 2nd World Youth Congress in Morocco explored the role of youth in the achievement of the MDGs and launched a campaign to promote youth involvement

World Youth Congress 2003

And what did they come up with?
The Casablanca Declaration, a document in draft form to plan what young people can do to help achieve the MDGs.

Did young people have anything to add to the MDGs?
Yes. They added two new goals of their own.

What did the King have to say?
Read his message to the Congress

Who are Peace Child International and the Moroccan Youth Forum anyway?
I’m relying on you...

I welcome this youth magazine, Target 2015, and congratulate the Government of Morocco and Peace Child International for producing it and for hosting the 2nd World Youth Congress to mobilise young people to promote the Millennium Development Goals. Ever since we started planning this campaign, I recognised that young people will play a central role in it. If you look at any of the great campaigns of recent years, young people have always been at the forefront of them. This campaign will be no different. We are depending on you!

The magazine elaborates the 8 Millennium Development Goals, drawing in some of the fine thinking that went into your Casablanca Declaration - and also the achievements of some very active and imaginative young people who have already done ambitious projects to help achieve the goals. This, I hope, will encourage you to think of the many things that you can do for this global effort.

Youth can do so many things: they can take action as volunteers - environmentalists, entrepreneurs and activists for social justice. They can also make friendships bridging north and south, modelling the kinds of partnerships we would like your governments to forge to give those in the South the support they need. Some years ago, a Canadian Prime Minister, Lester Pearson suggested industrialised countries should contribute 0.7% of their GDP to Overseas Development Aid. UN Members endorsed the suggestion but now, over 30 years later, only 5 countries are contributing that amount. The rest don’t get any where near it. The USA currently contributes only 0.1%

I have been working in development cooperation my whole life. Before 2000, we wasted 25 years disagreeing - disagreeing East, West, North, South, UN vs. financial institutions, governments vs. NGOs. In September 2000, 189 governments signed up to the 8 MDGs – and they were joined by NGOs, financial institutions, East, West, North, South. The period of talking and disagreeing is behind us and now is the time for action. We are working together, at last, towards a set of time-bound, measurable targets.

The beauty of the goals is their synergy: you cannot achieve any of them unless you work on all of them at the same time. And if you succeed at one of them BINGO! – you get closer to all of them. If we deal with the AIDS goal, in Zambia, where teachers have been dying of AIDS forcing schools to close, more of their young people will get educated: schools re-open and more teachers survive.

The other really important things that development is all about are human beings, human faces. Helping the poorest of the poor. But what I care about most, personally, is that the MDG package provides a balance. In the past, the North was telling the South, “You have to do more...” and the South was telling the North, “You’re not giving us enough help...” Goal 8 of the MDGs talks about the rich countries responsibility to help poorer countries by more and better aid – and, perhaps more importantly, fairer rules in the international economy.

When I was Minister for Overseas Development in the Netherlands, I was very proud of a scheme we developed to support the dairy industry in Egypt. My pride was somewhat dented when I found out that the Egyptians...
could not sell any of their dairy produce to the domestic market because Dutch farmers were dumping their cheap, subsidized farm produce on the Egyptian markets at a far lower price. There are hundreds – thousands – of such stories: did you know that each European cow gets more in subsidy than the average African gets in development aid? African cotton farmers could produce cotton at a fraction of the price American farmers charge but the Americans are protected by a US government subsidy currently running at some $400 a ton – which keeps the Africans out of their markets! This is one more way in which the North’s selfishness hinders the development of the South. It has to change – because it is costing us all a lot of money as well as perpetuating the poverty we are trying to end. If the $350 billion dollars spent by the developed countries on subsidies was eliminated completely, poverty would be eradicated almost overnight. And we would all be better off – with the possible exception of those who were being subsidised. It won’t happen any time soon: Governments rely on support from their own citizens to win elections and stay in power. It is not only the French electorate that are so reluctant to end the European Union subsidies which have made their lives so comfortable these last forty years. So what I need for this MDG campaign is a groundswell of voices - your voices! - shouting, demonstrating, arguing and appealing to your governments to “Drop the Subsidies!” as you did so successfully in the Jubilee 2000 campaign to “Drop the Debt!”

You may ask why we have set yet more targets when so many have been set - and missed - in the past. Well some targets are reached: the target to eradicate smallpox was reached in the early ’80s, and the eradication of polio is not far away. But the important thing is, even if past targets have not been met, setting them focuses the minds and makes everyone work a little harder. Progress is always made!

Looking at the score-card to date, the statistics are depressing:
- The proportion of people living in extreme poverty has increased in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Central & Eastern Europe. In 54 countries, incomes are declining.
- Only two countries, Thailand and Uganda, have been able to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS;
- In spite of efforts to reduce child mortality, in Africa, one in every six children die before the age of five.
I’m still very hopeful. We can already calculate that many countries will meet some goals by 2015. With more money, and with new technologies coming on stream daily, many more will be successful! It is possible to make the changes that need to be made. For example, you can get on the phone now in most of West Africa and South Asia using a mobile phone. It is no longer necessary to lay miles and miles of expensive copper wires. Solar, wind and water power are generating cheap, renewable energy in rural areas. New agricultural and health technologies are spreading prosperity and hope through many of our poorest communities.

History shows that we are accelerating: I come from the Netherlands which, a hundred years ago, was poorer than most African states. My grand-father lived a life not unlike the average African of today. But, in a hundred years, we have turned our society around. In some of the Asian tiger economies, there are signs that a country can go from poverty to prosperity in the space of a generation. South Korea has certainly done this.

So believe it! When people ask: “Can we achieve the MDGs by 2015?” - I answer: “Definitely YES! - if politicians find the courage to make them a priority.” The world, the rich countries, have never been richer – but today we are giving much less in aid than we were 20 years ago. We need to double the amount of official development aid – that’s a minimum! Remind your governments of the commitments they made to the development goals and the 0.7% of GDP for development. Get them to ensure that they are realised.

A little girl at a primary school asked me recently; “Why wait until 2015? Why not achieve these goals tomorrow?” Now that’s a good question! If only your governments had her attitude we’d be able to make some real differences and 2015 would be a real big party for all of us! So get out and do your projects - but do the advocacy too. Tell your leaders that you expect them to find that 0.7% of GDP to fund the development the world desperately needs. Tell your farmers and your industrialists that they have to learn to live without subsidies. Lobby, demonstrate, scream, shout - for you must all be the change! I’m relying on you.

Evelyn Herfkens, The Secretary General’s Executive Co-ordinator for the Millennium Development Goals Campaign
Robert Gilman, a great American writer and visionary, often starts his talks with the question: “What time is it?!“ – and while everyone checks their watches, he tells them to think about not the actual time but where we are on that great arc-like journey which is human civilisation. Where does our generation, the generation growing up today, fit in the great scheme of things? What is going to be our contribution to the development – or the destruction – of this fragile planet on which we find ourselves? Little as we realise it, we are coming to the end of one of the momentous times in history - we have passed through the time of empire, the industrial revolution, the agricultural revolutions and we are now coming to the end of the oil age. Best estimates suggest that we will have run out of economically extractable sources of oil some 30-50 years from now. Given how totally our industrialised world depends on oil – for everything from transport to heating and plastics – learning to live without oil is a pretty major challenge for our generation.

David Orr, the famous environmental educator, puts the challenge in a different way: “The generation now being educated will have to do what our generation has been unable or unwilling to do: stabilise a world population which is growing at the rate of quarter of a million each day; stabilise then reduce the emission of greenhouse gases which threaten to change the climate; protect biological diversity, now declining at an estimated rate of 100-200 species per day; reverse the destruction of rainforests now being lost at the rate of 116 square miles each day; and conserve soils now being eroded at the rate of 65,000,000 tons per day.

Future generations must also begin the great work of repairing the damage done to the Earth in the past 200 years of industrialisation. And they must do all of this while addressing worsening social and racial inequities. No generation has faced a more daunting agenda.”

Yet, apart from the inequities, Professor Orr does not mention any of the targets set out by the MDGs! - to halve the number of people living on less than $1 a day, to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis; cut maternal deaths and infant mortality; ensure gender equality and education for all and establish the global partnerships which will create more jobs for youth and improve the lives of those living in slums etc. These goals, in the context of the impending environmental catastrophe that Orr outlines, reveals the immensity of the challenge our generation faces. Previous generations were called upon to take great journeys – around the world, to the moon, to the top of the highest mountain or the deepest ocean trench. By contrast, our generation has the small problem of eradicating poverty while simultaneously saving and repairing the planet's environmental infrastructure.

How well are we being prepared to address that problem? Well – as delegates to the First World Youth Congress in Hawaii concluded - we need more appropriate education! The education we receive in our schools today barely scratches the surface of the big challenges we face. We have to learn more about them - to separate fact from fantasy. And we have to be told more about how our governments, and society generally, are signally failing to rise to these challenges. How many of you knew about that subsidy scandal Evelyn Herfkens mentioned, that people in the rich world spends $350 billion dollars a year to keep poorer countries from making things for us at a much lower price? How many of us really understand the concept of fuel cells and the other technologies on which our post-oil age future depends? And how many of us really understand the arguments for and against GM and the impact of the mapping of the human genome? These developments are vital to the future development of all of us – everyone member of the human family. We are together on this fragile planet which seems to be hurtling in a rather dangerous downward spiral at the moment. Only if we really know what is going on can we equip ourselves to turn the vicious circles in which we find ourselves into the virtuous spirals that might allow us to leave the world in a better state than how we found it.
At the World Youth Congress in Morocco where we launched this campaign to mobilise young people to action in support of the MDGs, delegates felt bound to add two goals (see p46-47). First, they pledged to work for peace and conflict resolution: “We as a generation, commit to dealing directly with the root causes of conflict.... In particular, we need to create an attitude amongst the members of our generation to rejoice and celebrate our differences rather than find reasons for fear in them.” Secondly, they addressed the need for International Engagement and political mobilisation. Most young people do not vote. We are not engaged! Delegates insisted that young people use their vote, learn about the diversity of the world and its cultures, and work to keep international institutions democratic. We must all take responsibility for the future through being politically engaged. We must learn and participate, empower ourselves and use that power, to get the things we want to see done. And of all the things to fight for, we must fight for these goals. For poverty is a scandal in a world with a $30 trillion dollar economy. Can it be right that close to a billion people go to bed hungry every night when the wealth of the four richest men in the world would haul them out of poverty? That is an example of the staggering inequality of the world in which we find ourselves. And it is getting worse – the gap between the richest and the poorest is widening in all but a handful of countries. If we carry on as we are, and do not put the MDGs at the top of our priority list, by the end of our lives, a few of us, the richest, will be living in tightly guarded gated communities while the great mass of the global population live outside with rapidly diminishing natural resources. This will be a breeding ground for wars, not peace. As UN Under-Secretary Brian Urquhart said some years ago, “Unless we do something very radical to change direction, the world will become a very uncomfortable place to live by 2050.”

Evelyn Herfkens says the MDGs are the best chance we have to set things right, for they are a joint collaborative effort between the peoples of the planet for our common goals. Each supports the next. Progress on one leads to progress on another. Most important, all our governments have agreed to them. So our task is just about getting them to keep their word. Some things seem to be working in our favour: population appears to be stabilizing, and we are on track to meet far more of the goals than we thought. This magazine is an attempt to stimulate young people to understand the importance of the goals and what they can do to help achieve them. Many youth are already doing a lot - but we could do so much more with a little support. At the end of the magazine, you will find contacts for groups taking actions specifically linked to the achievement of the MDGs. You are invited to join us in MDG-related Actions ahead of the 3rd World Youth Congress in Scotland in 2005.

Peace Child International
Targets:

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day, *and*
- reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

When the MDGs were set in 2000, 28.3% of people living in low-income countries were living on less than $1 a day - the traditional definition of ‘extreme poverty’. Professor Jeffrey Sachs puts it more simply: “Extreme poverty is poverty that kills” - where people are living so close to the edge of survival, in terms of food supply, shelter and health services, that the slightest nudge can push them over the edge. We need to ensure they are targeted specifically by the Millennium goals, because through living on the margins of society, they do not benefit from general trends of progress and development. They do not have access to the education, employment and civil rights which would enable them to better their position.

“Food security for all is essential to poverty eradication and must be realised by 2015”

-Casablanca Declaration Preamble
EXPANDING CHOICES:
The UN has long since stopped measuring poverty simply in terms of monetary income. Poverty, in their famous phrase, means ‘limiting choices.’ Poverty means having no choice about the work you do, the food that you eat, the place that you live or the education you receive. Poverty is about watching your children die because you have no access to, or money for, health care. It is about having a single set of clothes, about waking up every day wondering if you will eat that day, and where you might lay your head the next night. It is living in fear of abuse by the police or those who would exploit you sexually, economically, or for criminal endeavors. Hunger is the focus of the second target and is, perhaps, the most immediate effects of poverty. We can see the urgency of working to reduce hunger, when we consider that malnutrition, which means consuming too few calories to meet your body’s needs, plays a part in half of all child deaths. There are 150 million underweight children in the developing world, most of them in Africa and for an infant, being even mildly underweight seriously weakens their defences against disease, and inhibits their mental and physical development.

How can we go about tackling poverty?

There are several poverty elimination strategies which young people should understand and lobby for:

• People-centred development: investment that creates jobs and doesn’t just instal fancy factories with big machines that create more wealth for the rich but are so automated, they provide nothing for the poor.

• End subsidies and legislate for a level playing field: if producers from developed countries were forced to sell their produce at unsubsidised prices, farmers from less-developed countries would quickly dominate several key markets and make enough money to haul themselves out of poverty and create thriving economies in their countries.

• Legalise land ownership: a recent study showed that, if people living in poor areas had legal title to their homes, they could borrow money from banks using their homes as collateral. That would give them enough to start businesses and create jobs.

• A level playing field on bank lending: ensure that international banks lend money to developing countries at the same rate as they do to the developed world. Currently, developing countries have to pay 2-3 times normal rates;

• Drop the Debt: currently developing countries are paying 2-3 times as much to the developed world in interest payments as they are receiving in development aid. Many cannot make these payments, so their debts are increasing – and everyone knows they are ‘unpayable.’ So drop them – ensure that all unpayable debt is written off. Expand the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Country) initiative to do this.

• Invest in youth-led development and enterprises: if young people are empowered and given funds to do community improvement, several things happen: the young people doing it learn about project management, running a budget, a schedule etc. Their self-esteem rises and they have the confidence to go out and look for more work to do; the community itself is inspired – they see that young people can do things so are inspired to get on and do things themselves. And concrete improvements are made to communities at a fraction of the cost that adult professionals would charge. Also, frequently, jobs are created and better, more sustainable lifestyles are achieved.
How Young People Can Help Defeat Poverty

The vast and devastating effects of poverty around the world, so evident in the statistics and the familiar TV images of famine, deprivation, child labour and slums, make this goal a daunting one to think about. What can we do to tackle it? Young people can, and do, contribute considerably to poverty alleviation. These ones found a way... and consider the difficulties they faced, living in extreme poverty, lacking skills, education, support, empowerment. They did it by forging partnerships with Northern youth.

Providing basic necessities: Mandela Hygiene Project, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's civil war left many victims beyond those who were killed or injured. Many thousands of people were driven from their villages and settled in big towns in hastily constructed slum dwellings called "Refugee camps for internally displaced people." One of these is called the Mandela Camp, on the outskirts of Freetown, the capital. Such camps often have a lot of problems, such as overcrowding and crime, but one of the most serious worries is often health in these camps which often have no sanitation or water facilities. In the Mandela camp, there were only seven toilets serving over a thousand people. Sewers ran down the slum streets causing a serious risk of disease, and an appalling smell.

John Kamara, aged 17, realised that the camp lacked the medical facilities to cope with a major outbreak of diseases caused by this kind of poor hygiene. He also hated living in such squalid conditions with an open sewer running down the middle of the street outside his home. So he decided to do something about it. With a small grant from Peace Child's Be the Change! programme to buy construction materials, they set about building clean functioning toilets and bury the open sewer in a plastic pipe under the ground. They did all the work themselves, but got professionals to connect the pipe to the main sewer.

It may not seem like much, but this project made a huge difference in the camp. Not only did it eliminate the worst smells and make it a cleaner and healthier place to live, but enabled the inhabitants to regain a sense of pride and dignity in their community. So he decided to do something about it. With a small grant from Peace Child’s Be the Change! programme to buy construction materials, they set about building clean functioning toilets and bury the open sewer in a plastic pipe under the ground. They did all the work themselves, but got professionals to connect the pipe to the main sewer.

What progress has been made?

There has been considerable progress since 1990, chiefly due to the successful development achievements of India and China. 137 million people have risen out of extreme poverty. If this continues, we will reach the goal. However, as the goal only requires that the number of people living in extreme poverty be halved, this still leaves millions living on less than a dollar a day. In most countries, $2 a day is the absolute minimum possible figure for survival. In 2000, around 2.7 billion people - more than half population in the developing world - were living on less than $2 a day. Also, because improvements so far and those expected in the future, are concentrated primarily in East Asia and the Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to suffer and decline. The proportion of the poor is highest in Sub-Saharan Africa due to a history of civil conflict, slow economic growth, and the spread of HIV/AIDS. In these conditions, the march of human progress has become a retreat, and poverty has increased.

Likewise, while the number of undernourished people in developing countries has fallen by 20 million since 1990-2, rates of malnutrition remain high in South Asia and are rising across sub-Saharan Africa.
Creating futures: The Regent Pig Farm, Sierra Leone

How do you eradicate poverty in a country like Sierra Leone - officially the poorest country in the world? A decade of civil war has destroyed its infrastructure and left its young people with little education and no skills. Sheku Syl Kamara, head of Peace Child Sierra Leone is trying to get a version of the Prince’s Trust started to launch youth-led enterprises. The Regent Piggery effort is proof that it can work.

Sheku Selim Feika always wanted to be a pig farmer. He likes pigs and knows how to look after them. So he applied to Peace Child Sierra Leone for Be the Change! funding to build a piggery from stakes and old corrugated iron at the back of his village. A friend gave him two pigs, and he began to rear the first litter. He found the nearby British and Ghanaian troops garrisons were eager to buy the meat, but wanted more! and so his pig farm grew. The economics of his enterprise are very simple: he spends LE. 150,000 to raise a pig to maturity and he sells its meat for LE.250,000. He has an intuitive nose for the disciplines of the business: he innoculates the pigs against disease, feeds them vitamin supplements and has them guarded 24/7 by watchmen. The results of this enterprise are now filtering through to the whole of this war-ravaged slum community on the edge of Freetown. He employs nine young people in a village where jobs are scarce, and gives them a chance to earn money to support themselves and their schooling. He also occupies them in positive work which contributes to the community, and keeps them from the temptations of youth crime and violence which were rife in this town. He is also helping to improve the community’s health, as they get protein from the meat, and find their vegetables are growing fast thanks to the pigs’ manure. He is now rebuilding the sanitation facilities and renewing the water supply, which he needs for the piggery. This will service the whole village, bringing them clean water in which to wash and cook, and hopefully reducing the risk of water borne diseases which are so dangerous and so common.

This project has brought many material and social benefits to this troubled community giving them pride and a sense of satisfaction. As a result of the well-thought out initiative of one young man, things are finally looking up.

WE ARE WINNING THE BATTLE AGAINST POVERTY

Because of growth in China and India, we are on track to achieve the first MDG of halving the number living in extreme poverty. Good! - but this is not a reason for complacency. Most young delegates to the Morocco Congress felt that just halving the number was nothing like enough: the world should set firm, measurable targets and strategies for eradicating it completely. But let’s pause a moment and honour the achievement of the UN and others who, for the first time in human history, have got people from different countries working together to eradicate human poverty: (figures taken from the UN Millennium Report)

- 34 countries that a generation ago were struggling with under-development are now vibrant centres of global economic activity and domestic well-being
- In just two decades, 15 countries with a combined population of 1.6 billion, have halved the proportion of their people living in extreme poverty
- Since the 1960s, life expectancy in developing countries has increased from 46 to 64 (though in some of these countries the rate is falling back now due to HIV/AIDS)
- Infant mortality rates halved since the 1960s: 500 million children are alive today who would have been dead without development efforts;
- The proportion of children enrolled in primary schools has increased by more than 80%
- The number of people with access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation has doubled
Universal primary education (UPE) means that all children would be taught to read, write and do simple arithmetic, as well as acquire basic health education, and social and personal life skills. UPE has the power to transform developing societies. It empowers people to raise themselves out of poverty and create choices for themselves. It educates them about how to take care of themselves and their children. It also helps spread non-violent ways of dealing with conflicts and helps change societal attitudes to women so that their equal place in society is recognised. Education about sexual and reproductive health helps young women take control of their future and prevents the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes the right to education, it is impossible to enforce in all countries. The target of Education for All has been agreed at international level since 1989, and at a meeting in Dakar, Senegal in 2001, donor countries agreed to finance all well-thought out plans to achieve this goal. However, education, especially of girl children, is still not the norm in many countries. And, in the competition for scarce funds, education is the first to be sacrificed in times of hardship, poverty, sickness, conflict or demands for debt repayments.

Education is not only the right of every child, it is also a powerful instrument of social change, ensuring democratic societies foster a more equitable, peaceful and sustainable future. Education is the key to unlocking the potential of all societies.

However, at present, over 130 million primary school-age children are denied access to this basic preparation for life. Of those who do start primary school, more than 150 million fail to complete it. This is how we reached the stage today where almost one sixth of the world’s population - a billion people - are illiterate.

Also, about 250 million children aged 5-14 in the developing world cannot go to school because they are working, often in exploitative conditions close to slavery.
**Target:**
- Ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

**Indicators:**
- Net enrolment ratio in primary education
- Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5
- Literacy rate of 15 to 24-year-olds

---

**So what is being done?**

Young people all over the world are already helping each other and themselves to a better education.

Each-one-teach-one, Child-to-child, Peer-to-peer ‘Be a teacher for a day’ – there are hundreds of schemes which are putting young people in the teacher’s seat. Why? – because they know that young people are extremely effective teachers – they can interest and motivate other children when adults cannot. They can relate to them over sensitive issues like sexual health or social problems where adult advisors might be ignored, be embarrassing or intrusive.

Young people have proved especially good at being mentors for younger students in school, helping them with studies but also counselling them, and helping solve school problems like bullying. In one school in New Zealand, the peer counsellors on bullying were so successful, the Parent Teacher Association engaged them to deal with adult domestic violence problems. In parts of the USA, community peer councils have been leading the charge against drug and alcohol abuse – with success rates that make their police departments blush.

Imagine if you couldn’t even write your own name or read this article; if you wanted to learn but there wasn’t a school; if your town didn’t have a building to house lessons; if you did go to school once but you had to stop to work and support your family; if there was a school once but it closed because so many teachers contracted AIDS, or it was destroyed in a war, or it was not safe to travel there. These are the kinds of circumstances that this MDG is working to eliminate.
Mariko Obari, 18, from Japan, is an activist with Free the Children, a youth-led organization working with children in developing countries. She has worked and lobbied on child labor issues in Ecuador, Wales, Thailand, the Czech Republic and Canada. She also plays the trumpet.

How did you become an activist?

When I was 16, my teacher showed a video to our class about child labor. I had never heard of such problems before, and I was shocked. Japan is a very rich country and we don’t really know anything about how life is in other parts of Asia. I went to Thailand with an organization that worked with children in Thai slums. I met some amazing children there. When I went back to Japan, I met members of Free the Children, then last summer I went to Canada for the Free the Children conference, and it completely changed me. The people there told me that young people can change things, that you can change the world. I’d never heard these words before from adults in Japan. If I say I want to change the world, they ask what’s wrong with me. “You really believe you can change the world? It’s not possible, Mariko!” But I learned that not everyone thinks like that and it really inspired me.

What do people in Japan think about what you’re doing?

My teachers never understood why I had to travel so much, and I had to miss exams and had a bad attendance record. I was just in Ecuador for two weeks with Free the Children for leadership training. It was wonderful, completely different from anything I’d experienced before. There was never any toilet paper, usually there was no toilet. I couldn’t shower or change my clothes, and we slept outside, but I was so happy. In Japan, I can shower every day, change my clothes whenever I want and sleep in a bed, but I’m not happy because I always have questions. I’m always asking why we have so much and so many people are suffering.

What is your dream?

I want to end child labour! I hope to go to University in the UK and do development studies, and then work for UNICEF. I want to build a bridge between UNICEF and NGOs. They have such amazing resources, but not much openness to young people in Japan. I believe, someday, this will all end, and there will be no more child labour, no more child prostitution, no more UNICEF, no more Free the Children. I will just relax and play my trumpet.

Nicaraguan National Literacy Campaign:

You can think what you like about the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua which ended the Somoza dictatorship and provoked the USA into the controversial Contra war. But one thing the Ortega government did achieve was to raise the literacy rate from 45% to 86% in one of the largest literacy campaigns ever. They did it by using young people: literacy brigades toured the country explaining the revolution and teaching the rural people how to read and write at the same time. The Sandinista government drew international acclaim for their achievement. In September, 1980, the Minister of National Education, Carlos Tunnermann, received a UNESCO Prize. Sadly, such campaigns can only succeed when driven by revolutionary zeal. But if the UN and UNESCO are serious about achieving Universal Primary Education and Literacy for All, why don’t they encourage and support youth to do similar schemes in other countries? There are plenty of other incentives around!

If You Don’t Need it, Someone Else Does

Here’s something that just about anyone can do. At the end of the school year, walk around and collect any leftover supplies, textbooks that will be replaced, extra paper and notebooks, anything that will be wasted or is not really needed. Send them to a school in a less developed country, or an under-funded school in a more developed country. There are many organizations that can help you find a place to send these, such as New York’s PENCIL programme – www.pencil.org. Schools post what they need on this website. Many more organizations can be found easily on the internet.
CAN I HELP??

Think about children anywhere, maybe very different to you, on the other side of the world, or maybe just next door, and what you have that they don’t, and that maybe you could give them that won’t cost you a thing.

Are there children or adults in your community who would like to get a better education, but don’t have access to it, perhaps who are not attending school because they are working or caring at home, or because of drug or social problems. Are there some social or cultural groups who are denied an education altogether? And could you help them?

YOUTH EFFORT TO HELP NEWLY-ARRIVED REFUGEES

A youth congress in the Ukraine recognised that newly-arrived refugees were having difficulty getting educated and getting jobs in their new home. Some Young Ukrainians decided to help them by setting up support programmes, to help them with learning the new language and fitting into new towns and schools. That way they would not only obtain places in mainstream schools, and achieve high grades once they got there, but feel welcome in society and participate in all other kinds of social and community activities.

FIRST, YOU HAVE TO GET THEM TO THE SCHOOL...

In the state of Karnataka in South India, primary education is free and widely available. Every government school must accept any child who wishes to attend but many do not because their parents do not see the value of them attending school. Rather they want them to work and bring in money. Often street children themselves, their kids prefer the open streets and a life of begging to being stuck in a classroom doing something that doesn’t pay.

21-year old Viml Pinto decided to combat this trend. With the help of his friends and a professional cartoonist, he created a comic book to show such children the lifelong value of an education. The story is told completely in pictures, so that they can be understood by children and parents who cannot read and write. It was created with the help of children from a local slum. The comic was then distributed in to the 5000 children in the Anandapuram and Lingarajpuram slums in Bangalore.

Students help design their new school in Zoumi, Morocco

Young people in Morocco amazed themselves and their community when they were asked to plan a project for the Second World Youth Congress delegates to undertake this summer. The local scout group brought children, young people, parents, teachers and other villagers together to discuss their ideas for renovating the local school. They then worked with a team of students from the National School of Architecture to transform these ideas into concrete plans. The building and renovation work was then implemented primarily by young people of the village and the young congress delegates.

The local people were very proud of their children, who had shown just how capable they were of delivering a concrete improvement to their community.

Brook Meadow students build a School for Iqbal:

When Pakistani Human Rights award winner, Iqbal Masih, asked to see a US school to meet children of his own age, they sent him along to the Brook Meadow Middle School in Quincy, Massachusetts. None of the students he met that day could have dreamed idea how this tiny, 12-year old former carpet-weaver would change their lives completely. Four months later, he was dead - murdered probably by those angry at him for speaking out about the injustice of child labour. The Quincy students were stunned by his death. His sweetness and gentleness, the courage with which he had stood up for his rights - made a big impression on them. They wanted to do something to assure his memory and continue the work he had done when he was alive. They decided to raise funds and build a school for former child slaves. No one knew how much this would cost - they just began writing appeals for funding over the internet. They were so good at it, money started pouring in! In six months, they’d raised $147,000. The School for Iqbal is now built and every year 200 new children, none of whom have ever seen the inside of a classroom, are now getting an education, thanks to their efforts and the tragic early death of an extremely memorable, heroic young man.

Many schools now have student councils. These have incredible potential to contribute to all aspects of your education. Most, sadly, are only involved in domestic concerns like school parties, lunch menus and uniforms. If you have a school council, try to increase its influence. Demand discussions about what you study, under-performing teachers, the quality of exam questions. Don’t be a victim of your education! Get involved in the planning of it! And if your school does NOT have a student council … create one!
Men and women are very different. They have different bodily strengths and capabilities. Original man was larger and stronger to fend off enemies and collect food, and woman had the ability to bear children and breastfeed them. However, these innate physical differences have led to assumptions that women are unworthy and incapable of doing certain things in life that have nothing to do with biology.

Women are often treated as second class citizens and denied opportunities for education and employment. They often have to take on the most menial jobs while also managing the household chores and bringing up the children. In some poor households, women are generally fed after the men and receive less food. They stand in line for healthcare and get no time off. In many societies, they are denied basic control over their lives being denied by law to own property and by social pressure to possess their own money, or even choose who and when they marry and have children. Needless to say, women are in a minority at all levels of governance and in the management strata of all large companies. In a free and democratic society, it is essential to liberate women. It is idiotic to curb the creativity and enterprise of half our population. But gender roles are often so deeply embedded in a culture that prejudice is endemic. It will take a massive, global effort to uproot that prejudice and meet this goal’s target of equality for women with men.

Target:
- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.
Indicators:

- Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- Ratio of literate females to males among 15 to 24 year olds.
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

A WIN-WIN SITUATION

This goal echoes the previous one in that it calls for all girls to receive an equal education. An educated woman will be able to raise her family’s living standards, health and future prospects. She can better equip her children to be the social and business entrepreneurs of the future. By undertaking more skilled work herself, she can enhance her dignity, be economically productive and contribute to the development of her community.

* WOMEN HOLD UP HALF THE SKY - but are paid a lot less than men for doing so

The defining social success story of the last century was the emancipation of women. From the success of the suffragettes in getting votes for women at the beginning, (though note that Switzerland only gave the vote to women as late as 1967) – to the women’s liberation movement at the end, the position of women steadily improved throughout the century. In schools, and latterly universities, girls and young women consistently outperform boys and young men scoring higher marks over almost every subject area. And, interestingly, even in a Muslim country like Morocco, young women make up half the undergraduate population of several top universities and colleges.

Yet when they get into the world of work, statistics show that women get paid 25% less than men for the same work. In the USA, more than half of all women work in low-paid sales, clerical and service jobs. The 2000 census data show median annual earnings for full time male workers was $37,339; female, $27,355. It’s worse for men and women of color. Median annual earnings for black men was $30,409; black women: $25,117. Latino men: $24,638; Latina women: $20,527. The more an occupation is dominated by women and/or people of color, the less it pays.

Young girls rule in school in Pakistan

Traditional village culture in Pakistan regards it improper and unnecessary for girls to go to school. So girls in remote, rural areas of the country continue to grow up illiterate and innumerate, even when their family could well afford to send them to school. We all heard how the Taliban in Afghanistan made it illegal for girls to go to school and women to teach in schools. Similar religious restrictions are applied in some parts of Pakistan. UNICEF and the World Bank have enabled young girls of 12-13 to start schools in the front rooms of friend’s houses. Parents and relatives who would disapprove of their daughters going to ‘school’ are happy for their children to go and ‘play’ with friends, maybe learning a little about cooking or sewing. The young ‘head teachers’ are those from the same culture who have received a primary education. They are highly effective teachers and by teaching their friends to learn to read, write, do basic maths, and learn about citizenship and basic human rights, they reinforce their own knowledge. In addition, the World Bank and UNICEF help them to get a secondary education. Youth-led schools are giving thousands of young girls basic primary education. With support, they could help thousands more
WOMEN’S EQUALITY - IT’S THE LAW!

Have you heard of CEDAW? It’s the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women. Basically, it is a Bill of Rights for Women, passed by the UN General Assembly in 1979.

The 174 countries (90% of UN member states) that signed up to the Convention are legally bound to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, that is to protect against

“any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

Since 1946, the UN has had a Division for the Advancement of Women – researching, lobbying, explaining the issues to their member states. CEDAW is only the most visible of their efforts and it is legally enforceable. Their important role in Development was highlighted in 1995 by the UNDP Human Development Report on Gender and Development, in which they concluded that: “Human development, if not engendered, is endangered…” In other words, if women are not part of the development equation, it is not going to work. We say the same thing about the

UNEQUAL IN EVERY WAY

Women still constitute 70% of the world’s poor and 2/3 of its illiterates. They occupy only 14% of managerial and administrative jobs, 10% of parliamentary seats and 6% of Cabinet positions. Women hit ‘glass ceilings’ in almost every career – that is they can advance so far but no further as men like to appoint another man to the top positions. In the church, after an internecine fight, women are at last allowed to be priests – but not yet in the catholic church. No one is contemplating the enthronement of female Bishops.

That’s why this goal asks for equal employment opportunities, and an equal voice in government and high-level decision making. This would give women the power to grant and keep their rights for themselves and future generations.

Young people, young men and young women, must campaign for this target of gender equality. Throughout the world, girls do better at school and university than boys, so society is missing out if it does not encourage them to take positions of responsibility as they grow older. Men have nothing to fear from high-achieving women – and society has everything to gain. It is just ridiculous prejudice to stand in their way.

“If you want to change the world, you need to change yourself.”

- James Mawdesley UK, Centre for Democracy/ 14 months in a Burmese prison, tortured, for protesting against the overthrow of the Burmese democratically elected government.
Equal Opportunity Policy:
Every company, organisation and government office should have an Equal Opportunity Policy. Ask to see your school’s. Check to see that the policies exist in the places where your family members work. Inequalities between genders exist in even the most progressive countries – and even where policies do exist, and have tough penalties, the old culture of male dominance still persists. So be vigilant. Women need this right – and men can benefit enormously from giving it to them. In the UK, the Equal Opportunities Commission is launching a Campaign in 2004 called, “Time to get Even!” Join them – go to www.eoc.org.uk

The Grameen Bank:
Mohammed Yunus set up this micro-credit bank chiefly to help the women of Bangladesh start up small, sustainable businesses to haul themselves out of poverty. It worked – the women were far more reliable in paying back their loans than men had been. They grouped together and supported each other to make their interest payments. Yunus became a legend in the development world as a result of his achievement: but he would be the first to say – it was not his achievement: it was the achievement and effort of thousands of impoverished women who proved that women are extremely effective instruments of development. Peace Child wants a similar Grameen Youth Bank to prove that young people can be similarly effective.

THINK LOCAL
Laws and practices at government and company level can go a long way towards empowering women, but little will be achieved if the thoughts and assumptions of those around them prevent them from taking these opportunities. Gender must be addressed on a local level if there is to be any change. It will take individual people and local initiatives to influence individual people, and challenge gender stereotypes at their roots.

Being aware of gender stereotypes in your daily life can go a long way towards getting rid of them. Do the women and girls in your community get to enjoy all the opportunities and benefits that the men and boys do? Are there local instances where women are portrayed as sex objects? Do girls have the same chances to learn, can they perform the same jobs, do they have a say in decision making in their schools, workplaces, in the town or even in their homes? Are there many women in the leading roles in your community? If not, why not? Do you think they would like to have more of a chance?

Girls Rock
Having been in the shadow of their male counterparts for so long, many women and girls have become accustomed to assuming a lesser role, and need support and encouragement to assume their full potential...

The Rock ‘n’ Roll Camp for Girls is an annual, week-long day camp for girls aged 8-18 held in Portland, Oregon, USA. The mission of the camp is to foster creativity and self-expression in young women by providing young role models, and promoting self-motivation, self-reliance, and empowerment in music and creativity. The camp is run by young professional women artists who work with the participants in training them to express themselves with music, art, and writing, as well as encouraging them to find their voice in alternative and independent media. The camp holds workshops in areas such as zine (hand made publications) writing and publishing, songwriting, self defense, and stage presence, and of course, various types of music, from folk, punk and rap to R and B and Electronica. The programme culminates with a public showcase during which the campers have the opportunity to perform live on stage with their rock ‘n’ roll mentors.
Target:

- Reduce by two thirds the number of children who die before the age of five.

The harshest and most heart-breaking effects of poverty are most evident in young children. Malnutrition, hunger, and disease hit the very young the hardest. However, this goal is one of the simplest to tackle, since wealthier countries have the resources, ability, and the willingness to change the lives of children. “Every child must be ensured the best start in life – their future, and indeed the future of their communities, nations, and the whole world depends on it” (UNICEF).

In the developing world, about 11 million children each year die before their fifth birthday; most of them from diseases that are easily preventable through good nutrition, care, and low-tech, simple medical treatment such as oral rehydration therapy. Infant mortality is a sign of how poverty is transmitted from one generation to the next, as impoverished, malnourished mothers often give birth to underweight sickly babies who are more susceptible to disease. These babies are more likely to die and, if they do survive, are less likely to grow and develop their full potential. Chronic malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and frequent illness can lead to poor school performance. Consequently, affected children are more likely to drop out of school early and work in jobs that pay below the poverty line, if they manage to find work at all. (UNICEF)

This brings us back to the synergy between the goals. An
improvement in general healthcare and enhanced accessibility to doctors and primary healthcare centres, as well as going a long way toward meeting the child mortality goal also help to meet the goals for maternal health and HIV/AIDS.

Specifically, the goals of maternal health and child mortality are linked. As many as 22 percent of child deaths are attributed to pre- and post-natal causes - the health of the mother, the way she cares for herself during her pregnancy and immediately after the birth. If maternal health and education of mothers and fathers improves, child mortality will decrease.

Other factors contributing to child mortality include a failure to allow sufficient time between the births of each child - often due to poor birth control techniques. A lack of vaccinations for common diseases causes many child deaths, as do Vitamin A deficiencies and poor nutrition often due to a failure to breastfeed. In some countries, mothers still feed their babies powdered milk which, given the lack of clean water and safe sanitation, amounts to serving a death sentence on babies. Lowering child mortality is a key goal, as it encourages smaller families thus slowing population growth. It demands better health care and education for women which empowers whole communities.
Maternal health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being in all matters relating to the reproductive system and its functions and processes. According to UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund), no other public health problem shows greater disparity between rich and poor countries than that of maternal health. In rich countries, the number of women who die in childbirth can be as low as 1 in 7000, while in poor countries, it can be as high as 1 in 15. Most of these deaths could be avoided if women had adequate access to medical attention before, during and after giving birth.

In addition to providing funding for proper maternal health facilities, the numbers of complications and deaths could be greatly reduced if more pregnancies occurred after adolescence (after age 19). Seven countries allow marriage as early as age 12, and each year women between the ages of 10 and 19 give birth to 15 million infants. Women in this age group are less biologically developed than those over 19. Adolescent women’s bodies are still maturing and growing. Because of this, pregnant women under the age of 15 are more likely to have babies who are either premature or have low birth weight. In addition, adolescent mothers have a greater chance of suffering from toxemia, anaemia, hypertension, uterine dysfunction, and other pregnancy-related complications. If women and men were educated about the risks involved with pregnancy during adolescence and encouraged to postpone it, the lives of many young mothers would be saved.

Young women and men must also be educated on the importance of child spacing and birth control. Because of cultural and religious beliefs or sheer lack of access to contraceptives, many women become pregnant repeatedly in a short span of time, without giving their bodies time to fully recover. Women in this situation are often forced to wean infants early in preparation for another baby, which can be detrimental to both the mother and the child.

In addition, many countries, both more and less developed, completely disregard the reproductive rights of women. Reproductive rights are the basic rights of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so. If women and men were educated in school about their own reproduc-

Target:
- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality rate.

Indicators:
- Maternal mortality ratio,
- Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel.
In the time that it takes you to read this page, two women will die in absolute agony while giving birth (about 1 per minute). Another 30-50 will experience complications that could be permanently disabling. In many countries, quality maternal healthcare is completely lacking. Placing the maternal mortality issue on the list of MDGs has focused much-needed attention on a problem that was previously very low on many countries’ list of priorities.

Many pregnancy-related deaths are due to poor prenatal care, unhygienic practices and the absence of any midwife or professional health workers. In fact, in Less Developed Countries (LDCs), nearly half of all births occur without any midwife or healthcare worker in attendance at all. In some countries, only 20% of mothers have midwife’s or healthcare professionals attending their births. Having professional health workers with midwifery skills present during all births is essential to achieving this MDG, as these practitioners can recognise and treat complications before they become disabling or fatal.

tive rights and their decisions about them were respected, then we would be one step closer to achieving the maternal health MDG.

Fortunately, there are several international organisations that have been working to promote maternal health before it was identified as a MDG. The Safe Motherhood Inter-Agency Group (SMIAG), which includes UNICEF, the World Bank, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation, has been working since 1987 to promote maternal health. Some of the SMIAG’s main projects include raising awareness about safe motherhood, supporting national programmes working for maternal health, and initiating research on the topic.

In addition to the SMIAG, the White Ribbon Alliance was started in 1999 to commemorate all women who have died in childbirth. The Alliance, supported by UN agencies and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), encourages people to wear a white ribbon similar to the red AIDS awareness ribbon to bring attention to maternal health.

These organisations are already working to improve maternal health globally, but need more help. As will be seen on the next page, young people can do much to alert their peers to this problem and raise awareness of the steps that need to be taken.
Mother’s Milk: A Simple Solution

The World Bank lists breast feeding as a main effective intervention against major diseases in infants. It is proven to be effective against diseases in infancy and to bolster the immune system of infants throughout childhood. When babies are first born, their immune systems are weak. They are strengthened by the mother’s antibodies present in breast milk. The mother gives the baby immunities to diseases that she has had, and in turn takes germs from the baby, and her body responds and creates antibodies for the next feeding. Breastfed babies get sick less often. When they do, their illnesses are less severe and they recover more quickly (La Leche League). Unfortunately, many women in developed and developing countries do not breastfeed their babies for the minimum recommendation of six months. This is due to the promotion and acceptance of powder milk in some countries, as well as traditional beliefs which encourage babies to be fed water, tea, or cow’s milk instead of mother’s milk. This is also due to social priorities and economic necessity of women having no choice but to return to work very soon after the birth. While breast-feeding is a free and easy solution and its benefits are clear, the larger socio-economic issue of women being unable to spend the first six months of their child’s life constantly with them makes it more complex.

There are also corporations that would see mothers using milk formulas rather than breast feeding for their own profit. The WHO and UNICEF have declared that baby milk substitutes should not be advertised or given away as samples to hospitals and clinics. This is because milk substitute needs to be made up with clean water - a rare commodity in countries with no access to safe drinking water. Making up baby formulas with unsafe water opens babies up to infections they might otherwise avoid. Also when mothers begin using formulas, their own milk quickly dries up and they cannot produce any more. This means that she is forced to pay for milk formulas until her child is weaned which, in developing countries, places additional pressure on family budgets.

The multinational corporation Nestlé has been reported as challenging their need to comply with these rules, defying them, and allegedly putting their own profit before the safety of babies. Young people are already tackling this issue. At the World Congress of Youth, a young delegate from the UK spoke at the speaker’s corner about the Nestlé corporation and called for everyone at the congress to join the worldwide boycott of their products, which is already making an impact on the way the corporation conducts itself.

Planned Parenthood’s Peer Education Programme

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) links national Family Planning Associations in over 180 countries worldwide. It is the largest voluntary organization in the world to be concerned with family planning and sexual and reproductive health. In 2001, they launched their teen clinic peer education program. This employs young people to run the clinics so that they might be able to spread information amongst teenagers, who might feel more comfortable and open to information when receiving it from another young person. The volunteers, aged between 16 and 22, are given over 50 hours of training in sexual and reproductive health. They learn how to convey accurate and relevant information to their peers, whilst normalising the issues with a relaxed presentational style.
Women need to pay close attention to Health. In too many countries, women are still not assured proper health care, particularly during pregnancy. We have seen that half a million die in child-birth every year, but over 20 million have some kind of permanent, disabling injury from child-birth. Reproductive health problems account for more than a third of all diseases affecting women, compared to less than 12% in men. Women need to be able to decide how many children to have and when to have them. They need to know that having children too close together makes them weaker, that breast-feeding gives their babies vital nutrients and protects them against disease. They need to know how crucial sanitation is for babies’ health, and that their babies need to be vaccinated and well fed.

For all of this, education of young women is vital. In India, a test revealed that providing a thousand girls with an extra year of primary schooling averted 2 maternal deaths, 43 infant deaths and 300 unwanted pregnancies – all at a cost of $32,000!! Also, the child mortality rate of Indian children whose mothers have primary education and can read, is half that of children whose mothers are illiterate.

So, again, it is clear that keeping young women out of schools, disempowered, uneducated and illiterate, works against the achievement of so many of the MDGs.

North Indian Baby Vaccination Scheme: Student Nurses Innoculate Children from Slum Areas

We found out that most of the mothers who work as maids in our area live in a nearby slum where they did not bother to take their children to receive the free vaccinations provided by the government. Several babies had died in the slum from gastorenteritis which suggesting a lack of basic hygiene as well as vaccinations.

We are a group of six medical students with some (though not much) spare time on our hands. So we decided to use our knowledge to educate mothers on health and hygiene for their children, and set up an immunization clinic for the slum children in particular. We visited families in the slums, house by house, talking to them about vaccinations. We also approached their employers asking if they would give the maids time off to attend our clinic. All agreed and some even promised to contribute a small amount every month to help us fund the programme. We set up our operation in a maternity home where my mother, a trained paediatrician, teaches. She helped and trained us, finding us the vaccines, and showing us how to carry out simple checks like the babies’ weight etc. We also led classes to teach the mothers about breast feeding, weaning, management of dehydration and fever. Another volunteer talked about family planning techniques.

The aim of our immunization and health clinic was to reduce childhood mortality, but also to maintain and enhance the children’s quality of life, and ensure that each reaches adult life physically and intellectually intact.

Kuheli Battacharya, 17, Pune, India
HIV/AIDS is the largest killer in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the fourth largest killer in the world. 6 people a minute die of the disease, 3 million a year. Another 5 million acquired the virus. Over 40 million people in the world are infected and 13 million children have been orphaned by it.

Two years ago, the world's nations agreed that defeating HIV/AIDS would require commitment, resources and action. At the General Assembly's special session on HIV/AIDS in 2001, they adopted a Declaration of Commitment - a set of specific, timebound targets for fighting the epidemic. In 2003, $4.7 billion dollars was committed by donor governments and agencies to fight AIDS - 23 times what was spent in 1996. However, this is still a long way short of the $10 billion dollars a year that the UN AIDS organisation says that is necessary. Meanwhile, the epidemic continues its lethal march around the world, with few signs of slowing down. In the course of the past year, every minute of every day, some 10 new people were infected. In the hardest-hit regions, life expectancy is plummeting. HIV/AIDS is spreading at an alarming rate among women, who now account for half of those infected worldwide. The socio-economic consequences are alarming as teachers, business-people and farmers die from the disease leaving large vacuums in the labour market. Africa continues to be the worst affected. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 10% of the 291 million adults live with HIV. In Lesotho, more than 30% of the population are infected. In Botswana, it is 40%. And the epidemic is spreading rapidly in regions which had previously been largely spared -- Eastern Europe, India and China. But the cost of care is falling (from $10,000 a year to $300 since 2000), and leaders across Africa are now taking action. And the South African and Chinese governments have recently announced that they will provide anti-retroviral drugs (the drug that allows most AIDS sufferers to live a relatively stable life) to all who need them.

But probably the cruellest suffering of the AIDS pandemic is reserved for the AIDS orphans. By 2010, there could be 20 million of them - suffering the trauma of watching their parents waste away and die, suffering because their step-parents or new carers find them a burden and offer them less food, less love, less healthcare and education than their own children. They hit the streets - 2/3 of the prostitutes on the streets of Lusaka, Zambia are AIDS orphans. And the cycle repeats itself - more unwanted births, more AIDS orphans. UNICEF says that when the number of orphans amongst a child population goes above 5%, this exceeds the capacity of most communities to care for so many parentless children. In Zambia, and several other sub-Saharan African countries, the figure is already well above 10% and rising.

TARGET:

- Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015
- Halt and reverse the incidence of malaria, tuberculosis and other major diseases by 2015
As AIDS is yet incurable and treatment only slows the processes by which the disease ravages your body, prevention is the only cure. This begins with education. Spreading awareness is the simplest but also the most effective way in which the disease can be tackled. However, in many countries, local cultures prevent discussion of sexual matters so that information is not passed on. Young people are simply unaware of basic sexual and reproductive health realities. This taboo covers all levels of society. If marginalised people have no voice and no power, they need religious leaders to speak out on their behalf. But religious leaders from all faiths are reluctant to talk about it. This needs to change, for, as Kofi Annan said, “Your people are dying. We’re talking about saving lives. This is a very serious business and God will understand.”

A group of young actors in Nairobi knew that ignorance about AIDS was helping it to spread, and making the lives of sufferers much harder. So they decided to try and talk about it. They put together short plays and sketches on the topic of HIV/AIDS and performed them in poor slums and settlements and the schools around them, hoping that by creating an ‘event,’ they could attract the attention of the young, the idle and unemployed and children who do not attend school. They used theatre so that they could spread information to those who are usually forgotten by publicity campaigns: those who cannot read. They also hoped that the audience might see themselves in the figures in the role plays, and get involved in the discussions afterwards. They could thereby break down the division between those who have the disease and are shunned and those who are afraid of it and hope to protect themselves by ignoring it. This group realised the importance of teaching about AIDS to all members of society, but especially to the young. 80% of the people they asked were unwilling to discuss the problem of HIV/AIDS in society. As Kofi Annan said in his World AIDS Day speech this year, “No progress will be achieved by being timid, refusing to face unpleasant facts, or prejudging our fellow human beings - still less by stigmatising people living with HIV/AIDS. Let no one imagine that we can protect ourselves by building barriers between “us” and “them.” In the ruthless world of AIDS, there is no us and them. And in that world, silence is death.”
Clearly the state of AIDS in the world needs to be addressed. Governments need to honour their commitments and provide more money and resources, so that not least antiretroviral drugs can be bought and distributed. We are at a stage where 800,000 AIDS sufferers have access to drugs which make it possible to live a relatively normal life, and 39 million do not because they cannot afford them. In fact, 6 million people in developing countries need immediate ARV (Antiretroviral) therapy but only 300,000 of them have access to it. It is also crucial that infected mothers have access to nevirapine, which prevents her passing the disease onto her unborn child. Many companies are giving this out for free in the most affected areas, but availability still needs to be more widespread.

Nkosi spoke at the 13th International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa, in January 2001, when he had full blown AIDS. In a speech that he wrote himself, the then 11-year Nkosi spoke frankly to delegates about his experiences with HIV and about the issues surrounding AIDS in South Africa: “I’m a very lucky little boy because, when my birth mother died, Gail took me in and became a mommy to me. Gail and I have always wanted to start a care centre so that other HIV/AIDS mothers and children can be cared for. I am very happy and proud to say that the first Nkosi’s Haven was opened last year. We look after 10 mommies and 15 children... When I grow up, I want to lecture to more and more people about AIDS - and if Gail will let me, around the whole country... I want people to understand about AIDS. Care for us and accept us - we are all human beings. We are normal. We have hands. We have feet. We can walk, we can talk, we have needs just like everyone else. Don’t be afraid of us - we are all the same!” His words were reported around the world, and severely upstaged his President, Thabo Mbeki, who at the time appeared to be in denial about the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Long after the papers and the statements of the Conference are forgotten, people will remember Nkosi’s little face, his baggy suit and his soft, confident voice, explaining the reality of HIV/AIDS as it is experienced by young people.

Nkosi died of AIDS on 1 June 2001 from an AIDS related disease. He was South Africa’s longest surviving child born HIV positive. His speech was broadcast worldwide, and created a global reaction which prompted companies, individuals and governments to open their hearts and their pockets to People With AIDS (PWAs) in South Africa, where the rate of HIV infection has reached tragic proportions. His life was characterised by his brave fight for the rights of the HIV positive. He encouraged many people to join the fight to curb this terrible disease, and so his legacy lives on.

Nkosi Johnson Haven & Aids Foundation

Founded by Gail Johnson in April 1999 and named in honour of her 12 year old foster son and in memory of his biological mother who was unable to look after him, Nkosi’s Haven is a home for HIV positive mothers and children, opened on 14th April 1999.

Young Nkosi and Gail fought long and hard to raise awareness and to erase the stigma around the disease in South Africa. They opened their haven to provide shelter as well as medical and counselling support for HIV infected mothers and their children. Nkosi’s Haven believes in the policy of keeping the mother and child together. It is the belief that no mother should be separated from her child because of HIV-status. The foundation has also gone on to build more safe communities around the country, so that sufferers “are able to live in an environment of acceptance and understanding where they will learn to care for themselves and their children and cope effectively with the new challenges that HIV/AIDS will present to them.”

Nkosi Johnson died of AIDS on 1 June 2001 from an AIDS related disease. He was South Africa’s longest surviving child born HIV positive. His speech was broadcast worldwide, and created a global reaction which prompted companies, individuals and governments to open their hearts and their pockets to People With AIDS (PWAs) in South Africa, where the rate of HIV infection has reached tragic proportions. His life was characterised by his brave fight for the rights of the HIV positive. He encouraged many people to join the fight to curb this terrible disease, and so his legacy lives on.

Clearly the state of AIDS in the world needs to be addressed. Governments need to honour their commitments and provide more money and resources, so that not least antiretroviral drugs can be bought and distributed. We are at a stage where 800,000 AIDS sufferers have access to drugs which make it possible to live a relatively normal life, and 39 million do not because they cannot afford them. In fact, 6 million people in developing countries need immediate ARV (Antiretroviral) therapy but only 300,000 of them have access to it. It is also crucial that infected mothers have access to nevirapine, which prevents her passing the disease onto her unborn child. Many companies are giving this out for free in the most affected areas, but availability still needs to be more widespread.

We also need to pay attention to AIDS before and alongside any other social concerns, as community’s with a high incidence see years of progress completely undone. Socially communities become divided, as the stigma of AIDS forces victims to hide and leave their families. Parents and bread-winners who die leave orphans and grandparents struggling for survival with no way to provide for themselves. Teachers, doctors, civil servants, and policemen are all disappearing, forcing school and hospitals to close and social infrastructures which are the result of years of carefully nurtured development, to collapse. Furthermore, so much money is used to provide medical care and hospital beds for victims, and to help the families left behind, that little money, resources or energy is left to devote to other diseases. The important needs targeted by the other MDGs are abandoned in the face of AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. That's why, this goal, if not achieved, threatens the achievement of any of the other seven.
“What everyone at the table can agree on, is that young people are at the centre of the AIDS crisis, and what happens to them will determine the future of the epidemic.” Carol Bellamy, Director, UNICEF

The Teenage Life Programme works to combat AIDS in Tanzania, where 29% of the population is infected with the HIV/AIDS virus. It began in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, July 2000 by a young man named Lenny Boniface:

“I saw that lack of awareness of the disease itself and the attitudes and behaviour of young people in general were helping to spread this disease in my country. I wished to raise awareness amongst young people about not only AIDS, but also, prostitution, rape, drug abuse, drunkenness and social responsibility. It wasn’t easy to get started in this field as many young people felt they were too busy to get involved, but I started giving talks and workshops in the streets, and soon schools, colleges and youth groups welcomed me. Now I have toured the country, worked with the Tanzanian Commissioner for AIDS, Taji Lundi, spoken at our International Student week and, best of all, produced a nationally broadcast documentary, as these are all good ways to get my message to reach the most people. I want to wake young people up to the problems that affect our country now and in our future, so that they can tackle them.”

Youth are often not credited with the ability to change political, social or health problems in their countries, but as the next generation entering into the AIDS crisis, they must be enabled to understand the issues and take responsibility for action. This is especially important as older generations are rapidly disappearing, leaving only the very young and very old to survive by themselves. Youth should be taught to see the bigger picture, to understand the factors which are damaging their societies and allowing AIDS to spread. They must be allowed to question the actions of pharmaceutical companies and the prices of treatment, but also their own social structures and traditional mindsets which are exacerbating the problem.” Urmila Rosario, a congress delegate from Qatar phrased this perfectly. “Only once the youth understand all the hidden compartments of these health issues can they question the actions of themselves and those around them. Only when they have a full understanding of these concepts can they even attempt to change their social fabric, which is one of the major root causes of these problems.”

Do young people in your community face threats and problems they might be able to avoid if only they knew how? Lenny has achieved considerable success in his awareness campaigns in Tanzania, perhaps because he is a young person talking to other young people. Maybe one of the greatest ways young people can contribute to the achievement of this MDG is by teaching others around them about what they know. Because we find it easier to understand international issues if we are introduced to them through the words and experiences of other young people like us.

Students across Britain have launched a campaign to raise awareness about the gravity of the AIDS epidemic and revitalise young people’s energy to fight on this issue, now that the sensationalism we saw in the media in the 1980s has died down, and the epidemic seems to be under control. Students have asked for support and expert information from the many youth groups, AIDS charities and international development organisations, so that they can tour the UK, explaining the story of AIDS and calling young people to action. The campaign aims to renew interest and activism, by creating solidarity between the young people of Britain and those in countries like Botswana and Zimbabwe where the disease is so much more widespread, where one in three people are HIV positive and where average life expectancy has dropped to 33.
The philosophy

In 1996 and 2000, Winona LaDuke, a Native American member of the Anishinabe tribe, ran as a vice-presidential candidate in the United States presidential election. Part of LaDuke’s political platform included the promotion of the Seventh Generation Amendment to the U.S. constitution, which was based on the Iroquois tribe’s theory of sustainability. The amendment stated that “The right of citizens of the United States to use and enjoy air, water, wildlife, and other renewable resources determined by the Congress to be common property shall not be impaired, nor shall such use impair their availability for the use of future generations.” Basically, it would require that all government decisions take into consideration the effect they would have on people living seven generations (about 150 years) hence.

The philosophy behind The Seventh Generation Amendment embodies everything that sustainable development requires: the idea that there should be “some for all forever” (the definition of sustainability plastered on large billboards around Johannesburg during the World Summit in 2002.) The word “some” refers to human and natural resources - clean air and water, education, jobs & productive livelihoods, healthcare and the right to live in an unpolluted environment.

“In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.”

- Iroquois Confederacy’s Maxim

Targets:

» Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.
In pursuing the Millennium Development Goals, we must act with consideration for our natural world. Our human existence relies on the earth’s natural resources and throughout our development we have drawn heavily on them. So important are natural resources to our industry and prosperity that conflicts arise all over the world between those trying to claim as much of the earth as they can for their own, for political, social or economic gain. However, If we continue to consume in this way, the earth will not be able to provide even for our generation’s demands to supply our industries, warm our homes and feed our mouths - let alone seven generations hence. Our hard work improving the lives of the poorest on the earth will be in vain if we do not have the materials to support the society’s and infrastructures we set up. We must sustain a healthy environment to provide resources for future communities and manage natural systems in a way that secures industries and lives in developing nations.

NATURE’S OVERDRAFTS

In many parts of the world, we are running colossal water over-drafts – taking out far more water from the under-ground water reservoirs known as ‘aquifers’ than natural rainfall can ever put back. All over the Middle East, countries are running up huge water over-drafts which mean that in 15-20 years, all these countries will be facing water stress. That is, they will not be able to meet the demands of their people for water. Maurice Strong, who chaired the Rio Earth Summit, said in 1992, "In the past, wars in the Middle East have been fought over land; in the future, they will be fought over water.” Sustainable development depends on sustainable water supplies – and by the middle of our lives, over a third of the world’s peoples will not have them.

The other area where we are running a massive over-draft is with oil: since the 1960s, we have been using oil faster than we find new deposits. Currently, we are using four times more oil than we discover each year. Today, we will burn 76 million barrels of oil – by 2020, experts think that daily consumption will have risen to 112 million barrels. But several experts think that oil production must peak in the next ten years. Physical shortage will cause production to drop even as demand continues to rise. Prices will go through the roof – transportation and energy costs will double or triple the price of almost everything and the world will spiral into chaos. UNLESS – we pause now and find a sustainable way to meet our energy needs. One that does not involve rich countries invading poorer countries with huge oil reserves.
Fortunately, our Earth is resilient, and we still have the opportunity to halt and reverse our damaging environmental practices.

In a global effort to address the environmental crisis, many international environmental conferences have taken place, beginning in 1972 with the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. This was followed in 1992 by the Rio Earth Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. This is a promising sign that the international community is aware of the dire need for change, but there is still a long way to go.

Overriding problems remain in international agreements. Some countries do not have the technical or financial resources to support these treaties, while others can afford to ignore or work around the treaties. In addition, the process of negotiation and ratification is slow and once enacted, there is no international body to enforce the agreements.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Think about your own local and national governments. Do they practice the ideals of the Seventh Generation Amendment? The truth is, very few do. Because in democracies, governments have their eye fixed on the next election, most work on short-term solutions that only work for a few years at a time and never get to the root of the problem.

Governments realise the importance of the environment in the decisions they make regarding industry and trade. They know many of the decisions they make harm the planet further and disadvantage them in the long run.

However, politicians seek to make fast and tangible improvements to the lives of the generation who are living now. Ones who will live in the future do not vote and thus are of no pressing concern to them.

This is perhaps why concerns for the environment rank far below the needs for economic growth - for more productive industry, trade and commerce, for higher profit and increased sales. In developing nations, the pressing needs of those in extreme poverty, without secure food resources, adequate health care or education, mean that politicians feel their countries do not have the luxury of protecting the environment.

Therefore, citizens, companies, industries, governments local and national, need constant persuasion to keep their policies and strategies environmentally considerate.
Sustainable development has been on the agenda for many years. 2005 will see the start of the UNESCO Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, during which the UN will try to lead schools to reorient their curricula towards the issue. Though its importance is acknowledged by education ministries in many nations, few students fully understand it.

In England, Peace Child International is training Be the Change! Ambassadors to go out and teach children in primary schools about the topic. They are taught about the concept of sustainable development, and then rehearse powerpoint presentations and comedy sketches. One of the sketches, BEYOND 2050! - involves time travel. In a spoof TV chat show, the first guest arrives from the year 2051 happy, healthy, relaxed and prosperous because in his/her lifetime, people have successfully learned how to live in a sustainable way. After a ‘commercial break’, the TV host presses the ‘Alternative future’ button, and the second guest arrives from 2051 in tattered clothing, wearing a gas mask, explaining how his/her generation failed to learn the lessons of sustainability, carried on life as usual - and ended up running out of clean air, water and other natural resources. As the show ends, s/he begs and screams to be allowed to stay in the present, and have a second chance at creating a sustainable future. But, of course, in life there are no second chances: we only have one planet and one chance to create a sustainable world.

**Ann Kokoza from Horlivka in the Ukraine** saw the deterioration of the environment in the ravine near where she lived. She decided to do something about it. She got the local government, media, and both adult and youth communities to join her in an effort which has made her town much more considerate of the environment.

“Our town is one of the most ecologically troubling regions of the Ukraine,” she writes. “There are more than 80 enterprises in coal mining, chemical, metallurgical and machine-building industries. As a result a lot of industrial waste are stored in our town. The air in the town and the water in open reservoirs is polluted. Suffice it to say that 9 dangerous ingredients are emitted into the air and their concentration is from 1.2 to 3.5 times above what is safe. With such state of biosphere in our region, each tree in it is more a factory of oxygen and health than mere decoration. Unfortunately the green resources of our town are limited and our ravine is close to a chemical plant whose dangerous emissions are ruinous for some trees, making them droop and die. It wasn’t always thus: in 1961, the area was thought to be so famously beautiful that Nikita Krushov, the leader of the USSR, visited it on his official tour of the region. That’s why we decided to restore the woods that used to surround our valley by planting new sapplings, and to clear all the rubbish and chemical waste. We also decided that ecological propaganda among pupils and towns people was an essential component of the project and would help to sustain our environment in the future. So we have involved as much of the community as possible. We did a survey in some of the local schools and found that 80.3% of pupils realised the necessity to protect the environment but only 5.8% of them take part personally in solving environmental problems. We got in touch with the schools with eco-groups in our town and 53 of them agreed to help us on Sundays and after classes. Once we started to establish the project, many of the authorities agreed to support us, like the forestry who gave us the trees, and a local Foundation which lent us trucks to remove the waste we collected and buses to bring our volunteers to the site. The inhabitants of the ravine, which had been treated as an open sewer and neglected over many years, were, needless to say, very glad that it was being improved. Illnesses associated with the bad air and pollution were spreading among the people and their children. This had worried them greatly but they accepted it as they were used to it. Many were simply amazed that young people like us were sufficiently bothered about the situation to want to do something about it. After the project was finished, so many young people had become interested in what we were doing and the environment in general, that 30 new eco groups were started up in the region. The whole town were also glad to be able to be proud of their home again. We were pretty proud too.”

-Anna Kokoza, 16, Horlivka, the Ukraine

**What can young people do to further sustainable development? Teach others about it.**
Use your Consumer Power

Even when governments have policies in place to prevent companies from behaving too badly, some corporations find ways to dodge responsibility and continue environmentally and socially destructive policies. However, consumers can have a massive impact on these companies’ success. Our power as consumers is arguably the most important power we have. If we refuse to use the products and services from a company, we can have a massive effect on their profits, and persuade them to stop practices that harm the environment, without the government ever having to be involved. More importantly, if companies know that consumers are watching them and will not buy their brands if they behave inappropriately, they will be forced to re-think corporate policies. The famous consumer boycott of Shell in Europe resulted in their abandoning their plans to dump the Brent Spar oil rig. A similar boycott of Exxon-Mobil against the company’s environmental policies and donations to anti-environmental organisations in the United States made a big impact on the way one of the world’s largest company conducts its business.

In other areas, consumer power makes its presence felt: the increase in interest in organic foods has resulted in many supermarkets opening ‘organic produce’ aisles. The interest in Fair Trade products in increasing throughout Europe, North America, Japan and Australasia: these products, promoted by Oxfam, Christian Aid and other development charities, cuts out the middle men and allows primary producers to earn more from their farms. As more people eat less red meat and go vegetarian, so more land can be devoted to grain and vegetables which make less impact on the environment.

It all begins with a change in YOUR purchasing habits, and it makes more of a difference than you might think.

For how many generations will your impact be felt?

“At the core of our declaration, we the youth want to emphasise the need for a shift in consciousness that realises the interconnectedness that exists between all aspects of life. This shift in consciousness should underlie every action and decision made on behalf of our global community,” Casablanca Declaration preamble

This shift in consciousness must first be made within each person reading this magazine before it can be made on any large scale. Sustainability is not something that only companies and governments consider. Do YOU practice the ideals of the Seventh Generation Amendment and sustainable development? Everything you do is connected to someone or something in this world – the food you eat, the clothes you buy, the transportation you use – the list is endless. For how many generations will your impact be felt?

We can study the way we use the earth by considering our Ecological Footprint. This represents the effect our lifestyles have on the planet. It is measured by the amount of space that would be needed to replace all the resources we use in travelling, in producing the food we eat: land to grow the food, to grow trees to fuel the factories, waters in which the fish can breed. And the startling result is that there isn’t enough space for us all to live in the way we do. At the moment, experts calculate we would need 7 to 10 planets to enable every member of the planetary family to live as people in Europe and North America do. Looking about, we notice that we do not have any spare planets. We must therefore adjust our priorities to consider these environmental constraints alongside our own comfort and convenience or else we will be left with a planet that simply cannot sustain life as we know it.

“In the 10 years since Rio, we have realized that the world is still facing a massive environmental crisis. The state of humankind is critical.”

- Luis Betanzos de Mauléon, UNEP at the 2nd World Congress of Youth, Morocco 2003
Alerta Smog

The city of Lima in Peru is terribly polluted, mainly due to car exhaust fumes. There is such a high density of traffic and car owners do not take care of their cars or abide by pollution regulations. A group of school girls from the city decided to launch an awareness campaign to teach drivers in the city centre about the effects of such pollution caused by their refusal to maintain their cars properly. They asked traffic policemen who spent all day directing traffic and street children who worked cleaning wind screens, to wear pollution masks, and distribute leaflets explaining to motorists that we would all have to wear such things in the future if they continue to refuse to service their car exhausts. The children and policemen worked well together as a team, attracting a lot of attention with their white masks. They explained that, if they were caught again with smoking exhausts, they would be prosecuted.

Millenium Park Project

We are the students of Minsk grammar school #2, and we wanted to build a monument to celebrate the Millenium. We decided to make an environmental project, as the right to a healthy life in a healthy environment is really important to us. Our town is the greatest industrial center of Belarus, so our air is badly polluted by industrial fumes. Also, we are close to Chernobyl so we worry about the radiation in our atmosphere. However we know that trees are unique creations of nature. They not only create beauty but turn carbon dioxide emissions into oxygen and clean the air of pollution. Therefore we thought it would be a good idea to plant a Millennium Park in our neighbourhood. It is quite new so doesn’t have any parks yet.

It is a well known fact that our environment is in danger, but unfortunately most of the people around the world don’t accept that we need to change anything. To us this makes no sense but we need to convince everyone else that action needs to be taken. Thats why we got lots of other schools involved, organised pickets to collect support from people where we live, and are also involved in seminars, conferences, youth camps, meetings and just talked to people, discussing things so that news of our ecology is spread.

Local for global

Like all the other MDGs, environmental action begins with us at home with daily habits and extends to international organisations and governments who design protocol and shape global decisions. Engagement between local communities, governments, NGOs and international organisations is the first step to creating lasting change that fits the environments they are meant to protect. This is especially important for this goal because of the large-scale movement needed to clean up the environment. You may be able to start a clinic in a small community and locally address the problem of maternal health, but no environment exists in isolation. A polluted river flows for miles, and air pollution and depletion of the ozone layer affects everyone in the world. That why you must try to inspire others to contribute in any way no matter how small, to this global movement.

It was great to build this park by ourselves, and we could build another park, then a third... But our real aim is not just to create parks, but to make people understand that things like trees are really important. And for that, creating the park is like our proof.

Dzmitry Savelau, 18, Minsk, Belarus
Are there topics that all of these goals have in common?

The millennium Development Goals are fully interlinked with human rights, as every goal seeks to provide those people who are most disadvantaged in the world, with water, food, decent living conditions, education, health – those privileges they are entitled to have in order to lead a free, healthy and dignified life – in other words, their basic human rights.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated:

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

These pledges have been re-confirmed at dozens of UN conferences and declarations over the last fifty years, so that, beginning with the UN Charter in 19—right up to the Millennium Summit in 2000 where the MDGs were set, human rights, development and democracy have been recognised as mutually supportive and vital to the welfare and security of peoples.

Yet, though our ‘world community’ frequently reiterates these desires to support and protect human rights – yet at the same time supports regimes, like those in Burma, that consistently abuse them. Continuing such double standards will guarantee that the MDGs are never achieved – which is why delegates to our Congress insisted in the preamble to the Casablanca Declaration:

“ - that no human or socio-economic development can be sustainable without genuine consideration for the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or for good governance, democracy and human dignity.”

The CHILDREN for PEACE Movement

Murder, kidnapping, torture and displacement are all a part of daily life for children in Columbia. In one year alone, over 30,000 Colombians were killed either directly by the war or by the culture of violence it has helped to create. Especially vulnerable are the children, who fall victim to threats, abuse, gang violence and the death of their parents. Yet children’s groups from some of the poorest and most violent towns in the country are fighting back with actions for peace. At great risk to their personal safety, they petitioned for a national special election in which children could vote on the future of their country and themselves. With support from UNICEF and other organizations, “The Children’s Mandate for Peace and Rights” election was held in October 1996, with over 2.7 million children casting votes. They overwhelmingly chose the right to survive, the right to peace and the right to have love and family.

The Children for Peace Movement has been nominated twice for the Nobel Peace Prize. One-third of all direct casualties of the war are children, and, whenever parents are killed, it is children who suffer. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu says, “It is we adults who teach children how to hate. It is we adults who train children to fight in our wars.”

For decades, Colombians have been caught in the midst of a seemingly insoluble power struggle between government forces, leftist guerillas, paramilitary death squads and wealthy drug lords who profit from the chaos and who leave entire societies with their human rights in tatters. Now, in Columbia, it is the children who are fighting back.
How did you become an activist?
From hearing about the horrific human rights abuses in Burma, but being unable to put them in any context. I needed to see for myself what was happening and confront the regime face to face. I believe in justice. There is nothing more important in life. To have an opportunity to help means to have a responsibility to help.

You were imprisoned and even tortured for three months in a Burmese prison, and after getting out, you went back knowing you may be arrested again. What was it like to make that decision?
It was simple; I hadn’t achieved what I had set out to achieve: to show genuine solidarity with the people of Burma, particularly the political prisoners, to directly challenge the military regime, and to draw the attention of the international community to the situation in Burma. In the 14 months that I spent in prison in ’99, I was satisfied that this was done.

Do you think everything you went through was worth it?
Absolutely! I never doubted it, well I won’t say never doubted it, but I remained pretty positive. If I could change anything about what happened, I would try to be more respectful and sympathetic to the prison guards because they had a hard time; they were oppressed by the regime just like everyone else.

The idea of fundamental human rights is not explicitly listed among the MDG goals, but how do you think it fits?
It is impossible to achieve the goals unless we respect every person.

What do you think is the largest obstacle to the ultimate goal of universal poverty reduction?
Greed.

Free The Children
Free The Children(FTC) is an international network of children helping children at a local, national and international level through representation, leadership and action. It was founded by Craig Kielburger in 1995, when he was 12 years old. The primary goal of the organization is not only to free children from poverty and exploitation but also to free children and young people everywhere from the idea that they are powerless to bring about positive social change and to improve the lives of their peers.

Free the Children is unlike any other children’s charity in the world, as it is an organization by, of and for children that fully embodies the notion that children and young people themselves can be leaders of today in creating a more just, equitable and sustainable world.

Craig himself is a bit of a legend: as a 12-year old, he was going through the papers looking for the comic sections, when the story of Iqbal Masih caught his eye. Iqbal won a Human Rights award for his work in exposing the horrors of child slavery – and then was murdered in suspicious circumstances. Iqbal’s martyrdom at age 11 inspired Craig to found Free the Children. FTC now has hundreds of thousands of members world wide. Youth members of FTC have raised funds for the construction of more than 350 primary schools in the rural areas of developing nations, providing education every day to over 20,000 children. They have distributed approximately 125,000 school kits and in excess of 3 million dollars worth of medical supplies to needy families.

“Often assumed to be the leaders of tomorrow, our generation must be the leaders of today!”
Craig Kielburger
With the goal of generating this leadership, Craig and his brother, Marc, have founded a new organisation called Leaders Today. They have arranged leadership workshops for over 300,000 young people to help them realise their potential, in large or small ways.

An FTC school in Ecuador: the first in the village
Whose responsibility are the MDGs?

This is the focus of MDG No. 8:

Targets:
- Develop further an open trading and financial system that includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – nationally and internationally
- Address the least developed countries’ special needs, and the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States
- Deal comprehensively with developing countries’ debt problems
- Develop decent and productive work for youth.
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies.

Partnerships for development are not a new idea. They encourage some of the world’s richest countries to sacrifice some of their personal profit to support developing countries as they try to progress, and have been agreed upon many times over the past few decades.

So goal eight asks once again for the participation of the governments of all the countries of the world in improving the societies, economies and environments of developing nations, and the 80% of the world’s population that live in them.

For, whilst those countries themselves have great challenges ahead which will require social, economic and political restructuring, in order to meet the goals, they cannot do it alone. The rich countries have to accept they have a crucial role.

AID

Forty years ago, the world’s richest countries committed to donate 0.7% of their Gross National Product (GNP) to the poorest countries as Official Development Assistance (ODA). This simply means they donate 0.7% of all that their country earns to help developing countries. However, only five countries have reached this target, and from 1990 to 2001, the average contribution fell from .33% to .22%. If only the members of the Development Assistance Committee (the world’s 23 largest donors) delivered 0.7% of their GNI in aid, the ODA would total $165 billion each year, which would be more than what is needed to achieve MDGs (HDR, 2003).
“We watch silently as 59 countries grow poorer by the day. We do nothing to halt the widening gap between the rich and poor. In a $30 trillion global economy, we have the funds and the capacity to meet the MDGs – and we should support the compact proposed by the UN Development Programme between the LEDs and MEDCs to ensure that both groups meet their obligations and enter into full and constructive partnerships to achieve these goals.”

- The Casablanca Declaration

Recent trends show aid is increasing again, but still not at a fast enough rate to achieve the MDGs by 2015 or to reach the 0.7% target. Moreover, international co-operation requires that donors not only increase the amount of Aid they donate, but also ensure the money is used in the most effective ways. They must monitor its distribution, carefully finding out who receives it, and how it is spent. Receiving countries must also work to spend Aid more effectively. Corruption must be reduced and priority placed on health and education for the rich rather than military aid and luxuries for the ruling classes.

The burden of Debt
Many developing countries pay out a large proportion of their annual turnover in repayments to rich countries from whom they borrowed money in the past. They are charged extortionate rates of interest which they can never pay, so the interest payments get added to the principle which means that their debt is constantly rising. Thus much needed money for investment is wasted every year on debt repayments. Sub-Saharan Africa pays $10 billion every year in debt repayments - 4 times as much money as the region spends on health care and education. After war and corruption, debt is probably the biggest obstacle that stands between developing countries and the achievement of the MDGs. A change in the debt payment policy is essential if less-developed countries are to reach the targets for 2015.

The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.
HIPC is one solution. It was created in the late 1990s to reduce the unpayable debt the most seriously indebted countries. It works with 26 countries either to cancel their debt or refinance it in a sustainable manner. Between 1998 and 2001, their debt service declined from $3.7 to $2.2 billion. By 2005, annual debt service will be a third (about $1.2 billion) lower than in 1998-9. This has had significant benefits for the social services of HIPC beneficiaries countries. Uganda, for example, has almost achieved universal primary education as a result.

Trade
However, donating more aid and reducing debt repayments are just gifts which make developing countries dependent on hand-outs from the rich. That is not a good way to foster sustainable development: enabling developing countries to boost their economies on their own through a fairer global trading system is a more sustainable strategy. At the moment, most rich countries subsidise their domestic production to such a level that they defeat all other competitors on the market. It means it is cheaper even for people in developing countries to buy products from overseas than buy from local producers. The 2001 Doha Declaration committed all countries to make the needs of development, especially for the least developed countries, a central objective of future trade negotiations. Yet, as we have seen, even the supposedly good-hearted European Union spends more on subsidising each European cow than it does supporting each African.

Who else is responsible? WE ALL ARE!
The Millennium Development Goals are different from every other goal set before them, as they emphasise the involvement of not only every country in the world, but every sector of society in those countries.
After governments met at the Millennium Summit in New York and decided on the MDGs, they asked UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to report on how this could all be achieved. He proposed four key areas of action that the UN and its member states should take to make the goals happen:
1. Promotion;
2. Implementation;
3. Monitoring;
These tasks will be undertaken by a team headed by Kofi Annan, with Mark Malloch Brown, administrator of the UN Development Programme, Professor Jeffrey Sach, the Harvard economist and Evelyn Herfkins, former development Minister for the Netherlands.

So you can think of the effort to achieve the MDGs as a world party, organised by Kofi Annan and his team. Kofi throws the biggest and best parties with very high profile guests. But with the MDG party, he faces his biggest challenge to date. This one will last 15 years and cost millions. The only thing that will save him is if all the nations, groups and individuals on the guestlist are willing to help him out. The international community have all agreed to come - all the United Nations agencies, the World Bank and IMF, the European Union, all the heads of states, business and corporate leaders + leaders of civil society, religious groups and ordinary citizens. Some guests are already at the party and have been for years! These are the people who support and work overseas on projects - NGOs and official charities; volunteer doctors and nurses, trained teachers who work for tiny wages abroad, teachers who run school exchanges, children who choose an overseas project for their class charity, marathon runners who send their proceeds to hospitals and aid charities, children who do sponsored runs, church groups who have fetes and cake sales. Everyone who donates to an overseas charity when they see a crisis on the news. For a global partnership needs to be reflected in the actions of all kinds of people. Thankfully it is but for the party to reach the climax we all hope, more guests are needed and they need to bring expensive gifts for their host!.

**Life-Link Friendship-Schools** is an organisation which establishes 3-way relationships between schools - one close by and easily accessible; the other far away and from a different culture and background. The set up enables young people from each school to work together to make a difference by taking action for the environment, human rights, and conflict resolution. They also learn from and with each other, gaining knowledge and understanding of the differences and similarities between peoples and cultures as they work. There are different forums on conflict resolution, human rights, global collaboration and peace. Students can contribute to as many different forums as they wish.

As the schools work on issues simultaneously, the students not only get involved in global issues, but learn about the differences and similarities between peoples and cultures. They develop skills which enable them to enter each forum with increased understanding and information.

As Solomon Gyam, a student from Ghana, said, "I have learned more during this [project] week than during all my school time."

"We are schools without frontiers crossing cultural boundaries, who believe in the power we hold together, bringing peace, growth, change, and unity to the global community," says Hans Levander, the Founder. "Believing in ourselves, together we can and we will make a difference." As Kofi Annan said in praise of Life link, "No one can afford to think in pure local terms, we are all linked."

So far, more than 1300 projects have been completed by 331 Lifelink schools in 60 countries. For example, the Kurshenai Laurynas Ivinskis Gymnasium school in Lithuania explores the issue of landmines and spreads awareness about them with Manor House School Cairo, Egypt.

**Student Partnerships Worldwide** is an international development charity which works on community and health projects in developing nations, putting international partnership at the heart of their work. There are many companies which send young British volunteers to do development projects in developing nations which do not always collaborate successfully with local community, NGO and government wishes and existing work. SPW works to counter this by partnering its young people from Britain with another volunteer their age from the developing country. They send them to work together on projects with support and training from the Headquarters in Britain as well as from local workers in close collaboration with local NGOs and community leaders.
I went on holiday to Peru in September 2002. My friend Tammy Spencer and I were in Cusco for a few days in between trekking and going to the Amazon. We had already encountered the children on the streets many times, when we were handed a flyer in the square at Cusco about a fashion show. We arrived at the venue on time to find an empty room and some rather excited children behind a make shift curtain. They kept popping their heads around the corners every now and again smiling. We sat for a while and the only other people there seemed to be a couple of women and a man, who seemed to be the organisers. The start time passed and eventually we got talking with them. The children were getting more excited behind the curtain and my friend and I felt so sorry that no one else had come to see them, so we volunteered to go out with them into the square in Cusco to try to persuade some unsuspecting tourists to come. The show was postponed for an hour while we did this. We managed to gather between 10 and 15 people I think, which didn’t seem as bad as it sounds as the room wasn’t huge, and the show kicked off with a bang. This seemed like a great project, as the children were clearly having a lot of fun, and it was nice to see them doing things and getting positive attention. Outside on the street no one wanted them around. They were just shoed away from everywhere they sat. It was sad though because it seemed like so much more needed to be done for them, and could, if only the organisers had a bit more help. For example, they had a place where the children made the t-shirts, and could come to rest and play; safe inside, but they only had use of the premises for a few hours in the morning and evening, and the children from the fashion show were going to go back out to sleep on the streets that night.

The idea for a Salsa party to raise money for the children was born that evening. I really like Salsa and have been dancing for about three years at that point and had organized one party for a local charity in Dundee that June, and we thought we could do another one for the children. So on my return, I planned a party in a large hall in Dundee for the beginning of December, some of my friends helped sell tickets, get raffle prizes and make a buffet in my kitchen on the day. I got a Colombian friend to DJ for me on the night. There aren’t that many people who can dance salsa in Dundee. Well there weren’t till we arrived! So we ran a beginners class to get people started, and you have no idea how big a hit it was! About 170 people came and we raised £920 in just an evening. It was such a success that we have been running classes and club nights ever since, and the money we have raised has gone a really long way, and the children now have a home and beds and lessons and all sorts of things. So we’re planning lots more parties for the new year and I’m even teaching Salsa myself. It’s proving a lot more work, but we couldn’t just stop now!

Sarah Broxholme, Dundee, Scotland

**Spike the punch and buy Fair Trade**

We can campaign on international issues, persuade our leaders and rulers to behave as we would wish them to, or we can enter the arena ourselves, use our Consumer Power, and buy Fair Trade. Small local producers in developing nations cannot compete with the prices on world markets, so Fair Trade buys direct from the producer, requiring companies to pay above market prices but ensuring the benefits go to the farmers and workers and into developing economies. This enables developing nations to dodge the competition from powerful international companies and subsidised farmers. Buying fair trade is a simple and direct way that you can contribute to this partnership of peoples.

As independent trading organisations, Fair Trade companies have laws and regulations which ensure economically marginalised sectors of society like women, farmers and artisans can participate. They guarantee decent wages and working conditions, and monitor practices to ensure they do not harm the environment.

You can recognise a genuine product of fair trade by either the FLO (Fair Trade Labelling Organisations) or the IFAT (International Federation of Alternative Trade) stamp and there are a whole range of products to choose from.

Some young girls in Costa Rica set up a fair trade system for local peasants to force international buyers to treat their farmers more fairly. From January to December of 2002, a group of young Latin-American girls from the EARTH University in Costa Rica pioneered a project to create a direct channel of communication between their local peasant farmers and the consumers; in other words, they introduced a system of Fair Trade. They realised how difficult it was for the peasants to take control of their situation when they knew so little about marketing their products. They had always relied on the knowledge of a middle man, and had never even attended an agricultural fair. So they organised training in scheduling, managing prices and clients, crops and labelling etc. They took them to visit and learn from other farming groups who had managed independent trade, and set up a first peasants’ Agricultural Fair, which they called ‘Our Land,’ so that these farmers might learn to manage their own trade relations. They also formed an association between the peasants of different regions so that they could work together and therefore be stronger.

This project has increased the peasants earnings, given the public better prices and the knowledge and initiative to start marketing independently. They intend that their initiative will spread to other farms and inspire young farmers thus steadily improving the lot of more Costa Rican peasant farmers in the future.
WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE DO ABOUT THE MDGs?

Well - a good place to start is by holding a major International Congress where hundreds of young people from around the world can gather to discuss the most effective ways they can contribute. In the hot-house atmosphere of an International Congress, things happen that no one can plan or imagine. The connections made, the ideas generated, the energy fired up – all contribute massively to the effort to achieve daunting targets like the MDGs. This is why we are so grateful to the Moroccan government for hosting the 2nd World Congress of Youth – and to the governments of Hawaii, Scotland and India who are promising to host future congresses in the series. Putting sustainable development and the MDGs at the heart of fierce, constructive action and debate over the two weeks of the congress educated all of us about what we can do and inspired us to do more.

Youth Take Initiative

The Congress really came to life with the young people exchanging ideas, finding common ground, learning about and accepting diverse cultures, and questioning our own biases. As a journalist at the Congress, I spent my time trying to understand the dynamics of the numerous organisations that were being set up during the course of the event. Youth initiative was the most important element of this Congress because it represents what young people took home from Morocco, and demonstrates what “Be the Change” actually means.

About a hundred organisations were formed at the congress. One such organisation is Peace 180: Building Capacity and Youth Leadership amongst Young people of Iraq. This organisation seeks to ignite a generation of dynamic peace leaders by starting an activist training programme for young Iraqis. It will combine community organising, international development, and youth advocacy. They hope to address the war in Iraq and foster friendships and partnerships among youth activists, local NGOs, and international organisations.

As a consequence of the congress, some of the young participants have formed the Congress Positive Feedback Committee to give the participants a platform for constructive criticism about the congress to assist future organisers of youth conferences all over the world. They have networked over 600 participants since the end of the congress on their website, which is already full of comments.

The first step has been taken, and if even just one of these initiatives really takes shape, then the youth of this Congress have made a difference.

-Pavitra Chalam, India

“There is a spirit which reflects your will and mainly those of addition there is a about the future.”

“We launched a campaign for the MDGs at this Congress!! Most of us didn’t have a clue what the MDGs were before we came – but we learned, not only what they are, but how we can help achieve them – and that we all have a duty to work for them. Most of all – we realise the need for a Campaign! A campaign that leaves no stone unturned to ensure that all the goals are achieved by 2015 – if not before!”

-Participant of 2nd World Congress of Youth, Morocco 2003

“What CAN YOUNG PEOPLE DO ABOUT THE MDGs?”

“World”
From August 16-28, 2003, 802 people between the ages of 15 and 25 from 126 countries came together in Morocco, just outside of Casablanca, for the World Congress of Youth organised by The Moroccan government, the Moroccan Forum of Youth, and Peace Child International. The purpose of the congress was to gather young delegates and activists from all over the world to learn about each other, to network, and most of all to answer the congress question, “How can young people work most effectively with the United Nations to achieve the Millennium Development Goals?” Over the two weeks, these 800 young people attended speeches by people such as Carol Bellamy, the Executive Director of UNICEF, Evelyn Helfkins of the United Nations Development Programme, James Mawdesly, the human rights campaigner. Official delegates set up exhibitions to show what their organisations have done to advance the cause of sustainable development and youth action for the MDGs. In evenings of dance and music, talented performers from all continents showed the astounding variety and beauty of the different cultures on our planet. In addition to spending 5 days of the Congress working on Action Projects with local communities in the 16 provinces of Morocco, delegates met in regional groups to discuss what should go into the Casablanca Declaration and elected regional representatives to the Casablanca drafting committee, which produced the written outcome of the Congress.
The Casablanca Declaration

On the first day of the congress, delegates from all around the world broke into regional groups, and discussed what they wished to see in the declaration to represent them all. Each region elected two individuals to a Drafting Group to carry forward these concerns and ideas while they travelled all over Morocco to work on Action Projects. These 16 delegates debated, researched, discussed, brainstormed and produced a First Draft of this document. They discussed it with their groups and drafted amendments which were presented to a tempestuous Congress Plenary on Tuesday 26th August. We thank the talented members of the Drafting Group for producing what we believe to be an excellent working document outlining how young people may be usefully involved in achieving the MDGs. What follows is a summary; you can read the whole thing at www.peacechild.org/wyc.

The delegates studied each goal in detail and worked out what were the priorities necessary to achieve each one. They then outlined ways in which young people amongst them had already contributed to these areas.

In the study of poverty, the declaration prioritises the need to:

- educate both children and adults, girls and boys;
- educate about sexual health to reduce population growth;
- empower women as well as men to start income generating projects;
- develop nations’ infrastructures such as roads and sewerage systems;
- raise living standards in rural areas to reduce rural to urban migration;
- work to resolve and end all armed conflicts;
- lessen the dependency of developing countries on developed ones;
- cancel all unpayable third world debt;
- ensure food security by improving irrigation and soil management;
- end corruption and prioritize minority groups;
- end child labour and reintroduce street children into society.

In education, to end illiteracy amongst adults and children, especially in rural areas, to train teachers, to encourage learning through work experience and community projects, to ensure equal opportunity to education for those with disabilities, to spread flexi-time schools which enable working children to attend classes, to encourage the creation of more scholarships for the especially talented and the poor, to involve youth in the spread of information through the popular media, and to spread a more holistic approach to learning which includes the education of human rights, sustainable development, and global cultures.

The priorities of each goal often overlap with those of others. Projects which are effective in achieving one goal are often effective in the effort to achieve another. Thus the synergies Evelyn Herfkens talked about in her opening speech were seen to be perhaps the most important element of the MDG Youth Campaign the Congress launched.
1. INTERNATIONALLY ENGAGEMENT AND POLITICAL MOBILISATION

Voting has steadily declined in rich countries around the world especially amongst young people. They do not think it will make a difference and they think their governments do not stand for anything. Our priorities must be to encourage practical global responsibility through broad and diverse education, including youth exchanges. We must also realise the power of young people as consumers, and confront corporations that have power in our democracies. We must hold corporations also responsible for investing in young people. We must support international institutions; strengthen their democratic and consensual structures so they are neither international bullying grounds, nor ignored for their previous unmet targets or unfulfilled agreements.

We must demand that human rights and global issues to be a fundamental part of all education programs starting at primary level. Supporting this we call for resources to establish active political and social outlets within schools, learning centres and communities. We must encourage youth to run for elected office. Politicians must ask young people what their concerns are, and give them real opportunities for civic participation. We are not naive to the complexity and power systems in our countries, and we know there are many organisations supporting young people. But they, and we, need further government recognition.

CORRUPTION

“Young people have an important role resisting and combating corruption at every level of society. Government and society need to replace the deeply ingrained culture of corruption with a culture of transparency and punish those who resort to corrupt practices.”

2. TO FIGHT FOR PEACE

No development, sustainable or otherwise, can happen in the absence of peace. War sets back development by generations. It reduces populations to abject poverty, destroys facilities for health and education, demolishes homes and schools, leaves services, machines and crops to rust and rot as workers are taken off to fight. War always crushes the democratic process beneath the jackboot priority of winning the war - and it causes untold human grief and suffering.

We must not only prevent war to aid development, but aid development to bring peace. Those who live lives of suffering and oppression rebel to break free from the shackles of poverty. As such, poverty is a breeding ground for social unrest, violence and terrorism.

“We, as a generation, commit to dealing directly with the root causes of conflict, rather than just dealing with its violent symptoms through military means. Conflict prevention involves addressing ethnic and religious differences, poverty, the lack of education and career opportunities, historical baggage, political posturing, disregard for international law, human rights abuse, environmental degradation and other issues dealt with earlier in this declaration. In particular, we need to create an attitude amongst the members of our generation to rejoice and celebrate in our differences rather than find reasons for fear in them. We need to engage media, international institutions, the public and private sectors, NGOs and civil society to work with us to seek out and support the resolution of existing conflicts, the prevention of new ones, and the settling of economic and other differences in a peaceful, constructive way.

“We oppose the ideology behind the employment of child soldiers. They should be rehabilitated and taught non-violence techniques. Youth should be recruited for post conflict reconstruction. We should be more than just cannon-fodder for the military.” In that regard, we welcome the clause in the draft European Constitution that calls for the setting up of a Youth Humanitarian Corps. We urge the EU to set this up as a matter of urgency.

“We call for more communication and networking amongst youth; more exchanges, more links, more Congresses of this kind.”

DEMOCRACY

“We know that achievement of the MDGs will only happen with all governments, rich or poor, improving their policies to work for their people. We must strive for democratic governance where all people in all countries can effectively participate in the running of their community, nation and world.”

The Declaration insists on the centrality of Human Rights to the MDG process and recalls the spirit of all youth conferences where young people have asked to be ‘seen as a resource not a problem.’

Delegates to the Congress agreed that the Casablanca Declaration should be a continuously evolving and expanding ‘work-in-progress’ rather than a “Final Document.” This allows every young person to contribute to the document not only those lucky enough to attend the congress. It also allows new examples of how young people are addressing the goals to be added continuously. The Declaration can thus become a world pledge for all young people. So please read the Casablanca Declaration and send in your stories, your appeals, and your concerns about what you feel our role is in achieving the awesome challenge of the Millennium Development Goals.

To view the entire document, please go to www.peacechild.org/pcframe.asp?Main=WYC/default.html

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Message from His Majesty, King Mohammed VI

As far as we can ascertain, the 2nd World Youth Congress is the first international youth meeting ever to have been convened by a reigning monarch. Thus the King’s message to the Congress is important.

It contains ideas for new institutional arrangements for youth worldwide:

Praise be to God, prayer and peace be upon the Prophet, His Kith and Kin

Young people from around the World, On this occasion when the World Congress of Youth is convening in our country, I would like to tell our young people and youth all over the world that their preoccupations and concerns are also mine. I wish to stress how important this gathering is, in view of the strong interaction which exists between the visions and perceptions held by young people, on the one hand, and the fundamental questions affecting the present and the futur of human societies on the other. Its significance lies also in the results which are bound to come out of youth forums, especially as they are based on hope and optimism.

The world is confronted with numerous problems and a wide range of thorny issues, in a context where distances are getting shorter, regional barriers are disappearing and more and more links are being built between various parts of the globe. No one can cut himself off from his environment and turn a blind eye to what is happening around him or the world in which he lives. The situation is quite paradoxical: while stimulating progress and cooperation and creating good opportunities for positive cultural interaction, it also increases the risk of permanent hegemony or constant subjection depending on whether they are powerful or weak, rich or poor.

The world is up against major problems, especially the gap between the North and the South and the ensuing poverty. This is compounded by recurring problems such as desertification, drought and the proliferation of epidemics and dangerous diseases, the scarcity of water and the dwindling of arable land. These obstacles are exploited by some to spread extremism and terror. We therefore have a duty to work together at all levels and harness all enlightened forces in an effort to build more productive relations between our states. Our aim is to curb the scourge of poverty, protect countries from the spectre of famine and improve the condition of our continent’s environment to safeguard the security of its people.

To achieve this aim, it is necessary to foster a culture of peace, engage in dialogue, stick to international conventions and UN resolutions and abide by decisions reached at International Summits.

There is a spirit which acts as the driving force of this congress. It stems from your values – tolerance, coexistence and co-operation for sustainable development. In addition, there is your motto – Be the Change! – which conveys so much confidence and optimism about the future. It is clear that young people are ready and willing to assume the responsibilities that lie with them to enrich interaction and dialogue in the search for adequate solutions; hence the pressing need to encourage interactive communication between generations – for younger members to avail themselves of the experience and know-how of previous generations. These aims and values have been endorsed by our young people’s forums and enriched by efforts in all fields, particularly those relating to training and start-ups.

Young people of the world! – as you know, this nation has long acted as a link between civilizations and continent and has been a perfect illustration of co-existence between faiths and creeds. This is why Morocco is so keen to fulfil its international obligations and to defend just causes. Morocco considers it a duty to foster peace and co-existence and to disseminate and instil harmonious interaction and co-operation on a wider scale to build efficient partnerships.

Our young people, with their dynamism and optimistic outlook have resolved to move forward in this direction to ensure a better future for our people. It is keen to consolidate the institutional foundations of the state, in an irreversible manner, based on the rule of law, equality and the protection of human dignity. Thus we will be in a position to fulfil our mission and to discharge our duty to uphold human causes and the principles of justice and equity. We will be able to raise the banner of peace in the world.

All young people should focus their thoughts and efforts on this role as a matter of priority. It is necessary to stimulate the enthusiasm of people of goodwill and to pool their potentialities to develop a world strategy for young people. This would require sustainable, concerted efforts, under UN auspices and through a specialized international institution which should stem from a clear vision based on the principles of cooperation, coexistence and tolerance. Indeed, an international institution for world youth is likely to enhance what is sadly lacking in today’s world, namely mutual understanding and interaction between peoples and nations. In addition, everything should be done to cater for man’s well-being and happiness. This calls for the adoption of mechanisms to ensure the implementation of sustainable development programmes and, eventually, the improvement of living conditions of large sections of the world population.

The steps you have already taken and those you are planning are a clear indication that this vision of an emerging world dominated by love and fraternity is already taking shape.

Further evidence can be seen in your proactive attitude and your keen desire to harness the energies of dedicated people and rally their support. We can see, you are already on the job and determined to achieve your objective, with God’s help.

Mohammed VI, King of Morocco,
11th August 2003, The Royal Palace, Tetouan
Peace Child International

First - Awareness

Peace Child International was founded in 1981 to encourage young people to become more aware of the global issues that will shape their future and to give them a platform from which to express their opinions about those issues. For the first ten years, they did this through the musical, Peace Child. Like the Papua New Guinea story, the musical was about young people from cultures in conflict working together to build peace through youth exchange. In the mid-80s, Peace Child successfully brought the first young Russians to the USA on a youth exchange - an event that hastened the collapse of the Iron Curtain. It also worked in Central America, the Middle East, former Yugoslavia, Ireland, Japan and South Africa.

Peace Child's mission is “Empowering young people” - putting youth in control! Each cast of the 5,000 or so Peace Child performances was encouraged to re-write it to include their own ideas. Since 1991, Peace Child has enabled young people to write and illustrate a series of highly successful books on global issues - like human rights and sustainable development. Working closely with the United Nations, with which it has consultative status, Peace Child books have sold hundreds of thousands of copies and been translated into over 20 languages.

Then - Action!

Out of the books and conferences that Peace Child has organised came the clear demand from young people to go beyond talking and take action. ‘Be The Change’ is our new action programme. Mandated by the Millennium Young People’s Congress in Hawaii in October 1999, it encourages young people to identify the most urgent needs in their communities and devise projects to address them. Several hundred projects have been processed and nearly fifty are now underway or completed. Projects include touring plays to promote AIDS awareness, vaccinating slum children, building solar cookers, hosting workshops for rival gangs. Peace Child now sees its core business as promoting youth-led sustainable development as a key contribution to the United Nations effort to achieve the Millennium Development goals by 2015. The World Youth Congress series with meetings planned in Scotland in 2005, India in 2007 and Hawaii in 2009, we plan to track and encourage progress on this important new field of development expertise and experience.

JOIN US!! Get involved in Peace Child! Adopt a Be the Change! project; become a Be the Change! ambassador (doing presentations about sustainable development to schools & youth groups); take part in the next congress in Scotland; contribute to one of our books or magazines; or working as a volunteer in our office. For information on all these opportunities, contact:

PEACE CHILD INTERNATIONAL, The White House, BUNTINGFORD, Herts, UK  SG9 9AH
Tel: (+44) 1763 274459;  Fax: (+44) 1763 274460;  e-mail: david@peacechild.org;  web: www.peacechild.org

Moroccan Youth Forum

The Forum exists to ensure that the ideas and recommendations of all young Moroccans are heard and followed by the organs of civil society. As well as the 2nd World Congress of Youth, it hosts an Annual National Youth Forum. Its objectives are to:

• To train and inspire young people to take leadership roles in the effort to achieve universal human rights, sustainable development and the protection of the environment.
• To enable the realisation of projects relating to the priorities agreed at our International Congress;
• To engender co-operation and mutual self-help amongst those who operate in fields that concern young people;
• To participate in the rehabilitation of young people and the elimination of juvenile delinquency;
• To encourage and promote cooperation between talented young Moroccans and young people around the world.

For more information, contact: Chafika Affaq, Forum des Jeunes Marocains du 3ème Millénaire, Phone: +212 37 70 07 38;  Fax: +212 37 70 07 37;  gsm: +212 63 65 68 66 e-mail: cmj@pm.gov.ma;  web: www.maroc2003.org
The Campaign to achieve the Millennium Development Goals is not a numbers game. It is an effort to put a smile on each individual face that lies behind the numbers.

We thank His Majesty King Mohammed VI and the people of the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting the 2nd World Youth Congress and for supporting young people in their efforts to find more effective ways to be engaged in sustainable development and the achievement of the MDGs.