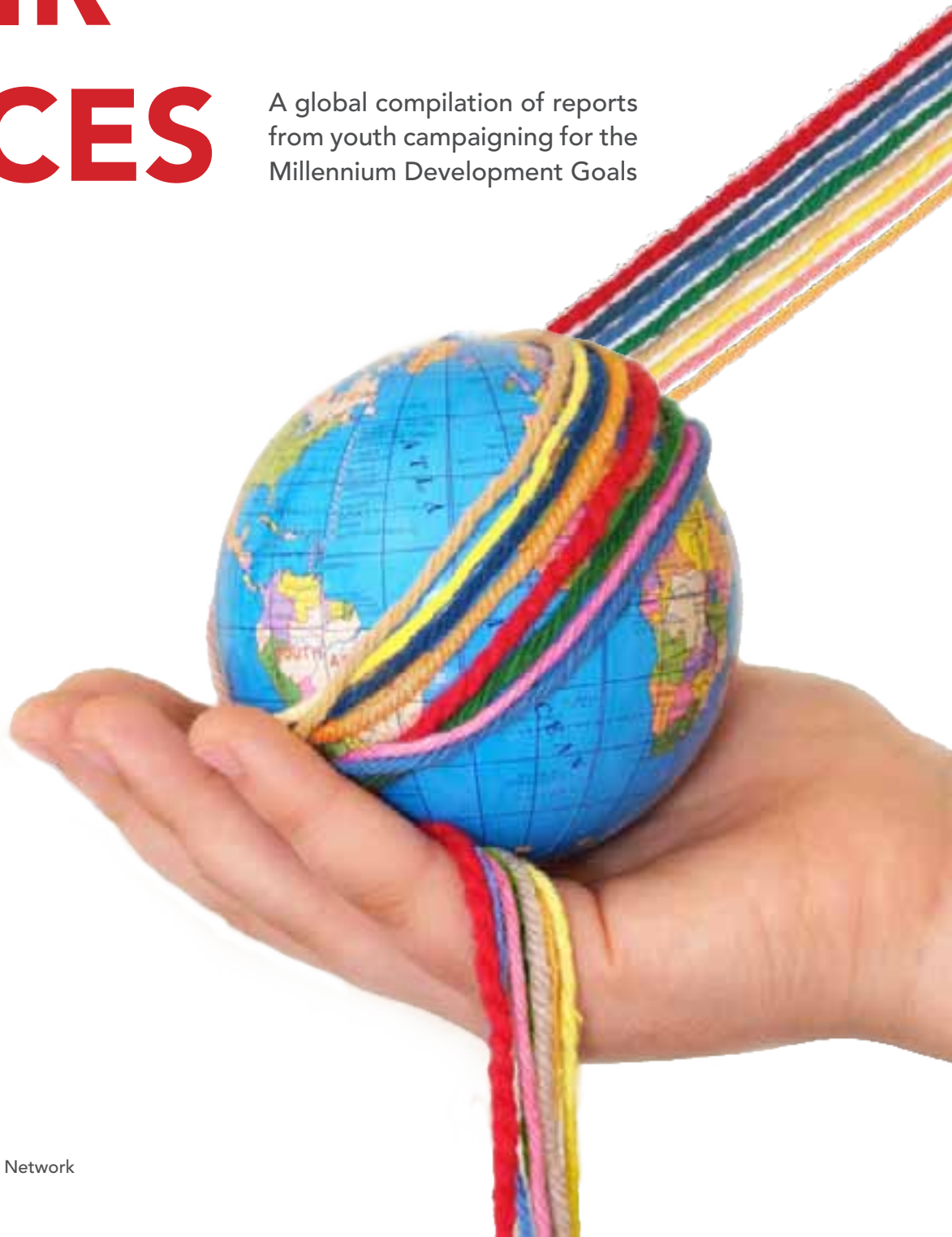


# RAISING THEIR VOICES

A global compilation of reports  
from youth campaigning for the  
Millennium Development Goals



A TakingITGlobal  
& Global Youth Action Network  
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TakingITGlobal (TIG) is an international youth-led organization that helps young people find inspiration, access information, get involved, and take action to improve their local and global communities. The TakingITGlobal.org community gets millions of visitors a month and connects youth in over 230 countries and territories. TIG builds the capacity of youth for development, supports youth artistic and media expression, makes education more engaging, and involves young people in decision-making.

The Global Youth Action Network (GYAN) connects thousands of youth organizations in almost 200 countries and territories, working together to create massive social change. The Network and its members facilitate greater collaboration among organizations around critical issues, support youth participation in decision-making, and provide support and recognition for positive youth action to improve our world.



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## Design Motif

**T**his report as well as all other MDG material produced before by TakingITGlobal and GYAN uses the design motif of inter-woven colored threads. If we are to achieve the MDGs by 2015, we can only do so by building a global partnership and by tackling all of the Goals at the same time – each of the Goals is inter-linked with all of the other Goals and we cannot concentrate on only some of the Goals or targets, if we want to be successful in achieving the MDGs. The eight colored threads that are used for the design of this report (one for each of the Goals) are representing this need for a global partnership and for the inter-relatedness of the Goals. Furthermore, threads are composed of even tinier threads and thus symbolize that every voice and every action is important, because even if they appear to be weak themselves, together they become strong and meaningful.

# Introduction



When we started our work with TakingITGlobal and the Global Youth Action Network in early 2005, both organizations had just partnered with the United Nations Millennium Campaign to empower young people worldwide to help achieve the MDGs. A huge amount of work was lying ahead of us – an MDG Youth Campaign Kit was to be developed, a website to be created and stories from young people to be solicited. It didn't take a long time though until the first members from within our networks contacted us and told us about the many activities they are already carrying out on the ground in their communities. The enthusiasm of these young people and their commitment to make their countries and the whole world a better place to live in for everyone, was a constant source of inspiration for us and reminded us time and again who we are doing this work for.

Looking back today, more than a year has passed since we took up our work, and all over the world, young people have started to take action in their communities. They have spread the word about the MDGs among their friends, family and community members, they have lobbied their governments, and they have taken action on one or more of the Goals themselves. Most of these young people have done so without any resources at hand, others were lucky enough to find some support from organizations in their country.

Seeing what young people can achieve without any resources and barely any support has encouraged us to put together this report without having any resources for it ourselves. We felt that it is our responsibility to bring to the attention of the international community that young people are taking the MDGs seriously and have started to work hard towards their achievement.

The majority of young people whose activities are featured in this report have received an MDG Youth Campaign Kit through either TakingITGlobal or the Global Youth Action Network. The Kit was developed in partnership with the UN Millennium Campaign in 2005 to provide young people with all the necessary information and tools they need to start their own MDG campaign. The Kit includes an Action Guide, posters, brochures, postcards and bookmarks. The Action Guide provides information about each of the Goals, with a specific focus on how they affect young people and why young people should get involved in them. Moreover, it describes how to start and run a campaign, giving also a number of examples of what types of activities young people can carry out. About 1,000 Kits in total were sent out to young people all over the world and distributed to the participants of

the 3rd World Youth Congress, which took place in Stirling, Scotland in August 2005.

One of the purposes of this report is to inspire even more young people to take action in their own communities by telling them about the activities that have already been carried out by others. Sharing experiences and best practices is essential, as it helps to build the capacities of young people and improve the quality of activities that are undertaken. The activities listed in this report can be replicated, or the ideas can be modified to fit the local context. On a larger scale, young people can start to collaborate with each other in the framework of the MDGs, also across national borders and between regions.

The main part of the report is a compilation of detailed descriptions of activities carried out by young people around the world. The reports have been sent to us and it is mostly the words of these young people that are being used in the report. In addition, there is a section containing brief country summaries. The division of activities does not imply anything about the magnitude or scope of the activities; it is rather an attempt to showcase some activities in detail (quality) while also illustrate the large number of MDG initiatives that exist (quantity). In between and around the descriptions of activities are poems, short stories, personal stories and quotes taken from the TakingITGlobal website. These creative writings are only a tiny fraction of the material that has been solicited through TakingITGlobal's online magazine Panorama over the course of the past year, but there are enough of them to show the creativity that young people have even when dealing with critical issues such as the MDGs.

Of course, this report is by no means meant to be a comprehensive report of what young people around the world are doing on the MDGs; rather it aims to show that the MDG youth movement is growing and new initiatives, ideas and activities are being planned and implemented everywhere. Young people, by their sheer number, are crucial to involve if the MDGs are to be achieved. With adequate support, resources and empowerment, young people can constitute the critical mass that is needed to drive and lead the changes that need to happen if we want to see the Goals achieved by 2015. We are proud to be part of this growing MDG youth movement and we believe that the true potential of young people to create social change is yet to be recognized and realized by the international community. Therefore, we sincerely hope that this report will be built upon and expanded in the future, and that it will help young people to get the attention and support for their activities that they deserve.

*Franziska Seel and Vidar Ekebaug*

# Country Summaries

## Armenia

**Hasmik Harutyunyan** from the Union Social Cultural Educational NGO, organized a couple of lectures for members of his organization as well as for friends and colleagues about international issues, including the MDGs. He also wrote letters to the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Together with another Armenian World Youth Congress delegate, he wrote a grant proposal to organize seminars for high school students to raise awareness about the MDGs and to publish a booklet about the MDGs in Armenia. They are still waiting to receive funding for these activities.

## Bolivia

**Cecilia Mendivil Toro** developed a program for children to grow and express themselves through art. Also, she delivered the message of the MDGs in each class that she gave in one of the most contrasting cities in Bolivia: Santa Cruz de las Sierras. Around 50 people took part in her workshops throughout the year, which were supported by PeaceChild International.

## Brazil

**Isabel De Souza**, a young law student, is working in a local NGO called Conciencia Ciudadana to promote the MDGs through courses they offer to young people on human values and environment. Around 150 people from Rio de Janeiro have participated in her program so far.

The **Shirley Ann Sullivan Education Foundation** held an event called "On to our Dreams," a White Band Day celebration on December 10, 2005. The event was held in Poa and was joined by the Minister of Education, Media Zero Hora, and the German Consulate. The goal of the event was to launch an overall school improvement project, safer learning environment, better education, English as a second language scholarships and computer classes.

## Canada

**Rosalie Hanlon** who is a volunteer with Engineers Without Borders, went to several concerts to raise awareness about the MDGs and hosted a booth at the local 14-day long Buskers Festival and Make Poverty History days. The group has also sent Make Poverty History letters and asked questions to candidates during the federal election campaigns.

## Colombia

**Juan Diego Valenzuela Jimenez** with his organization Grupo Tayrona and in partnership with PeaceChild Colombia organized an event called "Youth working for the MDGs". The event, which took place from December 1-3, 2005, was hosted by the Universidad Nacional Abierta (Open National University) and the Universidad Nacional a Distancia.

## Costa Rica

**Alan Cay** has taught local indigenous people about the MDGs and how to use them to promote their rights. At least five workshops were developed reaching 150 indigenous people. Hortensia Delgado, also from Costa Rica, is developing a campaign in her university and leading a national campaign with the government. She has been very helpful in promoting the MDGs by reaching at least 1,000 young people in the country.

## Croatia

The **Croatian Youth Network (CYN)** held five one-day workshops in five regions of Croatia on the topic of the MDGs with a special focus on youth. The events were titled "Youth and the MDGs" and were held in the regions of Rijeka, Zagreb, Vukovar, Cakovec and Sibenik. Each event had approximately 15 to 20 participants.

## Czech Republic

**Emiliya Kazimova** made a presentation to around 40 young people at the American Council for International Education. She inspired them to become active and told them about the MDGs and how important they are. She also distributed some of the White Bands that she brought from the World Youth Congress in Scotland.

## Ecuador

**Karina Garces Herrera** is promoting the MDGs (particularly Goal 7) through her work with indigenous villages in the country. Around 150 people took part in her workshops so far.

## Gabon

**Andy Roland Nziengui** from Jeunes volontaires francophones du Gabon organized an Open Forum with young people about the MDGs and raised awareness about the goals among other young people. He also wrote a letter to the Parliament of Gabon and the Minister responsible for the MDGs.

## Greece

**Manolis Athanasiadi** from Conservation Volunteers Greece was a camp leader at a sports camp that his organization organized from August 22 to September 2, 2005. There, he organized an evening concerning the MDGs. He made a small presentation to the volunteers about the MDGs and sensitized them about the issues the MDGs are addressing.

## Iceland

**Lucia Ballesteros** from Spain, who is currently working as a volunteer to ensure environmental sustainability in Iceland, is raising awareness about the MDGs among locals. She set up a family event to promote the MDGs supported by her host organization.

## Italy

**Alessandro Scarante** started campaigning for the MDGs with friends after receiving a Campaign Kit through TakingITGlobal. First, they went on the streets to attract peoples' attention and then they went to their universities to tell people about the MDGs.

## Jordan

**Sa'd Shannak** in cooperation with his organization is currently organizing courses for women and youth to discuss what role the MDGs play in their lives.

## Kenya

**William Njorge Hosea** became actively involved in trying to eradicate poverty in his local community after receiving a Campaign Kit through TakingITGlobal. For example, together with friends he collected funds to help a home of poor and was involved in helping street kits find a home in a charity house. He also wrote a letter to his government to remind them about their promises.

**Peter Osotsi** from the South Community Network started sensitizing the members of his organization about the MDGs and they started working on a project plan for an MDG campaign, which they were going to start in March. Due to the hunger crisis in Eastern Africa, he and his organization also started to raise funds to help feed people starving from hunger.

## Mexico

**Solange Marquez** leads local efforts to promote the MDGs in Mexico City D.F. Solange is the head of Rescate México and has done an enormous effort in 2005, organizing events to raise awareness about the MDGs.

**Lorena Codina** is a member of the Board of the Scouts has promoted the MDGs inside her organization. Around 100 hundred people took part in an event she organized in México D.F.

## Nigeria

The **Awaka Go Forward International Centre for Youth Development** held an event titled "National MDG Campaign (Only with Your Voice)" on March 9, 2006, using the MDG Youth Campaign Kit that they had received from GYAN. The aims of the event were to educate about HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and other diseases and how they relate to the achievement of the MDGs. There were approximately 70 participants at this event.

**Organ Davids** from the Movement for development and enlightenment raised awareness about the MDGs at several locations and events: The River State primary school concert, the River State secondary school drama and debate competition and the Port Harcourt Children Summit.

## Paraguay

**Julio José Recalda & Dani Rivera** have been promoting the MDGs in their high schools. Dani thinks that as coordinator of one of the most important high schools in Asunción (the capital of Paraguay) they have the duty to provide their students with this information and to make them agents of change. Around 200 hundred young people took part in their workshops during 2005.

## Peru

**Karina Sandoval** wrote an article named Eco-Economy about the relation between the economy and our environment after returning from the World Youth Congress in Scotland. For the future, she and the group she works with are planning an action project in Peru (a working camp providing food for children) as well as a conference at her university to show students the video from the WYC and talk about the MDGs.

## Portugal

**Diana Ferreira** started raising awareness among her friends and the students of her college by making available the brochures from the Campaign Kit, hanging up the posters in a public place and also putting under the poster a sheet describing briefly the MDGs and giving a list of sites that people could visit to learn more about them.

## Turkey

**Semanur Aksoy** prepared a presentation about the World Youth Congress and the MDGs to his organizations (AIESEC and Rotaract). He also gave away the brochures and other materials from the Campaign Kit to his friends. For the summer, he and friends from the World Youth Congress are planning to organize an action project to support the MDGs.

**Avsin Semizer** wrote letters to some officials in the Turkish Parliament, including a report about the World Youth Congress and actions that he demands to be taken on the MDGs. He also started raising awareness about the MDGs among his friends and at university.

## United States

**Katherine Ezzes** from Plan USA and Youth United for Global Action and Awareness was able to invite a speaker from Ghana to speak at a local international studies school. She spoke about the importance of the MDGs and how they relate to Ghana and other West African countries. She was able to show photos of schools in Ghana and alerted the students to the fact that many young people are not able to attend school due to school fees as well as gender preference. The presentation concluded with a barrage of questions from the students about the MDGs and how they could continue to incorporate them into their curriculum.



**Lewis Best** [http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/bono\\_fan](http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/bono_fan)

## Oaktree Foundation

**L**ewis received a Campaign Kit through TakingITGlobal and has since been actively involved in MDG activities taking place in Australia. In October, Lewis participated in an advocacy event organized by the Oaktree Foundation called STAND. Across Australia groups of young people gathered to take a stand for the MDGs: 8 minutes, 8 Goals. At the event in Sydney, in which Lewis participated, approximately 150 young people gathered to hear 8 students (current students at various Sydney high schools) to speak on the 8 Goals set forth in the MDGs.

Lewis also participated in the Road Trip, which took place between November 29 and December 1, 2005 and was organized by the Oaktree Foundation, World Vision's Vision Generation, the United Nations Youth Association and other organizations. 200 young people from across Australia converged on Canberra to take the message of the Make Poverty History campaign to the 'powerbrokers' of the country – in total, they had over 15 meetings with senators and over 30 meetings with MP's from across the country, including a meeting with Treasurer Peter Costello.

After all delegations arrived in Canberra on the first day, a crash course in negotiation skills and skills needed to lobby politicians effectively was provided for all young people, as it was, for the majority, the first time that they would meet with politicians. As Lewis reported, "All action groups that met with the various MPs definitely learnt a lot, with many groups having successful meetings, while others faced difficult but interesting meetings." After these meetings the action groups gathered again for a workshop on how to meet effectively with politicians, as well as strategies for tackling difficult questions, ranging from corruption to debt relief.

On the second day, the group split up again into different action groups, with some holding

meetings at the Parliament House and others participating in workshops. In the late afternoon, the whole group came together at the war memorial, where they started a Make Poverty History march down to Lake Burley Griffin. Following this march, they held a 8-minute vigil at Commonwealth Place, reflecting on the 8 MDGs.

The third day provided the group with the opportunity to meet with Peter Costello, the Australian Treasurer, and other prominent politicians.

As Lewis summarized, each meeting brought successes in different areas, and all sides of the political spectrum gave support for the campaign. Peter Costello, for instance, offered to review Australia's commitment in the area of Aid and Development and the ways in which Australia, as a nation, can further commit to the MDGs. Peter Garrett, a famous Australian rock star turned politician, offered to present a 90 second speech on the Make Poverty History campaign and the Road Trip to Parliament during question time.

On the question of "Where To Go From Here?" Lewis stated: "We know that we have made some great breakthroughs, but we also know that it is only the beginning. The challenge for us now is to take the Make Poverty History message, and a call to action, back to our local communities. We must gather local support within our electorates, and maybe then, our representatives will make the commitment to Make Poverty History. It is only the beginning, but it is an essential step. The abolition of slavery came about through ordinary people daring to step out and make a difference. The elimination of poverty can come about in the same way. Take a step, dive deep, be daring. Dare to Make Poverty History!"

More information about the Just Stand project can be found online:

[www.juststand.com](http://www.juststand.com).

“ Yes, the G8 is a group of the world's richest eight countries. Yes, the men of the G8 do have the power to change the lives of over 800 million people worldwide. Yes, these men do have the power to make poverty history. ”

Lewis Best



## Ruby Kenny and Shasheen Jayaweera <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/rkenny> Oxfam International Youth Parliament Action Partners

**T**he Oxfam International Youth Parliament (OIYP) is an initiative of Oxfam International that mobilizes a global network of young leaders and activists to bring about positive and sustainable change. Every four years, OIYP brings together several hundred young people from across the world, known as Oxfam IYP Action Partners, to kick-start a two-year program of social action and leadership development during which they will implement a plan for action and continue to develop the skills and networks required to achieve their goals.

At the end of 2005, Ruby Kenny, IYP Action Partner 2004 from Papua New Guinea and Shasheen Jayaweera, IYP Action Partner 2004 from Australia had the idea to create an avenue for IYP Action Partners and possibly other young people to openly discuss and share ideas about the MDGs. The idea came to reality when OIYP agreed to assist through an online skills share workshop.

Two months before the date of commencement in February 2006, Ruby, Shasheen and Anna Powell, training coordinator at OIYP, started planning and promoting the e-workshop. When it started, more than 20 young people from Africa to the Pacific Islands had registered for the event.

During the first week the discussions were based around developing an understanding and raising awareness about the MDGs, as well as exploring the roles of young people in achieving the Goals. As the discussion progressed, organizers allowed it to continue into the second week.

The third week looked at understanding the relevance of the Goals for the government and community, and participants shared their experiences working towards the MDGs.

The fourth week, which was the last week of the forum, was dedicated to discussing possible project ideas. This discussion continued, with an extension of the workshop, for another week as the organizers thought the participants needed more time to think about possible projects they could work on. At the same time, examples of possible projects and other resourceful information were provided to them.

The following two quotes are taken from the discussions during the e-workshop and show the passion with which the young people discussed the issues:

“Personally, I see the MDGs as an opportunity to speed up development and move closer to the rest of the world. And this of course can be achieved by putting an end to poverty (food on the table... meeting basic needs); improved health (a chance to live longer, better); quality education (or any at all); nipping HIV in the bud; and, of course, access to the good things of life (good roads, water, environment, empowerment).”

– *Olusegun Olowu, Nigeria*

“What do MDGs mean to the common man? I wish to refer to the needs that common people experience in a day to day basis. Whatever we refer to MDGs as, I do believe that every human being has a feeling on what has to change and how. Therefore all of us are key to the achievement of MDGs, but how many people think it is not their role? My government, politicians, etc. are blamed... But have we done our part?”

– *Douglas Arege, Kenya*

**Dmitry Savelau** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/dzmitrysavelau>

## Youth International Education Club "NEWLINE"

In 1999, Dmitry, along with his friends, launched the youth-led organization "Youth International Education Club NEWLINE" (YEIC NEWLINE), which was supported by an expert of the "Transformation of Humanities" Association, Sofia Savelava. In 2001 YEIC NEWLINE was transformed into a virtual youth educational union. Today the club is one of the most successful developing projects in the youth educational community in Belarus.

At the World Youth Congress in Scotland, Dmitry worked on the project THINK ACT MDGs as a natural continuation of the general YEIC NEWLINE activities. THINK ACT MDGs, which he started working on in December 2005, was created for promoting the Millennium Campaign and the 8 MDGs with a specific focus on Belarus.

The project aims to cover the youth aspect of the campaign in his country, i.e. what young people can do with only their voice and their hands. Within the project, NEWLINE plans to:

- Analyze the power of young people in Belarus, defining their opportunities to act and their rights to be heard, created either by the government or by young people themselves.
- Work out real project proposals towards any of the 8 MDGs.
- Collect the project materials, including information about the Millennium Campaign and examples of initiatives of young Belarussians, and work out an action toolkit for young people willing to make a change but have problems with how to transform ideas into real actions.

The project's final publication is supposed to become a tool to help all interested in taking action, working on the MDGs, and building cooperation among young people in Belarus. The toolkit will include all the necessary steps from creating an idea to its realization, including all the basic information and tips about defining a problem, forming a proposal, writing a project, searching for partners and funding, realization, and measuring success.

Among the activities that YEIC NEWLINE has carried out so far as part of the THINK ACT MDGs project are the following:

A Youth Contest of Creative Writing Performance invited young people to reflect on the topic of "Who Needs the MDGs in Belarus and Why." The writing contest aimed at broadening the educational potential of young people through their involvement in the Millennium Campaign. Participants were asked to submit any written or photo artwork that expressed their opinion on the contest theme.

On April 21, 2006, YEIC NEWLINE organized an Internet game called "OUR Belarus: the Millennium Goals." It was designed for school and university students to use ICTs in a collaborative way in order to research the Millennium Campaign and its possible realization in Belarus, as well as 8 localized MDGs and opportunities for personal involvement. Working online for three hours, over 70 participants from 15 different Belarussian schools submitted their answers to the game's questions about the MDGs and do a small research project about one of the 8 Goals in Belarus.

Moreover, together with partnering universities, YEIC NEWSLINE has managed to meet experts in the field of humanitarian education who work with young people in Belarus in master classes and workshops. The main topics of the discussions are the MDGs and their realization at schools and universities. A series of such master classes will take place during May and up to mid-June, 2006.

"THINK ACT MDGs is another attempt to show the potential of youth to contribute to the global collaboration for MDGs and to build local communities of involved young people in the construction of a better world."

More information about the THINK ACT MDGs project can be found online:

[www.newlineclub.net/mdg](http://www.newlineclub.net/mdg).

**Alejandro Chipana** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/alchip>

## Centro Educativo Y Desarrollo Integral Del Altiplano (CEDIA)

**A**fter returning from the World Youth Congress, Alejandro got in touch with the United Nations office in Bolivia to help spread the word about the MDGs in his country. He has also started a couple of projects with his organization CEDIA around the MDGs:

The first project is centered on the issue of Fair Trade. Through his organization, and in partnership with friends from Belgium, he has started an initiative, which, in his words, will create jobs for indigenous poor families in Bolivia in rural areas, fight poverty, and help protect the environment. He is planning to export products using the principles of Fair Trade. The products are mainly those that require craftsmanship, like wool clothes and musical instruments. He also intends to work with people in Spain and France, if the first attempts of this project are successful.

The second project, which he is currently planning, centers on Goal 4 and is called "Transformation as a cause to avoid infant mortality." The project is divided into two stages: in the first, he and his organization are doing a study about the practices of hygiene of the poorest families. In the second, they plan to use the obtained information to create educational programs aimed at teaching children that live in extreme poverty hygienic practices in order to avoid getting sick. The project is being carried out in its first stage in the city of El Alto, one of the poorest cities in Bolivia.

The third project is called "Civic Integration" and is a project he is planning with friends from Peru, Chile, and Bolivia. The main idea is to organize a youth event with 300 to 500 young people from Peru, Chile, and Bolivia. The youth will be able to talk about the development issues concerning all three countries and to exchange ideas and experiences about the MDGs. A first preparatory meeting with about 50 young people from all three countries was held in February 2006.



**Karim Viviana Gómez Borja** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/viviana>  
Asociación Orión Joven



“My question to you is how do you make the G8 accountable? I think the only way to make the G8 accountable is by bringing the less developed countries to the table by ensuring that when we are talking about debt forgiveness and aid there is an independent voice, all in a civil matter. It is also unacceptable that human rights experts are not at the table with the G8 to discuss what needs to be done about poverty. There is no democracy in the way the G8 operates.”

Samori Toure (Senegal)

Since receiving the MDG Youth Campaign Kit from GYAN, the Asociación Orión Joven held several local events centered on the MDGs. One such event was called “Towards the Construction of a better world, with your help we can achieve this...”, which was held in Sucre Plaza in Tarija Bolivia. This activity took place on December 5 2005. Approximately 15 youth volunteers participated in the event and more than 100 children contributed with letters and drawings about the state of the world, and the kind of the world they desire. These letters and drawings were sent to the President. In the letters the children asked the President for schools, a health post, security, and work for their parents.

Also taking place on December 5, 2005 was an educational fair which discussed the MDGs. For this event, there was a contest for the best drawing based around the concept “We draw the World that We dream.” The activity was developed for the International Volunteer Day, with the support of the United Nations in Tarija, Bolivia. This activity was particularly rewarding. The children expressed what they wanted through their drawings; a world in which they had their school, a clean environment and with a happy family. The citizens of Tarija were taught the meaning and the importance of the MDGs, by generating knowledge and building solidarity with the poorest citizens.

Another activity also taking place in Tarija was an event called the “Millennium Development Goals”. This event was held in the local Santa Ana School on March 8, 2006. At the event children learned about the importance of the MDGs. The participants were divided into teams with each team focusing on one Goal, and their objective was to inform everyone else about their Goal. The students were extremely motivated, and enjoyed the initiative and teamwork that was required for this learning experience. The aim of this activity was to raise awareness about the issues so the MDGs may be realized by 2015. The students are developing projects to give as examples to the authorities and institutions about the things that can be done to help implement the MDGs.

**Saida Ibragic** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/saidetun>  
**The Creativity Team**



**A**s members of The Creativity Team and attendees of the World Youth Congress, Saida and a few of her friends decided upon their return to Bosnia-Herzegovina to raise awareness in a primary school about the MDGs and problems occurring in their country, as well as in other parts of the world.

They first had a presentation about the MDGs, where they introduced the topic to the children and gave examples of practical steps that they can take in everyday life to help other people have sustainable lifestyles. Then they opened a discussion and suggested an art contest. As part of this contest, the children were asked to design their own white bands, which was very successful as most of the children were interested in painting, music, and literary work.

Saida reported that the children were very interested in their presentation, eager to learn about the MDGs and to 'be the change.' During the presentation they also found out that only a very few of the children knew what the MDGs are about, which was similar to the results of a public questionnaire they had conducted before going into the school.

This first questionnaire was a random one; it included both young and old. More than 90% of the people they asked had never heard of the MDGs before. Saida told us: "The questionnaire led me to the conclusion that the majority of the population is still uninformed about the MDGs; only people who are in a network with international organizations/events or people who are trying to promote the MDGs know about them. At the same time, I've come to the conclusion that there are many young people who are doing voluntary work and who are making significant contributions to reaching the MDGs without being specifically informed about them."

**“Remember, if the environment is poisoned, the feedback will soon be the same - it will poison us! Clearly, it is necessary to ensure environmental sustainability. Nowadays it is we - youth, the most mobile, resolute and active part of society - who can change the situation to the best.”**

*Elvira Nurieva (Russia)*

## Natal Voluntarios <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/natalvoluntarios>

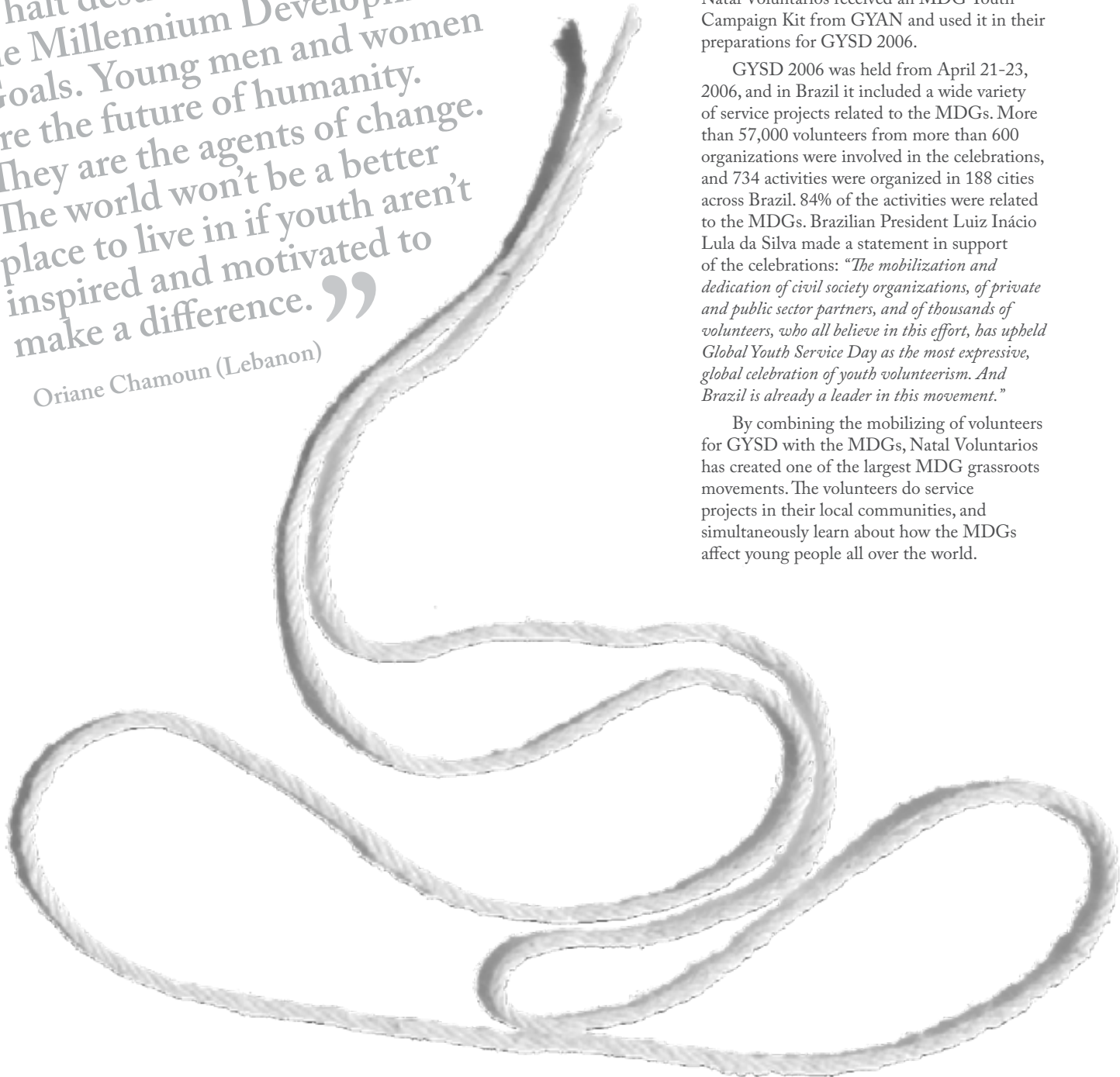
“The youth of the world should come together as one family to halt destitution and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Young men and women are the future of humanity. They are the agents of change. The world won't be a better place to live in if youth aren't inspired and motivated to make a difference.”

Oriane Chamoun (Lebanon)

Natal Voluntarios is a volunteer organization in Brazil focused on mobilizing young people. It has member chapters all over the country. For the last years, they have centered their volunteer activities around the MDGs, especially for Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) – the world's largest celebration of youth volunteerism. Natal Voluntarios received an MDG Youth Campaign Kit from GYAN and used it in their preparations for GYSD 2006.

GYSD 2006 was held from April 21-23, 2006, and in Brazil it included a wide variety of service projects related to the MDGs. More than 57,000 volunteers from more than 600 organizations were involved in the celebrations, and 734 activities were organized in 188 cities across Brazil. 84% of the activities were related to the MDGs. Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva made a statement in support of the celebrations: *“The mobilization and dedication of civil society organizations, of private and public sector partners, and of thousands of volunteers, who all believe in this effort, has upheld Global Youth Service Day as the most expressive, global celebration of youth volunteerism. And Brazil is already a leader in this movement.”*

By combining the mobilizing of volunteers for GYSD with the MDGs, Natal Voluntarios has created one of the largest MDG grassroots movements. The volunteers do service projects in their local communities, and simultaneously learn about how the MDGs affect young people all over the world.



**Chariya Ear** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/chariya>

## Brahma Kumaris Center Project AIDS Khmer

**A**fter returning from the World Youth Congress (WYC), Chariya has carried out a variety of activities including holding workshops, presentations, and youth forums in order to share his experience from the congress. This work has been done in order to promote the MDGs, to share his commitment to the development of Cambodia, to establish networks, and to encourage young people to 'be the change.' Moreover, he is volunteering for Brahma Kumaris Center, Project AIDS Khmer, and is now setting up a local action project called Youth Empowerment for Leadership.

Some of his concrete activities focused on the MDGs are the following:

Global Awareness Workshop at Newton Thilay University in Phnom Penh, September 10, 2005 (the 2nd White Band Day): During the workshop, Chariya first talked about the World Youth Congress in Scotland and encouraged young people to do voluntary work and set up community development projects ("start small but make a big difference"). The second part of the workshop focused on the MDGs and the role of students in contributing to these Goals. He introduced the participants of the workshop to the MDGs and then shared with them what young people around the world are doing (for example, he told the story of Ryan, the founder of Ryan's Well Foundation). As he reports, one of his friends (Naret, 23 years old) who participated in the workshop later came to him and told him: "The stories of those young people are the most wonderful examples for my life ... and

I have been told that I am old enough to make a difference for my country." The workshop also allowed participants to talk to each other in small groups on the topic of "The role of students to contribute to community development and the MDGs." Finally, Chariya encouraged them to write their personal action plan when at home, and offered to keep supporting them with advice, suggestions, and ideas.

On December 3, 2005 he held a similar workshop at the Brahma Kumaris Center in Cambodia.

On January 15, 2006 he and another WYC participant from Cambodia, as well as a group of 30 young people who participated in the 32nd Ship for South East Asian Youth Program 2005, organized a youth forum at the Chompong Cham branch of Maharishi Vedic University in Kompong Cham province. Among the objectives of the forum were to enable young people:

- To share their commitment to building a better future for Cambodia, and promoting the MDGs.
- To learn from the extensive experiences from the delegates who participated in the WYC in Scotland, and people who joined the Ship for Southeast Asian Youth Program.
- To establish networks and build a strong link of friendship among themselves for the future development of Cambodia.
- To realize that young people are not a problem, but a precious resource for a sustainable development.

The participants, including students, dean, faculty, and staff of Maharishi Vedic University, were very happy and enthusiastic about the forum, as Chariya reported. They eventually decided to organize the youth forum again in Phnom Penh at the International Institute of Cambodia on February 4, 2006 and on April 22, 2006 at the Pannasastra University of Cambodia. Chariya says about the forum: "We do believe the forum has been encouraging, inspiring, and gathering the young people in both rural areas and the cities to work together in order to see a better future of Cambodia."

In addition to the workshops, Chariya is also planning to set up an action project with friends called Youth Empowerment for Leadership, which will aim to promote primary education in order to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.



**Nshari Alice Kongla**  
Cameroon Children Environmental Forum (CCEF)

The Cameroon Children Environmental Forum (CCEF) is part of the One World Youth Project, a global sister-school initiative for middle and high school students, linking groups in the United States with youth groups from around the world in learning partnerships. CCEF works with middle and high school students to ensure sustainable development and to create mass awareness about environmental issues among children and youth and, through them, their parents. CCEF received an MDG Youth Campaign Kit through their participation in the One World Youth Project.

CCEF used the Campaign Kit to educate themselves about the MDGs and how they are affected by the Goals. For each of the first seven Goals, the students identified reasons for why the Goals are not being achieved in Cameroon. For example, Goal 1 is not being achieved due to lack of employment, even for university graduates. Another reason identified is the difficulty for farmers to transport their food to the market due to the lack of roads. Goal 7 is not being achieved because there is no waste management system in Cameroon, and the group focuses much of its work on environmental protection.

After the students had learned about the MDGs, they wanted to spread the word about the Goals to the rest of their community. They put MDG posters and brochures up in schools, local government offices and even in police stations, and they are educating their peers and their parents how the Goals can improve their lives.

The students acknowledge that the government is trying to achieve the MDGs, but that there are not enough resources in the country and that more effort is still needed. They have started doing monthly MDG activities where they contribute to achieving the Goals in their community, and also further raising awareness about the Goals.

More information on CCEF can be found online:

[www.oneworldyouthproject.org/cameroon.html](http://www.oneworldyouthproject.org/cameroon.html)

“I believe there is hope, but developing countries should know that even if the G8 gives out multi-billion dollars, it is only our behaviors and attitudes with respect to proper management of funds and proper accountability that will make us realize the MDGs.”

Jacob Baiden Odame (Ghana)



**Chris Evans** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/chrisevans>

## Engineers Without Borders (EWB)

“SHANTI, or PEACE, is much more than the absence of war. It is social justice. It is equality of opportunity. It is a clean planet for our children. It is the end of poverty, illiteracy and want. SHANTI is secured not by violence, but by understanding, compassion, and and social ACTION.”

After learning about the MDGs through TakingITGlobal, Chris has been very active in raising awareness about them through his involvement with the Calgary chapter of Engineers Without Borders (EWB). One of the main events EWB helped organize in partnership with a host of student-led organizations in Calgary was Shanti Day – a day of action and education on the MDGs at the University of Calgary in Alberta. It was held on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, October 17th 2005, to mark the five-year anniversary of the MDGs.

At the event, they distributed the MDG materials from the package – the goal of the event was to raise awareness around the MDGs and promote conscious consumerism. It featured a fair trade festival of local merchants as well as environmental and social NGOs. Alongside this was a main stage, which hosted local performers and a set of speaker panels, each focused on a different MDG. The speaker panels were:

- Gender Equity: The Gendered Face of Poverty
- Environmental Sustainability: Healing the planet to save our world!
- Social Action for a Global Partnership: What can one person do?

The event was located in a huge public space in Grant McEwan Hall, and Chris remarks that a couple of hundred students likely stopped by the event throughout the day. He hopes that the event will be run again next year, supported by a similar group of like-minded student-led organizations on campus.

After the success of Shanti Day, Chris was

involved in another MDG event in March 2006: on March 2nd, 2006 Engineers Without Borders Canada celebrated its third annual day of national outreach and awareness in Canada around international development and poverty eradication in Africa.

Through the Calgary Chapter of EWB, Chris helped encourage Canadians to “Play Your Part!”, as hundreds of EWB volunteers across the country rallied around three simple demands for Canadian leadership on the global stage:

1. Committing to a timeline to achieve foreign aid spending of 0.7% of GDP by 2015.
2. Untying 100% of Canada’s bilateral foreign aid to least developed countries.
3. Supporting developing communities during international trade negotiations.

According to EWB co-CEO George Roter, “The response was overwhelming! In a single day, 10,000 Canadians signed onto the Play Your Part Campaign by signing a welcome card to their Member of Parliament, welcoming them to the new government and asking that they be a champion of Canada’s proud tradition of leadership on the global stage.” The welcome cards will be delivered by EWB volunteers to 1,000 members of Parliament across the country.

In Calgary, EWB volunteers organized an Education Conference for young professionals in the City. Hosted on March 4th at the University of Calgary, the conference offered information on how professionals could get involved in international development issues, both in Canada and abroad. It featured a panel on Corporate Social Responsibility in Canadian Corporations, and a keynote address from Donna Kennedy-Glans, a previous Vice-President of the Canadian energy company Nexen and founder of BRIDGES, a humanitarian development organization.

More information on EWB’s Play Your Part Campaign can be found online:

[www.playyourpart.ca](http://www.playyourpart.ca)

Sarah Richardson <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/semr>

## TakingITGlobal (TIG)

During the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) International Development Week in February 2006, TakingITGlobal held "Voice Your Views on Poverty," an online campaign on the MDGs. Voice Your Views on Poverty was an online youth forum project created to support youth to reflect, discuss, and engage in global issues. Voice Your Views on Poverty focused on central issues of poverty and the MDGs, and their relationship to young people and international development.

There were two major parts to the project: an online discussion board hosted by TakingITGlobal and two Live Chats hosted by TakingITGlobal's strategic partner Chat the Planet.

The discussion board, held in English and French, was active from Monday, January 30, 2006 to Saturday, February 11, 2006. It engaged active youth networks across Canada and around the world in a dialogue on a wide range of topics related to the MDGs at local, national, and international levels. Several thought-provoking questions were posted and quotations and links to articles were provided to inspire youth to discuss their views on international development issues. In response to these questions, many dynamic responses and rich discussions occurred. The online discussion board also provided a starting point to gain background information for the Live Chats and worked as a follow-up tool for Live Chat participants to continue their dialogue and to engage in the resources available on TakingITGlobal's MDG theme page (<http://mdg.takingitglobal.org>).

The Live Chats took place on Saturday, February 4, 2006 and Saturday, February 11, 2006. Through a partnership with Chat the Planet, two Live Chat rooms were created for Voice Your Views on Poverty. One Chat room was in English and the other in French; each room had

a capacity to involve up to 100 participants at a time. The chat rooms had video-conferencing, sound, and text capabilities. Featured guests that had experience with the MDGs were invited to share their knowledge and enrich the discussions. Among these guests were Alex McClelland (Youth Coordinator for the XVI International AIDS Conference), Amil Husain (Global Youth Coordinator, UN Millennium Campaign), Julie Larsen (United Nations Programme on Youth), Cynthia Lacasse (Canadian Commission for UNESCO), and Pierre Giradier (World Bank Paris).

Overall, the project was very successful. The English discussion board was viewed by 2,597 people. There were 29 threads started and 169 posts. The French discussion board was viewed by 2,732 people. There were 36 threads started and 241 posts. Both discussion boards were extremely active with rich and meaningful discourse. The Live Chats were also very well visited: the first chat saw about 30 participants from across Canada and around the world, and the second one saw more than 50 participants.

The following is an inspirational quote that demonstrates the quality of discussion throughout the campaign: "Poverty is a monster and disease that has to be subdued and destroyed, especially in Africa. Some Western nations have been able to control the monster but Asian and African countries are already obsessed with this deadly disease. For us to conquer it we must talk about it, brainstorm about it, and pour our energy and strength into finding a way out, so that the coming generation will only hear about it as a history or as a fairytale. Together we can do this. There is a Chinese proverb that I love very much. It says: 'If spider webs can unite they can tie a lion.' This is true. If selfishness is out of the way we can make it work. Let's do it!"

– *Tayo Arogundade, 27, Nigeria*

“This is a democratic society right? If more and more people demand the government to prioritize the MDGs, I think it would give them more pressure. I think that we need everybody to rally together to make these Goals become real.”

Tiffany Lau (Canada)

**Moustafa M. Hussein** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/moustafahussein>

## Sustainable Development Association Egypt (SDA)



**M**oustafa and a team of 25 active young members of the Egyptian NGO, Sustainable Development Association (SDA) – a youth-empowered NGO with a board considered to be the youngest in Egypt – organized the first Alexandria International Model United Nations (AIMUN 2005), which took place from August 7-10, 2005 in the Bibliotheca Alexandria. AIMUN 2005 was a student-to-student simulation model of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the theme of “Re-evaluation of the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) Region Performance towards the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)... A Youth Perspective”.

The working team that planned the event was divided into an Academic Committee, which was responsible for the preparation of the project content, and an Organizing Committee, which was given the task of running the project smoothly. The clear assignment of tasks and perfect organization of the working team was certainly one of the reasons why the event turned out to be such a great success. As collaborating partners, the team was able to win the support of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, YES Country Network Egypt, and the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Alexandria.

The AIMUN was carried out in two phases: the first phase was a one-month intensive training for the chosen delegates on debating, negotiating, and most importantly on how to draw a practical and comprehensive plan to put the MENA region on track towards achieving the MDGs. The delegates were given various channels of communication and expression through live discussions during the training sessions, online discussions, and a weekly printed/electronic Horizons newsletter highlighting their thoughts and ideas.

The second phase was the conference where the representatives of 15 selected MENA countries debated the barriers to eradicating poverty, achieving primary education, attaining gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, raising the awareness of maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and creating a worldwide network of action for establishing a global partnership. The enthusiastic delegates, during the four-day conference, negotiated the suggestions so as to reach the best solutions. One of the conference outputs was the AIMUN 2005 book, which looked in detail at the MDGs in relation to the MENA region as well as the role of civil society organizations with a special focus on the region's pressing need of Good Governance.

The model came as a turning point in the lives of many of the active participants, stated Moustafa. They have discovered hidden talents, acquired basic skills, explored new horizons, involved positively in developmental issues, and developed a clearer vision about the status of the MENA region. These were all reflected in their cumulative work and efforts to issue a final resolution summing up their first encounter with the MDGs and the MENA region.

“Witnessing such youth engagement has been quite promising. Youth, as catalysts for development in the MENA region, are hardly aware of the MDGs. They should know that they have only one decade, until 2015, to go to meet the goals, and AIMUN was just the first step. It is the first time in history that the world with its current resources is capable of achieving development so I, personally, see the MDGs as a universal framework, flexible enough to be adapted differently in each and every country, but the outcome will be the same all over.”

– Moustafa M. Hussein,  
AIMUN 2005 Vice President



**Michael Boampong** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/mikenice22002>  
**Young People We Care (YPWC) Ghana**



**Y**oung People We Care (YPWC) is made up of university student volunteers who are willing to take up action and advocacy on the MDGs and believe that the Goals are achievable. The primary objective behind the campaign they organized was to educate youth and women of Ghana about the fact that HIV/AIDS, poverty and other common diseases can all be reduced to the minimum level. YPWC hopes to promote awareness on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and the MDGs. By doing this, the organization wants to prompt students and women into making the selected MDGs a reality. YPWC was able to form a very successful event with the help of the MDG Youth Campaign Kit received from GYAN.

YPWC organized a forum on HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis, focused on Goal 6 of the MDGs to address young people as the solution to these problems and how they can help in making the MDGs a reality by 2015 in Ghana. The event was called the Student Coalition against HIV/AIDS and TB, and was held in Atonsu-Kumasi, Ghana, on January 20, 2006. Approximately 500 people attended this event.

The objective of the event was to clarify the myth and the fear surrounding the diseases; encourage behavioral change which prevents the spread, offer care and support the infected and the affected; identify information groups, and provide the appropriate responses; provide accurate information on the causes of both TB and HIV/AIDS; and provide an ideal platform to grasp current trends on the epidemic.

After the programs evaluation these results were noted: beneficiaries were able to explain what actually was meant by TB and HIV/AIDS, and they also became aware of the MDGs and the need for youth participation.

“Even though our elected leaders must work towards the realization of the Goals, it is also the duty of every Ghanaian like me to remind them of the commitments that they have already made.

Ending poverty by 2015 in Ghana will not be a reality, unless the youth of Ghana get actively involved in strategies, which are aimed at making the MDGs a reality. Who can better speak for young people than young people themselves?”

Michael Boampong (Ghana)

**Wolfgang Gründinger** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/wgruendinger>

## Youth for Intergenerational Justice and Sustainability (YOIS)



**A**fter becoming involved with TakingITGlobal's MDG program, Wolfgang and his German youth network Youth for Intergenerational Justice and Sustainability (YOIS) carried out a number of activities around the MDGs over the past year. The MDGs are of importance to the youth network, which is striving for intergenerational justice and sustainability, because following generations will be heavily affected if current patterns of worldwide poverty and environmental destruction continue to exist.

The YOIS activists jumped at every chance to spread the message of the MDGs and to tell their fellows what the MDGs actually are. The actual start of the YOIS Campaign was an open forum held at the political festival "Berlin05" where thousands of young people gathered to discuss political and social issues – and, thanks to YOIS, also the MDGs. The offered workshops made the participants familiar with the situation of the MDGs and showed problems and strategies on the way to achieve them. In a Model United Nations workshop, the young participants learned much about the political obstacles linked to the MDGs and eventually decided on a resolution.

Different opportunities, above all the German Protestant Church Congress, were also used to raise the voice of youth for poverty eradication. YOIS activists distributed books about the "Global Marshall Plan," an initiative for a strategy to achieve the MDGs, and were involved in several plenary discussions, such as one about environmental policies, where they pointed out youth's claims for a more resolute policy to fulfil the MDGs. Several thousand participants listened to

the statements of the young activists. Some other opportunities where YOIS activists raised their voice were, for example, a workshop on the MDGs at the Annual Conference of the German Sustainability Council and several presentations at schools and universities and to NGO youth groups.

YOIS became even more strongly involved in the elaboration process of the official youth report defining the youth position on the German Federal Government's "National Action Plan for a World Fit for Children." The responsible youth expert for the chapter about international obligations – a YOIS activist – managed to bring engaged young people together and to agree on a very strong paper demanding the German Government to take serious steps to fulfil the MDGs.

Since the annual YOIS conference at the University of Lüneburg in December 2005, even more plans for new activities dealing with the MDGs came up. For instance, a youth initiative on youth unemployment (included in Goal 8 of the MDGs) was founded and is currently organizing a pupils' project in the German city of Leipzig, cooperating with the German youth delegates to the UN General Assembly. Furthermore, a European Youth Congress will take place in spring 2007 where young people from all over Europe will elaborate strategies to shape globalization and to make steps to achieve the MDGs.

For YOIS, the abbreviation "MDGs" does not only stand for "Millennium Development Goals" – it also means "Mobilisier Deine Generation," or in English, "Mobilize Your Generation".



# Extremity for Suffering

By Henry Ekwuruke (Nigeria)

We live in an era of extremity  
Poverty and hunger for our people  
People of Africa - it is fact and has been  
A truth said at the right time


Everything seems possible for the rich  
Mighty selfishness and hate  
Me, me, me mentality  
At the expense of the poor

Poverty – why poverty and hunger?  
Is it a crime to be an African?  
Our people are suffering and dying  
Looking into the blank future

Oh this world we live in  
Promises have been made  
Declarations to make poverty history  
Signatures of no excuses. 2015.

It has been with us from the beginning  
The right hour has come to eradicate  
poverty in Africa  
The true hour of Africa at hand  
Solidarity and love needed

A time for keeping the promise  
Our voices out against poverty  
We are a great generation, with  
a challenge and great history to make  
– To end poverty in its totality –



# Another Sky Falling

By Saad Javed (Pakistan)

She lay there, dying. In fact, she had been in the Intensive Care Unit for about an hour. Mutilated due to the burn scars, her face remained unrecognizable even to me, her sister. The over-all effect was an extra-ordinary fright, which oozed from her terrified eyes and crept through our hearts.

I peeped at Sarah, through the glass of the door. She turned in her bed to find a comfortable position and instantly regretted the attempt as she cried with pain. Tears streamed down her cheeks as she seemed to shrivel in agony. I vacillated between fantasy and reality. Disjointed pictures of the moments we had spent together flashed through my mind as my mother sobbed and my father sighed.

Sarah and I played and frolicked and skipped together. We were inseparable. Whenever I felt the sky falling, her motherly caress held it up for me. Both of us went through the same irritating lectures by mother about how

submissive girls should be. She was ten years my senior and yet I shared every peck of my thoughts with her. She was more than a sister; she was my heart and my soul and so I loved her, and loved her for how she made tongue-tickling dishes even from scratch, for that was what we could afford.

The strong smell of tincture iodine brought me back to the reality. I hopelessly saw Sarah clenching her fists to muster more strength. I could not swallow, as tears clogged my throat. How awful I felt when I compared her burn-scars with the brilliant shade of magenta I had witnessed when she was told that she was getting married. Her hearty laughter was suppressed somewhere beneath the numerous tubes protruding from her throat and mouth. A grotesque bald head had replaced her wavy chestnut hair.

Born to dirt-poor parents and being almost illiterate was her crime for which she was pushed into a burning hell. Her husband, twenty years her senior, and his vivacious family left no stone unturned to make sure that Sarah had to comply with a life that was thrust upon her, one shock after another. After enduring constant verbal and corporeal abuse from her in-laws for bearing them three daughters, Sarah was flamed to an

agony-incarnate last night, when the ultra-sound reports declared that the fourth one would not be an exception.

Suddenly the door opened and a nurse came running. She handed us a list of life-saving medicines. Father watched us in dismay and we knew that there was nothing we could do now. We simply could not afford the antidotes that were supposed to cure Sarah. We could do nothing; we could not even wait, for one never waits and anticipates the death of one's soul, one's life.

The setting sun, from the hospital window gave a terrible yet spectacular feeling. The veil of darkness was spreading over the red remnants of a bright day. I sensed a hurricane ravaging through my veins. I had never felt so helpless and resurgent at the same time. I knew I had to fight. I knew I was not going to become another Sarah. I knew Sarah had helped me again and ironically she was one who needed the utmost help.

I heard heavy steps approaching behind the door. There was a sound of rattling chains and clanking of the iron-bed being moved. With a loud grating voice, the door swung open.

I stood there terrified and yet resolved not to shed tears. Sarah had shed them on my part. As her

lifeless, body drifted across the corridor, I then knew what I had to do.

Sarah's death meant the birth of a new "me". I recognized that she had suffered because she was not armed with the strength of knowledge and enlightenment and poor girls in my part of the world never are. I decided to take up studies. I started sewing clothes for people and got myself admitted into an evening shift school without being a burden on my devastated parents.

I struggled not because I had to but because I wanted to. Five years have passed since then and today I'm a qualified Lady Health Visitor. I am an employee of the Government's poverty alleviation program, being funded by the WHO.

My parents are dead but their wishes are not. Today, when I visit poor, miserable women, each one of them is a Sarah to me. I become obsessed with their well-being and this is not paranoia because women hold up half the sky and I cannot see another sky falling around me. I cannot see another pillar falling. I cannot see another Sarah burning!

**Mostafa Nejati** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/mbastudies>  
**iEARN Iran, MAMEA Group**



In August 2005, Mostafa Nejati, member of the MAMEA group and volunteer of iEARN Iran, attended the World Youth Congress 2005 in Stirling, Scotland. After learning about the MDGs at the conference, he returned to Iran and started the project “Do You MDG?” with his group. The main idea of the project is to raise awareness about the MDGs nationally and internationally and help achieve them within the community of MAMEA.

Among the concrete activities that the group has carried out so far is a workshop about the MDGs during the 8th Annual Iranian SchoolNet Conference, held from September 13-16, 2005 in Neishabour, Iran. The conference brought together administrators and educators from different regions of Iran as well as foreign countries. The presentation about the “Do you MDG?” project reached about 30% of the conference participants (about 100 people).

Another activity started by the MAMEA group in partnership with iEARN Iran is a monthly magazine called “Love Voice Online Magazine,” which was launched in November 2005. The magazine focuses on the following issues: Friendship, Love and Peace; MDGs; HIV/AIDS; Poverty; and Cultural, Social and Economic Issues and Literature. The magazine is distributed online and is available at

<http://ict-club.schoolnet.ir/lovevoice>.





## Nyasuna Wanga Youth for Youth Association Kenya

**A**fter receiving a Campaign Kit from TakingITGlobal, Nyasuna from the Youth for Youth Association Kenya began identifying what other organizations are doing about the MDGs and how they could possibly partner with them. Their first success was with Oxfam GB in Kenya who were to carry out a white band campaign within the last week of November and first week of December in 2005, before the WTO summit. Nyasuna and her organization offered to partner with them and provided 24 young volunteers from their group who helped in selling white bands and distributing promotional materials in the six outlets of a large supermarket chain in four major towns in Kenya. After this first event they started training more volunteers for other similar events.

<http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/festusmorara>

## Festus Morara Riwo Youth Group

**F**estus from Riwo Youth Group developed a detailed campaign strategy after receiving a Campaign Kit and immediately started raising awareness about the MDGs in his community and among friends. He says that when his group started their activities, they were shocked to find out that almost 97% of the people didn't know anything about the MDGs and the few who had heard about them had no details. The group then started organizing a conference as well as three rallies and festivals. To lobby his government, he and his organization has sent a message on the poverty situation in Kenya to the Minister in charge of special programs. He says that he is living in a remote area of Kenya where a large part of the population is living in extreme poverty. They have therefore focused a lot of their activities on Goal 1. The group is currently mobilizing other youth in the area to join the campaign. They are planning to roll it out to other areas and also to involve other local leaders.

## Odeny Odhiambo <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/odeny>

### Kenya Youth Foundation & Global Youth Action Network-Kenya

**T**he Kenya Youth Foundation/GYAN-Kenya, Kenya Youth Education, and Community Development Program are co-leading the youth and MDGs process at the national level in Kenya. Kenya Youth Foundation (KYF) seeks to mainstream and support youth initiatives to be entrenched in the sustainable policy and development agenda on local, national, regional and international levels.

The efforts to organize a national event to bring youth leaders from across the county together have been difficult, because there has been a lack of resources available. Kenya Youth Foundation/GYAN-Kenya took it upon itself to initiate micro-MDG activities, which would make young people aware of the need to participate in MDG events. One such event was called the "Sensation Workshop on Youth Participation in the Implementation of MDGs in Kenya."

The event has held on December 16, 2005 and had approximately 50 youth representatives from eastern Nairobi in attendance. The workshop generated the views and aspirations that would enhance faster implementation of the MDGs by the Government of Kenya.

Through a lead discussant and short sessions of group discussions, an action plan to further the sensitization was developed as each participant promised to organize sensitization events within their organization using the Campaign Kit materials they received on the MDGs.

The Kenya Youth Foundation also came up with another program addressing the MDGs - the Kenya Rural Youth Livelihood Strategies Programme. The program aims to identify the existing opportunities in agriculture, environment, natural resources and related activities for young people towards their sustainable livelihoods within the rural settings; facilitate young people to generate sustainable livelihood from agriculture, environment and natural resources without compromising future users; initiate a process of dialogue towards policy and institutional review to promote more youth participation in agriculture and related sectors; and to promote and upscale best practice in different agro-ecological zones in the country. The program addresses several of the MDGs through action projects at the local level and through pushing for increased youth participation in developing policies addressing the MDGs.

**Vadim Biryukov** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/vadbir1195>

## American University Central Asia Drama Club



Vadim is an active volunteer in his university's drama club. In October 2005, the club was chosen as the main volunteer body for the promotion of the MDGs in Kyrgyzstan. With a group of about 20 students from his university, he traveled to the south of the country for one week to explain the MDGs to the population in different cities. They traveled to the following regions: Osh, Jalalabad, and Batken, and visited a total of six cities, with approximately 2,000 people visiting their activities in each city.

As they wanted to make the promotion of the MDGs interesting, they performed, conducted competitions and seminars, and generally tried to have their activities as close to youth as possible. For example, they did a remix of the famous song "We Will Rock You," where instead of singing the chorus "we will, we will rock you," they sang "we love, we love the goals." The whole event was primarily focused on raising awareness about the goals, their necessity, and the importance of their fulfillment. It was carried out in Russian.

Vadim says about his activities: "After having visited all regional centers of Kyrgyzstan with this program, I realized that people started to recognize us. It is something I cannot really explain, but I really understood that it had worked. I cannot say that people will definitely follow us, but at least they know now that the MDGs exist and consist of 8 terrific ideas."

They also wanted to leave something behind in the places they visited, so that people would constantly be reminded about the MDGs. So they planted 8 trees after each event, each tree dedicated to one of the goals.



**Alphonso K. Weah** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/koules>

## Youth for Community Academic and Development Services (YOCADS)

**T**he Youth for Community Academic and Development Services (YOCADS), is a Liberian based youth organization, founded in 2000 by some innovative Liberian youth who saw the need to address the many problems in the country that were a result of 14 years civil unrest.

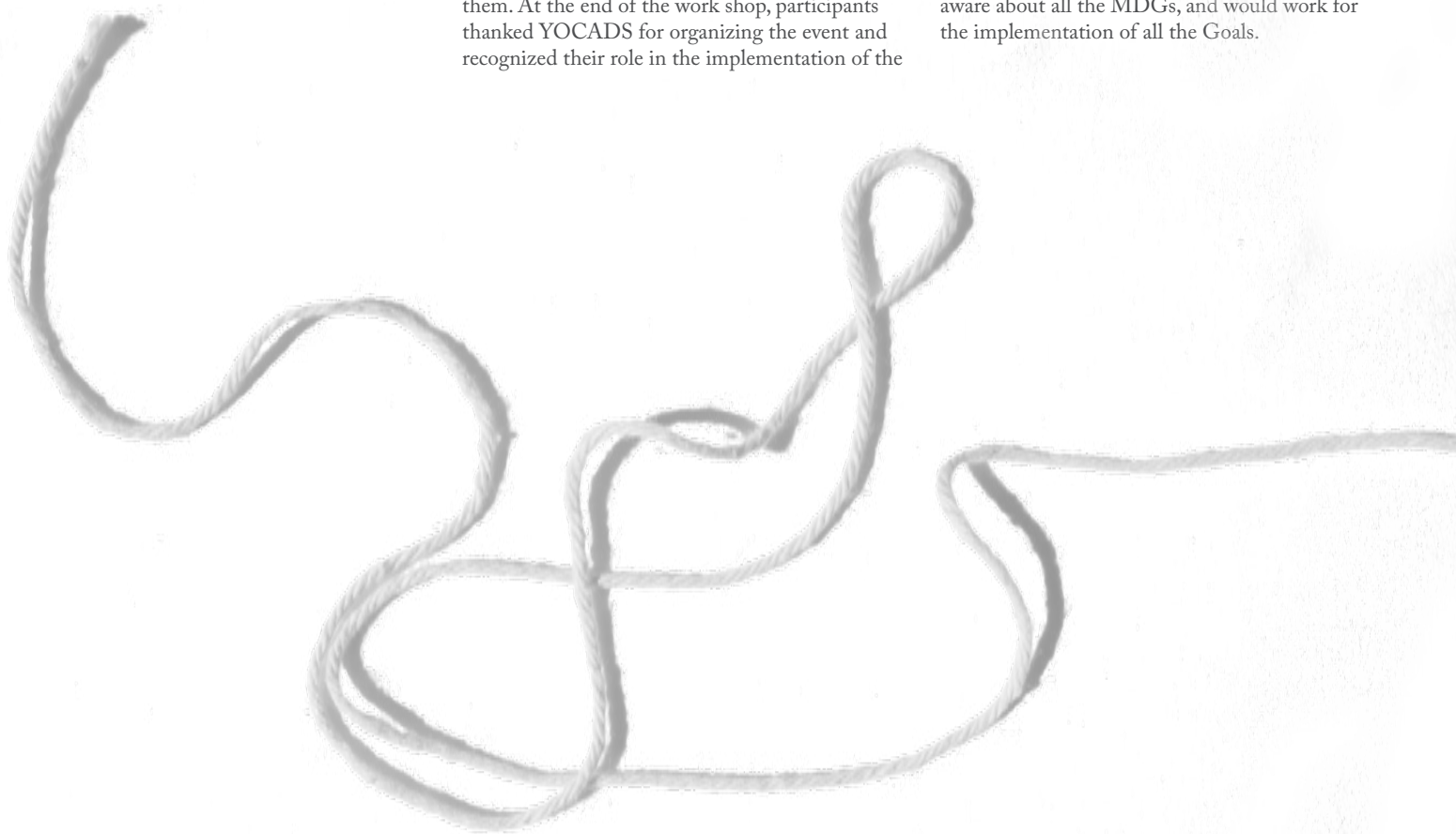
YOCADS received MDG Youth Campaign Kits through GYAN, which were very helpful in carrying out advocacy and awareness campaigns on the MDGs in many schools and local communities. YOCADS looked specifically at how to raise awareness on the MDGs and how to put pressure on the government to fulfill the promises they made in 2000 during the Millennium Summit. There have been some constraints about carrying out these activities, mainly the inability to get full awareness in some places due to limited resource materials and finances.

One event hosted by YOCADS was entitled, “Youth and Millennium Development Goals”. This event was held at St. Paul Bridge, in the Tweh farm community and focused on educating the young people in the community about the MDGs, and to get them involved in implementing them. At the end of the work shop, participants thanked YOCADS for organizing the event and recognized their role in the implementation of the

MDGs, as well as engaging the government to work on fulfilling the Millennium Declaration.


Another event that was held by YOCADS was an event called, “Be Aware of the Millennium Development Goals and Discuss It”. This event was held in New Kru Town, on the Duala Bushrod Island. The workshop was held by YOCADS to educate students about the eight Goals and how they could support their Government to achieve them. The students’ government of Samuel S Doe Memorial Institute (SSDMI) at New Town expressed their willingness to work alongside YOCADS in achieving the MDGs. It was at time that the student’s government and YOCADS established a club named “The Voice of the Millennium Development Goals”.

Lastly, YOCADS held an event called “Youth and MDGs”. This event was held at Momo Town West, on Bushrod Island. The event’s goal was to make students aware of the MDGs and to quickly act upon them. The student leadership, administration, and YOCADS decided to establish a Millennium Club. During the program the student government president promised to ensure that every student would be educated and made aware about all the MDGs, and would work for the implementation of all the Goals.



**Ramilimanitra Vololonarilalaina** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/arilalaina>

**Mpanazava Eto Madagasikara (Girl Guides from Madagascar)**



“With evidence, I affirm that over 80% of Africans are completely ignorant of the MDGs. How then can we achieve what the majority knows nothing about! It is everybody’s responsibility to be part of the achievement of these goals.”

Emmanuel Akapo (Nigeria)

**A**fter Ari received a Campaign Kit from TakingITGlobal, she started a couple of activities: first off, she researched about the MDGs in her country so that she will be better informed about the situation in her local environment. She also told her family, friends, and other young people about the Goals and distributed the postcards from the Campaign Kit, which she says are very useful to let others know about the MDGs. She also has a t-shirt about the MDGs, which she wears from time to time.

Through her association, the girl scouting movement, she is organizing projects around health issues for young women (particularly focused on the Goals 4 and 5). She is planning to translate the MDG Youth Campaign Kit poster (and maybe other material) into her local language Malagasy, so that she will be able to reach those people in her community who are not able to speak French or English.

On April 23, 2006 her local girl scouts group held a festivity called Ankoay, which is a bird-like eagle typical in Madagascar. Ankoay is also a project of the scouts in Madagascar that aims to fight AIDS by sensitizing people to the disease through games, theatres, and mini-festivities like the one on April 23. With her local group, Nazava Eto Madagasikara, Ari has given training to 120 girl guides and thus raised awareness among 460 other scouts and 9,200 young people in total.

The week after the Ankoay festival, Ari attended another camp where girl guides from Mpanazava Eto Madagasikara have had the opportunity to have a guest from UNDP Madagascar talk to them about the MDGs and ways to to achieve them. In addition, the group talked about the environment at the camp and started a project, which Ari is leading, that will educate people about rubbish and teach them how to make a solar cooking facility.

**Hector Vargas** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/directorfla>

## Future Leaders of America Mexico

**F**uture Leaders of America Mexico is an organization that aims to strengthen and promote social leadership among young Mexicans. In 2005, members of the organization took part in the 5th Congress of Mexican Youth of the United Nations about the Millennium+5 Summit, which is where they first learned about the MDGs.

The participants of the congress decided to include the MDGs in each activity of their organizations and the Future Leaders of America Mexico decided to focus particularly on goals 7 and 8. Later that year, the organization received an MDG Youth Campaign Kit from TakingITGlobal, which helped them to design strategies and approach local governments.

Conferences and seminars that the organization develops in partnership with Future Leaders of America Inc. (a non-profit based in California) all include the MDGs. The first such conference was organized on January 14-15, 2006 at the Instituto Politécnico Nacional de Mexico. About 45 young people participated, including local authorities. During the conference an evaluation of the MDGs was conducted with the main conclusion being the following: the MDGs are a basic framework that shows how global policies can be applied locally. It was also decided that it is time to pressure national leaders to achieve the MDGs. Therefore, a proposal was developed to organize a bigger seminar on the MDGs at the end of March 2006.

This seminar, called “Leaders with a Social Consciousness,” was a one-week workshop with Latin students from universities in Mexico and the United States such as Stanford, Berkeley, UC Davis, UCLA, UCSB, Yale, Northridge, Harvard, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and the National Poly School of Mexico (IPN). Out of the weeklong seminar, three days were reserved to visit different government institutions like the Mexican Congress, the French Embassy in Mexico, the Mexican Supreme Court as well as the United Nations Information Center (CINU). At CINU, Juan Miguel Diez, an official with the UN, gave a speech about the MDGs and how young people could support the Campaign to achieve them. At the other stations of their three-day tour, the group also spoke with Congresswomen, ambassadors, entrepreneurial leaders, and others about the MDGs and how a dialogue could be started to promote them. The main message of the group of young leaders to the politicians was: “We are here to remind you about your promises to the people, but we also want to tell you that we, the youth, want to help.”

During the seminar, the group realized that this seminar must not be the end – what is needed is action. Therefore, Future Leaders of America Mexico is now preparing another workshop where students will be sent to small towns in Mexico and, with the advice and guidance of local non-profit organizations, do community development work to actively help achieve the MDGs on a local level in Mexico.

**Marioliva González** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/marioliva>

## Red Global de Acción Juvenil (GYAN Mexico)

**G**YAN Mexico, with the help of RadioGuadalupe.org, held 11 radio programs on the MDGs in Mexico City, broadcasting every Wednesday from September through November 2005. Each week one of the MDGs was discussed and analyzed from a youth point of view. The last of the radio broadcasts discussed migration within Mexico and its direct correlation toward poverty in the country. The radio programs were extremely successful and both GYAN Mexico and RadioGuadalupe want to make this campaign permanent.

GYAN Mexico also participated in “Muévete por tu ciudad/Move it for your city”. This event took place in Zòcalo, Mexico City, and was a youth-to-youth workshop that focused on the MDG national campaign. It was discussed

how the Goals can be made to be more Mexican and local, and therefore, more inviting to people. This event had approximately 40 participants. GYAN Mexico also hosted the event “Mirror of Water” which was all about water accessibility and environmental sustainability, which ran as an alternative forum to the IV World Water Forum being held in Mexico City at the same time.

Lastly, GYAN Mexico is planning an event with the Youth Employment Summit, which will conduct a national workshop focusing on youth employment, youth migration and the MDGs. The forum will be international, conducted with the help of Youth Employment Summit Guatemala, and will take place in June 2006.

**El Hammoumi Naoufal** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/nawfalnet>  
**Association Tiflétois new life "ANTL MAROC"**



The Association Tiflétois new life "ANTL MAROC", an organization formed by young people in Morocco, organized a weekend-long seminar with activities around the Millennium Development Goals on December 4-5, 2005. The seminar took place in a youth centre and saw the launch of a broader sensitization campaign to reach out to kids and young people about the Millennium Development Goals. The launch of the campaign included activities that highlighted the role of volunteers in their struggle against world poverty, as well as features on children's access to education and the role that information communication and technology tools can play in achieving the MDGs.

The organizers used theatre and music to explain the MDGs. Also, drawings that spoke of the freedom to express one's dream for the future were made. A total of around 15 youth and 80 children attended the weekend.

**Theophilus Ekpon** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/theodore>  
**Youth Initiators Nigeria**



**T**heophilus, president of Youth Initiators Nigeria, received a Campaign Kit from TakingITGlobal that he used to organize the 1st National Youth Leadership Training Summit on the theme of “Nigerian Youths and the Global Future” on October 22, 2005. The event, which brought together about 60 young people from all regions of the country in the Placia Guest House in Enugu, lasted for a whole day.

The summit focused on Nigerian youth and the MDGs. The morning saw keynote speeches from, among others, a representative of the Enugu Central Local Government Council and the Enugu State action plan committee on HIV/AIDS and Alliance Française.

In the afternoon, participants had the chance to attend several workshops on the MDGs. Each workshop was facilitated by a representative of a local NGO or government body. In the late afternoon, two roundtable discussions took place: one on the topic of “Exploring avenues and platforms for youth involvement in achieving the MDGs,” and one on “TakingITGlobal as a platform for youth involvement, the MDGs, and the United Nations Millennium Campaign”.

At the end of the day participants at the summit unanimously agreed on an action plan to approach and remind governments of their MDG pledges.



**Henry Ekwuruke** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/ekwuruke>  
**Nnado Foundation Inc.**

**T**he Nnado Foundation, based in Nigeria, received an MGD Youth Campaign Kit from GYAN and started a campaign focusing on awareness-raising and lobbying/advocating, which reached over 5,000 people so far.

The objectives of the campaign range from parental change, family redress, community obstacles and traditional renewal for the girl child especially the aspect of education denial and right, to HIV/AIDS and poverty.

Awareness-raising on the girl child education was conceived to counter gender disparity and discrimination against girls in Nigerian communities. Henry's community has achieved attitude change, higher school enrollments, and raised awareness on women empowerment issues.

The Nnado Foundation plans on returning to communities to follow up with community leaders with feedback. There have been budget concerns and money was often tight, but through simple steps such as community meals, the Nnado Foundation has been able to reach and impact the people on young women issues and HIV/AIDS prevention.

**Ajagbe Samsondee** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/idsamson4>  
**National Youth Service Corps**

**A**jagbe is a young graduate with a strong desire and an inspiration to make positive changes in the world and Nigeria in particular. He is presently sensitizing young Nigerians on the MDGs by conducting MDG training programs within the project "Debate to Action" – moving from mere debate to real action to achieve the MDGs.

National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) is running the project in collaboration with the British Council and the World Bank Institute. The program entails sensitization of selected participants on the MDGs and programs of the Nigerian government to achieve them. Each training runs for ten weeks to analyze each of the Goals and how they affect each other. So far 120 corps members have been trained by the World Bank Institute and are now called Development Knowledge Facilitators – 1,000 young people in total are currently undergoing the ten-week program. After the training each facilitator is expected to train a minimum of 60 young people in their respective community. The young people participating are quite enthusiastic about the program and are now much better informed about the MDGs as global development framework.



**Shasheen Jayaweera** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/shishj>  
**Youth for a Sustainable Future Pacific (YSFP)**



**A**t the beginning of 2005, Shasheen Jayaweera and a friend of his from Brisbane, Australia, formed the group Youth for a Sustainable Future Pacific (YSFP) to help promote the MDGs to Pacific Island youth and empower them to take action on the MDGs. One of the first activities of YSFP was to partner with UNDP and the government of Samoa to run the first Pacific Youth MDG Summit, which took place in Samoa in May 2005 and brought together 56 Pacific youth. The participants at the summit created the Tofomamao Declaration, which was later adopted into the Pacific Youth Strategy by Pacific youth ministers at their meeting in December 2005.

Furthermore, YSFP publishes a Pacific Islands MDG and Youth Newsletter every month and helps young people in the Pacific Islands to receive grants for their MDG projects or to design MDG campaign activities (for example, one YSFP member organized a big concert in Palau to campaign for the MDGs).

For 2006, YSFP plans to extend its activities even further: YSFP recently received funding from UNESCO Australia to publish an MDG toolkit for Pacific Island youth, which will help them to create their own MDG activities. Lastly, YSFP plans to set up an MDG youth grants fund for the islands.

“My strategy to end poverty is not to beg governments to cut taxes or give welfare benefits. My approach is to bring the MDGs to the grassroots. So households can understand, work, own and live them. Let MDG talks come out from the conference halls and into the village councils. Let them enter the family circles. Then children will integrate the MDGs into their lives. Let us equip each household with skills that enter it into the sphere of wealth creation.”

Mike Ssegawa (Uganda)

## Angelicum Fernandez-Oda <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/angelicum> Young MDG

**T**ogether with a group of friends from all around the world, Angelicum Oda has started a web-centered project called “Young MDG” to educate children and young people about the MDGs.

The YOUNG MDG team met in the virtual world for the first time and brainstormed their ideas through an online forum. It is there that they drafted ideas and finalized decisions on what to include on their MDG website. Angelicum, responding to the question of “why another website,” says: “Knowing that this new generation of young people can maximize and minimize Internet Explorer windows and surf the net for cool games even before their moms stop spoon-feeding them, I first and foremost believe that if there is a medium to publish educational material for children around the world, it is the World Wide Web. It is the cheapest, as well as the most accessible and engaging. I feel it is essential to have a website about the MDGs specifically targeted for children simply because I haven’t seen one yet. Children, especially those who don’t use English as their first language, will find it hard to understand what is offered when you presently search for the MDGs on search engines. Who wants formal-sounding explanations anyway? Young people are easily bored and the issue of the MDGs is so important that we have to find ways to make these people interested in reading an MDG site. That’s why we are developing the Young MDG website in a way that it will be colorful and interactive.”

The group that is working on the Young MDG project is now composed of 11 young people between 14 and 19 years old from the

following 11 different countries: The Philippines, Jamaica, Finland, Australia, Egypt, Romania, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, New Zealand, USA, and Vietnam. The team believes that with the MDGs being a global issue, they should also have a global perspective when trying to explain them to children in all parts of the world by making a website that is of international quality. “Being on an international team made us realize different aspects of life. It’s also a benefit to have members from under-developed, developing, and developed countries, because we were able to share different points of views in constructing the site,” explained Angelicum.

The website is already being extensively used as official and non-official reference of schools around the world by children from 196 countries worldwide, and in 2005, the Young MDG project received awards of international recognition at the Cable and Wireless Childnet Academy held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, and the Oracle Education Foundation’s ThinkQuest International held in San Francisco, California.

The project team doesn’t want to limit itself to the Internet platform, though. At this time, the team is already drafting other reference materials like books, brochures and CDs – all targeted at children and young people as well. The team is planning to have these materials distributed to those who don’t have Internet access and computers to further widen the information outreach of their MDG campaign.

More information on Young MDG can be found online:

[www.youngmdg.com](http://www.youngmdg.com)

## Robert Sagun <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/robby> Philippine Resources for Sustainable Development, Inc.

**P**hilippine Resources for Sustainable Development, Inc. received an MDG Youth Campaign Kit from GYAN, which supported the various MDG activities they had started earlier. Their activities include a campaign to raise awareness about the Goals and a project focused on youth unemployment.

In partnership with the Voice of the Youth Network and DZME Radyo Uno the organization has recently implemented a two-month multi-media MDG campaign. Through the use of SMS (short messaging service), radio broadcasting, telephones, print media and the Internet, young people discuss and debate each MDG with respected leaders across the country.

Furthermore, they are implementing a youth entre-ployment business plan competition addressing the MDG’s target

on youth unemployment through youth-led micro-enterprise development. This project is part of the Youth Employment Spark\*, a global project focused on youth entrepreneurship.

An estimated 1.5 million people have been reached by these two campaigns. Another direct accomplishment due to Philippine Resources for Sustainable Development’s efforts is that more (young) people are knowledgeable about the MDGs. They also achieved a couple of youth-led partnerships with different local stakeholders. In the case of the Youth Employment Spark\* project, a group of enterprising deaf youth are now managing a coffee shop inside a campus cafeteria supported by a team of business mentors and a loan from a micro-finance institution. Follow-up action planned by the organization includes a second round of Spark\* and the MDG radio program.

**Codrin Stefan Arsene** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/codrin>



**“W**hat if someday you wake up in the morning telling yourself that maybe, just maybe, you could do something to end poverty? Of course you realize that you can't do it alone so you try to find some dedicated young people who might share the same passions and dreams like you and who are also determined to make a step forward. I tell you that it changes your life immediately. It fills you up with energy, power, happiness and adrenaline. But it's not enough. You really have to start by doing something. I started with a call... “

Codrin Stefan Arsene is an 18 year-old student from Romania. Two years ago, he started to get involved in extracurricular activities: he organized workshops, cultural manifestations, raised funds for different activities, organized ecological campaigns, and raised awareness among students about sexually transmitted diseases, first aid and multiculturalism etc. In July 2005, he learned about the MDGs and the Global Call to Action Against Poverty when attending a United Nations Environment Programme workshop in Paris. At the same time he participated in an event of the French version of the Global Campaign to Action Against Poverty – “2005: Plus d'Excuses”, which they had organized near the Eiffel Tour. As he told us, that was the first moment when he said to himself: “I've got to do this in my country.”

After returning to Romania, he immediately started to make a structured plan for his campaign.

He found a small city – Tirgu Bujor – in which everyone knew everyone and he met some wonderful teachers and students who were willing to dedicate some of their time for his campaign. They then started translating the MDG Youth Action Guide into Romanian and spread copies to most of those who were involved in the campaign. Their objectives were: to make people aware of the existence of the MDGs and the Global Call to Action Against Poverty and to develop a local strategy on what politicians should take into consideration for their 2006 agenda. They made flyers and posters, convinced the local authority to join them and with the help of 500 students involved spent a whole day informing everyone in the little town about the MDGs.

At the end of the day, Codrin with the help of three teachers and the students from Eremia Grigorescu high school achieved that about 8,000 people had learned about the campaign and even answered a small survey. Moreover, the local government promised to involve young people in more activities in the future and decided to get involved in another campaign, which will focus on Goal 7 (Ensure Environmental Sustainability). Codrin himself is planning to organize seven other major activities until the beginning of July, to write articles about the Goals and to convince people that “they could do more than just stay there and observe what is happening with their lives”.



## Sofya Mezhorina <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/sofya> TakingITGlobal-Russia (TIG)



Starting in April 2005, TakingITGlobal-Russia (TIG) has been actively involved in promoting the MDGs among young people in Russia, informing them about the activities of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP), inspiring them by showcasing MDG projects young people have been implementing around the globe, and involving them into vibrant discussions on the role of young people in achieving the MDGs. With kind support from the Russian Volunteer Development Centre and the Sozidaniye Foundation, TIG has been able to ensure multiple stakeholder participation in this process by running open forums, giving key-note presentations, and translating the MDG Youth Campaign Kit into Russian.

TIG has conducted four open forums on the topic of youth and the MDGs in Russia, all of them following the same rationale. The forums were designed in a way that enabled young people to learn about the MDGs and the steps taken in the world in order to achieve them, discuss the relevance of the Goals to Russia and their home communities in particular, decide on the major obstacles on the way towards the implementation of the Goals, and brainstorm on the projects and initiatives that young people can develop to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs on the local level.

The open forums took place in three cities of Russia, comprising of a total of 100 youth leaders from all over Russia.

*Tambov, April 2005:* TIG's first open forum on the MDGs in Russia gathered high school students and teachers who had barely heard of the acronym and its meaning before the event. Focusing on the role of each individual in the global quest for the MDGs, the participants developed a list of recommendations on how each person in their community can help achieve the Goals and reinforced the role of education in these efforts.

*Tver, September 2005:* The open forum became a part of the first International Volunteer Festival in Russia, which attracted leaders of youth organizations from the majority of Russian regions and some of the neighboring countries. During the event the participants

shared experiences they had acquired in the field of MDG project work and brainstormed ideas for possible collaborative initiatives to achieve the MDGs in their home communities.

*Moscow, December 2005:* This open forum was held as a part of the Third National Conference on Volunteering in Russia, which gathered more than 250 active youth from all around the country. The forum provided a global perspective on youth work around the MDG initiative. Many of the participants had been active in projects aimed at reducing poverty, promoting HIV/AIDS awareness, and sustainable living for all, but not all of them had worked at an international level and were aware of the bigger process going on in the same fields they worked in. This event gave a safe and fertile environment for young people from different regions of Russia to make connections and solicit ideas for new projects they can implement together.

Another event was carried out in Moscow in December 2005. On the eve of the WTO summit in Hong Kong, Russian, and British youth joined a video-conference to discuss implications of Russia's accession to the WTO. The event was organized by Oxfam GB, TakingITGlobal-Russia, Peace Child International, and the Global Development Learning Network program, administered by the World Bank as part of GCAP. Around 20 young people involved in various youth projects and pursuing their studies in economics or public administration were able to talk with their counterparts from the UK about the world trade regime and how it might affect Russian citizens once the country joins the WTO. The forum featured presentations by Liz Stuart of Oxfam, David Tarr of the World Bank, Anna Sidoruk of the Russian Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, and Kseniya Yudayeva representing the Center of Economic and Financial Research. The participants had a chance to engage in an open discussion with the experts on Russia's accession to the WTO and present their own vision and ideas about how the process can affect citizens of the country, and youth in particular.

Lastly, TIG was invited to speak on the MDGs and the role of youth in their achievement at two regional conferences held by AIESEC in Russia and Kazakhstan. More than 250 young people from these two countries attended the presentations and received a digital copy of the MDG Youth Action Guide.

**Mouhamed A. Latif Mbengue** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/mlatif1>  
 Synapse Center

**A**fter getting involved with TakingITGlobal's MDG program, Latif launched an MDG West Africa Youth Caucus to get young people in the region involved in MDG activities and keep them updated about global developments. The Youth Caucus, which operates through a TakingITGlobal e-group, now comprises more than 200 young people from all over West Africa.

On June 16, 2005, Latif organized an Open Forum for young people in Senegal. About 45 members of the West Africa Youth Caucus and youth activists from many African countries including Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Rwanda gathered in the Senegalese capital Dakar to identify their role in the fight against poverty and the struggle to reach the MDGs in the West Africa region.

The meeting coincided with the Celebration of African Child Day. It was attended by major West African MDG stakeholders including the Millennium Campaign Regional Coordinator Coumba Toure and representatives of the Senegalese National Platform for the MDGs.

Talking to the 45 participants Latif stressed: "Poverty is not destiny... the same way we defeated Apartheid, we can defeat poverty." The open forum saw several speeches about the MDGs, the United Nations Millennium Campaign and how young people can be involved in the achievement of the Goals.

Latif also organized an Education For All workshop in partnership with ASENS, the Senegalese Association of teacher trainees and the UNESCO office in Dakar. The event took place on August 4, 2005 and brought together 25 young leaders from Senegal, Burkina Faso, Rwanda and Cameroon at Senegal's National Teacher Training School to discuss the role of youth in achieving Goal 2 of the Millennium Declaration. The meeting was an opportunity for young people in West Africa to learn about the efforts that are needed to reach universal primary education by the year 2015.

For Latif, youth are both beneficiaries and actors in the campaign to achieve the MDGs. He also told the participants of the workshop that education is at the heart of the Millennium Declaration: "Without education it is an illusion to talk about sustainable development".

Mr Amath Faye from the UNESCO office in Dakar urged young people to get organized and to work in partnership with governments and other civil society actors to make Education For All a reality in the remotest areas of the continent. He also underlined the intricate link between education and development. Speaking after Mr Faye, Binto Diallo a youth leader and UNESCO employee strongly advocated for youth participation and youth leadership as a solution to the problems facing Africa.

Latif also traveled to Sierra Leone, where he took part in the West African Youth Leadership Training Seminar in Freetown, from April 2-9, running a workshop on the MDGs. The workshop intended at informing and engaging young West African leaders in the efforts to reach the MDGs. As part of the workshop participants broke into small groups to identify the different Goals around which they and their organizations are already active. The group works were followed by presentations, which showed that almost all participants were already active in making some of the Goals a reality in their communities. From Goal 1 to Goal 7 participants realised that they are already in the field of the MDGs even though they do not conceptually relate to them. Latif then informed participants about the regional efforts and the momentum gathered with the MDG West Africa Youth Caucus. He also expressed the need to join forces and to work collaboratively to make West African youth better contribute to the realization of the MDGs in West Africa. Participants left the workshop with a better understanding of the MDGs and how the Goals relate to their social work. The workshop also made them more willing to work towards the achievement of the Goals in West Africa.



**Bernise Ang** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/bernise>  
**Singapore International Youth Council**



**B**ernise is the founder of the Singapore International Youth Council. After returning from the World Youth Congress, she joined forces with other young Singaporeans to organize a mini-series of community workshops on the MDGs and broader development issues, held in Singapore.

Among the topics they covered in the workshops were global issues such as Trade & Globalization, HIV/AIDS, Gender Equality, Environment, Human Rights, and Peace-Building. There was also a dedicated section of the workshop giving an overview of the MDGs, explaining what the goals are, what the United Nations Millennium Campaign is doing, providing some “shocker statistics” related to each goal, and some examples of successful youth-led MDG-related projects. For this part of the workshop, they used available resources such as the ones on the Millennium Campaign and TakingITGlobal websites.

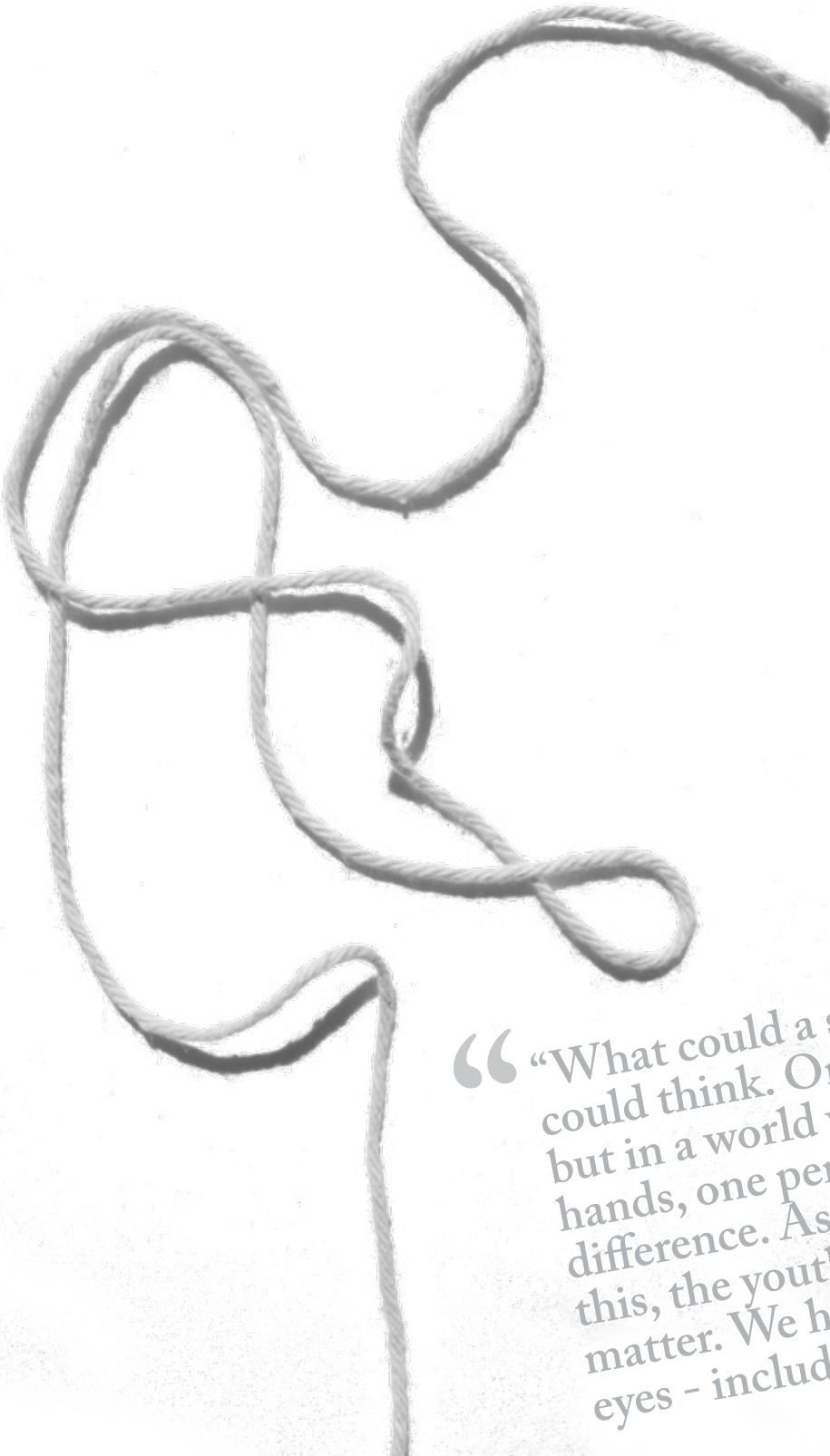
Participants were post-secondary students from junior colleges and university, ranging from 16 to 24 years of age. Various organizations and young Singaporeans themselves presented at the workshops, including UNIFEM Singapore, Mercy Relief, RAW, Think Centre, Environmental Challenge, The Equator Initiative, SHINE, Social Entrepreneurship Forum, and others.

An outcome of the workshops will see an action project, a proposed online portal on Fair Trade and ethical consumption targeted at Singaporeans. The project aims to inform and encourage fairer consumer choices for the developing world, in turn sending a message to businesses about what consumers want.

Bernise comments on the workshops: “It’s great to see young Singaporeans eager to learn about development and how they can play their part as citizens of a donor country. With the Millennium Campaign emphasizing citizens holding their governments accountable, a key message of the workshops was: as young Singaporeans, we have been born into a lot of privilege. Let’s use that privilege.”



**Athuman Khalid Kipao** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/khalidkipao>  
**Ilala Youth Development Organization (IYDO)**



**I**lala Youth Development Organization (IYDO) from Tanzania received an MGD Youth Campaign Kit from GYAN and started campaigns against child labor, youth poverty, HIV/AIDS, and societal gender imbalances, effectively reaching 10,000 people a month.

IYDO's campaign is currently trying to put pressure on the government, making them accountable in initiating productive movements within civil society, spurring development programs and policies all over the country.

They also tackle employment issues for young ladies with low levels of formal education by forming groups in order to make it easier for them to have access to bank loans and access to governmental and non-governmental organizations. The organization believes unity can give young women a common voice to express their problems to society. Through education, the organization would also like to influence behavioral patterns to combat HIV/AIDS by encouraging abstinence and awareness issues on poverty and employment.

Influenced by IYDO's multiple conferences, seminars, and concerts, about 2,500 people per month became more socially aware about how to combat HIV/AIDS. Many young women have volunteered to participate in the organization's campaign against poverty and HIV/AIDS. The organization's follow-up action aims to increase the number of seminars, conferences and concerts to extend their services in other areas in Tanzania. Obstacles that IYDO has faced were lack of education and educational resources in the communities, financial budget constrains due to lack of internal and external sponsorship, and overcoming the stereotypes and barriers concerning labor and HIV/AIDS.

**“What could a simple human do?” one could think. One person can't do much, but in a world where everyone is holding hands, one person would make a big difference. As the elderly don't quite see this, the youth play a vital role in this matter. We have to open everybody else's eyes - including the eyes of our peers!”**

**Giullz (Romania)**

**Jenny Hao** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/jenny87>

## Medsin at Imperial College London

Jenny has been involved for a long time in different voluntary activities that are connected to the MDGs. While still in high school, she launched a branch of People and Planet, a student run organisation affiliated to Oxfam, and organised high profile activities in the Warwickshire area to raise the awareness of Fair Trade, as well as campaigned for better medical treatment for AIDS patients.

Since attending the World Youth Congress, Jenny has started studying Medicine at Imperial College London and has been sharing her experiences and promoting the MDGs amongst her peers. During the congress, Jenny developed a better understanding of the MDGs through meeting individuals from affected countries. She realised that there is a need for countries to increase and improve their engagement with young people, especially in health promotion, where young people can be the best advocates.

For that reason, Jenny joined Medsin and is currently the Vice President of Medsin at Imperial College London. Medsin is the UK branch of the IFMSA (International Federation of Medical Students Association). Formed in 1997, Medsin is a network of motivated healthcare students active in raising awareness and taking action on humanitarian and global health issues at local, national, and international levels. Medsin has local branches in most of the UK medical schools whose student members organise projects and campaigns in important health-related issues.

From March 25 - 26, 2006, Medsin organized a Global Health Conference in London, centered on the theme of "Poverty and Health in the New Millennium." The conference addressed pressing issues in international health and

development, focusing on the MDGs. Clinicians, public health experts, advocates and policy makers spoke on a range of critical topics:

- Infectious disease: HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB, and cholera present the biggest challenges to public health in the poorest countries.

What should be done to halt and reverse the spread of major infectious diseases?

- Maternal and child health: Women and children are two very vulnerable groups in society. Child mortality and injuries associated with pregnancy create a large number of preventable deaths each year. Students learned of the horrific experiences of women and children in developing countries and the factors, which result in poor health outcomes.

- Neglected issues in international health: Some lesser publicised diseases of increasing prevalence include cancer, cardiovascular disease, and mental illness. Non-communicable diseases were highlighted as a contributing factor to poverty in developing countries.

- Forging a global partnership for development: The last plenary allowed opportunities for consolidation and discussion. A consensus was reached that healthcare students should actively participate in international health issues in order to bring these issues to the attention of the next generation.

In addition, workshops and other opportunities for further discussion were organized, and participants were given the chance to give poster presentations of their own work on both days. As Jenny told us, the 300 students from across Europe who attended the conference praised its structure and content. They took with them a sense of inspiration and enthusiasm to organise global health projects in their individual university branches.

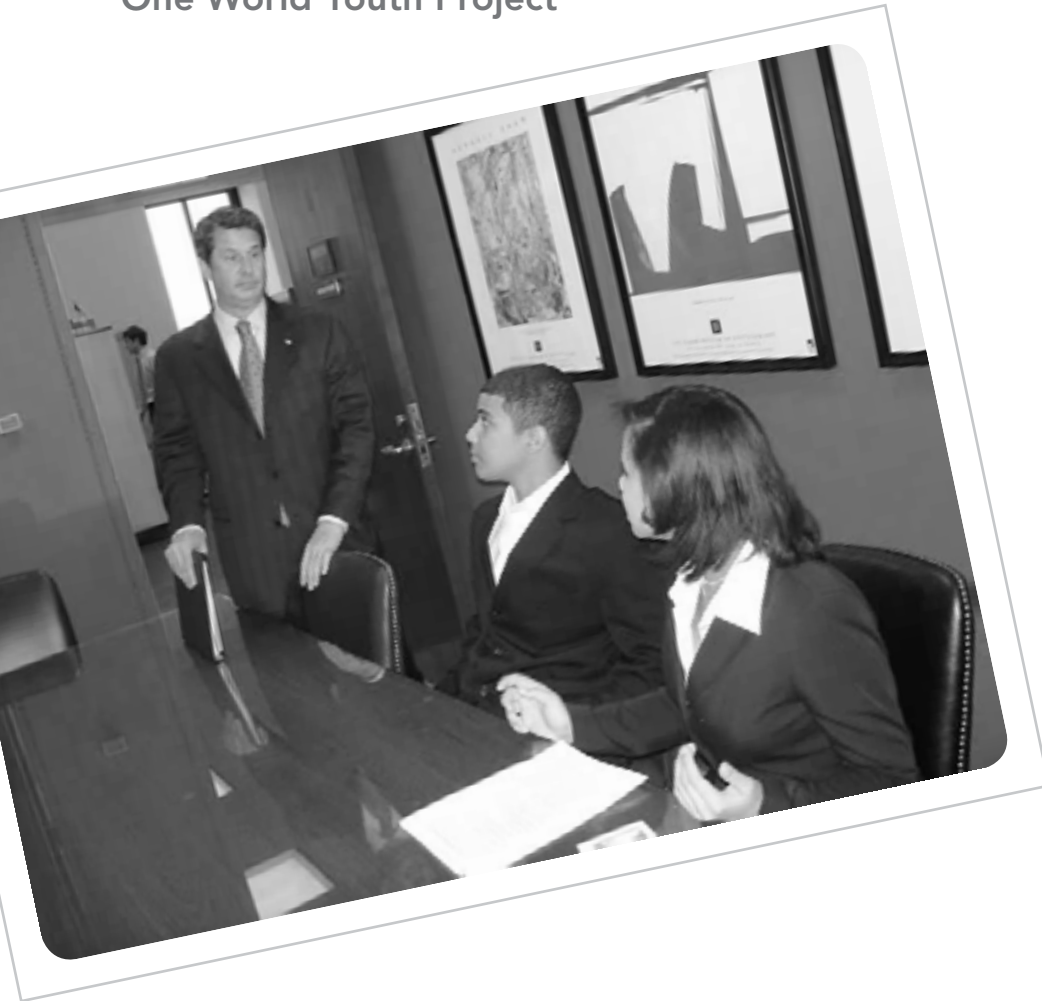
In addition to organizing such conference with Medsin, Jenny is part of a research team of student volunteers planning to go to Sri Lanka this summer to teach nutrition and dental health in primary education.





**Jessica Rimington** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/oneworldyouthproject>

## One World Youth Project



One World Youth Project is an entirely youth-led and youth-run global sister-school initiative for middle and high school students, linking groups in the United States with youth groups from around the world in learning partnerships. The Project builds and connects communities of youth action through cultural understanding, leadership training, and community service, and received 40 MDG Youth Campaign Kits from GYAN, which were distributed to participating schools and youth groups.

One World Youth Project uses the MDGs as a platform through which all their initiatives are connected to each other. MDG-specific activities have been organized in several countries, where a school in the US partners with a school or a youth group in another country to learn about the MDGs, how they affect their lives, and what can be done in both countries to help achieve them.

The partnerships have inspired many MDG-related projects, ranging from fundraising, awareness-building and advocacy in the US to community development and awareness programs in developing countries. In April 2006, One World Youth Project organized a summit in Washington DC where 19 US students from four states came together for four intense days of workshops, meetings and lobbying of members of Congress regarding the importance of the MDGs.

Since November 2005, the project has had monthly MDG-themes, where the participating schools and organizations focus on a specific Goal each month. Students and members are asked to reflect on what the Goal means to them and to make recommendations on what can be done to achieve the Goal in their community. The responses are listed and shared on the project website.

“The Goals set by the MDGs are real and should be targeted by every society, by every state. But I don’t agree with the idea that developed countries will help developing countries into materializing them. Developing countries should forget about financial helps. In fact, there have never been financial helps from developed countries to developing countries. We had financial business. That’s why we have so huge debts to pay back.”

Jean-Pierre Nziya (Congo DR)

**Nil S. Navaie** <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/art4development>

## Arts For Global Development, Inc.

**A**rts For Global Development, Inc. (Art4Development.Net) is an international, nonprofit initiative with a purpose of furthering an interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral, cross-cultural, and creative approach in social change and development. For the past few years Art4Development.Net has been working on bringing the creative sector and stakeholders of development together to empower socially and economically disadvantaged individuals and communities worldwide, particularly children, youth, and women. This mission and almost all its programs thus far have been in line with the MDGs.

Art4Development.Net is an educational organization that helps bridge developed and transitional communities by means of utilizing any kind and style of arts. Through its online resources, Art4Development.Net facilitates a global learning opportunity. On the website, the "Arts and MDGs" section lists arts-infused development programs and projects (such as fem'arts, art's edu, artAIDs, or CreativEco) that not only to inform, but also to inspire individuals to take action towards achieving the MDGs. The E-Community creates a platform to share news and announcements on MDGs and develop collaborative programs while giving voice to and presenting opportunities for young individuals. The arts, culture, social change, and development e-magazine art'ishake, offers an outlet for interdisciplinary and international exploration of the concepts and practices of creative projects as well as those that primarily focus on the MDGs.

Art4Development.Net also co-develops educational and arts-infused projects, thereby increasing the practice of 'arts' in third-sector-support and social/societal responsibility. In April 2005, Art4Development.Net, in collaboration with TakingITGlobal and the UN Millennium Campaign launched the CreativeChange Youth Arts Project to raise greater awareness about the MDGs and foster an intercultural

dialogue and understanding through diverse perspectives. The project consists of an arts competition and an educational traveling arts exhibition, which presents a selection of youth artworks from across the globe that depict the MDGs. Since the Millennium+5 Summit, Art4Development.Net has curated three exhibitions in Washington, DC, as well as a screening event that gave an opportunity for youth and the arts to meet and reflect on global development challenges in creative environments. As part of this project, Art4Development.Net also worked with young sound artists on the "Sound Project" to draw attention to development issues through sounds. The sounds aim to help the exhibition visitors visualize situations and circumstances, become curious, think, and feel...

There are many other projects that are similar to the CreativeChange Youth Arts Project: Art4Development.Net organizes workshops with groups such as the Peace Tiles Project to discuss HIV/AIDS and the vulnerability of children and youth. Art4Development.Net also coordinates educative events like "Women, Arts and Social Responsibility" and curates exhibitions such as the "For Women By Women" photo project to highlight violence against women issues and help generate funding for shelters that provide supportive services for victims of abuse. The objectives of these programs are directed towards achieving the MDGs by promoting gender equality, empowering women, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.

Art4Development.Net works together with youth on opportunities where art is utilized for tackling the challenges in the development field and transforming societies into more socially conscious, responsible, tolerant, and creatively active groups of people.

More information about Ar4Development, Inc. can be found online:

[www.art4development.net](http://www.art4development.net)

## Fabrizio Scrollini <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/fabrizioscrollini> Sumando Uruguay

**F**abrizio Scrollini became actively involved with TakingITGlobal's MDG program at the beginning of 2005 and carried out a couple of activities with his youth organization, Sumando Uruguay, and friends throughout the year.

On July 21, 2005, Fabrizio with two friends organized an Open Forum in cooperation with the Catholic University of Uruguay and with support of the United Nations system. It was the first and (so far) only major youth activity on the MDGs in the country. The event gathered 45 young people and adults from different backgrounds to discuss the MDGs and their current level of implementation in Uruguay. Young leaders from all political parties, youth led associations, activists, students, and members of the National Youth Institute participated in the meeting, which was a major success.

The event was divided into two parts. The first part was composed of an exposition made by Marcos Lorenzelli and Ruben Katzman. Marcos Lorenzelli, from UNDP Uruguay, made a diagnosis about the situation in Uruguay and the MDGs. He also outlined some ideas about how youth could be involved in achieving the MDGs. Ruben Katzman, laureate professor of the Catholic University and a prestigious researcher, expressed his view on how to achieve the MDGs and stressed that "Uruguay is capable of achieving the MDGs, but we definitely need to face new challenges for our country."

In the second part, the participants were split up into three groups to discuss the issues of poverty reduction, gender equity, and sustainable development. Each group created a document calling for youth involvement in achieving the MDGs. Fabrizio and Pablo Cavalieri of the sustainable development group pointed out that "It is time to realize that there is no possible future or development for our country without a serious investment in youth. A major part of the national budget should go to youth issues. Otherwise we are wasting our present, and jeopardizing our future."

The documentation about the event was later sent to UNDP and, as they promised, will be taken into consideration in upcoming national discussions on the MDGs. All participants agreed that since Uruguay has not developed a strong campaign yet, it is time to raise their

voices to help achieve the MDGs. They made a call for action for the government to be aware of the MDG framework in order to continue their efforts towards a sustainable Uruguay.

Sumando Uruguay also joined the global MDG campaign through the program *Ágora* and its volunteers, trying to promote the MDGs locally. *Ágora* is a program devoted to promote democracy in Latin America through a role-playing game where young people between 17-19 years old are supposed to run the political structure of the country. Around 300 young people were exposed to debating the MDGs in Uruguay through *Agora*.

For White Band Day II, Sumando Uruguay distributed white bands and gave presentations in the city of Maldonado at Woodside School. 50 kids discussed with Sumando volunteers about the campaign and the role of the UN in the achievement of MDGs.

For White Band Day III, Sumando Uruguay organized a seminar with Rotaractors from Argentina and Uruguay to promote the MDGs. 150 Rotaractors discussed the importance of the MDGs for Latin America and their local implications.

In February 2006, Fabrizio and Mariana Ballesterro from Vientos del Sur gave a presentation about the MDGs at the third Mercosur youth event. The event gathered young people from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Spain, and Chile. The focus of the discussion was "MDGs and Uruguay" and "MDGs and the region." 120 young people took part in the general discussion and workshops that were organized by Mariana Ballesterro.



## Matongo Maumbi <http://profiles.takingitglobal.org/matongo> Chikuni Radio



**M**atongo is a practicing radio journalist in a community radio station in the southern part of Zambia. He lives in the Chikuni Mission, which was founded in 1905. The mission is under the Jesuit Fathers of the Catholic Church. The main target area has teachers, nurses, and agriculturalists, with a lot of people being peasant farmers.

Matongo is 25 years-old and has six years of experience in the journalism profession, working in the broadcasting sector. He is on air at least three hours every day, either in live presentations or in programs. He has 17 30-minute programs that he produces every week on agriculture, poverty, culture, and the MDGs, as well as musical shows. He has talked about the MDGs in his programs for about a year, but intensified it when he became connected to the Internet. Ever since, he has been trying to include the MDGs in most of his programs. His inspiration is to share all the information on the Internet that is worth sharing with those that don't have access to it.

In his programs, he has closely worked with the listeners and also conducted field visits where he could see the living situations of different people. He says that the only problem for most people he visited was that they did not know how they could help themselves, so he felt obliged to let them know what they have to do, rather than waiting for outsiders to come to their rescue. "Seeing a thriving community is what I hope to have," says Matongo. The challenges facing his community are mainly those concerning agriculture, health (HIV/AIDS and Malaria), and unemployment. People lack information on development, entrepreneurship, and self-sustainability. Droughts have devastated the people, due partly to reliance on one crop, maize.

In a daily sample, there are about 210,000 people listening to the radio station and especially to his program "Random Talk." This is the program where he wants to turn the focus on the MDGs. So far he has mainly highlighted Goals 1, 2, and 6:

**Goal 1 (Eradicating Extreme Poverty):** For Goal 1, he has made agricultural programs to encourage farmers to use sustainable methods rather than using chemicals and empowering them to start community initiatives like grain and seed banks (including the preservation of local varieties). He has also discouraged farmers and people from using genetically modified crops and he has collected oral testimonies from elders to

provide the new generation with a clearer understanding of how poverty was tackled in the past.

**Goal 2 (Universal Primary Education):** For Goal 2, the radio station has a project where they offer lessons to children via radio using the Interactive Radio Instructions methodology. The station also holds massive campaigns for parents to send and keep their children in schools.

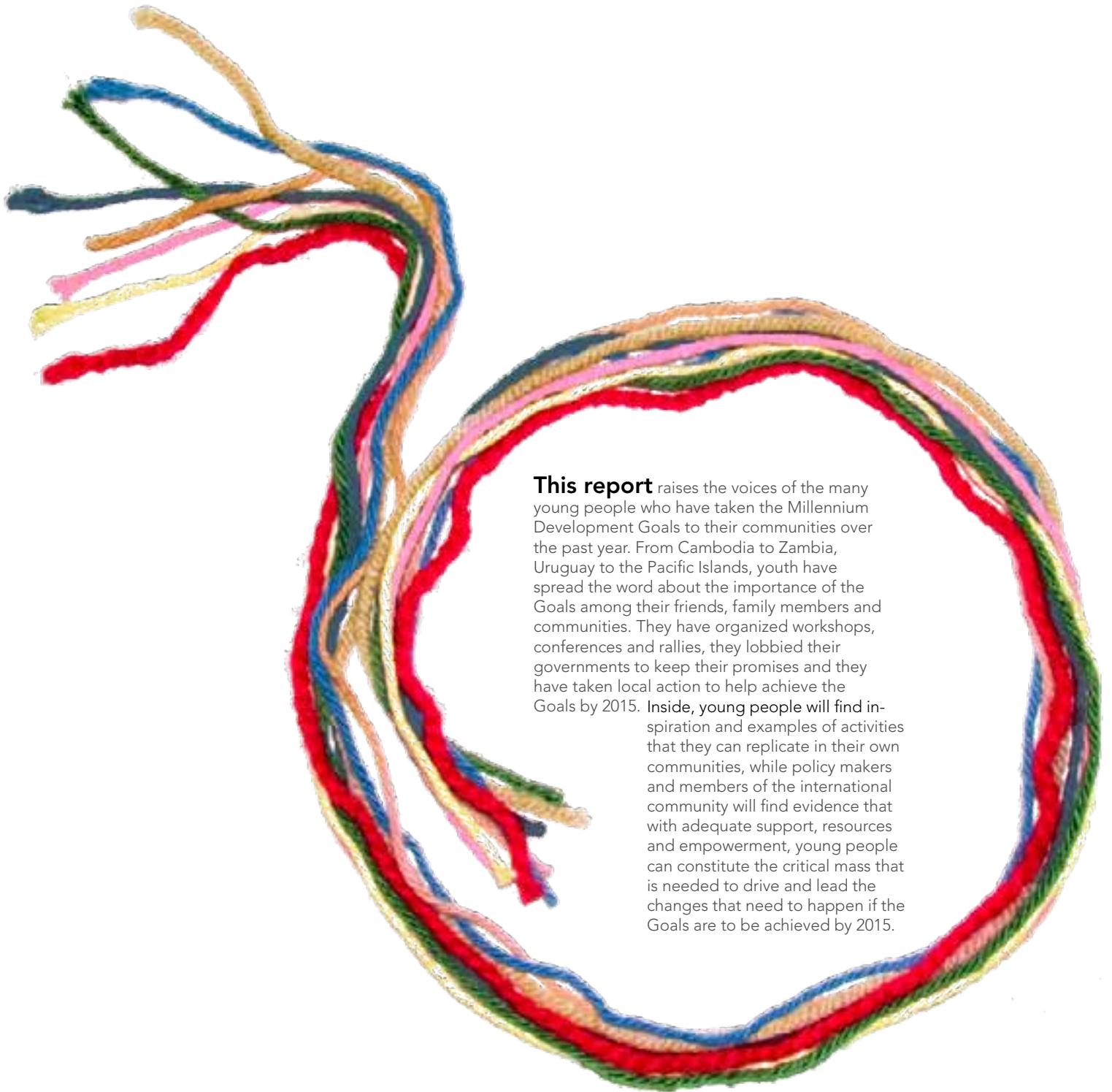
**Goal 6 (HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases):** The radio station has completed a massive campaign on HIV/AIDS where they held competitions in singing, poetry, essay writing, and fact-based quizzing. They organized programs every day during 2005 and also held public speaking sessions and debates involving schools, colleges, and the general public. Unfortunately, they had to cut down on the programs as the sponsorship for many of them has run out. They now run a program though on health matters and a new series on Malaria and TB – spots on these topics run at least three times a day.

Among the feedback Matongo has received from people is that they have now started putting into effect his advice. On one program, he talked about the need to plant and sell mangoes. Some people came to report that they now have a mango field with about 200 mango plants. Others have said they have collected the seeds and put them in strategic positions so that when they germinate, they can transplant them to a better field. Another program looked at the need to have community seed banks where local varieties can be stored. Some people have come to discuss in detail how to establish seed banks.

His radio program has been so successful that promoters for development of the Catholic church in the Southern province where he lives are interested in helping his region. Matongo is comfortable in saying that people have appreciated the info that he has been given them through the radio. What he now sees as urgent is a call for a public meeting where he and his colleagues from the radio station can chat with the people in detail about the issues discussed on radio.

He also mentions that the main challenge for the program he is doing is that not a single one is sponsored: "It's been hard to get a sponsor for the programs. I am still working hard to find sponsorship, which would allow me to go deeper in the villages to gather information and facts. Being in a rural area seems to be a deterrent for possible sponsors, even while it is such a worthwhile cause."





**This report** raises the voices of the many young people who have taken the Millennium Development Goals to their communities over the past year. From Cambodia to Zambia, Uruguay to the Pacific Islands, youth have spread the word about the importance of the Goals among their friends, family members and communities. They have organized workshops, conferences and rallies, they lobbied their governments to keep their promises and they have taken local action to help achieve the Goals by 2015. **Inside**, young people will find inspiration and examples of activities that they can replicate in their own communities, while policy makers and members of the international community will find evidence that with adequate support, resources and empowerment, young people can constitute the critical mass that is needed to drive and lead the changes that need to happen if the Goals are to be achieved by 2015.