Winning Essays
International Essay Competition 2005

BUILDING A SECURE FUTURE...
SEEKING PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS
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SEEKING PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

“What are the biggest obstacles that you face in your daily life?
What practical solutions would you propose to build a secure future for yourself and others?”

Essay Competition finalists, from left to right: Maria Fernanda Heyaca, Lhotse Quintanilla, Safet Hadzimuhamedovic, Wilfrido Kabiling, Boniface Chimwaza, Asnia Asim, Esther Ng, Wilfred Oliver Segovia, and Alfred Shako Kpane, who could not attend the final jury in person and presented his essay via teleconference
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INTRODUCTION

In the year 2005, the World Bank and its partners launched the second edition of the Essay Competition.

The International Essay Competition 2005 invited young people between 18 and 25 years of age, representing all countries of the world, students and non-students alike, to reflect upon and share their views on the following topic:

**BUILDING A SECURE FUTURE… SEEKING PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS**

“What are the biggest obstacles that you face in your daily life? What practical solutions would you propose to build a secure future for yourself and others?”

The submission process was entirely online-based via the website:

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

Contestants were encouraged to make use of the following approaches in structuring their answer to the second essay question.

**Personal Reflection**
Describe your own personal efforts to solve a problem or grapple with a specific issue (through volunteer work or other type of involvement), showing 1) how your work changed your own life or the lives of others, and 2) how those solutions can be adapted to helping others facing the same challenges.

**Policy Analysis**
Essays in this category could focus on a particular organization or public policy. The goal of the essay would be to show to what extent the work of an organization or a policy has
been effective in building a more secure future by addressing issues such as unemployment, homelessness, hunger, gender violence etc. The essays should include concrete recommendations on how a particular project or program can be improved or reformed to have greater impact.

**Academic Inquiry**

This approach may appeal to students of life sciences (biology, engineering, environment, etc.) or economics, but also of philosophy and history. It may be used describe how new technologies might be used to build a more secure future (for example, environmental solutions or agricultural solutions) in their country. Students of history could use historical precedent or example to build proposals; students of philosophy could look at the response of different philosophical traditions to problems of insecurity and explore reasons for their relevance today.
PARTNERS

The International Essay Competition 2004/2005 was organized by the World Bank in partnership with:

AEGEE Europe
The Bretton Woods Committee
Cairo University, Egypt
Conciencia, Argentina
Jadavpur University, India
Universidad National Autonoma de Mexico, Mexico
Tsinghua University, China
Youth Association for Peace and Development, Egypt
**KEY FIGURES**

The Essay Competition generated great interest among young people worldwide:

- 3.8 millions hits on the website
- 1 241 essays submitted from 108 countries
- 20 pre-selected essays
- 9 finalists
- 4 winners

Regions represented by the contestants:

Countries with the greatest number of submissions:

- Nigeria
- Uganda
- Ghana
- Philippines
- China
- Uzbekistan
- Colombia
- India

Most frequently chosen themes:

- School-to-work transition – youth employment
- Education
- Conflict prevention & resolution
- Risky behaviors and HIV/AIDS
- Participation and empowerment
- Energy and environment
CALENDAR

The application process for the Essay Competition was launched in January 2005. Essays could be submitted until mid April 2005.

From April 15 until May 9, 2005, a group of reviewers read the essays and selected the finalists.

On May 9, 2005, nine finalists were announced and invited to participate in the ABCDE Conference in Amsterdam.

### Finalists:

- Winner of the 1st Prize (ex aequo): Asnia Asim, Pakistan
- Winner of the 1st Prize (ex aequo): Wilfred Oliver Segovia, Philippines
- Winner of the 3rd Prize: Lhotse Quintanilla, Bolivia
- Winner of the 4th Prize: Esther Ng, Singapore
- Boniface Chimwaza, Malawi
- Safet Hadzimuhamedovic, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Maria Fernanda Heyaca, Argentina
- Wilfrido Kabiling, Philippines
- Alfred Shako Kpane, Democratic Republic of Congo

### Awards:

1 prize ex aequo: 3000 US dollars for each winner
3 prize: 1000 US dollars
4 prize: 1000 US dollars
On May 23, 2005, finalists presented their essays and answered questions from juries and fellow finalists:

Winner Asnia Asim presents her essay  Winner Wilfred Segovia argues his case

Finalists pose for a souvenir picture  Finalists with juries

After the presentations, the juries met to discuss the finalists’ performance and select the winners.

On May 24, 2005, winners received their awards from Ian Goldin, Vice President for External Affairs, Communications and United Nations Affairs, The World Bank, and Anna Kuznicka, Winner of the European Essay Competition 2003/2004:
Winners of the 1st prize, Asnia Asim and Wilfred Oliver Segovia, delivered short speeches during the Closing Session of the ABCDE Conference.

**Speech by Asnia Asim**

“I would like to thank you all for giving me this opportunity to propose a solution to the growing insecurity all of us feel today due to terrorism. I have proposed to you the necessity of a global effort to check and correct any biased form of education since education is our best tool against intolerance and frustration which eventually end up in terrorism. I am gratified by the award, but of course true satisfaction shall accompany this gratification once education is taken seriously and there is a positively charged global coalition to bring about an actual change. Thank you.”

**Speech by Wilfred Oliver Segovia**

“I would like to take this chance to thank the World Bank for organizing this Essay Competition and giving us a chance in the Philippines to share our voice, our stories, our hopes and dreams on something concrete which can be done to help address the problems of a very, let’s say, transitional and fledging democracy like the Philippines. My essay
was about sharing a proposal to use debate as part of the curriculum and as something concrete which the youth can do to help have a better voice in the government and to have more participatory views to scrutinize and intelligently discuss issues in the government.
Thank you for this chance.”
SELECTION PROCESS

The format and content of the competition were determined by a group of experts forming the Steering Committee:

- Jean-Christophe Bas, Development Policy Dialogue Manager, The World Bank
- Héctor Castillo Berthier, Universidad National Autonoma de Mexico, Mexico
- Hisham El Ruby, Youth Association for Population and Development, National Federation for Egyptian NGOs, Egypt
- Adam Kucza, European Students' Forum (AEGEE)
- Xue Lan, Tsinghua University, China
- Heba Nassar, Cairo University, Egypt
- James Orr, The Bretton Woods Committee
- Joyashree Roy, Jadavpur University, India
- Silvia Uranga, Conciencia, Argentina

Essays were evaluated and pre-selected by the Selecting Committee (Jury):

- Héctor Castillo Berthier, Universidad National Autonoma de Mexico, Mexico
- Maya Brahman, The World Bank
- Ling Chen, Tsinghua University, China
- Carol Ferrara, The Bretton Woods Committee
- Pierre Girardier, The World Bank
- Adam Kucza, European Students' Forum (AEGEE)
- Shuichi Kiyanagi, The World Bank
- Anna Kuznicka, The World Bank
- Joyashree Roy, Jadavpur University, India
- Silvia Uranga, Conciencia, Argentina
ESSAYS

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAY

“It is not about winning, it is about expressing yourself and learning from this process.”
Dorin Vremis, Republic of Moldova

“During the period when I wrote the essay I got to learn even more about the predicament of the youth in my country and the rest of the world from the reference materials I used. This has helped me have a broader perspective on youth and I can therefore confidently say that I am more knowledgeable than before I entered the competition.”
Lydia Asena, Kenya

“I am happy that I had an opportunity to participate in Essay Competition 2005. Although my essay was not be chosen among those best ones, I have learned a lot during the process of writing and expressing my ideas about the problems of youth in my country.”
Arevik Danielyan, Armenia
1ST PRIZE WINNER, ASNIA ASIM, PAKISTAN

A for altruism, B for brotherhood, C for compassion

Asnia’s essay stresses the importance of unbiased, culture-fair education as a way to prevent military conflicts.
Ist Prize winner, Asnia Asim, Pakistan, speaks:

About herself:
I am a 22 year-old student of Business at the Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan. I have volunteered for various NGOs for short periods of time, in order to learn and participate in the processes of social development. At my university, I am the founding member of two councils emphasizing the awareness and social participation among students. Recently, I have completed an internship at the World Bank Country Office in Islamabad, and I am currently involved in writing a book for children to create more awareness about others’ religion, rituals and cultures etc.

About the topic:
I live in a developing country, where everyday one faces the bitter truth that so many people are dying due to great problems that envelope the nation, such as poverty, terrorism and diseases etc. I came across the Essay Competition 2005 competition website while I was searching for the World Bank’s scholarship program for youth. The topic emphasized the word “practical”, and that is what I have always believed in. My topic “A for altruism, B for brotherhood and C for compassion” holds terrorism accountable for growing insecurity around the world. I have proven in my paper that quality education can in fact enlighten an individual and make him/her more tolerant towards others. The reason for choosing this topic and targeting the type of material being taught around the world was to focus the world’s attention on a problem that is aggravating everyday but still remains unchecked i.e. the biased and partial ideas being fed into children and the youth’s minds.

About being a winner:
I was excited to be selected and thrilled by the idea that I was being invited to attend the ABCDE conference in Amsterdam! It was a great learning opportunity since the main focus during the conference was on poverty and such problems in the developing world. When I met the other finalists, I thought I would never win. As all of them were very competent and intelligent individuals. We had a lot of fun, just being together, attending
the conference, presenting our papers and of course hanging out in Amsterdam. When I presented in front of the jury along with my fellow finalists, I enjoyed every bit of the experience.

It is great to be a winner! First of all the feeling of self satisfaction and accomplishment is just out of this world. The news of my victory has been published in several newspapers and I am also going to meet the Governor of Sindh in a few days. Life definitely changes after becoming a winner, but it only changes for the good. I plan to study after my MBA and am sure that this achievement will help me a great deal to get into some good college.
Abstract
The paper extracts acumen for central idea by a tragic personal experience of loss of a dear friend in a terror attack. Then it proceeds into identifying terrorism as the major obstacle in personal life as well as of many others around the world, causing insecurity and impeding success by using examples from a global context. Triggered by the tragedy mentioned the author attempts to identify the reason behind terrorism to eventually advance a solution to it. Factors frequently proposed such as poverty and lack of education are considered but only to be dismissed in light of certain studies and facts. Finally increasing level of intolerance for others, frustration towards their practices is identified as the root cause.

An attempt to investigate as to why education has been unable to play its role in teaching individuals to accept others’ beliefs is narrated, which ends up detecting major flaws in the curriculum being taught in educational institutions around the world. Specific examples are cited, describing instances where some appallingly biased concepts against some concerned party are being taught as part of curriculum.

Finally a solution to growing and uncurbed intolerance is proposed in the form of an international council, formed under the supervision of the World Bank, headed and run by generally admired and academically capable individuals from countries and communities around the world. The council is proposed to work in collaboration with the already established EFA program, in order to make the education brought to children effective in addition to efficient, and hence the council is given the name of International Council of Effective Education (ICEE). The mission, role, goals, members, curriculum changes and publicity campaigns are suggested, with the intention of providing a sustainable and secure future and relieving present of anxiety caused by growing terrorism.

8th of August, 2004, was the day that I was unfortunate enough to experience what insecurity meant in reality. My best friend was blown to pieces in a terror attack while he was on his way to meet me. It was an ingenious plan of twin blasts. The first one
explored when he was in the car, he came out like many others to help the panicking and profusely bleeding victims, falling right into the trap, and then another bomb attached to a motorbike right next to them, exploded. For many days after my loss, I often wished I had learnt what insecurity meant, through some dictionary or movie, but had not experienced it. While I was already wallowing in the misery of my loss, my feelings of vulnerability were multiplied when in coming days on television, I saw a mother similar to my friends’, wailing over her son’s body, outside a Moscow subway station1 (Aug. 31, 2004); I saw expressions similar to what my friend might have had, on a web site linked to an Iraqi militant group showing a video of what is purported to be the killing of 12 Nepalese workers by militants who had kidnapped them2 (Aug. 31, 2004) and I saw a friend (like me) of some girl (like my friend) killed in a terrorist suicide bombing in Beersheba, Israel3 (September 1, 2004).

If someone asks me today what is the biggest obstacle I face in my daily life? An obstacle that distorts my plans for a sound future, that negatively affects my lifestyle, which has made my present and future insecure? My answer would be: Getting up every morning with a feeling that somebody in the world is going to harm someone else in an unbearably terrorizing and gruesome manner.

The High Level Panel’s report, “A Secure More World”4 defines insecurity as “Any event or process that leads to large-scale death or lessening of life chances and undermines States as the basic unit of the international system is a threat to international security.” What I and many others experienced in one month unfortunately fits the description perfectly. Terrorism was able to take innocent lives of 142 people in 10 days in places as diverse as Russia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Israel in August 20045. Today’s tragedy is the suffering caused to people around the world not due to an epidemic or a tsunami but due to other people. It is moral shattering but at the same time far more

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1 Washington Post Foreign Service Wednesday, September 1, 2004; Page A10
2 BAGHDAD, Iraq, Aug. 31, 2004 (CBS/AP)
3 Wednesday, September 1, 2004 Posted: 12:26 AM EDT (0426 GMT) BEERSHEBA, Israel (CNN)
4 http://www.un.org/secureworld/
5 www.msnbc.com
terrifying than a natural disaster because the frequency of such terror attacks is far higher and they are almost always unpredictable.

When such horrific scenes are repeated daily on every television set in every house, one question that comes to mind is: Why so much hatred, why this intolerance for another’s values? The paper makes use of this word: intolerance, as it very aptly summarizes the core of all these attacks. The paper will describe the reasons for choosing intolerance as the essence behind terrorism against poverty or education as it proceeds.

The intolerance is not only towards Americans or Jews by only Muslims, but Sunni are hated by Shiites (vice versa), IRA against Northern Island and according to Muslims around the world USA’s war on Iraq is an equally unjustified terrorist activity. To gauge the extent of this hatred toward others, to analyze how bad the situation is, I planned to conduct a casual survey, and asked people in my community what they felt about Americans, Jews, Shiites or Sunnis. People’s answers were full of incidents where they had lost some member or had heard of someone die in a terrorist activity against them, or Muslims, or Shiites or Sunnis. During the process of interviewing I was startled when a girl of almost eight, interrupted her father with extreme confidence and said looking me straight in the eye, “They are all after us, they want to kill us all, so it is better that we harm them before they harm us.” The little girl’s comment was painfully blunt but summarized everyone else’s feelings of insecurity, just perfectly. This revelation puts focus on the fact that not only the animosity is strong but has also manged to seep deep into the roots of each interest group. This hatred and intolerance for anyone else’s practices and beliefs has affected not only the adults but unfortunately the youth is also continuously being polluted with similar negative feelings.

Intolerance has never been treated as the culprit but instead the United Nations and World Bank representatives have highlighted the need for poverty alleviation repeatedly in their papers and speeches. It is proposed that once income inequality is curtailed, crimes such as terror attacks can be lessened. For example, James D. Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, asserted that the war on terrorism "will not be won until we have come to
grips with the problem of poverty and thus the sources of discontent." Also writing in Business Week December 2001, Laura D’Andrea Tyson (dean of the Haas School of Business at the University of California) argued: "We live in a world of unprecedented opulence and remarkable deprivation, a world so interconnected that poverty and despair in a remote region can harbor a network of terrorism dedicated to our destruction. In such a world, our prosperity and freedom at home increasingly depend on the successful development of countries like Afghanistan." But the fact is that terrorists are better-educated and better off than many of their compatriots, like the September 11 hijackers came mostly from Saudi Arabia, a country that has reasonably high levels of per capita income, and the Israeli Jewish extremists who attacked Palestinians in the West Bank in the late ’70s and early ’80s, were Gush Emunim members, and a list of 27 of the Israeli terrorists revealed a pattern of high-paying occupations. Hence poverty alleviation might not end up in a desperately aspired secure life.

If poverty reduction is not a harbinger of tolerance, then the next very obvious choice seems proper education provision to all. And keeping this in mind programs such as Education for All (EFA) by the World Bank seem very promising. This very enthusiastic mission strives to bring the benefits of education to “every citizen in every society.” But then again these optimistic emotions are despoiled when the review by NBER Research Associate Alan Krueger and co-author Jitka Maleckova states that "Any connection between poverty, education, and terrorism is indirect, complicated, and probably quite weak," (Education, Poverty, Political Violence, and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection? The author states that "Members of Hezbollah’s militant wing who were killed in action in the 1980s and early 1990s were at least as likely to come from economically advantaged families and have a relatively high level of education as they were to come from impoverished families without educational opportunities." The writer describes other factors as reasons for terrorism promotion and says "Instead of viewing terrorism as a direct response to low market opportunities

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6 cfterrorism.org/causes/poverty.html
7 www.businessweek.com/magazine
8 JUNE 10, 2002 ECONOMIC VIEWPOINT By Robert J. Barro, Business week
9 www.worldbank.org
10 (NBER Working Paper No. 9074)
or ignorance, we suggest it is more accurately viewed as a response to political conditions and long-standing feelings (either perceived or real) of indignity and frustration that have little to do with economics."

But the fact that education is supposed to broaden one’s scope and teach an individual to learn as a child, to adapt and make the right choices, perplexed me. Hence I decided to casually study the various curriculum being taught and educational techniques being practiced in various parts of the world, and attempted to detect what was lacking in them, that individuals did not learn to be adaptive and accept others ideas and values. The findings are as follows.

The curriculum being taught and followed in many countries is biased in its representation of facts. Tales of holy wars and fights for freedom are taught to children at a very young age. Although such information is a part of history and is critical for learning, but when the events that took place are presented in an extremely partial manner the child naturally ends up developing hatred for the “bad guys”. An example would be of the Indo-Pak history taught in both India and Pakistan. Chapters in their History books describe the nationals’ fight for freedom and relate tales of how the British Army wrongfully invaded their land, how the British Army tortured them and how eventually they were able to fight for their freedom and take their land back. Children grow up loving their heroes like Nehru in India and Qaid-e-Azam in Pakistan, and of course despising the villains who tortured their forefathers, namely “The White People”. In Saudi Arabia the textbook for one of the five religion classes required of all 10th graders in Saudi public high schools tackles the complicated issue of who good Muslims should befriend. After examining a number of scriptures which warn of the dangers of having Christian and Jewish friends, the lesson concludes: "It is compulsory for the Muslims to be loyal to each other and to consider the infidels their enemy."11 In USA Patrick Henry Christian College is being termed as another extremist madrasa12, as its students are trained with extremist view to "lead our nation and shape our culture with timeless

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11 www.nytimes.com
12 Madrasa: a small set up of religious studies taught to young boys in Pakistan and Afghanistan, accused of breeding terrorists
biblical values”. At Sacramento, West Coast, USA when students returning post-
holidays to seventh-grade social studies classes in many school districts found themselves
immersed in the study of Islam, parent complaints were making headlines on
conservative radio and Internet news sites.

The point to be noted in above examples is that the text books, educational activities and
role-model teachers and parents in many countries are themselves planting seeds of
hatred and animosity towards different sects, religions, races, countries and people. In
more developed nations such as USA and some Britain such extremist or biased
education isn’t as ingrained in the curriculum as in most developing nations. But they
lack true representation of Islam and Muslim practices, which aid children in better
understanding of their Muslim community within the country and everywhere around the
world. This is a reciprocal effect: people around the world misunderstand Islamic
practices and label all Muslims as extremists, whereas Muslims already feeling
threatened by super powers and the West become more defensive, and hence a vicious
cycle of negative feelings continues unchecked. The fact is that nothing is being done to
prevent or eliminate these misunderstandings, which later translate into intolerance
towards others. More worrying is the situation mentioned earlier that more biased
opinions and partial views are actually being taught to the coming generations. If such
practices are not stopped, the frustrations towards others and the impatience towards their
beliefs, breeding within societies all around the world will rise to an irremediable extent.
As children mature into youth and further, it is harder to change their ideals. Once grown
up, they are far too convinced of others’ evil towards them and their community to
change their views.

Proposal for Building a Secure Future

Technology has progressed at a pace much faster than what humans could handle or get
used to. Evidence is the use of sophisticated weapons and communication systems for

13 www.voiceoffreedom.com/patrickhenrycollege/interns.html

transnational crime and global terrorist activities. Such crime and terrorist organizations work globally and hence are hard to catch. But at the same time their impact is equally international and sends waves of insecurity and vulnerability all across the globe. Hence to fight such crimes of passion and extremity, triggered by intolerance and affecting all of humanity, there needs to be a global movement attempting to find a sustainable and lasting solution. Although, we, the people of today, do suffer badly from these attacks, we can secure our and our coming generations future by teaching them to be accommodative and tolerant towards others and their practices, religion, values and beliefs.

To achieve such a sustainable security the paper proposes a council formed under the influence of the World Bank. The mission and particulars of the council are explained below in detail.

**The International Council for Effective Education**

International Council for Effective Education, (ICEE) will be formed as a part of The World Bank Group’s Education sector and will attempt to focus on the type of rather than the amount of education being provided all around the world. Its mission would be to check and establish curriculum that is free of any kind of bias, prejudice or misrepresentation in teaching institutions all around the world.

ICEE will proceed with more of a proactive role rather than reactive i.e. it will attempt to make effective changes in educational system and anticipate their impact on coming generations and children at present with respect to their socio-cultural setup.

**Role**

Efficiency is defined as “The ratio of the energy delivered to the energy supplied for its operation.” In the light of the above definition what EFA attempts to accomplish is efficient education as it plans to bring the benefits of education to “every citizen in every society”. Now that the role of EFA is explained, ICEE will work towards ensuring that
education delivered is delivered effectively. Effective is defined as “The quality or property of being efficient.”

The above description describes the crucial role of ICEE in the achievement of the EFA goal and its participation in deriving benefit from resources dedicated to the cause of education.

ICEE can play an effective entity’s role only when it has formed close relations with the local governments since they hold the main links and channels of the country in their hands. At the same time ICEE needs to establish a network of pre planned activities with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). As they are already active in welfare activities in local and international context, making use of local citizens, who have a better understanding of the region and behavioral impacts of various policies and actions.

The ICEE will play a vital role of ensuring effective education wherever education is being provided.

**Goals**

The ICEE will plan to achieve the following goals in order to provide effective education, wherever education is being provided.

1. ICEE will work in complete collaboration with the Education for All (EFA) program, already initiated by the World Bank. In this way all the new efforts being made by the World Bank to provide every child with proper education will be directed in the right direction. The resources (funds and money) will be utilized towards a complete goal of provision of timely and effective education.

2. ICEE will plan and implement complete new curriculum in the areas receiving education for the first time, the primary and secondary level schools and institutions beings opened.

3. ICEE will work towards gradually transforming the existing curriculum being taught around the world. It will conduct detailed studies of the material being
taught and will try to gauge the impact on a child’s mind in his/her context (socio-cultural environment)

4. ICEE will design programs to train teachers – novice and experienced – in accordance with its goals, namely, promotion of more tolerant, adaptive and broadminded ideas.

5. ICEE will form close alliances with governments and move with their coordination and at the same time will keep closer monitoring of the use of aid being granted for educational purposes. Its role will exceed mere provision of funds and ensuring of education provision and will be to answer questions like: What is being taught? Why? And How?

6. ICEE will form close alliances with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working within each country and donate funds and aid in order effectively implement its plan across the region.

7. ICEE will have the official capability to take action against schools or educational institutions teaching extremist views, promoting biased views or refusing to cooperate. E.g. madrasas that were operating in Pakistan.

**Council Members, Representatives and Cooperators**

People taking part in the ICEE actions and achievement of goals will be vital to its success and effective functioning. Members working at different levels for different tasks need to possess the following characteristics:

1. **Advisors to council:** These advisors to the council regarding changes in curriculum will be nationals of the country under consideration. They need to be very well educated and should possess a thorough understanding of the values, culture and norms of the society and at the same time the impact of changes made on it. These individuals need to be highly esteemed and generally liked or admired in their country or community so that people don’t feel that they are once again being manipulated by “The West”.

2. **Participants of the Council:** All individuals taking any part in the council and its activities should be selected completely on the basis of their personal inclination
towards a more coherent, peaceful and adaptable future. As long as they don’t believe in the cause of the ICEE they won’t be able to perform in complete coherence with the council’s goal.

3. **Publicity People:** The individuals chosen for ad-campaigns and publicity of the ICEE should be admired and well reputed celebrities from the local as well as international entertainment field. Popular political as well as religious leaders can be convinced to take part in the council’s publicity campaign, to convince their following crowds of its credibility.

4. **President:** The president or head of the council should be some globally known and admired individual in terms of personality as well as academics. The president shall be changed annually, and each country participating in the program shall be given a chance of participation.

5. **Members to Council:** Different members to the council need to be of influential position so that they can back the actions taken by the council. E.g. President Bush or British Prime Minister, Tony Blair could be made honorary or permanent members of the council.

**The New Curriculum**

**Additions:**

The new curriculum as well as the changes proposed in the existing ones need to include the following:

1. Addition of more stories and poems for children written by other children their age from the other end, mentioning their names, countries and interests. With such an addition children will develop a natural bond towards those their age, but of different race, color and religion.

2. Addition in text books of different names (e.g. use of name Amina in a math problem in USA and Angela in Saudi Arabia) and colorful pictures of people wearing different dresses with different features.
3. Arrangement of dramas and plays written in different countries and children should be encouraged to participate.

4. Collaborative interactive sessions with children from around the world e.g. chatting and e-mailing on pre-chosen topics and pen pal activities where there is no internet.

5. Addition in curriculum and textbooks, of the positive role played by United Nations, World Bank, Red Cross etc. and various other organizations in the development of their country as well as global development.

6. Inclusion of various incidents of coordination among people of different religion, races and nationalities in times of tragedy, for example, the tsunami incident, where volunteers from all around the world tried to help the victims.

**Omissions:**

Following aspects of the curriculum need to be either completely omitted or changed:

1. Extremist religious statements or scriptures out of religious books or by religious scholars.
2. Biased statements and narratives against any other country, religion or sect. for example, “...the fight of Pakistan or India against brutal British umpire”
3. Use of names that are considered a threat or are disliked by communities somewhere else should be avoided, for example, Osama bought six oranges…, or Rushdi sold five apples…

**Ad and Publicity Campaigns**

A global publicity campaign needs to be launched that works on the following format:

- Spreads a message of tolerance and equality for different people in a global context but targets individuals at the local level.
- A campaign making use of all types of celebrities in sports (David Beckham, British), entertainment (Aishwarya Rai, Indian), politics (Pervez Musharraf, Pakistani) and others
The campaign could take inspiration from the “Got Milk” campaign, spreading a message of public welfare, carefully selecting celebrities to represent and deliver the message, in a generally accepted and appreciated manner. Celebrities from different ends of the world can appear together in advertisements to amuse and encourage individuals all around the world.

**Conclusion**

Today every individual of any community feels threatened by some opposing party. When fear of being objected to for following ones beliefs or religion transforms into fear of being killed, hijacked or raped for doing the same thing, action needs to be taken. In today’s world when people have become impatient they need to be re-taught the meaning of tolerance and resolving issues with civil negotiations. This can never be achieved in a world where every child is being taught different lessons of freedom fighting and is encouraged to develop negative feelings towards someone else, based on either biased information or facts included in textbooks and curriculum that are beyond his understanding. Hence collective action is proposed in the form of an international council headed and run by eminent members from all types of communities around the world. Only an action on the international level leading to consistent representation of unbiased and positive messages and lessons about other people everywhere in the world, can lead to a sustainable security system, which can be carried on in coming generations and free them of insecurities faced by us at present.

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I\textsuperscript{ST} PRIZE WINNER, WILFRED SEGOVIA, PHILIPPINES

The Triumph of Reason, Shaping a Democratic Political Culture among Filipino Youth through Debating

Wilfred’s essay explains how the art of debating can help shape democratic culture in the Philippines.
Ist Prize winner, Wilfred Oliver Segovia, Philippines, speaks:

About himself:
In 2004 I graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines with degrees in Management Engineering and Global Politics. During my senior year, I was the Director of the Ateneo Debate Education Program, an organization that teaches debate to secondary and tertiary students all over the Philippines. I was an Asian debating champion, one of the top 10 debaters in the Philippines for three years, and a veteran of several international debating competitions held in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Canada, South Africa and the United Kingdom. I also founded a new student organization devoted to undergraduate business research, the Ateneo Student Business Review. I am currently based in Singapore as an Associate Manager for market research at Procter & Gamble ASEAN/Australia/India where I spearhead development of consumer knowledge in low-income markets.

About the topic:
I first learned about this World Bank initiative from a friend who sent an announcement to our Yahoo group. The nature and scope of the Competition were very impressive and this catalyzed my interest to read further. After going through the proposed theme, it actually dawned upon me that the initiatives we worked on during university, particularly in the Ateneo Debate Society, were worthwhile stories to tell the broader global community.

I was at first deciding between writing a philosophical essay regarding governance in the Philippines and a practical essay based on my real life experience as a university debater. I decided on the latter because not only did we deliver concrete results, but I also hoped our story can inspire others around the world that action through practical solutions was indeed possible. There are countless schools of thought on how to bring about progress and emancipation in the developing world. And I agree that all our efforts must be grounded in great thinking, but there comes a point when we should just get down to business. Ideas are useless without great execution.
About being a winner:
Well, it heightened my sense of pride for what we do in the Ateneo Debate Society. For a small student organization like us to be recognized by the World Bank was indeed heartwarming. I feel more linked to a broader community of friends who share the same dreams and aspirations for their respective countries.
Abstract

The Philippines is suffering from a democratic deficit. Although the system of government can be characterized as essentially democratic, the manner in which the system is used – the political culture - is not. Governance in the Philippines is riddled with corruption, family dynasties, and vested interests. Hence, building a secure future for Philippine democracy requires both reforms at the institutional level and a transformation at the social level. This transformation must be focused on the long-term stakeholders of democracy: the Filipino youth. Any solution to the democratic deficit must take into account both political culture and its effects in shaping the youth.

This essay is divided into three parts. Firstly, it begins with a historical reflection on the events which shaped how governance in the Philippines is carried out today. The insight here is that the Philippines is democratic in form, but not in substance, precisely because of a political culture that is not conducive to an ideal working democracy. Secondly, the essay moves on to extend the notion of security to include “human security”, and in this case, the security of the Filipino youth. Insecurity can come from both tangibles such as poor living conditions and environmental degradation, and intangibles such as poor quality of education. It argues that the current political culture of celebrity politics, family dynasties, and politics riddled with money is another source of insecurity for the youth. If nothing is done to shape the youth’s development, then this culture will surely transfer itself to the next generation through the socialization process. Thirdly, the essay proposes a solution to address the political culture problem by creating avenues for the intelligent public discourse of national issues. It advocates debating as a concrete way for secondary and university students to develop critical thinking skills, social awareness of current issues, and empowerment to become concerned citizens seeking to create a participative government based on reason and discourse. The essay reflects on the link between debating and these objectives coming from the author’s personal experience as a university debater in various national and international tournaments. To concretely address this vision, the Ateneo Debate Education Program was launched as a project of the debating club of the Ateneo de Manila University in 2003. The program is a free
nationwide educational tour that sends university debaters around the country to teach
debate and argumentation to secondary and tertiary students. The essay then continues to
describe the program in detail, including its objectives, sources of funding, and how it
can be reapplied by debating clubs. It also explores ways to link with other debate clubs
overseas. Lastly, a final note is aired on the massive scope of changing the Philippines’
political culture: despite the immense task ahead, a small step in the right direction is
infinitely more desirable than inaction.

I. Truly Democratic?

I was born in a time of turmoil and unrest in the Philippines. In 1982, President
Ferdinand Marcos strengthened his grip on power after nearly a decade of martial law. It
was a time when Filipinos were slowly realizing that Mr Marcos’ dream of a “New
Society”, patterned after the success of our neighbors in Singapore, Korea and Taiwan,
was not coming into fruition. The Philippine Peso was losing more of its value each day
as the government began defaulting on its loans from foreign creditors. It was hard to do
business due to the prevalence of “crony capitalism” – a practice wherein Mr Marcos
structurally redistributed the country’s economic assets to his friends and allies, even
going as far as rewarding virtual monopolies in the sugar and coconut industries to his
supporters.

The dire straits of the Philippines led exiled opposition leader Senator Benigno
“Ninoy” Aquino to return from exile in the United States. In August 1983, as Mr Aquino
disembarked from his plane, he was gun downed on the tarmac of the Manila
International Airport in front of local and foreign journalists.

Mr Aquino’s assassination led to a series of events that culminated in the EDSA
Revolution of 1986, wherein the Marcos government was toppled by a peaceful
revolution predicated on “people power”. For five days in February, a huge mass of
citizens gathered in EDSA, Manila’s main thoroughfare, to prevent Mr Marcos from
sending the Army to crush the uprising led by Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos and Defence
Minister Juan Ponce Enrile. Mssrs Ramos and Enrile supported the claim to the
presidency of Mr Aquino’s widow, Mrs. Corazon Aquino, coming from a snap election
that the opposition claimed Mr Marcos rigged. The Revolution climaxed with Mr
Marcos fleeing to the United States and Mrs Aquino being proclaimed President of the Republic.

It was under the backdrop of the EDSA Revolution that my first memories of Philippine politics emerged. I remember vividly television scenes that showed people gathering at EDSA and preparing to face the Philippine Army.

In 1986, democracy returned to the Philippines. Or did it really?

In 2001, the Filipino people disposed of another president, popular movie actor Joseph Estrada, through another “people power” uprising. This sent alarm bells ringing among observers of Philippine politics around the world. What was surprising about Mr Estrada’s departure from office was not the fact that this was the second time in recent memory for a head of state to be removed forcibly, but by the manner it happened. Mr Estrada, who was also a supporter of Marcos in the 80s, was accused of plunder and the Philippine Senate convened as an impeachment court to rule on the matter. As expected, partisan politics played its dirty head and several weeks into the trial, the impeachment court was at a deadlock on whether or not to consider a new piece of evidence from the prosecution. As the masses of people converged onto the streets, the Vice-President, Mrs Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, supported Mr Estrada’s ouster. The critical point came when the Armed Forces, again acting as a political tiebreaker, transferred its support from Mr Estrada to Mrs Arroyo.

The “second” EDSA Revolution showed the entire world the symptoms that ail Philippine democracy: a political culture that values deity-like popularity over meritocracy, our apparent short-term memory when it comes to political affiliations, the sway of celebrities in politics, family dynasties, an extremely loose party system that encourages constant fence-jumping, and a military eager to interfere in civilian affairs.

Can we say that the Philippines is truly democratic?

Perhaps not, depending on how you look at things.

In the Philippines, democracy is present in form, but not in substance. As a system of government, the Philippines is democratic – there are elections (although not always “free” and “fair), the existence of three co-equal branches of government, and
constitutionally-guaranteed rights and civil liberties. But democracy is more than just a system. It is the way the system is internalized and the manner in which people think and behave. It is a way of life.

In this essay, I reflect on my insight that even if democracy has returned as a system to the Philippines in 1986, it has yet to emerge as a “culture” and as a norm that governs how we conduct our affairs. I contend that it is the political culture that creates the major barriers of governance in the Philippines. It is this political culture that is in danger of being passed on to the next generation of Filipino leaders, today’s youth. It is this political culture that our student organization, the Ateneo Debate Society, has sought to influence among our peers, by advocating secondary and tertiary institutions all over the country to make debating as important as any other classroom subject.

II. Political Culture as Insecurity: The Obstacles of Daily Life for Filipino Youth

“Political culture” refers to the sum of shared norms, beliefs, values, and behaviors that constitute the different ways of how governance is carried out. Understanding a nation’s political culture reveals insights into various issues such as why a particular leader is elected into office, how legislation is carried, what the relationship between government and the private sector is like, the kind of participation citizens have in government, and so on.

Political culture also plays a role in how “security” is conceived by a society. In western liberal democracies, security no longer refers to just the territorial security of the state, the absence of conflict or the threat of conflict, or general law order. The understanding of security extends to the notion of “human security”, the idea that all aspects of human existence is subject to insecurity that prevents us from reaching our full potential. In the case the youth, human security should not just be limited to providing material needs, but more importantly, to also ensuring that there exists an environment wherein intangibles such as education, values, and the ability to think critically and exercise reason over passion or vested interests can flourish.

The political culture of the Philippines is a source of insecurity for the youth. Surely there are several daily obstacles that threaten human security in a developing such as the Philippines: poverty, inadequate healthcare, local terrorism, lack of employment
opportunities and more. But what I believe sets political culture apart is its ubiquity and hidden-ness from daily observation. We cannot measure the evolution of attitudes and beliefs on a daily basis, but across generations. This is because political culture is transmitted to the youth through a process of socialization which a child is not conscious about. Political socialization starts with the family and is extended at school and reinforced throughout a lifetime by influences from media, current leadership, and public opinion. Political culture plays a binding role in three concrete sources of insecurity in the Philippines: celebrity politics, family dynasties, and the economics of politics. Let’s take a brief look into each source of insecurity.

**Celebrity Politics and Electoral Idolatry**

We Filipinos are an idolizing lot. Our history is a history of poverty, hardship and struggle. Any avenue that promises a larger-than-life escape from the drudgery of the everyday will gain wide acceptance and appeal. In colonial times, it was the Catholic Church, with its promise of salvation and everlasting life. Today, it is our celebrity culture that has provided Filipinos with a dream of a better future, and alas, more than our fair share of celebrities in government.

Of course, the presence of celebrities in government is not undesirable unto itself. There have been celebrities who performed well-above the public’s expectations, such as a former movie actor who is now the anti-piracy czar, or an award-winning actress who has revitalized one of the biggest cities in South Luzon. What is disconcerting is when voters elect leaders for the sake of popularity and sheer strength of personality, and not meritocracy. Of course, it can be argued that in a democratic system, popularity is simply a result of one’s merit, but a deeper investigation into the reason why people vote for particular candidates betrays this school of thought. Mr Estrada’s on-screen persona as a defend-the-poor-against-the-rich anti-hero was so strong that it reflected the way people perceived his capacity as a leader in government; yet, Mr Estrada turned out to be just like the rich barons and landowners that he fought against in his movies.

The way we choose our leaders affects us how our leaders govern. If a president feels that he can get away with sheer charisma and charm, then there will be no need for due diligence in policy-making.
Family Dynasties

In the Philippines, government is a family affair. President Arroyo has both a son and a brother-in-law in Congress. In the past Congress, 61% of representatives had a family member somewhere else in government. Indeed, dynasties serve as political in themselves perpetuating a patronage network wherein a family member closer to the top ensures the flow of resources while a family member at the local level helps muster the votes come elections.

Family dynasties are obstacles that affect Filipino’s daily lives because they prevent the rise of more progressive and professional leaders in government. Oftentimes, officials in government take advantage of their tenure to ensure that their families have maximum publicity so that when the time has come that the official cannot run for reelection, it is the wife or brother that takes over. Moreover, when there is little interest beyond making sure that family members can win the next elections, policy-making also suffers. In the past 10 years, as the number of linkages of families in the Legislature increased, the number of laws passed per year dropped from 500 to a paltry 76, even as the budget of Congress has almost tripled.

The Economics of Politics

It is expensive to get into government. Experts estimate that over $53 million is needed to run a credible campaign in an archipelagic country where the minimum daily wage is just below $5. Thus, celebrities who already have name recall with the public are prime candidates for office and are often coveted by political parties to run for office. Because of the high cost of campaigning, there is an incentive for corruption while in office to recoup the lost “investment” for the longest time possible, and the only way to ensure that is through reelection. The main effect of this is the high levels of corruption in government, and hence, less resources that can be used for projects and services that benefit society. The Philippines, unfortunately, is the second most corrupt country in Asia and the billions of pesos lost each year to corruption magnifies the effect of foreign debt servicing, something which takes up almost 1/3 of the annual national budget.
Why are these sources of insecurity, especially for the youth?

Jose Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines, once said that “The youth is the hope of the fatherland.” The youth is subject to the influences of how today’s politics is currently played out by the older generation. In short, political culture matters and this culture will be passed on to the next generation, unless something is done about it.

Soon, it will be my generation blindly electing fools and unqualified people into government.

Soon, my generation will have to face an increasingly oligarchic government wherein power and resources are concentrated within few political clans.

Soon, my generation will be acclimatized to think that it is perfectly acceptable to use public office for private gain.

Soon, history will repeat itself all over again and we will still be where we were twenty years ago during the Marcos dictatorship. Only today, it is not a single tyrant, but a network of tyrants taking advantage of the whole nation.

Enacting change slowly but surely is our everyday challenge.

III. Transforming Political Culture Through Debate

If this is the case, what can we then do to help build a truly democratic political culture?

Most experts in emerging democracies agree that education is a place to start. As people’s education levels increase, they can increasingly think on their own and be more immune to the group-think that perpetuates the idolizing masses. Elections will not work if people blindly choose their leaders. An informed choice that is a result of critical thinking is the prerequisite of productive and participative citizenship.

It is one thing to teach the basics of mathematics, science and language. It is another thing altogether to teach critical thinking, something seriously needed if we are to address the political culture deficit in the system. The activist movement among the young is very strong, but during rallies, what you will often see are out-of-school youth who just don’t have anything better to do. Rarely will you chance upon an intelligent and well-articulated argument from these protestors.
At the Ateneo Debate Society, we believe that the schools should include debating in their curriculum, either directly as part of a class in history, or as a separate student club. Debating has personally enriched my life as a student and as a budding young leader in my university and my community. It has allowed me to meet people whom I have much to learn from and understand schools of thought I would never have encountered if I didn’t join the debating team.

**Personal Beginnings**

I have always been opinionated, even as a child. I remember having my first debate in 7th grade speech class. Our debate was about the use of contraceptives for population control. At a time when my personal opinion favored the use contraceptives, I was asked to defend the opposite side. This was a critical part of my development as an individual. I had to take a position I did not personally believe in and defend myself in front of the whole class. I was first aversive to the idea, but it broadened my thinking by leaps and bounds. By defending the other side, I was obligated to understand the opposing view. For the first time, I was considering two points of view, instead of just mine. I was seeking to understand, before seeking to be understood.

The ability to think, to understand and to argue on both sides of two opposing ideas is a powerful tool. It enabled me think better about the choices I made in my academic, personal and professional life.

**Why Debate?**

I’m sure most high school and college debaters have been asked this question at one point or another, either by their parents, teachers, or peers. At the Ateneo Debate Society, we try to debunk the misconception that debate is a useless, academic activity left to the outspoken and opinionated types.

Debate is not just a mere exchange of opinions between individuals. Arguing with your friend about which movie to watch, or which football team is better is not debating. Debate involves a formal structure, and hence, rules and roles. Debate is an activity in the art of thinking and persuasion. As an art, it helps develop specific skills, and most importantly, very valuable paradigms critical for citizens of any democracy.
Debate helps develop critical thinking skills. Debate should be seen not as an end, but as a means to achieve greater educational goals. A very important goal is developing critical thinking skills and using them to make better decisions. Students would learn to think through ideas, be more inquisitive and learn not to accept things at face value. By building critical thinking skills, we develop more politically mature future voters who scrutinize whatever is said to them by their candidates, and not be swayed by emotional campaign speeches.

Debate improves listening, language, and communication skills. A good idea must be expressed and shared to others. Debate helps train students not just to think, but also to speak out and express their thoughts in a logical, coherent and understandable manner. Part of debating is learning how to listen. An argument can only be refuted if someone has patiently listened and understood that argument.

Debate is a learning process. It helps students approach new subject matter with a proper mindset. Debate involves approaching a topic systematically, researching, formulating and proving arguments with analysis and reviewing the new things learned in the debate. In fact, debate can be used complement learning in various subjects. In science, cloning and other bioethical issues in genetics could be debated. In history, the role of terrorism as a political tool of oppressed minorities is a central debate. Students of economics can talk about the effects of the WTO and the IMF in the economies of developing countries.

Debate fosters issues awareness. At the ADS, we believe that a student shouldn’t just be good in maths, science, or English; but should also be aware of the various social, political and economic issues today. Awareness doesn’t just include knowledge of these issues, but also a capacity to talk about them intelligently – something we believed should be possessed by any citizen of a democratic country.

Debate develops tolerant and open-minded future leaders. At the heart of any democracy lies the ability of its people to discuss and deliberate issues before going through any course of action. Through debating, students become more open to new ideas. Tolerance and open-mindedness are extremely important because it creates the paradigm that conflicts can be solved peacefully without resorting to violence.


Understanding Who we are and What we can do by Understanding the World.

When I went to university, I had the opportunity to represent the country in several debating tournaments around the world. I was able to travel to Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, the UK, South Africa, and Canada. We were able to debate topics about the war in Iraq, the United Nations, free trade, Islamic fundamentalism, genetic engineering, gay marriage and other gay rights, censorship, the legalization of drugs, democracy, sustainable development, debt relief, feminism, among others. Perhaps the greatest achievement of my debating career was when we won the Asian Championships in Malaysia, on the role of American foreign policy in Southeast Asia. My experience in debating provided with two things: the satisfaction of victory after a hard-fought battle, and most importantly, broadening my perspective in issues that affect everyday life.

The ability to think critically, the thrill of competition, and the capacity to articulately discuss current issues were some things we wanted to impart to our peers in the Philippines. Instead of simply being a debating team that competes, we wanted to reach out to the community and teach debate.

The Ateneo Debate Education Program

When I reached my final year in university, I volunteered to lead this project. In 2003, we christened the Ateneo Debate Education Program, a nationwide educational tour wherein accomplished ADS debaters travel all over the country to teach debate and argumentation to students in the secondary and tertiary levels through seminars, workshops, and local tournaments. As the director of the program, we called out three objectives at the start of the year:

1. **Build a culture of critical thinking**
   An important aspect of any education is for students to not just master the basics of the sciences, mathematics, or history. A crucial aspect in the development of Philippine democracy should include the ability to think critically, free from subjective bias or prejudice, about everyday political, economic, and social issues.

2. **Integrate issue awareness with debate education**
Debate cannot be taught without discussing current issues. At the same time, current issues cannot be advocated without debate and critical discourse in the public sphere. Debate not only develops critical thinking and communication skills, but also social awareness of various issues in our country and in the world.

3. **Empower youth leadership and responsible citizenship**

The ADEP calls upon its participants to be leaders in their own communities and practice responsible citizenship – a Filipino who is not just a mere spectator in current events, but a key player in shaping the necessary institutions instrumental to the success of democracy.

**About the Program**

The elements of the ADEP, in brief:

- **Targets both high school and college debaters** - The ADEP provides custom-designed workshops and seminars, depending on the target audience. Outside of Manila, seminars are usually co-organized with a local university with the ADEP sending speakers and trainers.

- **It’s completely FREE!** – The costs of the seminar, including transportation costs, and cost of materials come absolutely free. This was accomplished through a network of sponsors both in government and in business.

- **A comprehensive Debate Kit** – includes all materials necessary for the development of new debaters. This includes a training manual, rules of various competitions, Powerpoint presentations, sample debate videos and issues briefs of general topics.

- **Involving more schools in national tournaments** – by being a partner of the ADEP, a debating club is exposed to the growing network of contacts in the Philippine debating community. We actively encourage new debaters to join national tournaments to apply what they have learned and improve their debating skills.

**What We Have Accomplished and How it can be Reaapplied**
The resources to make it free and accessible

Since we wanted to make debate as accessible as possible, we decided to bear all of the costs of the program and provide it completely free. To gain the necessary resources for the program, we went on a massive fundraising effort during the summer before the school year. In approaching potential sponsors, we targeted organizations which had similar interests. We didn’t want to appear like students begging for money, but a competent organization with a clear vision and a clear means to achieve that vision. By the end of our campaign, we made agreements with two of our major sponsors – a German foundation advocating civil rights in the Philippines, and the country’s largest telecommunications company which had long been active as a sponsor in non-profit educational projects.

What we learned from this experience is that fundraising shouldn’t be seen as a major obstacle. Most students believe that since they are still in school, the rest of the world won’t take them seriously. We believed otherwise. We had a clear direction. We articulated what we wanted to achieve. We had a great idea for a project that was relevant to the needs of the larger society. From thereon, sponsors recognized this potential and provided commensurate support.

Reaching out all over the country

By the end of the school year in 2004, the program reached over 30 high schools and universities all over the country and successfully mentored and coached over 1,000 budding debaters. Accomplished members of the Ateneo Debate Society were more than willing to reach out and share their knowledge with people who are also interested in making a difference by first understanding the affairs of the nation. In the places where we have taught debate, we encouraged them to reapply our model. We recognized that we cannot achieve our objectives on our own. We helped local schools develop their debate education programs so they can “pay it forward”. If we can reach 30 schools in a year and each of these schools reach 30 more, then we can surely achieve so much more.

Branching out to new audiences
In 2003, we branched out to new audiences. In the middle of the year, we provided a weekend workshop for public high schools in the Zambales province. This is something which we have never done before and I feel personally proud of accomplishing this. In the past, debate education in the high school level has been confined to private schools in Manila. In reaching public schools, we can bring our message to wider segment of society. The community hall was packed as more than a hundred students, some as young as 12, joined the workshop. This event meant a lot to them. It was the first time they were being taught how to debate and they treated us graciously during our stay there. They listened to every word we said and studiously took notes. Indeed, it was one of the most rewarding times of my life. The response was so good that on the following day, we were asked to give a special seminar on basic debating skills to the town’s local government officials!

**Gaining Social Recognition and Leaving a Legacy**

The ADEP has been recognized as an Outstanding Project by the Ateneo de Manila University’s annual student organization awards and has earned for the ADS a place in the list of the Ten Accomplished Youth Organizations in the Philippines, a search sponsored by the National Youth Commission and the Office of the President. More importantly, we were able to set up a project within the ADS that is still being carried out until today.

**Musings on the Future: Debate in an Age of Globalization**

I believe that the ADEP is a project that can apply to other countries, and trends show that this is clearly the case. Debating at the collegiate level in Europe and America is vibrant and active. In Asia, schools such as the National University of Singapore, Multimedia University and University of Malaya in Malaysia, Mahidol University and Chulalongkorn University in Thailand actively seek to reach out and teach debate. The key challenge now is to link these movements together so we can learn from each other. Debating at the college level has been a global endeavor, with the World Universities Debating Championship, the largest student competition in the world, now on its 25th year.
A Final Word

I started this essay by reflecting on what is wrong with democracy in the Philippines today. I argued that it is our political culture that creates insecurity among the youth, and it is only when we can have a citizenry that can think critically on its own, use reason instead of passion or idolatry to make voting and public policy decisions, and can understand the bigger picture, can we truly claim to be maturing as a democracy. A political culture is something that cannot be changed easily, but it is infinitely better to start with something small, take incremental steps, and sustain this progress over time than to do nothing at all. By initiating the Ateneo Debate Education Program, we hope we have contributed in making a step in the right direction for Philippine democracy.

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3rd PRIZE WINNER, LHOTSE QUINTANILLA, BOLIVIA

"MINKA" - building a secure future

Lhotse looks for solutions to the problem of youth unemployment and school to work transition in the ancestral MINKA concept.
3rd Prize winner, Lhotse Quintanilla, Bolivia, speaks:

About herself:
I am a student of business administration at Universidad Privada Boliviana in La Paz. One of my passions is sport – I represent my university in sport tournaments and I like taking part in competitions.

About the topic:
One day, I was walking around at my university and I saw the World Bank Essay Competition leaflet. I read it, but I was not planning to participate. While I was walking in the street, I saw poverty, alcoholism, racism, disorder and drugs. In my house, my sister was talking about finding a job for the holidays. My parents told her: “Professionals are working as waiters, cleaners and sellers, so if you don’t have a professional title you won’t even find one of those jobs”. The same week the president of Bolivia appeared on a television show in which people were calling to ask questions directly to him. I only saw four questions; three of them were related to unemployment. Analyzing it, I found out that unemployment was a root problem; if someone solves it, many other problems will be solved (like poverty, alcoholism, social conflicts).
At that moment, I decided to participate and sent my essay.

About being a winner:
Being a winner gave me hope, and I decided to work hard so that my project could be implemented in my country. When I arrived back to my country, many people were waiting for me at the airport. My country was passing through difficult moments, so I gave them the only “good news”. I was on TV, and I started to have meetings with people who wanted to read my essay and help me. Now, I am working with my university so I can implement my project there. Being one of the winners of the essay competition has changed my life. Now, I have a different vision of my future, I want to help my country with my ideas. I just want to thank the World Bank for giving me this opportunity to help my country. I thank all the other finalists, juries and the people I met at the conference for
giving me hope and for showing me that many people are working hard to make our world a better place to live in.
Summary in English:

The presented essay is divided in 6 parts: in the first one, some situations are shown that motivated me to carry out the work; I talk about some problems I have overcome and others that are still challenging me. In the second part, the current and concrete situation of young people of my country will be presented - their aspirations and desires, and the MINKA concept will be introduced, suggesting that the solution to build a better future would be: those that we have the opportunity to study help the ones that do not have the same luck.

In the third part, I describe the ancestral concept of MINKA - how the indigenous residents of my country care about each other and they help the community without asking for any kind of retribution. What is emphasized, is the concept of “community work.”

The fourth part explains how the Project MINKA outlines the self-generation of permanent productive employment, through the implementation of programs of managerial development with competitive vision, describing the role that students, universities, government, financial institutions of micro credit and training institutions play.

The project consists in gathering future professionals of different areas, so that in the moment to prepare the business plan, with professors’ support, managers and experts in the subject work jointly on the planning, with the purpose of "creating a company", and each person takes responsibility of a specific part of the project.

Later on, with the support of the government and financial institutions, companies are founded. Later on they hire young people and, with support of training institutions, prepare for the beginning of operations.
In the fifth part, I try to show the beneficiaries of this project, and the advantages that each of them obtain. Finally, I make a call to make this dream reality. Motivating "team work" to build a secure future.
Original essay in Spanish:

“Minka” Construyendo Un Futuro Mejor

Resumen:

El ensayo presentado se divide en 6 partes: en la Primera, se muestran algunas situaciones que me motivaron a realizar el trabajo, relato algunos problemas que me tocó enfrentar y otros que aun continúan desafiándome. En la Segunda, la situación actual y concreta de jóvenes de mi país, sus aspiraciones y deseos, además de hacer una introducción al concepto MINKA, insinuando que la solución para construir un futuro mejor, se dará cuando aquellos que tenemos la oportunidad de estudiar y capacitarnos, ayudemos a nuestros compañeros que no tienen la misma suerte.

En la tercera parte, describo la conducta ancestral MINKA, cómo los indígenas pobladores de los andes se preocupaban unos de otros y se ayudaban entre sí. Recalcando el concepto de “Trabajo en Equipo”.

La cuarta parte explica como el Proyecto MINKA plantea la autogeneración de empleo productivo permanente, a través de la implementación de programas de desarrollo empresarial con visión competitiva, describiendo el papel preponderante que juegan los jóvenes estudiantes, las universidades, el gobierno, las instituciones financieras de micro crédito y las instituciones de reconversión laboral.

El proyecto en sí, consiste en reunir a futuros profesionales de diferentes áreas, para que en el momento de preparar la Tesis, Proyecto de Grado ó Trabajo Dirigido, con apoyo de catedráticos, empresarios y expertos en el rubro, trabajen conjuntamente en la planificación, con el propósito de “crear de una empresa”, desde sus especialidades se enfoquen en un mismo objetivo y cada uno se encargue de una parte específica del mismo.
Posteriormente, con el apoyo del Gobierno e instituciones financieras, las empresas son fundadas, momento en el que contratan a jóvenes y con apoyo de Instituciones de Reconversión Laboral se los capacita, preparándolos para el inicio de operaciones.

En la quinta parte se muestran los beneficiarios de este proyecto, y las ventajas que obtiene cada uno de ellos. Finalmente, invito para que todos ayudemos a convertir este sueño en realidad. Motivándolos a “trabajar en equipo” para construir un futuro más seguro.

“MINKA” PARA CONSTRUIR UN FUTURO MAS SEGURO

1. DESEMPLEO, EL PROBLEMA DE LOS JOVENES PROFESIONALES

Hacen dos años, cuando mis compañeros y yo estábamos a pocos días de graduarnos del colegio, fue que comenzaron aparecer muchas interrogantes, era un momento trascendental, nos preguntábamos que haríamos después del egreso, nos tocaba respondernos si ¿Continuariámos estudiando o comenzaríamos a trabajar?

Si la opción elegida era trabajar, teníamos pocas alternativas, entre ellas: trabajar de meseros, o en alguna empresa de limpieza u oficio parecido. Analizando a fondo el tema, llegamos a la conclusión de que todos aspirábamos algo mejor, y la respuesta unánime fue ¡continuar estudiando!.

Teníamos vocaciones diferentes así que comenzamos a preguntarnos ¿Qué estudiar y Dónde hacerlo?, algunos optaron por empleo “seguro”, así que estudiarián en la Escuela Normal de Maestro, otros se incorporarían a las fuerzas armadas y los demás elegirían entre medicina, ingenierías, etc. Pero en mi caso, en vista de que deseo ser dueña de una empresa, me decidí por Administración de Empresas.

Mis compañeros me decían: “¿Que te hace pensar que los administradores de empresas son dueños de las mismas?, la mayoría solo llegan a ser simples empleados y, si tienen mucha suerte, llegan a ocupar algún puesto jerárquico, los propietarios de las empresas
son personas que tienen mucho dinero. De todas maneras, yo estaba segura de tener toda la capacidad para crear una empresa, así que la decisión ya estaba tomada.

Empecé a buscar entre la diversidad de universidades de Bolivia, todas tenían propuestas similares, pero encontré una que ofertaba algo diferente, brindaba “trabajo al graduarse”, esto me pareció muy alentador e importante. Así que únicamente quedaba por solucionar: ¿Cómo pagarla? Felizmente, daba oportunidades para la obtención de becas, así que del grupo que postulamos, algunos salimos beneficiados y logramos el ingreso.

Algunos de mis compañeros en la universidad son hijos de empresarios, y pueden poner en práctica lo que aprendemos. Otros comienzan sus propios negocios. Pero, como no todos tenemos esta posibilidad de pedir a papá que financie uno de nuestros proyectos, nos preguntamos, ¿en que trabajaremos al graduarnos?, la respuesta no es fácil, de todas formas, yo sigo aspirando algún día tener mi empresa, únicamente debo hallar la forma de financiarla. Poniendo en debate este problema, la mayoría me dice: “trabaja y empieza a ahorrar”, pero en todo caso, mi respuesta es: “Pensar y capacitarme”. Fue entonces que me propuse generar una solución.

2. ¿QUÉ PODEMOS HACER LOS JOVENES?

La juventud15 es casi un tercio de la población total boliviana16, pero lamentablemente en promedio, tiene muy pocos años de escolaridad, la media llega al séptimo curso (primaria superior). Comparando con el año1992 ha mejorado, pero todavía es un problema que nos frena para poder ayudar al país17.

Al revisar algunas encuestas, muestran que para los jóvenes: estudiar, ser profesional, superarse y ser responsables no son únicamente objetivos personales, sino que

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15 Se considera juventud a preadolescentes, adolescentes y jóvenes.
16 Ver Cuadro 1
17 Ver Cuadro 2
consideramos éstos como obligaciones con nuestro país, para luego trabajarlo, defenderlo, apoyarlo y quererlo, cambiando y mejorando todo lo que este mal\textsuperscript{18}. 

De todas maneras, la gran mayoría de jóvenes aspiramos tener un título profesional o técnico, aunque solo una mínima parte logra obtenerlo\textsuperscript{19}. Muchos se ven impedidos de ser profesionales porque deben contribuir financieramente con sus familias. Lo peor es que posiblemente no encuentren trabajo o la paga sea poca, ya que se enfrentan a un mercado laboral en el que prefieren gente con experiencia y no requiera de capacitación\textsuperscript{20}. Por esto, para ser más competitivos, muchos están optando por la nueva tecnología informática y el conocimiento de idiomas extranjeros, además de otro tipo de oficios de corto aprendizaje\textsuperscript{21}.

Por todo lo anterior, llego a la conclusión de que Bolivia a es un país subdesarrollado y pobre, pero en el que las personas con ganas de triunfar siempre buscan la manera de capacitarse y salir adelante, lamentablemente a pesar de este esfuerzo, no consiguen trabajo, es algo que escapa de sus manos y se ven derrotados. Por esta razón considero que, el desempleo es el mayor de los problemas que enfrentan los jóvenes. Solucionándolo, es posible que la situación del país mejore de gran manera y se entre a una nueva era de industrialización y exportación.

Los jóvenes que tenemos la oportunidad de estudiar y capacitarnos debemos ser quienes ayudemos a nuestros compañeros que no tienen esa suerte. Debemos aplicar conductas ancestrales como el MINKA y muchos otros que nos enseñan a trabajar en equipo y ayudarnos entre nosotros.

3. UNA CONDUCTA ANCESTRAL

Las culturas ancestrales como la incaica, tenían algunas costumbres que para muchas personas de nuestra época son difíciles de entender, ya que son contrarias al modo de

\textsuperscript{18} Ver Cuadro 3  
\textsuperscript{19} Ver Cuadro 4  
\textsuperscript{20} Ver Cuadro 5  
\textsuperscript{21} Ver Cuadro 6
pensar del hombre individualista y moderno. Las conductas ancestrales como ayni, minka, phayna, chuqu, umaraqa, jayna, kayani, mita y otras, plantean trabajo comunitario y ayuda a los que lo necesitan.

Uno de los ejemplos es el MINKA. Esta costumbre se da por ejemplo cuando en una comunidad indígena muere un hombre, dejando viuda a su esposa y huérfanos a sus hijos. En esta situación toda la comunidad se reúne y construyen una casa para la viuda y sus hijos. Pero ellos no le piden ninguna retribución a cambio. Los de la comunidad saben que si uno de ellos muere, la comunidad también ayudará a sus esposas y a sus hijos.

Lo importante del MINKA es EL TRABAJO EN EQUIPO, que implica: crear una solución que brinde trabajo a la mayoría de jóvenes bolivianos, algo que no es tan fácil, ya que esto incluye a jóvenes con diversos niveles de educación, profesionales, estudiante universitarios, técnicos y no capacitados. El MINKA me permite plantear una solución que beneficie no solamente a los jóvenes, si no también a muchos más involucrados.

“MINKA” LA SOLUCIÓN CONCRETA POR APLICAR

El proyecto MINKA plantea la autogeneración de empleo productivo permanente a través de la implementación de programas de desarrollo empresarial con visión competitiva. Esto quiere decir:

- Autogeneración de empleo: Los jóvenes deben ser los que creen sus propias empresas, con la mentalidad de emplear a otros jóvenes con diferentes características.
- Productivo: Estas compañías se enfocan preferentemente en crear productos de alta calidad y no en comercializar materia prima o brindar servicios.
- Permanente con visión competitiva: No deben ser transitorias, deben ser lo suficientemente competitivas para permanecer y consolidarse en el mercado.

a. CAMBIO DE ACTITUD, TAREA DE TODOS
Nuestra educación como jóvenes, debe estar enfocada más en CAMBIO DE ACTITUD, QUE EN LA ACUMULACIÓN DE CONOCIMIENTOS. Debemos mentalizarnos que obtenemos conocimientos para crear empresas y SER GENERADORES DE EMPLEO. Las capacidades adquiridas deben permitirnos ver las cosas “EN GRANDE”, debemos soñar con grandes corporaciones multinacionales, aunque debamos comenzar con una microempresa e ir creciendo.

Por esta razón, se deben cambiar algunas modalidades de graduación que son poco prácticas y que no apoyan a esta actitud. En este momento las modalidades de graduación que reconoce el Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia son las siguientes: a) Tesis; b) Proyecto de Grado; c) Examen de Grado; d) Trabajo Dirigido; e) Graduación por excelencia; f) Práctica en empresas y g) Monografía. Algo sorprendente es que solamente un porcentaje mínimo de Tesis, Proyectos de Grado y Trabajos Dirigidos son puestos en práctica. Otros como los Exámenes de Grado y las Monografías carecen de alguna aplicación. El MINKA propone aplicar solo las Tesis (Prácticas), Proyectos de Grado y Trabajos Dirigidos, eliminando así las modalidades de graduación “poco prácticas”.

b. EL PAPEL DE LAS UNIVERSIDADES Y SUS ESTUDIANTES

Las universidades deben dar las siguientes oportunidades a sus alumnos a punto de graduarse:

- Que el alumno pueda proponer un proyecto práctico (Alumnos Creadores), basado en una Tesis o Proyecto de Grado. En este trabajo debe detallar la creación de una empresa o un producto.
- Otra opción para los estudiantes es, unirse a un proyecto (Alumnos Fortificadores), éstos tendrán que realizar algo parecido al “Trabajo Dirigido”, y se encargan de

22 Según la Ley 1585 de 12 de Agosto de 1994, (Art. 63)
aspectos más específicos, y son asesorados por algún catedrático (La universidad debe garantizar esta ayuda).

Por ejemplo: Una alumno creador propone la siguiente tesis en Administración de Empresas:
El proyecto consiste en la “producción de mochilas”. Los alumnos fortificadores, que pueden ser de otras carreras, podrían realizar los siguientes trabajos dirigidos:

Ingeniero Industrial: “Producción de telas especiales para mochilas”
Licenciado en Marketing: “Introducción de mochilas en el mercado boliviano”,
Ingeniero Químico “Tintes eficientes en la coloración de mochilas”
Ingeniero de Sistemas “Programa para el control de almacenes y distribución de mochilas”
Ingeniero Electrónico “Obtención y Mantenimiento de maquinaria para la producción de mochilas”
Licenciado Psicología “Reclutamiento, Selección y Capacitación de recursos humanos para una fábrica de mochilas”

Y también otros campos del quehacer universitario, el reto es “Trabajar Juntos”. Entonces los alumnos se reúnen y comienzan a trabajar como empresa, se dividen las tareas de acuerdo a sus campos y ponen en práctica todos los estudios realizados. Tomando en cuenta la falta de experiencia, también en este proceso se debe tener el apoyo de catedráticos, empresarios o expertos en el rubro. Todo esto para llegar al momento que todo este listo para fundar la empresa formalmente.

Todo este trabajo tendrá como resultado una flamante empresa, que tendrá administradores, abogados, egresados en sistemas, en psicología, en marketing, en organización y métodos, en recursos humanos, etc., todos con el más profundo deseo de sacar el proyecto adelante.
c. **EL PAPEL DEL GOBIERNO**

El gobierno apoya este proyecto dotando de facilidades a esta empresa. Algunos municipios en el país ya brindan facilidades como terrenos, reducción de impuestos, asesorías, pasantías para egresados, etc.

d. **EL PAPEL DE LAS INSTITUCIONES FINANCIERAS DE MICRO CRÉDITO**

En este momento es requerida la ayuda de las instituciones financieras de micro crédito, lo importante es que éstas adjudicarán créditos sobre proyectos rentables y viables, de tal forma que aseguran la recuperación de sus créditos y cuentan con el compromiso serio de pago.
e. EL PAPEL DE LOS INSTITUTOS DE RECONVERSIÓN LABORAL, CAPACITACIÓN Y JÓVENES NO CAPACITADOS

Cuando todos los pasos anteriores se han logrado, es momento de contratar a los técnicos y jóvenes no capacitados, implementando el sistema estudiado en el proyecto. Estos jóvenes tienen la oportunidad de obtener su primer trabajo además de ser capacitados. El papel del SAT (Servicio de Asistencia Técnica), FOMO (Formación de Mano de Obra), INFOCAL (Instituto de formación y capacitación Laboral) y PROCAL (Programa de Capacitación Laboral), es fundamental en la reconversión y formación de los jóvenes que no tiene formación académica, pero que su mano de obra es importante.

4. LOS BENEFICIOS

- EL FUTURO PROFESIONAL realizará su egreso practicando, viendo como se va a llevando a cabo su proyecto y siendo propietario de la empresa que lo acoge.
- EL PROFESOR GUÍA dirigirá a sus alumnos brindando su experiencia y haciéndola práctica, con alumnos motivados y seguros de colaborar en el éxito de la empresa.
- LAS UNIVERSIDADES se prestigiarán al colaborar a sus alumnos y con la sociedad, cumpliendo con la promesa de que sus egresados tengan empleo.
- LOS DESEMPLEADOS NO CAPACITADOS podrá obtener empleo permanente y capacitación.
- INSTITUTOS DE CAPACITACIÓN podrán realizar la reconversión y masificar la capacitación masiva de obreros.
- INSTITUCIONES FINANCIERAS adjudicaran créditos sobre proyectos rentables y viables, de tal forma que aseguran la recuperación de sus créditos y el compromiso serio de pago.
- EMPRESA PRIVADA, contará insumos de calidad, a precios más competitivos, con ventajas de localización, transporte etc.
• EL GOBIERNO MUNICIPAL, podrá apoyar a su propia ley de promoción y poner en funcionamiento la zona industrial.

Requerimientos necesarios:
• Aceptación y compromiso de autoridades Universitarias para que las tesis y los trabajos dirigidos sean bajo este esquema.
• Autorización para inicio de investigación a detalle.
• Preaceptación de las entidades financieras y su ayuda.
• Preinversión especializada con apoyo de universidades y profesionales capaces.
• Inversión mínima en tiempo y en equipos básicos,

No solo creo en esta idea sino que estoy dispuesta a poner en práctica el proyecto, si todos los requerimientos necesarios son implementados.

5. TODO PUEDE CAMBIAR

Al terminar este ensayo sigo imaginando como sería mi país si pudiera implementarlo. Si nos esforzamos de manera conjunta, existen soluciones que una sola persona no puede lograr. En este trabajo en equipo, debemos participar todos, decidirnos a ser triunfadores y proponernos lograr un país desarrollado y próspero. La honestidad y la confianza entre nosotros son valores que debemos comenzar a cultivar y fortalecer, trabajar juntos, vencer las diferencias y adversidades que se presenten, así nos encaminaremos hacia un mañana mejor.

CUADROS

CUADRO 1 Composición de la población de Bolivia, según grupos generacionales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grupo Generacional</th>
<th>Tramos de edad</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niños</td>
<td>0 a 9 años</td>
<td>2.171.304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preadolescentes</td>
<td>10 a 12 años</td>
<td>625.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CUADRO 2 Promedio de años de estudio
Población de 19 años y más, por sexo según área geográfica, censos de 1992 y 2001 (en años promedio de estudio).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ÁREA GEOGRÁFICA</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Hombres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>4,37</td>
<td>4,97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Área Urbana</td>
<td>5,29</td>
<td>5,79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Área Rural</td>
<td>3,05</td>
<td>3,90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fuente: Instituto Nacional de Estadística

Cuadro 3 Obligaciones de los jóvenes con el país y la sociedad.
Porcentaje de la población adolescente y joven, por obligaciones que creen tienen los jóvenes para con el país y la sociedad, según grupo de edad. Cada uno de las celdas representa un porcentaje sobre el total, es decir, cada celda es independiente.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categoría de Análisis</th>
<th>Estudiar, ser profesionales, superarse, ser responsables</th>
<th>Trabajar</th>
<th>Defender al país, quererlo, apoyar a cambiar lo malo</th>
<th>Cumplir leyes, ser honestos, evitar drogas y violencia</th>
<th>Respetar a los mayores y a los demás</th>
<th>Apoyar a su comunidad o vecindad</th>
<th>Colaborar con los más pobres y necesitados</th>
<th>Hacer el servicio militar (hombres)</th>
<th>Proteger el patrimonio del Estado</th>
<th>Votar en las elecciones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preadolescentes</td>
<td>66,0</td>
<td>26,7</td>
<td>15,2</td>
<td>10,3</td>
<td>17,5</td>
<td>7,6</td>
<td>4,8</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>2,9</td>
<td>1,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescentes</td>
<td>72,2</td>
<td>30,6</td>
<td>19,5</td>
<td>15,5</td>
<td>16,1</td>
<td>8,7</td>
<td>8,3</td>
<td>6,5</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>3,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jóvenes</td>
<td>65,2</td>
<td>40,5</td>
<td>23,0</td>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>11,9</td>
<td>10,4</td>
<td>7,6</td>
<td>8,1</td>
<td>6,3</td>
<td>5,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>67,8</td>
<td>32,6</td>
<td>19,2</td>
<td>14,8</td>
<td>15,2</td>
<td>8,9</td>
<td>6,9</td>
<td>5,9</td>
<td>4,8</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fuente: Encuesta de Juventudes en Bolivia 2003, PSRN - GTZ
Cuadro 4  Aspiración por tener título profesional o técnico
Distribución porcentual de la población adolescente y joven, discriminado por: la que ya tiene, la que desea tener y la que no desea tener título profesional o técnico, según grupo de edad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categoría de Análisis</th>
<th>Ya Tiene</th>
<th>Si</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preadolescentes</td>
<td>0,2</td>
<td>99,3</td>
<td>0,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescentes</td>
<td>0,7</td>
<td>98,9</td>
<td>0,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jóvenes</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>95,5</td>
<td>1,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>97,9</td>
<td>0,8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fuente: Encuesta de Juventudes en Bolivia 2003, PSRN - GTZ

Cuadro 5  Percepciones sobre el trabajo de los jóvenes
Porcentaje de la población adolescente y joven, por afirmaciones que se les plantea sobre el trabajo de los jóvenes y manifiesta su acuerdo con éstas, según grupo de edad. Cada una de las celdas representa un porcentaje sobre el total, es decir, cada celda es independiente.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categoría de Análisis</th>
<th>A los jóvenes se les paga poco por su trabajo</th>
<th>No hay oportunidades de trabajo para los jóvenes</th>
<th>No contratan a los jóvenes prefieren gente con experiencia</th>
<th>No se da trabajos interesantes a los jóvenes</th>
<th>No se capacita a los jóvenes para que tengan buenos trabajos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preadolescentes</td>
<td>72,4</td>
<td>64,8</td>
<td>75,3</td>
<td>65,0</td>
<td>64,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescentes</td>
<td>78,1</td>
<td>68,8</td>
<td>83,9</td>
<td>73,9</td>
<td>68,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jóvenes</td>
<td>87,8</td>
<td>77,8</td>
<td>87,0</td>
<td>78,6</td>
<td>75,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>79,4</td>
<td>70,5</td>
<td>82,1</td>
<td>72,5</td>
<td>69,6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fuente: Encuesta de Juventudes en Bolivia 2003, PSRN - GTZ

Cuadro 6  Estudios técnicos o complementarios a su educación
Porcentaje de la población adolescente y joven, por estudios técnicos o complementarios a su educación realizados o no realizados, según grupo de edad. Cada una de las celdas representa un porcentaje sobre el total, es decir, cada celda es independiente.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categoría de Análisis</th>
<th>Ninguno</th>
<th>Computación (hardware y software)</th>
<th>Ingles u otro idioma extranjero</th>
<th>Oficios Técnicos</th>
<th>Oficios de Oficina</th>
<th>Otros</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preadolescentes</td>
<td>90,7</td>
<td>5,7</td>
<td>2,2</td>
<td>0,1</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>1,4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adolescentes</td>
<td>78,1</td>
<td>13,9</td>
<td>4,6</td>
<td>3,9</td>
<td>4,4</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jóvenes</td>
<td>58,0</td>
<td>22,1</td>
<td>4,7</td>
<td>12,1</td>
<td>5,7</td>
<td>1,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fuente: Encuesta de Juventudes en Bolivia 2003, PSRN – GTZ²³

²³ PSRN: Proyecto Salud Reproductiva Nacional
GTZ: Cooperación Técnica Alemana
4th PRIZE WINNER, ESTHER NG, SINGAPORE

Esther’s essay discusses the detrimental effect of patents on the development of medicine and disease prevention and treatment.
4th Prize winner, Esther Ng, Singapore, speaks:

About herself:
I am a student at the National University of Singapore. I grew up in Singapore and I was mostly educated locally. Although I am studying medicine, I also maintain keen interest in current affairs of the world.

About the topic:
I found out about the Essay Competition through the internet and I am extremely glad that I took part in it.

About being a winner:
Through meeting the other finalists, I have gained a much broader view of life in general, as well as the cultures of other countries. I would encourage other youth to take part in this competition as it has been an enriching experience for me.
INTRODUCTION

As we approached the cot, I thought the sick child had left her doll on the bed and made a dash for the toilet to escape the medical students. Upon hearing the tutor bark, “Right, do a musculoskeletal exam”, there was a strange sense of revulsion as we realized that this cadaverous, arched-back form with bizarrely contorted limbs was a sick child.

The figure did not utter a sound as we tapped and prodded the twig-like legs, rigid from spastic quadriplegia. “CP”, muttered one of my friends. Cerebral Palsy, a disease associated paralysis and mental retardation, affects 1 in 500 people. As yet, there is no known cure for it and the underlying causes are poorly understood.

After the ward round, I made my way to the biomedical laboratory at which I was doing a rotation. The laboratory staff were chatting as they set up the newly-purchased Hybaid Polymerase Chain Reaction machine.

“Oh, that vial of fluorescent conjugated dye we bought the other time? We couldn’t find the journal paper to check if it works. $15 000…and it doesn’t even produce half a dot, awful isn’t it?” said the research assistant, jabbing at the buttons.

I thought about it as I put on my labcoat. $15 000 is not considered a great deal in terms of biomedical research. Every year a single laboratory wastes many times that amount in terms of useless equipment bought just to use up the grant by the deadline, patenting expenditure, antibodies bought which do not work, erroneous procedures etc. I wondered what improvements in healthcare might have occurred if such money been put into better use. Could we perhaps have isolated another neonatal brain protein to help us understand the aetiology of Cerebral Palsy? Could we have provided polio vaccines for another 1000 African children?
To improve healthcare in any part of the world, there are 2 broad approaches – one is the development of better technology through research, the other is an improvement in the implementation and distribution of these technologies to those in need. These two aims will be dealt with separately in my essay.

**RESEARCH**

An essay on the problems encountered in research seems consigned to the few who isolate themselves in ivory towers. In reality, it is estimated that biotechnology is one of the world’s fastest growing industries with global demand for biotechnology-based products and services expected to reach $50 billion by 2005.²

Improvement of healthcare infrastructure is limited in its ability to raise living standards. For long term advances, it is imperative that new ideas be injected into the system. Research may save many times its cost in the long run by offering cheaper and better solutions to healthcare problems. This section aims to highlight and offer suggestions to current problems in biomedical research.

1. **Intellectual Property Protection**

In the context of biomedical sciences, patents can raise several issues which can be divided into 2 categories. The first is the impact of these patents on scientific development and the second is the impact of these patents on society.

1.1 *Effects of patents on scientific development.*

Patents can impede the development of diagnostics and therapeutics by third parties because of the costs associated with using patented research data. Patents of partial and uncharacterized cDNA sequences will reward those who make routine discoveries but penalize those who determine biological function or application, which are more difficult to elucidate and have a more direct contribution to the final product. In fact, US Bioethics
Professor Jon Merz testified before congress that twice when he performed surveys of laboratory physicians, about one quarter responded that they abandoned research because of gene patents.³

Patenting organisms and their DNA promotes the concept that life is a commodity to be exploited. Even more abhorrent yet is the First World patenting of Third World resources, eg. genes of indigenous people.⁴ This lowers the standing of biomedical research in the eyes of the public, who would understandably be less willing to offer financial support.

Patenting is expensive and litigations are often bound up in red tape. Patent protection in Europe alone can run to over £30,000 for a single invention.⁵ Because applications remain secret until granted, companies may work on developing a product only to find that new patents have been granted, with possible infringement penalties.

On the flipside, patents provide the incentive required for further scientific development. They accelerate research and development by attracting private investment. In 1994, the private sector contributed 59% of US research expenditure, whereas the federal government and non-profits, contributed 36% and 5%, respectively.⁶

1.2 Effects of patents on society

In supplying the incentive for biomedical innovation, patents aid in accelerating the development of useful products. However, they may also augment the cost of these products. The Myriad company, which holds patents on BRCA 1 & 2, genes connected with breast cancer, prevented the University of Pennsylvania from using a test for these genes, which was substantially cheaper than the company’s own screening procedure.⁷ Furthermore, in the haste to hurry an innovation in order to patent it, safety corners may be cut. In one study done on US research, out of 691 cases of ‘serious, adverse effects’ in trials, 652 were reported to the National Institute of Health weeks to months late.⁸
How can we modify the patent process to maximize the benefits and minimize the disadvantages?

1.3 Suggestions

Greater governmental monitoring of the biomedical industry is needed, especially in the private sector profit organizations. Stiffer penalties must be introduced for unsafe practices and ethical violations. However, the formulation of monitoring framework must be done in collaboration with scientists, and will be discussed later.

In order to alleviate the usage restrictions created by patents, exemption systems should be fully utilized. Most patent systems have some form of exemption to enable research to be carried out on a patented invention provided it is not intended to produce commercial benefit, so as to ensure that innovative research is not stifled. This should be given a statutory basis and should be extended for DNA sequences. To be fair, monitoring should also be stepped up to ensure that this is not exploited to create commercial products which may disadvantage the patent holder.

In addition, patent laws should be reviewed to allow patenting for end-line products rather than basic discoveries, eg. regulations should make it easier to patent diagnostic tests but harder to patent DNA sequences.

There are 2 areas where members of the public can contribute. Firstly, because patenting is often expensively bureaucratic, taxpayers’ money is wasted. Members of the public should hence pressurize local administration into taking steps to removing red tape from application and litigation process. Secondly, because patenting can greatly increase the cost of healthcare products, members of the public should persuade local administration to review regulations in order that patent owners cannot exploit their privileges to charge unreasonably exorbitant prices.
2. Legislation

With the growth in biomedical research, there is a corresponding growth in guidelines which deal with controversies arising from experiments involving life forms, especially humans. These regulations are necessary but can often be a hindrance to research.

One example is UK’s Human Tissue Bill. While laying down procedures for the collection of human tissue, this bill could prohibit extremely important and significant studies on stored DNA samples taken before its introduction. Donations to Cancer Research UK's tumour banks have since dropped due to public suspicion combined with the nervousness of doctors uncertain of their legal position.9

While the rights of individuals are important, the rights of society as a whole have to be considered, as society benefits from tissue research. In order to draw a balance, greater representation should be given to researchers in determining whether such measures should be passed. Lord May, president of the Royal Society, said the measures in the bill were "like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut." 10 This would certainly occur if policy makers are not in touch with the actual workings of the research field on ground level.

Policy makers need to work with major research organizations and collaborate in formulating policies that provide protection for subjects yet minimize hindrance in research. In addition, a systematic monitoring system should be laid down to assess the impact in the next few years, in order that legislation may be reversed or modified to better fit the situation. This system should involve the opinions of individuals who deal directly with the subjects involved eg. primary care physicians

3. Integrity

In 1980, an American Association for the Advancement of Science survey of the professional ethics activities of its affiliate societies concluded that "little attention and only minimal resources have been directed toward professional ethics" 11
Scientific Misconduct can be divided into 2 categories, negligence and direct fraud. The difference in the two lies in whether the scientist is deliberate in his misconduct or ignorant of his mistake.

3.1 Deliberate Fraud

Deliberate fraud in science is mostly found in the biomedical sciences. A study by Sociologist Pat Woolf of some 26 cases that surfaced one way or another between 1980 and 1986 revealed that 21 came from biomedical science, two from chemistry and biochemistry, one from physiology and the other two from psychology. A possible reason is that biological variability allows similar experiments to give different results, and this may tempt cheating.

Science is self-correcting; a falsehood injected into the body of scientific knowledge will eventually be discovered and rejected but the time taken for that to happen varies, during which many adverse events could occur due to the applications of the results. Hence science needs to take active measures to protect itself. Unfortunately, government agency action is a poor choice because they are often unable to differentiate real fraud and negligence.

I suggest that universities have internal regulations which recommend scientific investigation by senior colleagues rather than a judicial proceeding by non-scientists. Though this could introduce elements of partiality due to conflicting interest, fellow scientists would be able to comprehend the situation better. Possible ways to decrease bias include multi-layered review before panels of increasing authority. University of Caltech has a good system. Private attorneys are discouraged and there is no confrontation of the accuser, cross examination of witnesses etc. Despite that, sufficient safeguards are built in to protect both accused and accuser that the courts have many times ruled that this type of proceeding does have the requisite degree of fairness.
3.2 Negligence

While blatant misconduct is less common, there is a continuum of bad scientific practices that can be classified as negligence. This has great potential to undermine the validity of results, being downright dangerous especially if the studies involved are pre-implementation studies. Some of these bad practices include the collection of data without a statistically valid sampling plan, failure to consider and adjust for confounding factors, or orienting statistical work toward an outcome (ie. p-value less than 0.05) rather than toward methodological validity.

In order to correct negligence, institutions should define expected standards of research quality and provide initial training to junior and senior researchers. Funding sources should pay attention to the credibility of statistical competence, methods, and prior results within grant application proposals. Journals should provide for competent peer reviews in both the fields of statistics and subject matter.

A possible way to diminish both types of misconduct is through scientific societies. Currently, the activities of scientific societies include workshops, discussion groups and mentorship programmes to encourage scientific integrity. However, many of them are reluctant to enforce their code of ethics with disciplinary proceedings and sanctions. Understandably, there is little incentive to join a society which enforces a strict code of ethics with disciplinary measures. Hence what is needed is a concerted effort in which all societies exert such pressure. At present, there is a council of scientific society presidents. Change can begin through bodies such as these.

4. Research Assessment and Funding

One of the main reasons for research assessment is funding allocation. With the multitude of laboratories competing for money, grant sources need ways to determine the potential, as well as quality, of research in laboratory.
4.1 Problems in Research Appraisal

There are two problems with research appraisal. Firstly, there are very few measurable endpoints. Hence it is difficult to empirically elicit how beneficial research into a certain field is. Attempts have been made, eg. the European Union has designed an ‘Innovation Scoreboard’ to rate a country’s progress in the field of research. However, these endpoints are mostly based on quantity rather than quality eg. number of high technology patents filed, sale of new-to-market products, population with tertiary education. They may not reflect actual benefits as they fail to take quality into account.

The second problem is that research is truly an unpredictable investment, with results that may only be reaped many decades later. A field which may seem trivial and frivolous in its nascent years may produce large benefits in time, hence the difficulty in allocating resources.

4.2 Types of Research Appraisals

Grant sources conduct research assessment to determine how productive a laboratory is, and the criteria they use may have little to do with how beneficial the research is to society.

One of the simplest quantitative ways to rate a researcher is based on the number of papers he has written. As such, the researcher is under tremendous pressure to produce papers. This would not be such a bad thing if it accelerated development. The problem is that journals look for certain criteria in selecting papers. One such criterion is ‘hot topic’. This leads to many laboratories duplicating work in a certain field, performing similar experiments with insignificant alterations. Philippe Busquin, the EU commissioner responsible for research, has stated that a significant portion of European research and development funding is wasted because researchers are often working on near-identical technology.
One of the qualitative ways of assessing scientific research is through peer review. Peer review was suited to an earlier era when progress in science was limited by the number of good ideas available. It is not suited to adjudicate an intense competition for scarce resources. The referee has an obvious conflict of interest since he is anonymous and never called upon to justify his reviews.

In this way, credit often goes to researchers who may not produce the best ideas, but are most adept at adjusting themselves to the requirements of the system. Funding may then be directed at fields which do not produce much benefit to society.

4.3 Suggestions

While it can be said that research in the theoretical sciences eg. astrophysics, may not improve anyone’s living standards, biomedical science is primarily directed the development of better healthcare technology, hence benefits to society is important criteria by which the research quality should be judged.

Attempts should be made at devising a system by which the concrete benefits of research can be measured and money can be better allocated. It would be beyond the skills of a single person to formulate an algorithm. However, I would like to make several suggestions.

In peer review, there should be an increase in the number of referees doing independent review. Attempts should be made to recruit referees with different opinions so as to balance the review especially with regard to polarized topics. However, care must be taken to ensure that professional competence of these referees.

Actual benefits of a research product should be assessed on a field level. Bodies should be set up for the purpose of assessing what benefits each scientific idea can bring to society. This assessment should take into account ground-level studies which include the opinions of healthcare personnel who are involved in direct application of the product.
These assessments should be taken into account when deciding whether grants should be given and whether they should be extended.

To solve the problem of assessing long-term benefits, a time line should be supplied by the researcher. This should include predicted milestones by which progress can be measured. Funding should then be withdrawn if the deadlines are not adhered to.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

With the development of new technology through research, ways of implementation have to be developed to allow for better access, especially to less developed countries, which I have chosen to focus on.

In an attempt to narrow the focus, this essay has chosen to leave out broader issues such as structural adjustments and poverty because these issues warrant a separate discourse - a few sentences will not do them justice. Instead, I will focus on several ways by which can help developing countries use the existing capital to maximize benefits in healthcare.

1. **Education**

It has been said that education can act as a ‘vaccine’ against diseases when physical vaccines are nonexistent or not in use due to high cost. However, the effects of education may not be as straightforward. An example is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

An early Zambian study found a strong linear relationship between level of education and HIV infection—the percentage of infected persons in a hospital population rose monotonically from 8.0 percent for those with 0–4 years of schooling, through 14.7 percent for those with 5–9 years, to 24.1 percent for those with 10–14 years, before climaxing at 33.3 percent for those with more than 14 years of education. 17
Recent evidence from Zambia shows a substantial decline in HIV prevalence among younger people in both urban and rural areas. A consistent finding, restricted to urban areas, was a marked decline in prevalence rates among 15–19 year-olds with medium or higher educational backgrounds. The trend was for HIV prevalence to increase amongst young people at lower educational levels, which suggests that the correlation between HIV infection and level of education is no longer linear as in the past.

There are several pointers we can pick up from this. This surprising trend could be because higher levels of education are associated with higher income and greater mobility, factors that increase promiscuity. It could be because those who are in an education system establish transient relationships to compensate for the almost necessary deferment of a stable partnership in marriage. It could also be because schooling has engendered a more liberal set of values.

In view of this, while raising education standards, it is also important to build strong cultural ties, so as to preserve a traditional set of values. In addition, the danger of AIDS must be very strongly emphasized, together with the hazards of sexual promiscuity, as raising education standards alone is not enough to decrease the prevalence of AIDS.

Fears are sometimes expressed that integrating reproductive health and HIV/AIDS education into the school curriculum will increase sexual activity. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS found that of 53 studies that evaluated specific interventions, only three studies reported detrimental effects, hence this claim is largely unfounded.

2. Drugs

8.8 million people contract tuberculosis annually. Malaria kills an African child every 30 seconds. 42 million people are living with HIV/AIDS. There are known drugs to alleviate the symptoms of all 3 diseases.
Although the Trade-related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) allowed for the issuing of licenses to allow companies to make generic drugs without consent of the patent owner under certain circumstances, these generic drugs had to be for the domestic market limiting the ability of countries that cannot make pharmaceutical products from importing cheaper generics.  

Finding a balance in the protection of intellectual property between the short-term interests in maximizing access and the long-term interests in promoting creativity and innovation is not easy. However, World Trade Organization members should aim towards the simplification of the final TRIPS amendment aimed at lifting restrictions on the export of affordable generic versions of new drugs to countries without drug-production capacity. A possible solution to the protests of the patent owners might be to step up monitoring of drug distribution so as to ensure that generic drugs reach primarily the third world, while the patent owners continue to reap benefits from sales in the developed nations.

In addition, technical assistance should be provided to developing countries. This assistance should be aimed at increasing access to affordable medicines, rather than advancing the interests of the pharmaceutical industry.
3. Personnel

Many third world countries lack sufficient healthcare personnel. In Malawi, afflicted with one of Africa's most severe nursing shortages, almost two-thirds of the nursing jobs in the public health system are vacant. This shortage is caused by the exodus of many healthcare personnel to developed countries. Save the Children and Medact, a UK charity, estimates that the UK has saved £65 million in training costs by recruiting nurses from Ghana. In February 2000, A UN Economic commission analyst estimated that over 30% of Africa’s skilled labour was working overseas.

Measures have to be put in place to restrict the emigration of these personnel eg. banning recruitment of healthcare personnel from certain developing nations. However, this may result in a decrease of youths who enter into healthcare training as the prospect of emigration is no longer viable. Emigration prevention may also be seen as a violation of human rights. It is up to the individual governments to decide which is more important – freedom of choice or taking steps towards freedom from disease. An alternative solution would be to increase pay and improve working conditions, but this would require the injection of capital.

Developed nations should also set up grants to help in the training of third world doctors and nurses, following with the return to their own country. Admittedly, this policy would incur further expenditure. However, personnel from developed nations may be able to pick up valuable improvisation skills from third world healthcare professionals.

4. Learning from Successful Examples

It has often been said that there is so much the developed world and do to help the developing nations break the cycle of poverty and illness. In order for success to occur, effort must come from within the country. It is useful to examine successful examples of developing nations which managed to turn their healthcare systems around. Their success was attributed to several factors:
a) Consolidating aims

Carabayllo, an impoverished region in Peru, has managed to cure 80% of multidrug resistant tuberculosis, previously thought to be untreatable in resource-poor settings. According to an observer, a typical planning group meeting in Peru before the project charter was written, included 20 to 30 people, three or four times as many as would attend an equivalent planning meeting in the United States. This openness and struggle produced great breadth of agreement. 25

b) Team based improvement

The Peru programme uses multidisciplinary teams in 41 community based clinics, in five districts in Lima. The 41 teams have been working for more than two years, and their results compare favourably with those achieved in similar collaborative improvement projects in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Sweden, and Norway. 26

c) Simplification

Leaders in resource-poor settings often excel in creating local infrastructures to support improvement efforts. It may be those very constraints that have nurtured a kind of ingenuity to do more with less. 27

d) Altering the policy environment

Local and pragmatic improvement efforts in Peru seem to remain strong despite frequent changes in wider political environment. The leaders of improvement at the local and district levels seem to know how to keep the projects going despite the Minister of Health changing four times. 25

e) Scaling up improvement

Successes in decreasing adult hypertension in two of Russia’s poorer states had been recognized by the central Russian Federation Health Ministry and the projects are being replicated in 39 states, covering almost half the population of Russia. 28
CONCLUSION.

For the future improvement in the global state of healthcare, new ideas are needed. This can be provided through biomedical research. Despite harbouring various intrinsic problems, biomedical research has the potential to create new technology that will greatly improve the standard of living. However, effort is needed to iron out the current problems.

For present improvement in the global state of healthcare, there has to be better implementation of current healthcare technology. This involves effort from developing as well as developed nations, from scientists, politicians, healthcare workers and members of the public.

5. Dr Jeremy Philpott (2001)“Patents for Biotechnology” Biotech Advantage Issue 3 Department of Trade and Industry
15. “Innovation Scoreboard” European commission community research.


28. Cynthia Young. “Quality Improvement Program Expands to National Level in Russia” Quality Assurance Project.
Wilfrido describes a rationale for a youth alliance micro-foundation model.
Finalist, Wilfrido Kabiling, Philippines, speaks:

About himself:
I recently graduated with an M.S. degree in Industrial Engineering at De La Salle University in Manila. Currently, I am a full-time faculty member of the same department, teaching system dynamics, operations research, ergonomics and product engineering. I’m continuously engaged in research, mostly developing mathematical models for supply chain management, and measuring service and operations performance. To keep in shape, I train and spar with the university’s taekwondo team. I enjoy books, Senge’s “The 5th Discipline” being a favorite, and movies, being particularly delighted by “The Shawshank Redemption.”

About the topic of the competition:
I learned about the essay competition through an email that was sent to me by a friend. The topic of security really caught my interest as I went through the email, since nowadays there really is a growing sense of insecurity in our country and the many struggles we’ve faced in the past don’t seem to have placed us in the right direction towards a secure future. The choice of my essay’s topic, franchising anti-poverty initiatives through youth alliances, was really borne out of what I observed to be a shared sentiment among my peers: that we want to do something to help people but the more we do so the harder society pushes us back.

About being a finalist:
The experience of being a finalist changed me in two ways: by energizing me and by tweaking my life goals. It was energizing because at some point, seeing how the other finalists, the speakers, and the conference organizers were sharing their experiences and ideas, it became very easy to see that there really is hope for a world united against suffering. As I shared during the essay presentations, I was overwhelmed not so much by the brilliance of everyone but by their genuine desire for change. The experience also affected the way I see myself in the future. As an industrial engineer, I’m engaged in a lot of research, but mostly about supply chains, services, and industry success factors. By listening to the speakers at the conference I saw concrete examples of how the
mathematical tools we use can also be focused on development concerns and creating solutions to the world’s biggest problems. I hope to do just that by applying to the World Bank and contribute to the work being done, if given the chance of course. If not, then I can always do some research of my own at De La Salle and share with the students how their knowledge can be used to directly help the poorest of the poor.
Abstract
Our time is both the worst and the best moment in history to be a young person. It is the worst time, because socio-economic forces all over the world have placed the youth under great risk. It is the best time, for it is under such insecurity that young people are being presented the opportunity to collectively define themselves as leaders towards the goals that humanity has long sought to achieve.

In this paper, readers first meet three active members of the Filipino youth sector. Their journeys are vital in understanding the issues faced by the idealistic youth who are about to make amends with a society they are so eager to change but at the same time is itself exerting much pressure on them socially and economically. It must be understood that for a developing country like the Philippines, finally leaving the University with impressive records still does not by any means ascertain a decent future.

These conditions are then viewed in the context of security as an idea that has evolved to encompass both phenomena of poverty and vulnerability. It is shown how, despite such conditions, young people still seek to actualize their idealism and love for country, through community projects that truly make a difference. This paper then discusses how such a set-up, however inspiring it might sound, leads to a limits-to-growth system structure. Thus there is the need for mechanisms by which young Filipinos can channel their vigor and involvement but at the same time sustain themselves in a socio-economic environment that becomes more and more pressing and debilitating. It is described how such insights would point to a counter-intuitive global development approach where empowerment is sought not necessarily for the least secure, but for those who are slightly better off, but who nevertheless are willing to do the dirty work in poverty reduction efforts. Thus the rationale for a youth alliance micro-foundation model is established. The paper tackles the intricacies of such a set-up and the functions that are critical to the success of microfoundations. Furthermore, a discussion is made on how international organizations can play an invaluable role in cascading development efforts and yielding results through such a model.
1. Introduction

Forget about country reports for one moment. Meet some good friends of mine. Alvin Pusing, 22, admits his lifestyle has diminished all sense of yesterday, today and tomorrow and he no longer has the impression of weekdays and weekends. Alvin does systems and process assurance for a leading professional service firm in the Philippines. For the once consistent dean’s list member and student organization head at De La Salle University - Manila, a typical day at the office carries on to around 1am or 2am, when most public transportation is asleep except for taxis who hold-up their own passengers and rolling coffins for bus fleets. He heads home, catches whatever quality he might find in three hours of sleep, gets up, kisses his family good morning and charges back to his office in Makati, Manila’s bustling business district. In his daily struggles to meet financial needs, Alvin’s sense of time has become a borderless continuum of work, other responsibilities on the side, and more work. As a result, he also expresses a sincere frustration at not directly being able to contribute to the country’s collective recovery. Future secure? Not quite.

At about the time Alvin turns on his laptop to start the day’s auditing travails, another young man awakens and says his prayers of thanks, both for the good night’s sleep and for the day ahead. He is head coordinator of his parish youth ministry, involved in facilitating activities to encourage the youth in their community to become active not just in Church activities but also in socio-civic activities like outreach programs. He does not, however, receive income for this. Wowie Guerrero, 23. Mass communication graduate at Centro Escolar University (CEU), recipient of the Gold Medal for leadership, one of the five most outstanding students of CEU, an active youth leader, a visionary, passionate, eloquent and committed. Secure? Not the slightest bit.

Then there is Elvin Uy, who just topped the April 2005 nationwide licensure exams for electronics and communications engineers. He graduated magna cum laude from De La Salle, where he was also a very active student leader. One would think that such a mold would seek to go into some prized multinational firm, work non-stop and get filthy rich. Not the case for Elvin. His academic and leadership prowess is matched only by his genuine love for country. He continues to volunteer for project after project of youth involvement. Secure? Not to be exact. He admits facing a deep dilemma, being
torn between his need to sustain himself and the ever-burning call to direct service with all his might.
Different stories, one common thread: the ability and desire for service, haunted by the daunting task of supporting themselves and their family amidst a national condition that grows more and more bleak by the day.

2. Youth Alliances Amidst Vulnerability
The point is not to present these conditions as constitutive of poverty, for they are clearly not. They are, however, indicative of a great vulnerability among young people in the country who have just recently graduated and are out to make their mark in society. Vulnerability here is taken in the sense offered by Osmani (2003). This sector of the youth, that to which the proponent also belongs, is vulnerable in so far as there is present the risk of plunging into poverty, in the light of possible shocks brought about by a broader country-wide instability in the economic, political and social realm. In a developing country like the Philippines, the post-graduation stories faced by the likes of Alvin, Wowie, and Elvin are not in parallel with their counterparts in developed nations. It is this precarious state that is the reason that there is no secure future for the Filipino youth, whether by vulnerability or poverty. As Cherly Galunza, also an information systems auditor like Alvin, succinctly puts it, the hardest part of being a member of the youth sector in the Philippines is “to realize that the situation that our country is into right now is no joke.”
There is good reason for such a statement as the plight of many young Filipinos is utterly depressing. According the to Department of Social Welfare and Development, there were 222,417 street children in 65 major cities in 1998, while the National Statistics Coordinating Board estimates that the proportion of families living in poverty is two out of five (West, 2003).
Today may very well be the worst day to be a young person. Ironically, the youth sector, despite its own insecurity, possesses that unique brand of idealism and zeal that has put it in the forefront of the charge towards poverty reduction in the country. For example, Wowie and Elvin are members of the Ayala Young Leaders Alliance (AYLA), the alumni association of the Ayala Young Leaders
Congress, a yearly gathering of student leaders across the country. AYLA has in recent years been able to form chapters scattered around the archipelago, a mechanism by which members can get together and, apart from their jobs or their studies, set up projects that address the needs of their locality. Of tremendous success have been the chapters in the islands of Visayas and Mindanao, which have gone into various activities ranging from providing audio-visual presentations to underserved public schools, to setting up peace projects for community rehabilitation, and even to conducting prayer offerings in areas that have been struck by violence.

3. A Counter-intuitive Approach to Building a Secure Future

Given all these, we find what is referred to in system dynamics as a limits-to-growth system archetype. Youth leaders are passionate about lifting their countrymen, especially their companion youth, from poverty and thus put in much time and effort. However, their precarious state limits such actions, since the more they try to provide for the needs of others, the more vulnerable their ability to provide for themselves. In such a scenario, the preferred point of system intervention is not to strengthen youth action further, for it is indeed already strong, but instead, to eliminate the negative feedback loops, the limiting factors. (Senge, 1994) In this case, that means pulling resources together to eliminate the vulnerability of the idealistic youth sector. It’s all about pushing the right buttons.

This insight impacts not just efforts toward building a secure future for Filipinos, but also the quest for security that is undertaken on a global basis. It might be profitable to explore approaches at attaining the Millenium Development Goals along these lines. Counter-intuitive as it may seem, the proponent would like to suggest, therefore, that in building a secure future, resources must be provided to those who are not exactly faced with a total lack of security. Thus, in order “to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day”, perhaps, resources must be poured to empower those who earn more than that, but who nevertheless have the ability and desire to execute programs benefiting the poorest of the poor, while whose vulnerability mitigates their capacity for doing so.

This is not to say that international institutions for poverty reduction have not at
all tackled this perspective in the past and present. In fact, the organizations are beginning to see the mission in a different light, for example, through a greater emphasis on participation.

For example, Mr. Bhuvan Batnagar, Senior Social Scientist for the World Bank Office in Manila in 2000, cites how the preparation, implementation, and monitoring of poverty reduction strategy papers have been illumined by participatory approaches. He cites stories coming from many countries, pointing in particular to the successes of Ireland in garnering people’s participation in developing reforms on the macroeconomic level.

Another example is in the acceptance of the United Nations General Assembly to enhance its relations with civil society, in an effort to “connect the global with the local” as recommended by the Cardoso Panel, the prerequisites of which include strengthening the United Nations itself as well as its intergovernmental structure.

But while these are welcome developments, there is a need to bring efforts down to the grassroots level. Participation must not only be along the lines of debate or ventilation. International institutions must also explore the possibility of strengthening its partners’ membership by providing the members and staff with a means of living that is sustainable as well as in line with the vision of poverty reduction to which they are so fervently committed.

4. Proposal for the Youth Alliance Micro-Foundation Model

What is being proposed here is a model for the establishment of what the proponent would like to call youth alliance micro-foundations that would empower youth leaders to go about, form groups and create projects of their own, apart from the international institutions but continuously monitored by them. How different is this from the status quo? Here, young people need not be caught on the socio-economic tightrope, balancing their desire to play a vital role in poverty reduction with their need to keep abreast of their own vulnerability. The micro-foundations are seen to become self-sustaining after some formative period. In a sense, the youth alliance micro-foundation model is similar to the franchising model that has been successful in retail industries around the globe. What critical functions then must a micro-foundation play? First, and perhaps
most important, is the finance function. In order for it to be self-sustaining, the microfoundation must install mechanisms by which it receives a steady flow of funds. There are many ways of doing so, but two models are suggested here. The first is that followed by *Tahanang Walang Hagdan* (Filipino for “Home without Stairs”), a non-profit organization that supports the employment, education, and skill-acquisition of the handicapped, by giving them jobs mostly in manufacturing crafts. Their products are sold and the proceeds support the organization’s operations. On the other hand, another source of funds for the micro-foundation would be the business sector. In this sense, the micro-foundation would become the executing agency for the corporate social responsibility aims of a group of companies. Since the micro-foundation is not a corporate foundation in itself, it may pool funds from various corporations. At the same time, the scope of a micro-foundation’s operations is not at all comparable to that of a corporate foundation or a government agency, thus contributions of each donor need not bloat to such huge amounts.

Recruitment is the next function that must be given much attention. The rationale of developing micro-foundations around youth alliances is that young people in the country are extremely dynamic and cultivate amongst themselves astounding idealism. These would make up the driving culture for the micro-foundations and they depend to a great extent on the constant influx of young members, their skills, ideas and vigor. Fortunately, Filipino youth leaders seem to have a natural way of maintaining networks, so such should not be of difficulty.

What roles will international organizations like the World Bank play? First, organizations may play a significant role in the formation of the microfoundations. Thus, poverty reduction internship programs may be conducted where fresh graduates may use their knowledge and specialization particularly for projects engaged in poverty reduction. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is already offering such a program. The end result however is more of the integration of the individual into the Bank. In this case, what is proposed instead is that the graduates of the internship programs would be free to form groups among themselves, and each group would form the core of one micro-foundation. Hence, part of the thrust of the internship program
would be to prepare youth leaders to face the objectives of poverty reduction from an organizational perspective, hand-in-hand with the Bank. This would include management of funds, designing performance measures, setting year-on-year targets, expanding operations and the like.

Second, the financing role of the institution must not be focused just on funding the projects initiated by the micro-foundation, but rather on funding the microfoundation’s existence, including perhaps compensation given to the youth leaders who spearhead the initiative, during the formative period. The role would be one of rearing, as perhaps a mentor to a student. It is not about dependence of the youth alliances on the institution, for eventually the alliances are seen to become self-sufficient in their recruitment and compensation systems. The end result, in this case, is that youth alliances (AYLA, NYC, etc.) are no longer groups of young people who would collectively volunteer for a project, but are organizations that can afford to support the financial needs of its membership, thereby empowering its constituency for greater involvement.

5. Conclusion
This paper has presented specific means by which the energy and abilities of young people can be channeled in order to build a more secure future for themselves and for those whose lives they are to touch through such initiatives. In a country like the Philippines, where the confidence of the youth has already started to sink into collective depression, time is absolutely essential. Filipino statesman Lorenzo Tanada once said, “the future of our country depends to a full measure upon what our young people of today are thinking and setting their mind to do.” The minds of the youth are full of hope. In a sense, that hope is the only real hope we have for our world. It is frightening to imagine what would become of our efforts as a human race if even the willingness of young people is dampened and withered by lack of opportunity.

As Wowie puts it, “I want to do so many things in life and I know I have all the time but it seems I am running out of time already.” Alvin has similar sentiments, “Our idealism is being challenged by realism, and in the process, if one is not holding on tightly to this idealism, he will slowly be just like the rest.”

Such doubts are neither signs of weakness nor of cowardice. They are the inner
murmurs of leaders. They are the impetus of those who, upon realizing the uncertainty ahead, dare to redefine the essence of youth.
Today may very well be the best day to be a young person.
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Alfred describes his experience of being involved in a military conflict as a child soldier and his way to becoming a university student.
Finalist, Alfred Shako Kpane, Democratic Republic of Congo, speaks:

About himself:
I am 20 years old and I have just become a university student. In the years 2001 - 2004, during the war, I was a child soldier.

About the topic of the competition:
I wrote the essay in order to share my experience with a large group of young people - to bring my message to them and to make them understand the mechanisms of a crisis situation (war) and how it can transform one’s life.

About being a finalist:
Being selected as a finalist of the Essay Competition has not changed much in my life, as I could not participate in the ABCDE Conference and present my essay to the juries in person - I did not manage to obtain my visa on time and therefore I had to make my presentation via phone.
Nevertheless, I feel deeply grateful that I could participate in this initiative and that my contribution was appreciated. I think that this initiative denotes a responsible and serious attitude of the organizers towards youth.
Summary in English:

I often think about my future, just as many others do. Obstacles have always been an integral part of my everyday life, as is also the case with a great number of young people in the contemporary societies. This essay is the fruit of my reflections based on the present and past ordeals that I have been through. Sometimes I am tempted to think that I am the only one afflicted with problems, but clearly this is not the case. Many young people are faced with similar or different daily obstacles, no matter what their actual situation is. Some of us suffer from HIV/AIDS, others from unemployment, armed conflicts etc. Faced with these predicaments, they often forget about the future and lose their desire to live on. Speaking of a secure future… Youth need to realize that, even though their destiny may be uncertain, they should always safeguard hope for a better future. This is precisely the spirit in which I have constructed my essay, based on my personal experience of being involved in an armed conflict – as a victim of war and as a child soldier.

(...) I was 16 when ethnic conflicts first erupted in my native region in the year 2001. Tension soon developed into a civil war and I had to stop my school education. At some point my family had to flee our village of origin when it was already too dangerous to live there. We all became war refugees, unable to find peace and security anywhere in the country, moving from place to place. Not able to go back home, I joined a military group and participated in combats and atrocities, until I finally managed to escape in an act of desertion - and desertion was punished by death. After I deserted for the second time, at the end of 2003, I finally managed to restart my interrupted studies and in 2004 I obtained my high school diploma. Right now I am a university student and I can finally breath freely. With a university diploma, one day I will be able to serve my nation, if it needs me.

(...) In conclusion, I would like to stress that it is youth that most often fall victim to global crises. Very few people, however, actually take the initiative to overcome the problems
derived from these crises. Essentially, one needs to accept the things that help construct a decent life and fight against the ones that are destructive. In my view, the misery of humans doesn’t come from what they failed to accomplish, but from not trying to accomplish what they desire for. For me, the solution to my own problems lies in my own will to overcome the obstacles. What I see as the concrete and practical solution to my predicament is studying, that will help guarantee a more secure future for myself. Education will equip me to confront whatever further obstacles life may bring.
Il m’arrive très souvent, comme à d’autres, de réfléchir à mon avenir. Ce dernier me paraît parfois tellement sombre. Les obstacles n’ont cessé de faire partie intégrante de ma vie quotidienne. C’est sans doute le lot de nombre de jeunes dans nos sociétés. L’objet de cette dissertation est donc le fruit de mes réflexions, basées sur mes luttes, passées et présentes. Parfois, au terme de mes réflexions, il m’arrive de penser que je suis le premier et l’unique jeune à être touché par ces crises auxquelles je dois faire face. Mais je sais que c’est loin d’être le cas. Nombre de jeunes font également face à ces obstacles, bien que nos situations soient parfois diamétralement opposées. Certains d’entre nous sont soumis à des problèmes liés au VIH/SIDA, d’autres au chômage et beaucoup d’autres encore au problème des conflits armés qu’on retrouve, sans doute, un peu partout dans le monde. Face à de telles situations, ils tendent à oublier la permanence d’un avenir, et cela peut compromettre leur désir de vivre. Parler d’un avenir sûr… La recherche de solutions pratiques revêt une importance capitale car il s’agit de faire comprendre à ces jeunes que, si nous sommes exempts de toute notion d’un destin sûr de par la situation qui nous accable, nous pouvons cependant garder l’espoir en un avenir souriant. C’est pourquoi il nous faut proposer des solutions qui peuvent directement nous aider dans cette démarche. C’est dans cet esprit que je vais essayer de me baser sur mon expérience personnelle, que je surnomme « mon aventure », une grande aventure des conflits armés dans laquelle j’ai pris une part active et que vous allez découvrir tout au long de mon exposé, afin d’aboutir à ma manière de surmonter les défis quotidiens.

Mon expérience m’a plusieurs fois fait constater l’absence flagrante d’un destin sûr. Au contraire, le danger s’est toujours manifesté, court-circuitant l’évolution fonctionnelle de ma vie. Une fois que j’eus découvert cela, je me suis immédiatement décidé à m’engager dans un processus qui me permettrait de le surmonter. Quel est alors cet obstacle ? Comment puis-je lui faire face ?
De toutes les crises mondiales actuelles, j’ai trouvé, à partir de ma propre souffrance, que les conflits armés sont les problèmes les plus déstabilisants, dans toutes les sociétés du monde. Leur impact sur moi m’a imposé une certaine déception à l’égard de ma propre vie que j’avais décidée de vivre avec toute l’aisance possible. Leur impact sur d’autres jeunes ne cesse de m’influencer. J’ai pensé ainsi diviser ma période d’agitation et de perturbation en quatre étapes essentielles.


Comme nous le savons tous, tout conflit armé entraîne son lot de conséquences néfastes. Ces conséquences peuvent se manifester sous la forme de famines, de pauvreté accrue, de chômage. Tout cela ne peut qu’avoir un impact négatif sur la population. Dans la plupart des cas, cette crise est le grand problème qui se trouve à
la base de la déstabilisation de la société. Nombre de familles, de clans, voire de villages, disparaissent. Cela débouche souvent sur un déplacement massif et involontaire de la population, qui doit abandonner son milieu d’origine pour un autre qu’elle ignore totalement. C’est ce qui se produisit à Bunia en 2003, lorsque 80% de la population de la ville furent contraints à l’exode.

En mai de l’année 2002, le pouvoir changea de main, alors que le conflit semblait devoir prendre une double forme : civil et politique. Civil, parce qu’une population de même origine s’entretuait et que les groupes tribaux belligérants visaient chacun leurs propres intérêts, intérêts souvent purement matériels. Les alliances entre groupes politico-militaires se faisaient et se défaisaient, tant avec les pays étrangers qu’avec les mouvements rebelles des régions voisines, aux gré d’intérêts fluctuants. A cette époque la ville était sous le contrôle d’un mouvement rebelle, le RCD-ML24. La situation demeurait encore sereine. Mais, au début d’août 2002, un groupe d’extrémistes hema issu de ce mouvement rebelle réussit à s’emparer du pouvoir à Bunia en chassant le gouverneur désigné par le RCD-ML. La ville commença à obéir à la loi du plus fort. Bunia était désormais sous le contrôle d’un nouveau régime politique à forte connotation tribale.

Ma famille restreinte, quant à elle, devant faire face à l’adversité, décida de se retirer de la ville. En effet, le mouvement politico-militaire qui venait de s’emparer du pouvoir à Bunia considérait notre ethnie comme ennemie, et la traitait en tant que telle. La sécurité de ma famille était donc devenue tout à coup fort précaire. En ce jour de victoire de l’UPC25, nombre de membres de notre tribu trouvèrent la mort. Ma famille choisit la prudence et préféra assurer sa survie en fuyant à l’extérieur de la ville. La tempête de haine qui soufflait sur la ville ne nous disait rien de bon. En ce jour funeste, « salus in fuga », ce proverbe latin aurait pu être notre devise familiale. Cette fuite fut la deuxième phase de mon aventure. La grande déception qu’elle me causa me devait me marquer profondément. Désormais, seule la mélancolie pouvait se lire sur mon visage.

Déplacé de guerre. Oui, j’étais devenu un déplacé de guerre, de surcroît condamné au chômage, puisque j’étais désormais dans l’impossibilité d’étudier. Telles

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24 Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie – Mouvement de Libération
25 Union des Patriotes Congolais
furent les deux premières retombées du conflit sur moi. Que faire pour échapper à une telle situation ? Ne voyant aucune issue, je me résignais peu à peu à subir cette situation, nouvelle pour moi. Cela perturba beaucoup, moi qui étais jusqu’alors accoutumé à consacrer l’essentiel de mon temps à mes cours. Cette nouvelle leçon me semblait particulièrement pénible. Le célèbre « article15 », bien connu de tous les Congolais, c’est-à-dire « débrouillez-vous », s’imposait à moi. Cette nouvelle situation m’ouvrit les yeux sur la précarité de notre existence.

Le déplacement et le chômage forcé eurent pour conséquence l’ennui. Je ressentais cette série de conséquences comme les Européens perçoivent l’alternance des saisons, en Europe. L’été avait fait place à l’automne, ce dernier annonçait maintenant l’hiver. Je me demandais si le printemps arriverait un jour. Dans le petit village d’accueil où nous avions trouvé refuge, l’ennui s’accrut de jour en jour. La vie dans ce milieu pourtant hospitalier me parut de plus en plus fastidieuse. Je perçus très vite qu’en dehors de l’ennui, un autre danger me guettait. En effet, dans cette situation de guerre tribale, tout individu de sexe masculin âgé de dix ans ou plus, autochtone ou déplacé, jeune ou vieux, malade ou non, affamé ou pas, était un soldat en puissance. La pression communautaire était telle que l’engagement dans la milice ethnique apparaissait comme un devoir. Un devoir de nous préparer à faire face une attaque de la milice tribale adverse, c’est-à-dire celle de nos frères ennemis, ceux-là même qui, à ce moment-là, faisaient régner l’insécurité en ville. Un devoir de défendre nos familles, notre communauté. Je me retrouvais entre le marteau et l’enclume. Rentrer en la ville, c’était risquer la mort. Rester sur place, c’était devoir subir la formation militaire et, tôt ou tard, participer aux combats, aux atrocités. Toutes ces jeunes recrues, dont je faisais désormais partie, étaient impitoyablement molestées, vouées à une formation militaire rigoureuse, qui devait nous préparer à l’affrontement. Je me souviens d’ailleurs d’une de ces attaques improvisées, qui fut le premier engagement auquel je pris part. Ce jour-là, je crus que le ciel me tombait sur la tête, tant j’étais peu habitué à faire face à une telle situation. Je n’avais aucune notion de la guerre, car la formation de moins de deux semaines que nous avions subie était insuffisante. Je n’avais que dix-sept ans, j’étais devenu un enfant soldat, la tête farcie de peur. Cette initiation à la guerre fut la troisième période de mon aventure, sans doute la plus traumatisante.
J’ai plus tard réussi à déserter cette bande de manipulateurs qui nous enseignaient la violence, qui nous inculquaient, au besoin par la force, le goût du meurtre. Je regagnais Bunia. Je croyais y trouver le repos, le soulagement. Je me trompais lourdement. J’ignorais que je me jetais de nouveau dans la gueule de loup. En effet, en 2003, le conflit reprit avec une intensité nouvelle. Le 6 mars de cette année-là, de bon matin, beaucoup d’hommes, de femmes et d’enfants trouvèrent la mort, lorsque les dirigeants tribaux qui tenaient la ville furent misérablement chassés par la coalition de leurs ennemis. Les semaines passèrent et au moi de mai, la ville passa sous le contrôle de ceux qui m’avaient enrôlé lors de mon séjour au village. Cette présence, ainsi que le départ des forces ougandaises, entraîna une contre offensive de la part de ceux qui avaient été chassés deux mois plus tôt. Le retour des éléments de l’UPC, qui avaient à cœur de venger leur précédente humiliation, contraignit une grande partie de la population à quitter massivement la ville. Comme je l’ai indiqué plus haut, on estima que 80% de la population de Bunia choisit le chemin de l’exode. Craignant les représailles de l’UPC, je me décidais moi aussi à suivre, même à l’aveuglette, cette foule. En ce lundi de mai, notre misérable troupeau devait ressembler à celui formé jadis par les fils d’Israël, lorsqu’ils quittèrent l’Égypte pour la terre promise. Sauf que pour nous, il ne semblait pas y avoir de terre promise.

Je me retrouvais dans un étrange village aux mœurs rudes. Au début, j’appréciais son hospitalité remarquable. Mais, rapidement, je me trouvais repris par la milice. Mon cœur se remplit peu à peu d’amertume. J’entamais la quatrième phase de mon aventure, celle que je qualifierais de punition. Jamais je n’aurais cru que, né humain, on puisse être ainsi châtié. Cette dernière étape précédé mon retour à une vie meilleure. Cependant, elle me hante jusqu’aujourd’hui, tant je crains de retomber au fond de l’abîme.

Car après une année 2004 de paix relative, les conflits et la haine tribale semblent à nouveau gagner le cœur des frères ennemis de l’Ituri. Ces derniers s’étaient pourtant engagés dans une démarche de paix sans précédent. L’an 2005 que l’on espérait pacifique nous a apporté son lot de nouvelles dérives sanglantes. Au moment où j’écris ces lignes, l’Ituri est aussi entrain de traverser une période de terreur. De part et d’autre, les leaders sont entrain d’instiller dans l’esprit des gens le venin de la haine et de la

« Aucune défaite n’est définitive ». Cette phrase de Léopold II, roi des Belges, revenait sans cesse dans ma pensée. Elle rejoignait dans mon esprit ce que mon père avait coutume de nous dire, à nous ses enfants: « Mon seul héritage pour vous, mes fils, sera les études ». Il m’arrivait de douter de ces paroles, tant elles me paraissaient être de simples promesses fugitives. Je ne croyais pas que mon père, dans la situation qui était la sienna, puisse être encore capable de soutenir mes études jusqu’à leur terme. Toutefois, je gardais un brin de courage en me disant que s’il y a échec aujourd’hui, demain verra peut-être ma réussite. Depuis, le mot « études » ne s’est jamais échappé de mes pensées. Je résolus donc de tenter une nouvelle désertion, dans l’espoir de reprendre le cours de mes études qui, à ce moment, me semblaient être la clé de mon avenir.

Nos chefs ainsi que les autorités du village nous tinrent des propos menaçants, tentant d’éliminer en nous tout espoir d’évasion. Toute personne qui tenterait de déséter serait exécutée, nous annonçèrent-ils. Ils nous montrèrent du doigt l’étendue du territoire sous leur contrôle en nous expliquant qu’il était illusoire de songer à nous échapper. Mais ces invectives n’entamèrent pas ma résolution secrète. Il me fallait trouver un subterfuge afin de déséter. Ce que je fis. Je me suis évadé à travers ce vaste pays, et je suis enfin rejoint Bunia. La ville était alors sous le contrôle systématique de la force d’intervention européenne baptisée « Artémis ».

d’efforts, de luttes, de successions d’espoirs et de désespoirs. L’avenir semblait enfin s’ouvrir devant moi !

L’obtention de mon diplôme d’État dans de telles conditions, malgré toutes les épreuves subies et vécues, semble prouver mes potentialités. En entreprenant mes études universitaires, j’ai la conviction de pouvoir un jour servir la nation, en cas de besoin. Mon expérience fait qu’en toutes circonstances je sais que je ferai toujours en sorte d’être à l’écoute des jeunes qui continuent à subir ce que j’ai subi. Les épreuves passées m’ont ouvert l’esprit aux problèmes des autres jeunes, ici et ailleurs dans le monde. J’ai résolument opté pour la défense de la cause de ces jeunes qui luttent pour avoir accès à l’éducation, faisant pour cela face à des obstacles inouïs. Mes études garantiront peut-être mon destin, mais elles permettront aussi d’aider les autres à réaliser qu’il faut toujours garder l’espoir. Ma modeste expérience permettra aussi de leur ouvrir des horizons de réflexion qui leur faciliteront l’identification d’éventuelles solutions face à des obstacles qui leur semblaient insurmontables. Je suis persuadé que mon « aventure » peut servir à d’autres jeunes, et pas seulement aux victimes des conflits armés. Mon message essentiel à tous ces jeunes est qu’il ne faut jamais désespérer car, à la longue, ils trouveront des moyens efficaces pour franchir ces obstacles qui, dans de nombreuses sociétés, semblent obscurcir leur horizon.

En conclusion, il convient de souligner que, dans la plupart des crises mondiales actuelles, les jeunes sont les premières victimes. Peu de jeunes savent prendre l’initiative se débarrasser des obstacles dérivés de ces crises. Nombreux estiment que s’ils n’obéissent pas à tel ou à tel autre ordre donné, la fin du monde s’annonce pour eux. Ce n’est pourtant pas le cas. Certes, il faut accepter les ordres qui permettent de construire sa vie, mais il faut résolument rejeter ceux qui tendent à la détruire. Pour moi, le malheur de l’homme vient non pas de ce qu’il ait échoué mais plutôt de ce qu’il n’ait pas essayé. Pour ma part, la véritable solution réside dans ma propre volonté, car c’est elle qui m’a permis de franchir obstacles auxquels je me suis heurté. C’est elle qui m’a permis de désertner à deux reprises, en rejetant les mots d’ordre subversifs et inhumains des autorités militaires. Grâce à elle, je gardais ma fidélité stoïque en toutes situations. Et c’est elle qui m’a aussi permis de supporter le poids des déceptions. J’ai la conviction que ma propre
volonté me permettra aussi de franchir les prochains obstacles, qui ne manqueront pas. Elle m’a enfin poussé à abandonner mes penchants naturels afin d’embrasser ce qui pouvait assurer mon avenir, ce qui était utile pour ma vie : les études. Ces dernières étayent mon espoir en un avenir serein, un avenir qui sera exempt des souffrances de ma jeunesse. C’est pourquoi les études sont pour moi l’unique solution concrète et pragmatique susceptible de garantir mon futur de tous les maux engendrés par les crises. Mais cette solution que j’ai trouvée peut également garantir le sort de ceux qui se trouveraient confrontés à de telles crises. La foi que j’ai développé en moi me permet d’affronter l’adversité sereinement, car «qui a un pourquoi vivre, supporte n’importe quel autre comment vivre». 
FINALIST, MARIA FERNANDA HEYACA, ARGENTINA

Avoiding waste to avoid wars

Maria discusses the daily waste of water in her home town Buenos Aires and how this waste could be diminished through effective education.
Finalist, Maria Fernanda Heyaca, Argentina, speaks:

About herself:
I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Relations obtained at the University of San Andres in Argentina. Currently I’m working at the same university as research assistant and assistant teacher. I am also a coordinator for the Democracy Education Project ‘Agora, Educating for Democracy’.

About the topic:
The main reason why I decided to participate, is because I believe that young professionals should take active part in the resolution of global problems. The scarcity of water will be one of the main causes for war in this century and Argentina is a geographical location particularly affected by this type of situation by virtue of the fact that its water resources rank among the highest in the world. As I state in my essay, it is highly probable that Argentina should be a scene for international conflicts triggered by need for access to a scarce non-renewable resource. At the same time, while Argentineans are aware of the environmental effects of water scarcity, they don’t think of water as a strategic resource. As a young professional aware of the geopolitical dimension of water scarcity, I decided the essay competition was an excellent opportunity to introduce Argentina into the debate for peace and to involve myself in the discussion, which is an important stage to solve present and future problems affecting international stability.

About being a finalist:
Thanks to the competition I could meet young people from diverse countries that are representatives of different ethnic and cultural groups. I had the possibility of exchanging experiences and knowledge with them. My usual sources of information about the challenges that other countries face, are the media, conferences, documents and books. All of them are valid and powerful. But the possibility of learning through direct contact with people that are involved in those challenges is much more powerful. After all, conflicts affect real people and it is listening to the voice of real people that a person can
fully realize the meaning and consequences of history and politics. The competition increased my professional as well as social and human assets, due to the contact with people from other ethnic and cultural groups, which at the same time reinforced my esteem for diversity.
The end of the Cold War gave rise to a multiplicity of debates aiming at the configuration of a new paradigm so as to explain what the future governing dynamics of the international system would be. In spite of the varied (and even opposing) answers, it is possible to identify a common factor. The conceptual framework favoured by those taking part in the debate was the concept of globalisation. The leading actor of the different reflections was the Nation-State as conceived after the Peace of Westphalia, i.e. a politically sovereign, economically autarchic and judicially autonomous entity. The driving force behind the debate was the contradiction resulting from the interaction between a phenomenon of trans-national essence and one of a clear national nature. Globalisation appeared to be defying state boundaries. It is out of this setting that the concept of global threats popularised; that is to say, the notion that from then on states would be faced with public problems beyond their national boundaries.

Within the different areas of public policies, the chapter on security was among the most affected ones. During the Cold War, state security was mainly conceived of as an exclusively inner item of states’ domestic agenda. The ground gained by the notion of global threats obliged states to question this premise and, as a result, the security agenda was internationalised and included a range of new topics. Thus, the environment – a global threat – entered into the state security agenda given the assumption that the environmental degradation and/or the competition among states for access to scarce resources would henceforth be potential sources of escalated international conflict.

Robert Kaplan is the one who best exemplifies the aforesaid. In a renowned article titled “The coming anarchy”, published in Atlantic Monthly in 1994, he stated that “It is time to understand ‘the environment’ for what it is: the national-security issue of the early twenty-first century” (Kaplan 1994, 57). In his article, Kaplan establishes that the cause for future international armed conflicts would be the competition among states for access to scarce resources, particularly potable water.

On the one hand, besides being a scarce resource, potable water is non-renewable and has no substitute. Even though about 70% of the Earth’s surface is water, freshwater...
rivers and reservoirs amount to 2.53% of the total world water. Out of such reserves, only 0.26% is accessible freshwater, i.e. suitable for human consumption. On the other hand, by virtue of the demographic growth, the United Nations Organisation has predicted that by the year 2025 the demand for potable water will exceed the supply a 56% because the demand for water increases three times faster than population growth. As a reflection of this situation, the number of people living in countries with scarce water supplies will increase to 2.3 million by 2025. 

The fact that the scarcity of potable water is a factor of interstate conflict is not a mere speculation, for it is possible to offer concrete examples. Control over water is a crucial aspect of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In Terror in the Name of God. Why Religious Militants Kill, Stern points out that “Its scarcity, misallocation, use and abuse is yet another point of conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, especially those in the Gaza Strip” (Stern 2003, 308), because the Israelis build settlements where there is water, and the six thousand settlements in the Gaza Strip use 70% of the water resource – to which they have access by means of state subsidies.

So far I have tried to account for water being a critical factor in the current world and, therefore, an ingredient to take into consideration for the creation of a safer future for everyone. Now I would like to focus on how this problem affects Argentina in general and the City of Buenos Aires – my city of origin – in particular. We will then have gone along a line from the maximum possible degree of abstraction on the debate around water as a factor of conflict (covered up to this point), to the minimum possible degree of abstraction: how the identified problem affects my daily life and what solutions I suggest in this respect.

In order to introduce Argentina into the discussion, it is worth mentioning what place it is ranked at according to the Water Poverty Index (WPI). The index classifies the 147 countries following five criteria: resources, access, capacity, use, and environmental impact. The results show in the first place that there is a positive connection between poverty and water scarcity. Argentina’s 53rd position as “middle scoring” is not so much determined by the possibility of having access to water – which is high – as by the inefficiency in resource management. At a local level, the City of Buenos Aires is a good example to illustrate the conclusion revealed by the WPI.
As shown in the research done by the Fundación Ciudad, in Buenos Aires, problems related to water include, among others, the irrational use of water and water pollution – especially in the case of the River Plate, which is a wonderful freshwater reserve and the city’s main supply.

In my city, when we try to put the blame on someone for the problems that affect our quality of life, we tend to blame it on the State. In the case of potable water, arguments such as “the State will not plan”, “the State will not pass the appropriate laws” and “the State will not control the application of current legislation enough”, multiply in every corner of the metropolis. What we usually forget is the reflection upon the demerits on the part of the citizenry.

We also tend to approach problems only from the point of view of the great debates, leaving aside their application at the micro level, of which we citizens are active participants. To put it in another way, we do not take into account that reflections such as that provided by Kaplan concern every inhabitant of Buenos Aires in general and me in particular. Now, then, how can I justify this conclusion?

A given percentage out of the total accessible potable water for human consumption is destined to domestic consumption. We said before that in Buenos Aires one of the problems related to water is its irrational use. Mostly this irrational use has to do with a variety of practices we porteños carry out as part of our daily domestic routine involving the use of potable water. The quantity of water that we waste day by day due to these practices is just massive. In other words, the amount of potable water we porteños could save daily if we were responsible citizens concerning the use of the said resource is very high. In figures, whereas in order to maintain an acceptable life standard a person needs 20 to 50 litres a day for drinking, cooking and washing, in the City of Buenos Aires about 630 litres a day are being used per capita. The figure is even more shocking if we take into account that the larger cities of the world consume approximately 250 litres of water per capita a day.26 We can understand now why the city of Buenos Aires is a very good example of irrational use of potable water. The challenge then is to reduce the existing gap between the average of 630 litres that each Buenos Aires citizen uses day by

26 The data have been excerpted from a report published by Fundación Ciudad on their web page: http://www.fundacionciudad.org.ar/pdf/Folleto%20AGUA%20I.pdf
day and the average of 20 to 50 daily litres that an individual needs to keep an acceptable life quality.

Bearing this in mind, and focusing our attention on the daily consumption of potable water, which are the water-wasting practices that we could afford to avoid? And what would be the manner and the impact of overcoming the said practices in terms of saving?

Day by day I observe how my relatives, my friends, my work colleagues, my neighbours and people I come across because of my activities, waste potable water. In parallel with this, I could say with an almost complete certainty that they are people who value such resource. How do we explain this contradiction? I believe that the explanation lies in the fact that they consider water to be an infinite resource. When given a concrete situation I ask any of them not to waste it, because potable water is going to be over, they look at me in wonder and reply that that is impossible. Therefore, the first condition for a change toward responsible use of potable water is to raise public awareness. What we need is, above all, a cultural change. We need to educate the citizens (a) to acknowledge the problem, and (b) to get involved in the change.

Going back to my observations, I set to elaborate a list of the irresponsible practices that I most frequently detect. Added to that, I set to estimate how much water could be saved if we eliminated those practices replacing them with practices involving considerable saving of potable water. The measures will not be academic – though they do respond to common sense – and will be based on the average use involved in the activities to be described. My list, which is far from being exhaustive, includes the following variables: watering of the plants; use of the washing machine; own consumption; teeth cleaning; bath and shower taking; and pavement washing. This list includes all the daily potable water uses of a citizen from the moment he or she wakes in the morning to the moment he or she goes to sleep in the night.

Suppose we water the plants every day and we use 2 litres of water each time we do it. Here we can think of two concrete solutions. If plants are watered on a daily basis, they could as well be watered once every two days. Basically no indoor plant needs daily watering. Likewise, instead of using 2 litres of water we could use 1 and a half. This would mean saving a total of 8 litres a week per household. The annual saving would be
of 384 litres of running water per household. If a million households were to adopt those two measures, the annual saving would be 384,000,000 litres of running water. One way to control the amount used to water the plants is to resort to an empty 1500-cubic-centimetre bottle instead of a hose.

Every washing machine cycle uses an average of 100 litres of water. Suppose that in a house the washing machine works three times a week. It is very likely that it is not used to its full capacity. Therefore, if it were used so, the washing machine would work twice instead of three times a week. This means a saving of 100 litres of running water a week per house. If 500,000 homes could save a weekly wash, the city would save 50,000,000 litres of water a week and 2,400,000,000 litres a year.

The quantity of water the inhabitants of Buenos Aires consume includes water for maté and other infusions such as coffee or tea; water for cooking; and water for washing (dishes and food to be cooked). Many times, we do not consume all the water that we boil in the kettle to brew maté. So, one way to save would be the re-boil the rest of the water. Regarding water for washing, if we do not turn off the tap while we wash, 60 litres of water are wasted every 15 minutes. The way to save, then, would be to turn off the tap while we are not using water to wash. Finally, we could be careful enough so as to use the necessary amount of water for cooking. Let us suppose that at any given house dishes are washed once a day in a standard 15 minutes. Turning off the tap, we could save 60 litres of water a day per house, or 20,160 litres a year. If we re-boil the water in the kettle instead of throwing it away, we could save half a litre a day, or 168 litres a year. We would be able to arrive at a similar conclusion with respect to water for cooking. In short, just by re-boiling the water in the kettle, using the necessary amount for cooking and turning the tap off when washing, an individual could save 20,496 litres of water a year. If 300,000 people adopted similar practices, we would have a total annual saving of 6,148,800,000 litres.

If we do not turn off the tap every time we brush our teeth, 3 litres of water are wasted every 55 seconds. Let’s assume that we brush our teeth twice a day. If 1,000,000 individuals that do not turn the tap off started doing it, we would get an annual saving of 2,016,000,000 litres of running water.
We porteños are addicted to showering and we greatly enjoy baths. If we turn on the shower before getting under it, 4 litres of water are wasted every minute. At the same time, instead of having 20-minute showers, we could reduce the time to 15 minutes. If we take 10 baths a year, we could reduce the number to 5. Suppose that 500,000 people who turn on the shower three minutes before getting under it started turning it on just 2 minutes before. If those people have showers on a daily basis, the annual saving would be of 1,344,000,000 litres. If the bathtub has a capacity of 80 litres and 200,000 people reduce the amount of baths from 10 to 5, the annual saving would be of 80,000,000 litres.

Lastly, every time the pavement is washed, about 250 litres of water are used. In my city it is a typical habit for building caretakers, housewives or domestics to let water run and run off the hose every time they wash the pavement. One way to avoid this is to use a bucket instead of a hose. The 250 litres used could then be reduced to 100. Let us assume that 100,000 people replace the hose with a bucket: 3,360,000,000 annual litres would be saved in total.

Now, if we add the different annual savings so far expounded, the resulting total saving of running water for domestic purposes amounts to 15,732,800,000.

By way of conclusion, we will say that we can individually accomplish a great deal if we are committed to a responsible use of running water. What matters above all is that adopting the practices included in the list does not mean to lower the citizens’ quality of life. From now on, we should cease to hold only the state accountable and change into responsible citizens, conscious that our own individual actions can have a positive impact on society.

The scarcity of water will be one of the main causes for war in this century, as we have proved at the beginning of this reflection. Argentina is a geography particularly affected by this type of situation by virtue of the fact that its water resources rank among the highest in the world. In other words, it is highly probable that Argentina should be a scene for international conflicts triggered by need for access to a scarce non-renewable resource.

We are urgently required to become aware of the dimensions of the problem and to realise that we can (and must) be a part of the solution. It should be a joint task aimed at that direction, i.e. it should draw together different social and political sectors
(government, individuals, educational institutions, media, among others). The government should at all levels play a main role, assigning a portion of the annual budget to programmes of civil awareness about the issue at stake and about which practices imply responsible use. Above all, the necessary change is a cultural one. For this, educational institutions have a fundamental duty to fulfil. The problem of water scarcity should form part of school and university curricula, at least of those courses of study connected to international relations. In my particular case, I am a university teacher of international politics and year after year my students and I reflect upon the problem of water and its link with war. It is a small contribution, but one which has a multiplying effect. In the university senate, we arrive at conclusions very similar to those I have presented by means of this reflection. The educational institutions have a leading role in fostering a message raising awareness. The civil society also has a part to play. There exist several Non-Governmental Organisations that deal with the problem. It is important that the government and private companies should allocate funds for these organisations, particularly for those programmes seeking to encourage responsible use.

The total saving I have presented includes only one city of the world and is not exhaustive – for example, it does not include the use of swimming pools, car washing or house cleaning. Let us multiply that figure taking in not just cities but whole countries, and no doubt the result is even more astounding. The fundamental message that I want to convey by means of this reflection is the profound multiplying effect of small concrete actions. An important part of the solution is within reach. Otherwise, running water will have already run out in a time when there will still be human beings who will not have known what an invaluable miracle it is to turn on the tap and see water fit for consumption run.

References
FINALIST, BONIFACE CHIMWAZA, MALAWI

Environmental Degradation: Effects and Possible Preventive and Mitigation Measures

Boniface focuses on the various factors that lead to environmental degradation.
About himself:
Just a few days before the finals of the Essay Competition I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from The University of Malawi, Bunda College of Agriculture. I have a keen interest in environmental issues – I have written several study papers on environment and I also used to be an intern at Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi.

About the topic:
It all started with a friend who told me that he had seen a brochure in our college library that outlined the details of the competition. I was eager to know more about the competition and rushed to the library to see it for myself. I saw it and visited the website that was given on the brochure to get more information about the competition. I went back home and thought about the problems I could give practical solutions to. Environmental degradation came to my mind immediately! A source of many social, economic, health, ecological problems in my country - Malawi, environmental degradation was a problem worth sharing with my fellow youths and the world as a whole.

About being a finalist:
The news that I am among the nine finalists to meet in Amsterdam during the ABCDE conference brought happiness and excitement to my friends, my lecturers, and me. I was a hero! I was eager to meet my fellow finalists and the final jury; I looked forward to the ABCDE conference itself. The waiting was not long as the following week was an exam week (my final university exam as an undergraduate student!) I finished my exams on Friday, 20th May 2005 and departed for Amsterdam the following day. Meeting my fellow finalists, presenting my essay to the juries, and attending the conference were an extra mile in my learning journey. We, the finalists shared
experiences, I learnt new things from the conference itself, I made new friends from different countries. It was super!

I got my only disappointment and frustration (for a short time though) when I learnt that I was not in the top four. I felt bitter at first but I shortly accepted the final result. That is why it is called COMPETITION. Some win, others lose. It’s part of the game!
Abstract
There are many problems related to the degradation of the environment. These are problems such as human health problems, reduction in the productivity of the land, loss of biological diversity and many others. The degradation of the environment is accelerated by rapid growth of the human population, corruption, poverty, HIV/AIDS, negligence, ignorance and some other inevitable natural events such as volcanoes and earthquakes. Many people are dying every year due to the problems related to environmental degradation. There are frequent droughts and persistent hunger episodes in many countries especially in Southern Africa.

There is need for collective action to improve environmental management and the spirit of stewardship. Change of attitudes and consumption patterns among individuals, changes in some product designs, increased political will and other interventions are among the measures that could be taken to avert these problems. There is also great need for civic education in environmental management because people in many societies and institutions do not understand the impacts of their activities on the environment.

There should be gender considerations in the implementation of project that deal with environmental protection and natural resources management. Women are very important in natural resources management and environmental management since they are among the most severely groups affected by problems emanating from environmental degradation.

Introduction
Environmental degradation is a threat to the social and economic development of any country. Gratuitous destruction of natural resources has the capacity to paralyse the economies of many countries. Pollution of water, land, and the atmosphere presents risks to the human society as well as to the aquatic and terrestrial fauna and flora.
Causes and Effects of Environmental Degradation

HIV/AIDS is one of the factors that contribute to environmental degradation and worsening poverty in developing countries. It claims lives of people that would work in various fields to conserve and protect the environment, and to reduce poverty. HIV/AIDS is also reducing productivity of people by keeping them busy caring for the patients. This time would have been used for other economically productive activities. Collective and individual actions are of vital importance in the battle against HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation.

The population worldwide especially in most developing countries is growing at alarming rates. The growing population and the poverty increase demand for various resources especially natural resources, food, transportation, and living space. The poor, unemployed people solely depend on natural resources for a living as they do not have an alternative source of income. The need for new land for settlement and cultivation leads clearing of forests. This involves use of practices and technologies that are environmentally destructive. People cultivate on steep slopes, in river catchments, and very close to the rivers and other water bodies.

In a bid to increase agricultural yield from the limited pieces of land to feed the growing populations, farmers worldwide use pesticides, heavy machinery and inorganic fertilisers. These are not sustainable means of production because they lead to degradation of the natural resources and destruction of natural ecological systems. Pesticides have many undesirable effects on human health, plants, fish, and wildlife. This has been reported by many environmental writers one of whom is Chiras who said that:

“Pesticides contaminate many foods and have been found in many body tissues even in remote areas of the world, indicating that pesticides are globally distributed. Farm workers are frequently exposed to the highest levels, especially in developing countries. The effects of pesticides exposure range from mild neurological problems to death, depending on the exposure level and type of chemical.”
This is a very serious problem that needs urgent solutions to save the lives of many people. It is a sad situation to learn that in the United States of America alone, at least 4500 workers are seriously poisoned each year, and many experts believe that this figure grossly underestimates the number of serious poisonings (Chiras, 1998). Chiras 1998 further reports that between 4000 and 19000 people die per year due to pesticide poisoning.

Another problem worth worrying about is that of water pollution. Countries produce different types of water pollutants. According to Chiras (1998), the water in all countries is plagued with pollutants from human and animal wastes, but in industrial nations, toxic chemicals also contribute to water pollution.

Pollution by plant nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus encourage massive growth of aquatic plants. The plants have negative environmental, economic and social impacts. For example, in Malawi, there are frequent power failures because of plants that choke the water intake points for the hydroelectric power generation station at Tedzani Hydroelectric Power Station on Shire River. This leads to loss of a lot of money in industries and households. The power generating company itself loses a lot of money in revenue as well as in removing the plants. When the plants die, they decompose and deplete oxygen in the process (a process called eutrophication). This degrades the quality of water. Eutrophication also leads to death of some aquatic oxygen demanding animal species such as the Oreochromis species as oxygen is depleted. Saunders, (1976) reported that nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, and land run – off are among the most common pollutants of fresh water. He furthers reports that nitrates and phosphates encourage productivity in oligotrophic or “nutrient – clean” waters. High concentrations of nitrate – N increase the possibility of the occurrence of infantile methaemoglobinaemia (the effects of a reduction in the ability of haemoglobin in red blood cell to carry oxygen), which mainly affects children below the age of six months. A further potential hazard may be the formation of carcinogenic nitrosamines in the human digestive system by the conversion nitrogen to nitrite and subsequent reaction with amino acids.
Soil erosion drastically reduces agricultural productivity of the land. The soil that is eroded in most cases is the top fertile soil. This leaves the subsurface, poorer soils which are not very productive. This forces the framer to add more synthetic inorganic fertilisers. This increases the costs on the part of the farmer and the fertilisers act as a source of pollution.

Destruction of the trees implicitly destroys the habitats for many plants and animal species. Animals like leopards and monkeys that live in forests find themselves with nowhere to live and hence they go where they can find ideal living places. The cutting of trees may also leave the animals vulnerable to predators. Some plant species can only live in association with certain tree species. When the tree species is wiped out, the other plant species also disappear. This is very serious as some of the plant species are very rare and have scientific and medicinal values.

Where land is very scarce, conventional heavily mechanised and chemical reliant agriculture is used to produce maximum yields from the small pieces of land. This leads to compaction of soil and pollution of water bodies. Compaction of the soil reduces its productivity as it hinders normal penetration of plant roots and hence normal plant growth is disturbed. Pollution of water bodies is a threat to both the current and future human generations. Most of the pesticides are mutagenic, carcinogenic and or toxic. Chronic exposures to these chemicals increase risks of cancer and birth defects in the future generations. These chemicals also negatively affect aquatic fauna and flora.

It can be said that high rates of HIV/AIDS cases may increase the probability of the occurrence of severe shortage of food and conversely, severe shortage of food may lead to the increase of new HIV infection rates. People spend a lot of resources including time taking care of people suffering from HIV /AIDS related illnesses. The resources and time would have been used as input into agricultural industry to ensure food security and economic development for countries like Malawi whose economies are mainly dependent on agriculture.
Coupled with unemployment and the weak economy of a country, shortage of food is likely to result in higher commercial sex activities. According to Oxfam, weak economies and high rates of unemployment may lead many women to sell sexual services because this may be seen as the only means of survival available to them (www.oxfam.org.uk). Sex is a major means for the spread of HIV and hence higher sex activities have a higher probability of increasing the rate of new HIV infections.

Pollution from industrial activities is another serious problem that has to be dealt with. Some companies do not have well defined mechanisms to reduce emissions from their industrial activities. Their main interest is in making profits. The designs of their products are not ideal to suit the modern times. In some products, the packaging material is a source of pollution. For example, use of unrecyclable plastic materials in the packaging industry does not take into account how the plastic material will be disposed of when the main product has been used.

Some big industries are located in residential areas. Industrial activities may produce hazardous emissions, a lot of disturbing sounds, and toxic liquid wastes. These create social problems in the residential areas as the society may suffer from a wide range of diseases resulting from inhaling the pollutants from the industries after a long exposure. This becomes a very serious problem when officials from environmental regulatory bodies are corrupt. Instead of making right recommendations to the relevant authorities, they favour the industries for their own monetary gains at the expense of many people in the society.

**Practical Solutions to Environmental Degradation**

The problems that I have outlined above need individual, societal, national and global efforts to combat. As an individual, I have been trying to deal with problems of water pollution and deforestation. Knowing that one of the ways one can make correct and sound recommendations to the relevant authorities is through the use of data that has been generated through a scientific research, my academic research dealt with the impacts of commercial farming on water quality. The title of the project is “The Impacts of
Commercial Farming on Water Quality in Likangala River: A Case Study of Rathdrum Farm Limited, Chimpeni Estate Limited, and Kachulu Estate Limited in Zomba District.” In this project, I did a chemical analysis of the water to establish the link between the chemical and plant nutrients concentrations in the river relative to the activities of the commercial farms. The project found that there are significant negative impacts of the commercial farming on the quality of water in the river (Likangala). There link between the water quality in the river and the commercial farms has been established and I am now making recommendations to the Environmental Affairs Department (in Malawi) basing on what I have found.

It would not be simple for me to influence people’s attitudes towards the environment as an individual; hence I joined Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM), the biggest and oldest non governmental organisation in the field of wildlife and environmental protection in Malawi, as a student member. During the holidays, I work at its Zomba Branch on voluntary basis so that my ideas could be heard on the ticket of WESM. WESM has the capacity to influence even the government policies on the environment. While working there, I have been attending various meetings on environmental natural resources management. One of these meetings was converged to find ways of stopping destruction of the Zomba - Malosa Forest Reserve. Using the knowledge that that I have acquired during my four years of studies at the University of Malawi as an Environmental Scientist, I made my contributions to the meeting, a thing which would not be possible if I did not join the society. In addition to making such contributions during the environmental protection meetings, I have also been involved in the production of environmental education materials for environmental clubs and the rural communities, conducting environmental education sessions with pupils and students from primary and secondary schools and tertiary education institutions respectively. From my experiences while working with WESM, I would recommend to my fellow youths that it is a good idea to join an organisation that deals with the problem in question so that your voice could be heard under the organisation.
Apart from the ways that I have used to help to solving the problem of environmental degradation, I suggest the following as practical solutions that can help us build a secure future:

• Change in people’s attitude towards the environment. People must be convinced that they are part of nature and must live in harmony with it. We must learn that nature can stay without us but we cannot stay or live without nature and hence we are not superior to nature.

• Change in people’s consumption patterns. Reuse of such materials as plastic bags and plastic bottles should be encouraged. This will ensure that we do not buy another plastic carrier bag each time we go shopping and hence reduce the amount of plastics being dumped as wastes. We must learn to buy only those items we know we are going to use; do not buy an item simply there is money to spend then throw the item away. This leads to accumulation of wastes unnecessarily. Where we doubt the environmental friendliness of an item and where a better alternative is available, we must reject the questionable item and go for the alternative.

• Change in product designs. Wherever possible, the designs of the products should take into considerations its effects on the environment from the cradle to the grave. Product designers should make sure that the product is produced, packaged, stored, distributed, consumed, and its by products are disposed of, with minimum negative environmental impacts. Wherever possible packaging material and products’ by-products should be recyclable.

• Use of bottom – up approach in implementation of projects whose goal is to improve environmental and natural resources management in rural areas. Before implementing such projects, there should be proper consultations with the local communities to make sure that the project will be acceptable among, and there will be participation from, them.

• Establishment of environmental groups. This will enable the people to speak with one voice. It is easier to influence policy makers when a concern has been raised by a group of individuals than from an individual. As such, grievances from the people concerning activities of private companies and even government, which have a negative effect on the
environment, could be taken more seriously if it came from a legally recognised grouping of people.

• Where corrupt practices are apparent, we must report to the relevant authorities (for example, The Anti Corruption Bureau in Malawi). This could be done as an individual as well as a collective action to stop the malpractice.

• Promotion of income generating activities (IGAs) to the people that are directly involved in the destruction of the environment. People that are not employed and solely depend on the natural resources should be given capital to start their own IGAs to reduce the pressure on the natural resources. These IGAs could be businesses, piece work (temporary employment), nature based income generating microprojects such as bee keeping, guinea fowl rearing, tree seedling rearing, fruit and vegetable production and many others. The microprojects should be given to the after doing a thorough feasibility study otherwise they will be a waste of time and money.

• Intensive civic education. Environmental education in work places, academic institutions, and in the rural communities can make a difference in the way people think about the environment.

• Gender considerations environmental projects. The existing relationships between men and women play a major role in the success of various projects, including the environmental ones. Women should be part and parcel in the implementation of environmental projects because they are the ones that are most affected by the effects of environmental degradation. For example, in most African countries including Malawi, women walk long distances searching for water and fuel wood because of the degradation of water resources and forest resources respectively.

I believe that the suggestions I have given above could help us to build a good world. They would help to lower rates of environmental degradation, they would help to combat corruption, they would help to reduce hunger, and they play a role in reducing the infection rates of HIV. In the end, everyone will be at peace and the world will be a better place to live in.
REFERENCE


Retrieved 7th April 2005
Safet reflects on the meaning and the importance of tolerance in the contemporary world in the light of the recent war in his home country, Bosnia.
Finalist, Safet Hadzimuhamedovic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, speaks:

About himself:
I was born in 1985. My childhood was interrupted by war - I am now defined by it. I am at present studying Art History and Sociology in Sarajevo.

About the topic:
My sister sent me a web-link to the essay competition page. The topic was excellent: Building secure future. That’s all I wanted, so that children never again experience Sarajevo, Brcko, Stolac, Srebrenica, Gorazde, Prnjavor, Tuzla, Visegrad, Mostar, Nevesinje, Bjeljina, Trebinje, Modrica, Livno...
I also wanted to be heard, to send my scream out to the world, to make someone feel bad for not knowing or caring. I wanted to promote tolerance as a virtue, not that hypocritical strange habit to turn a blind eye on things.

About being a finalist:
The final presentations that we made during the Final Jury in Amsterdam were a discussion about the future. Everyone had a personal point of view. I felt that I was overlooking issues that were not related to me or my country. But when I was speaking of intolerance, the slaughtered Bosnian children in me for a moment became the same as all the children in the world. I am glad I got a chance to make that speech, but it would seem pointless, if I didn't have ambassadors of it, now all over the world. Today, I feel that this sharing of ideas between Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Philippines, Bolivia, Argentina, Malawi, Congo and Bosnia, makes my country’s future a bit more secure and bright.
No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less...any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind...

John Donne

Personal ordeal

What I wish to tell you is impossible to say. The horror which I want to share with you is perhaps easier to understand if I tell you that I come from Bosnia. What is Bosnia?

Undoubtedly it is a symbol. And symbols arise out of lack of words. But what does this symbol signify, why is it a paradigm and a warning? I will remind you: when I was just a child, as all Bosnian children I became a victim of intolerance, of such intolerance that makes the usual view of intolerance seem like a kind thought. I was hungry and thirsty but unlike so many other children I didn’t starve to death. I was lucky in all that horror, because I had parents. Everyday fathers and sons were separated from their family and then slaughtered. Because sons were to have sons, and sons were to have names, names were to carry ages of memory. That’s why my people was to be eliminated, erased. Women and young girls were raped, physically and mentally, haunted by fear and humiliation before brutally murdered.

They were often buried alive, arms tied to their back. These perverse people played football games with human heads for a ball, they burnt houses with people locked, screaming inside. They built concentration camps, full of starving people, beaten to death, forced to drink their own urine. Two of my uncles were agonized in these camps. At the present time Bosnia hardly remembers a day without finding a new mass grave.

When I look outside my window I see four graveyards. In almost every one is someone I
knew, my cousin, my playmates from primary school and their families. I recall one winter when we were second grade, 7 year old kids, and our school was a basement so that we don’t get killed, a friend of ours Dijana, wanted to play in the snow although the grenades and snipers were in quest for all they can diminish. So she sneaked out to play. A red sign in the snow, and flowers on the table where she used to sit in our basement-school was all that’s left of her laughter. Targets in my city were clearly defined, there were two types: 1. anything moving: people, children, open market places, schools, line ups of people waiting for food, water… 2. Targets worse and more painful than any murder: our libraries, temples, museums and galleries… These people didn’t just want to torture us, they wanted to erase every notion that we once existed. Today I’m not allowed to say their names, and the murderers walk freely and satisfied, because they got most of what they wanted. Towns are clear of Bosnian people, and their history has been erased. An ethnic cleansing successfully accomplished and a genocide no one will mention.

What do I want?
So as you can see, somehow those illusions I had as a child vanished. No longer was the imperative of my life being happy. Now I just wanted to live in a world where I could proudly say my name, I wanted to do something for the mothers with sons and husbands slaughtered. I wanted you to open your eyes. I wanted you to say you were sorry for not helping more. I wanted to condemn all those responsible for my tragedy. I live today in a society which allows criminals to walk freely. I understand that no one can pay the price of my destroyed childhood. I realize that revenge will not give me satisfaction, although justice might. But I definitely have a need to give a new definition of relations between people. I want to be tolerant, but tolerance in my case seems like a misused term. How can I tolerate a destructive force? Either tolerance is wrong or it has to be more than just enduring. In this essay I will try to deconstruct the term tolerance and give a solution for a plural society dealing with bigotry and prejudice. It may not seem practical, because it is impossible to give a short prescription for being tolerant. It has to be personal and general in the same time. August Comtes legacy among other things is an idea of positive religion, a religion that would be based on universal moral values, one that would fit into
everyones religious beliefs. Is his idea possible? What could constructively help the mankind to break out of the trap of these self-centered ideologies? I do not wish to find an answer to this question yet. Let us first deal with what tolerance is today, and find its faults and negative sides.

In this essay the term tolerance is presented as a concept designated with this in language frequently used term. I will observe this phenomenon primarily from a sociological aspect. Any ethical, philosophical, linguistic and other approaches indicated, will be used as unavoidable and helpful in reaching certain conclusions. The essay will encompass sections, trough which I tried to open and/ or resolve issues of tolerance, reasons for tolerance, outcomes of tolerance, intolerance, negative tolerance, rational approach and economical effects of tolerance, ideological misuse of tolerance, passive tolerance, freedom of belief, dialogue and differences.

The fundamental theses I will question are:

1. Tolerance derives from existence of differences;
2. For being able to define tolerance, it is necessary to understand what >other and different< means.
3. Tolerance is not a goal but a social necessity;
4. Intolerance is a historical reality;
5. Tolerance implies dialogue;
6. Tolerance does not mean acceptance but enduring, bearing...

Question of tolerance is raised as an essential question of human comprehension of himself. Tolerance is a possibility for extension of understanding ourselves, which is inseparable from understanding other and different – traditions, races, genders, religions, education, appearance, capability. “This is why answering the question of future involves the question that appears as the foundation of identity: Who am I? This question is impossible to answer without knowledge of where the questioner is coming and where he’s going.”27 We live in a world where intolerance and inconsideration are paths towards power, domination, imposing of intimate and public desires and impulses. We live in the shadow of holocaust and genocide. At the beginning of the third millennium world is

27 Rusmir Mahmutéhajié, 2001
confronted to a need to answer the question: What is ethnical cleansing? I am one of the letters in that question. My own experience with intolerance forces me to try to understand it, its consequences. It is not just an ethical standard for me anymore; it becomes the basis of definition of my surroundings. I read “the roots” by Alex Haley, while I was hiding in the basement of my building in 1994, and I learned about a horrifying racism in proximate past of the democratic society. I realized that the history of mankind is full of oppressions and intolerance. Tolerance has appeared only exceptionally, as a possibility or an indication. Because of that tolerance is a social necessity. Not respecting other and different is in fact not respecting yourself.

Tolerance has negative occurrences. Every individual is exposed as an object of intolerance – as such or as a member of a group. Race, religion, background, gender, color of hair, leanings, education, and political belief, color of voice… all that defines a person or a group can be used as a reason for intolerance. Intolerance is a menace to human rights. Rational understanding of intolerance is consisted in the effort to impose the idea that an individual or a group which threatens the rights of others and different, actually gain by being intolerant. This is an essay to answer certain questions: Why is tolerance a necessity? Is tolerance possible? Is tolerance sufficient for the existence of a community? Does tolerance have its negative forms, and can it be harmful for a community? Is intolerance justifiable?

**What is tolerance?**

Etymology of the term tolerance is a Latin verb *tolerare-* to endure, to bear, to put up with. Therefore, tolerance is not acceptance or respecting another opinion / act / appearance / belief, as if it was our own, but not endangering such opinion / act / appearance / belief. Tolerance is inseparable from existence of differences. According to official documents of United Nations, tolerance is a capability to accept differences, to ensure respect towards different, including a struggle against, all kinds of exclusivities-racism, sexism, chauvinism, nationalism etc. In the Charter of the United Nations tolerance is characterized as one of the bases for defining and realization of human rights.
In ‘’ American Heritage Dictionary’’, tolerance is defined as ‘’ Capability to allow, or allowing, or respecting beliefs or conduct of others.” This definition fits into description of individual freedoms, which the western world preaches as correct, yet we judge people by the resemblance of their beliefs to ours. We characterize those different behaviors as odd or wrong.

**Why tolerance?**

The world we live in every day becomes a smaller global village. The level of communication, technology and trade has expanded in such a way that people all over our planet, whether they want to or not, must cooperate in building the future. We live together, all of us: Africans, Americans, Asians, and Europeans, which are Jews, Muslims, and Christians, Buddhist, Hindu, or atheists… People with a variety of different cultural, religious, economic, political, traditions and attitudes are now forced to interact and exchange ideas, knowledge and goods. Functioning of a community, which in modern society outgrows the frontiers of tribes, nations, countries, and even continents, is based on one simple sentence: ‘’ No man is an island…” No individual or community, of which he is a member, can survive without work based on common interests and aimed towards joint goals. The difference of an individual is in the same time a request for tolerance, if not respect and agreement. Through history the ones who oppress, always have their reasons for rejecting tolerance as a principle. On the other hand, the ones oppressed, often realize their endangerment, and in the name of their rights they rebel and use oppression themselves, and so neglect the principle of tolerance.

Such solution endangers tolerance and its unconditional validity. For understanding the need for tolerance it is important to accept that no individual holds the key for the ultimate truth. Goethe understood: ‘’ If I’m allowed to feel and think my own way, it costs me nothing to let each person be what it is or even what it wants to be. “ And everything would be as Goethe prescribed, if the mankind was given freedom, and they didn’t need to fight for it, again, and again. Tolerance never came to anyone by itself. Economy also has it interest in tolerance. The patterns of costumers are becoming more diverse every day. So it would be unproductive to neglect diversity. Even so far back as to 17th century, authors of the initial principles of tolerance, the great minds like John Locke, Baruch Spinoza and Samuel von Pufendorf, weren’t afraid to emphasize the
benefits that tolerance can bring to economy. Fast growing contemporary societies such as Great Britain and United States of America. Have realized the economic benefit of different races, ideas, views of life, talents and what they can contribute to the evolution of art and industry.

**Diversity**

A fine example, often been used, deriving from Manfred Max-Neef a member of the Roman club, illustrates the complexity of differences. Imagine the world as a small settlement with a thousand inhabitants. This settlement would be home to 564 Asians, 210 Europeans, 86 Africans, 80, south-Americans, and 60 north-Americans. 310 are Christian, including 189 Roman Catholics, 87 Protestants and 34 orthodox Christians, 183 inhabitants are Muslim, 134 Hindu, 60 Buddhist, 36 Jews, 54 animists, and 223 have no religious preference. More than half of this population is women. At first glance our settlement can give a good impression, a plural, multicultural and multi religious community. If you observe closer you will find out that 60 inhabitants own more than 60% of entire wealth. The other 940 must share the leftovers. Furthermore, 500 inhabitants suffer of famine, 600 live in settlements without basic life conditions, and 700 do not know how to read or write. When we picture this situation, most of us are stunned. Therefore these 6% of people holding the majority of world’s wealth represent a problem which can not be solved with tolerance. If conflicts do not repair the damage, then all there is left is **dialogue**. Consequently tolerance is not always the best solution.

If we refuse to give equal rights to people different from us, thinking that what we are doing is justified, we open the possibility of someone rejecting our own difference. Each one of us has the right to disrespect something. And here lies the absurdity of the situation: Denying the right to disrespect is also intolerance. Defining tolerance equals defining the outlines of freedom. The designation of “the other” derives from difference, and “I” (“we”) is the only component for evaluation. Definition of “us” and “the others” is a powerful sociological, and consequentially a cultural setback of the civilization, which reached its climax in the holocaust.

**Identity**

To know about yourself, about the time and place in which we live, about the costumes of our ancestors seems like a significant factor of keeping values that we share and which
derive from our traditions. But, actually, identity is taken as a reason for hatred throughout history. What are the features of a rational, moral human being? An individual discovers itself in its identity, finds paths, philosophy of life, and point of spiritual elevation? Each identity, a person or a group carries, cherish and fight for, loses its value, when another persons identity is endangered. But translating this simple equation into practice - that endangering the rights of others is the same endangering our own- is a problem. A problem that makes us obliged to explain why we should endure the existence of differences. Tolerance is acceptance that no individual holds the key for the ultimate truth. I would rephrase and say: One holds the key for his own truth, but he must not try to unlock other doors with that key.

**Negative tolerance**

I cannot give tolerance as an ultimate criterion for solving some of the problems that future brings, at least not that usual appearance of tolerance. Why? History teaches us that tolerance can often have negative forms, and develop into conflicts and chaos. Even if such tolerance doesn’t turn into conflicts, its still isn’t a virtue. I will point out certain negative outlines of tolerance, often practiced in society:

The kind of tolerance, which stands for mere enduring, or supporting nearly everything, can be dangerous and threatening, when it borders with negligence and ignorance. We tolerate famine in Africa, just as the world tolerated when Bosnia was being killed. And those 94% of the planet tolerate the fact that resources of their planet are not appropriately distributed, and that it result in deaths and sufferings. To tolerate an act or a thought which gives rise to threatening situations, intolerance or crime is not wise and doesn’t lead to solution, but only makes it wider. There are numerous examples: thieves, murderers, rapists, pedophiles, chauvinists, people or groups spreading national hatreds and oppressing… All of those people obviously have an opinion, but such opinions affect freedom of other people. If we stand up, or put a stop to them, refuse to endure, we become literally intolerant. Tolerance is acceptance that other people have different opinions; it is not having the same opinion. It seems that people treat tolerance as self-sufficient, when it is actually, one of those virtues for which Aristotle says they help us keep balance between two opposite extremes. Our society needs to define the range of its tolerance, partly based on ethical presumption.
Karl Popper didn’t think that tolerance is a positive principle by itself. He wrote: "You must not accept the principle of tolerance without qualification. If you do that, you damage not only yourselves but also the attitude of tolerance.” So tolerance should be performed with some restrictions. Karl Popper also said: ‘’In the name of tolerance, we should not tolerate intolerance!’”28 Another great political mind, Herbert Marcuse, in his essay ‘’Bounding tolerance’’, analyzed the term tolerance with more criticism. In his opinion, ‘’what is proclaimed and practiced as tolerance today, in many of its manifestations serves to aims of domination… Conditions of tolerance are designated and defined with institutionalized inequality.’”29

What is should we do? What should we do to implement tolerance in a correct way? We should persuade, educate, and give reasonable arguments. The challenge is to make safer a constructive, public debate, to influence the attitude of the people. On the other hand, positive and active tolerance carries numerous obligations, as may be noticed in the Declaration of principles of tolerance.

**Intolerance and ideology**

28 Popper K. Conjectures and Refutations, L. 1962 p.357;
Can affection for one's own difference create hatred and intolerance towards other and different? Reaching the goal, even at the price of sating back the mankind for centuries, were ideas of individuals lacking the sense for tolerance. The ideas of hatred were installed in masses by various methods. The individual would then sink into the hatred of the group, as happens in fascism, Nazism, and other nationalistic and mass ideologies. For Marx ideology was, among other things, a way of corrupted conscience that in relation recognition manifests itself as in the camera obscura. It is an embezzled consciousness, an idealization of reality. The ruling ideology, according to Marx, describes the awareness of the ruling social class, and represents as the national spirit, or national ideology. Extreme ideologies reject the principle of tolerance, and freedoms of individual, traumatize the mankind time and again. ‘“Absolute tolerance and eternal unspoiled peace are not possible, because they don’t suit human nature. As long the partial social interests exist there will be opposed ideologies. But disagreements don’t have to be exclusive and lead to war. Diversity is the treasure of the world, which is able to exist without vicious antagonisms.” Holocaust, Palestine, Bolivia, Vietnam, Rwanda and Bosnia, Alger and Northern Ireland, Kosovo and Chechnya and Kashmir, and much other intolerance is not only a result of human dissatisfaction with themselves, but also a consequence of strategically planned ideologies, installed in the minds and acts of the public. Freedom and objectivity of the Medias is essential for reduction of such dangerous ideologies. For example a television station RTRS (radio-television republic of srpska) not only was part of genocidal attempts during the aggression o Bosnia and Herzegovina, but even now is trying to tell lies to its audience. Recently they announced in their news that what was the most horrifying massacre in Sarajevo, when Serbian army threw grenades at the open market place Markale, and

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30 Arif Tanović- Forum Bosnae; Tolerancija i Ideologija; Sarajevo, 1990.
killed hundreds of people is actually a setup with old corpses and fake blood. Another factor important for tolerance is freedom of speech. Even if someone had courage to tell the masses in Serbia and Montenegro that their army was responsible for ethnic cleansing and murders of thousands people in Bosnia, they would probably be beaten up or in jail. In many towns in my country people can not attain freedoms of religious belief. The term tolerance often appears in regard to the freedom of religious beliefs. Such condition is not apparent solely in war torn countries like mine, but also in modern democratic societies like France (the ban of using religious symbols). The French case is a classic example of negative tolerance I was mentioning. Such tolerance in which an individual has no freedom of difference, and where diversities are forbidden, in order to have a big melting pot where everyone has the same, imputed values reminds me of communism and its paroles. During the period of communism in my country freedom of religious beliefs didn’t exist, mosques were closed or razed to the ground. Intolerant societies don’t have other values as well, and often disrespect historical monuments and common heritage. I am a Muslim, but believe me I wanted to cry when statues of Buddha in Afghanistan were teared down, because they were my heritage and their as well. These two terms “freedoms” and “tolerance” were often discussed within the work frame of United Nations, especially UNESCO. According to the general director of UNESCO, Fredric Mayor: “Tolerance in the exact meaning of the word signifies recognition of diversities and tolerant attitude towards them” Tolerance includes mutual understanding that prevents contradictions evolving into conflict.

**Dialogue as the way out of crisis**

In this global village we live in it is no longer possible just to tolerate the existence of other/different, because we have to deal with these diversities everyday. They are not something strange happening far, far away anymore. In order to tolerate diversities today we need the help of dialogue. We cannot obtain peace without informed public. This can be achieved by local and global **unrestricted debates**. In cases where it's impossible to reach an agreement tolerating certain issues can also be debated.
We need dialogue!!! Even ancient Greeks considered that opinion can develop only through discussion, and discussion required difference. How can dialogue be helpful to tolerance? Dialogue among civilizations is a frequent need for life in peace, mutual respect and rightful international law. International dialogue summarizes intellectual maturity achieved by mankind, after analyzing experience from the past and present society, as well as expectations for the future. The struggle against all forms of indifference and disagreements requires a large amount of acquaintance with cultural specifics and the need of others. Dialogue among civilizations strengthens the right to difference, as guaranteed in international conventions and regulations. In this important period in the history of mankind dialogue unites a human criterion and efficient method, on political and ethical levels. What I ask for and promote is educating people to respect differences, accept them and prefer understanding rather than conflict and hatred.

Human beings as rational and spiritual beings have a need to express their rationality and spirituality to deepen and perfect themselves through music, movies, architecture, painting, etc. But, art is also an ideal way of communication. The field of my study is art history and sociology. I feel that some human relations can’t be defined by words. That’s where art takes place. Art is universal and when it’s truthful it is higher than the principle of tolerance and becomes the best dialogue needed. I proclaim art to be the best cure for our insecurity and intolerance. Young artists should be cherished as the ones who will unite the world in all its differences and offer a new solution, one that will announce a new tolerance, a better one, more human, less rational and scared, but always based on truth.

Let us make a concept of positive ideology. This ideology would promote tolerance, dialogue and knowledge as the highest virtues. No longer should people be scared to see another point of view, instead everyone will take art as the indication of human truth. Once people take art, buildings, monuments as something that belongs to them and every other person intolerance towards a different tradition or feeling will not exist.

We take prehistoric art as something that belongs to all of us because there were no nations then, to declare the solemn possession of art. But if we realize that present art is made by those same people, same genes, only detached from its core, we will grasp some truth and defend common values. Hatred would then become self hatred, and rejecting something familiar and well known is just not in human nature.
I offered my vision of better future. Remember that this vision comes from Bosnia, and it took a lot of strength not to desire revenge. But as much as I think that punishment is required for villains who tried to erase my kind, I know that if people can be spoiled they can also be brought to mind. As tolerance never comes by itself, and since it’s a long, hard road, I will make the first step. I will question my own prejudice, and try to overcome them. I will try to set a positive example for my friends and my enemies, I will work for tolerance in my community, and I will speak against hatred and injustice. I will not demand the same from others, although I will expect it, because tolerance always begins with us.

We share this world,
With all our differences,
We share one world.

Being tolerant is
Welcoming differences,
And the joy of sharing

Literature used to back up the essay:
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OTHER OUTSTANDING ESSAYS

The Juries have selected 9 finalists, but they have also acknowledged many others (essays available in an electronic version at www.essaycompetition.org):

Metodija Trajkovski, Macedonia
Ivan Kuzminovic, Serbia
Mohammed Al-Baaly, Egypt
Naureen Hamid, Bangladesh
Barbara Villa Verde, Brazil
Dace Kalnina, Latvia
Patricia Faustino, Philippines
Temitayo Etomi, Nigeria
Rolando Gonzales Martinez, Bolivia (in Spanish)
Gerald Businge, Uganda
Miha Zavrsnik, Slovenia
Guarocuya Batista, Dominican Republic
María de los Ángeles Lasa, Argentina (in Spanish)
Danitza Magdalena Montoya Suárez, Bolivia (in Spanish)
Gabriel Macossay, Mexico (in Spanish)
The International Essay Competition 2005, organized by the World Bank in partnership with several distinguished academic and civil society organizations, invited young people to respond to the following questions:

1) What are the biggest obstacles you face in your daily life?
2) What practical solutions would you propose to build a secure future for yourself and others?

From over 1200 participants, the juries selected 9 finalists and 4 winners.

http://www.essaycompetition.org

I have proposed to you the necessity of a global effort to check and correct any biased form of education, since education is our best tool against intolerance and frustration which eventually end up in terrorism.

Asnia Asim, Pakistan, Essay Competition winner

My essay was about sharing a proposal to use debate as part of the curriculum and as something concrete which the youth can do to help have a better voice in the government and to have more participatory views to scrutinize and intelligently discuss issues in the government.

Wilfred Segovia, Philippines, Essay Competition winner

I am delighted that the International Essay Competition is growing. It now attracts global talent from an extremely wide community of applicants: this year, there were over 1,240 essays submitted by people from 108 countries. By providing an opportunity to reflect on the possibilities and obstacles to development, this competition provides for the exchange of new ideas on a vital challenge of our time.

Ian Goldin, Vice President for External Affairs, Communications and United Nations Affairs, The World Bank