

Centre for Studies in Social Justice



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CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN SOCIAL JUSTICE

Newsletter, Summer 2011



The need for active global citizens has increased greatly with the intricacies of today's global affairs narrative. This has become a growing focus within the numerous academic programs and co-curricular opportunities offered at the University of Windsor. Amidst this, some of the brightest minds at the university have dedicated their academic careers toward creatively tackling a number of the many pressing social justice issues around the world.

This issue introduces a few of the many global citizens who represent the university, both locally and internationally, as they partake voluntarily in building a better tomorrow. The student initiatives in the following pages are but a handful of the numerous inspiring efforts that are formulated by members of the university—reaffirming our position in the international community, and amplifying our voice in the ongoing global discourse toward global peace and progress.

by Rahul Radhakrishnan
Guest Editor

**the
ISSUE**
www.theissueonline.com

An online publication curated at the University of Windsor to promote awareness and generate a dialogue about international social justice and socio-political issues.

Our back issues are available at:
www.issuu.com/the.issue

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ON THE COVER Adam Hummel in Kenya, Summer 2009.

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Rahul Radhakrishnan is a recent graduate of the University of Windsor. He is the founder and editor-in-chief of *The ISSUE* magazine.



Adam Hummel with youth in Kenya

PEACE-BUILDING IN KENYA, FROM THE GROUND UP

by Adam Hummel



I will be the first to admit that I had lofty ambitions when I decided to start up a peace building project in Kenya. After having been to Kenya once before and meeting many people who had been affected by the post-election violence at the start of 2008, I thought that I could have a hand in picking up where the Kenyan government had seemingly dropped the ball: grassroots initiatives designed to unite the population of Kenya. I went to Kenya in May

2009 with approximately \$1500 in funds that I had raised from friends and family, and a vague ideological framework into which I would try to fit my projects.

From my time studying political science and history at York University I had always wanted to get involved in some sort of peace initiative. My area of interest and focus however was the Middle East, an area where peace and coexistence seems like an increasingly distant dream. As a result of being born in South Africa as well as my Jewish identity and a focus on the concept of *Tikkun Olam* (fixing the world), I shifted my focus to Africa. After a short trip to Kenya with an organization called *Volunteers for Peace*, I started law school at the University of Windsor. With the school's focus on social justice and "loving thy neighbour," I thought that perhaps I had an

opportunity, based on the connections that I had made in Kenya, to head over there and do my own thing.

After my first year of law school I spent a month in Kenya reflecting upon a peace building framework. After analyzing the successes and failures of other peace initiatives, I decided that my approach had to involve asking the locals what they wanted to see, and help them do that. I was not interested in going over to Africa to try and impose my own brand of peace on these small villages, but rather I wanted to utilize my status as an outsider and the curiosity it inspired to bring people together and have them unite for a common purpose. Because youth are often seen as the hope of the future, I felt it was important to get them involved to tackle two things that villagers identified as problems which block peace building: tribalism and youth idleness.

Tribalism is akin to racism in that it is an irrational hatred of the other based on what tribe they come from. Tribalism spurred much of the violence during the post-election turmoil, and was a factor that was manipulated and perpetuated by politicians vying for power. Youth are often idle in these small villages as there is nothing for them to do. If they are not working, then they are susceptible to take up drinking and doing drugs. If we could create a project together that would enable these otherwise idle youths to take control of their futures and give them something to dedicate their time and passions toward, then we could eradicate both these negative influences.

While there, I held a workshop with 25 youths from three different tribes (Luo, Kisii and Kalenjin) for a week. We spent this week discussing war, peace, shared hopes and values, the differences and similarities between their

(Continued on page 11)

PEACE AND CONFLICT

TOPIC OF 5TH ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL JUSTICE FORUM

by Nicole Noël & Arthur Barbut



Dr. Basok addresses the participants.

Now in its fifth year, the annual High School Social Justice Forum is a partnership between the Centre for Studies in Social Justice and Teachers for Global Awareness. The forum aims to teach high school students about issues of public concern. This year's theme was *Resolving a State of Perpetual Conflict*.

About 300 students from nearly 20 area high schools attended the day-long forum at the University of Windsor, which consisted of a series of workshops on topics such as Canada's oil sands, links between conflict over **resources and modern technology, first nations' issues**, the conflict in Rwanda, human rights, the occupation in Palestine, and Canada's role in Afghanistan. A number of activists and University of Windsor faculty, staff and students presented, including Centre for Studies in Social Justice members: Dr. Judith Sinanga-Ohlmann, Dr. James Wittebols, Dr. Jim Brophy, Dr. Margaret Keith, Kate Murray, Nicole Noël, and others.

The students also attended a panel discussion with several University of Windsor students who spoke about their activism experiences. The panel was moderated by Dr. Tanya Basok, director of the Centre for Studies in Social Justice, who also spoke to the assembled high school students about the possibilities of pursuing social justice studies at the University of Windsor.

At the end of the day, students met in the Ambassador Auditorium to discuss what they had learned as well as ideas for implementing social justice programs in their **schools. Genevieve Chevalier, a grade 12 student at L'Es-sor in Tecumseh**, who attended the forum for her second time, called the experience "amazing" and said it was a great way to encourage students to think about social justice issues in their own communities.

"As much as we want to believe that social injustice only happens in third world countries, it happens here and we need to pay attention to it," she said.

Teachers for Global Awareness have recently received a grant from the provincial Trillium Foundation to expand the forum. With this grant, Teachers for Global Awareness are able to fund student groups interested in implementing social justice initiatives in their schools.

"They'll be able to actually put into action what they talked about [at the forum]," said Arthur Barbut, a volunteer with Teachers for Global Awareness. "Then they can come back the following year to report on their success."

In addition to assisting student groups in the area with their social justice projects, **Teachers for Global Awareness have already begun planning for next year's Social Justice Forum**. The tentative theme is *poverty and inequality*. ■

To learn more about the Forum and Teachers for Global Awareness please visit <http://socialjustice.govital.net>

Nicole A. Noël is the Research Coordinator at the Centre for Studies in Social Justice, University of Windsor.

Arthur Barbut is the Policy Advisor to the Vice President, Administration and Finance.

FOOD & FAIR WAGES ON THE STREETS OF NEW YORK

by Jonathon Liedtke



Jonathon preparing meals for the homeless in New York.

Sometimes people decide to help others because it is the right thing to do. Other times people decide to lend a hand because that is just the kind of person they are. Sometimes, people just help because they enjoy the feeling. While I fluctuate between the different categories at different times, travelling to New York last fall provided me with the opportunity to see just how many people truly need help.

We all know of the economic situation we are in—recession, depression, stagflation—the terminology seems to take on endless forms. Many of us are facing higher bills, and lower wages and incomes, which is downright frustrating. More-

over, we are also seeing CEO salaries rising steadily, alongside government subsidies to major corporations. While some argue that this is simply smart economics, others contend that in the face of the economic climate **which we are currently in, it is a “slap in the face,”** and telling of the times which we are in.

In New York City, roughly 38,000 homeless people take refuge in shelters throughout the city, and this number includes more than 16,000 children! The number of those who use food banks and other social services, who are not homeless, is equally as high, if not higher. The sheer number of people who need social assistance is staggering, and all around we can see cutbacks occurring to these services.

When I disembarked in New York, I was shocked at the sheer magnitude of the city: the buildings, streetscapes, storefronts, and number of people were all incredible. The group that I went with was the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students (CFJS), and the students represented different faculties and programs from universities across Canada. All of the students embodied a drive toward justice, and a passion to *do*. Never were complaints made about the level of work, the situations presented, or the little time for sleep at night. Hands on volunteering, social justice work, and study was the itinerary of the students. Our days included working at soup kitchens, participating with Midnight Run delivering food, blankets, and clothing to the homeless, and learning about and **canvassing for Uri L’Tzedek and their ethical seal for the fair and equal treatment of all workers, documented and**

undocumented, in Kosher restaurants across the city. Working directly with Midnight Run, delivering food to the homeless at various locations throughout downtown Manhattan, and finally culminating at Penn Station, helped to juxtapose the inconsistencies and cracks in our social fabric. Posters for Broadway shows lined the walls **of these disenfranchised peoples’ home.** “**The Lion King: Eight Performances a Week!**”; “**Free Wi-Fi for All!**”; “**Swarovski diamonds and jewels!**”; all seemed oddly out of place when the audience at night for these advertisements and services were the homeless. When people are **using Penn Station as a home, the luxury of “Free Wi-Fi”** almost seems like a slap in the face.

Uri L’Tzedek, a non-profit social justice organization aimed at inspiring the Jewish trait of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) in Jews and non-Jews alike, is pursuant of the ethical treatment of all workers, regardless of national origin. The vast majority of kosher restaurants in New York, and Brooklyn, employ the same business strategies as their competition: paying below minimum **wage where they can get away with it.** **Uri L’Tzedek believes that this strategy does not fit hand in hand with Biblical Torah values, or the laws as defined by the United States of America (or Canada for that matter).**

After a rigorous qualifying period, its seal is affixed to an ethical restaurant, alongside their seal of Kashrut [Kosher], to let patrons know they are supporting a restaurant, which employs ethical standards. Though theirs is an uphill battle against orthodoxy and fixed values and beliefs, they are garnering speed and traction; with 60 restaurants across America conforming to their beliefs, the organization is constantly expanding and seeking support.

Serving as chair of the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Committee for the City of Windsor, has allowed me to explore the different avenues through which social justice is delivered in our own city, and to see where help is needed. Some think that Windsor has little that ails it, while others see an entirely different situation. While it is true there are a great many number of services in the city aimed at providing help to those who need it most, there is always room to grow, and provide better services.

Pursuing social justice is no easy feat: it is not a one-day quest, as the world cannot change overnight. What I have learned now, more than ever however, is that the change you can affect, is monumental. Even if you can **make one person’s life a bit happier, easier, even less hectic,** that is what counts. We are all in this world together, as one team: we need to work together! ■

Jonathon Liedtke is currently attending the University of Windsor for Combined Honours in History and Political Science. He is acting as the current chair of the the mayor’s youth advisory committee in Windsor, and is also a member of a local band—The Nefidovs. He has expressed that he is committed and engaged to connect the youth, arts and cultural sectors of the city of Windsor.

EDUCATION STUDENTS DISCUSS SOCIAL JUSTICE

by Margaret Mayer



The diverse nature of today's society demands the promotion of social justice and equity facilitated through building connections to the global community, demonstrating the importance of student involvement and encouraging them to "make a difference." The role of an educator is not solely to provide academic curriculum to students, but to incorporate social justice initiatives as an essential part of the educational landscape as well. Social justice initiatives,

integral to teacher training, are the foundation on which diversity and equality are promoted, strengthened, and fostered within a society. Addressing social justice issues within the scope of education includes anti-bullying strategies, cultural competency, and gender and sexuality issues. These have become intrinsic and essential components of professional teacher training through a variety of pedagogical exercises and social justice centered calls to action. To gain a better understanding of social justice, education students recently participated in a social justice conference.

The 4th Annual Social Justice Conference in Education was held on March 11, 2011. This conference has grown from the 1st Conference which centered on antidiscrimination into a comprehensive initiative which recognizes the role of social justice as an integral facet of the educational process. Dr. Karen Roland, Experiential Learning Specialist at the Faculty of Education, founded and organized the conference.

This year's conference featured Craig Kielburger, the activist, author and founder of Free the Children and co-founder of Me to We; as keynote speaker. Kielburger has given voice to a whole generation, challenged them to effect real change with the world's leading youth-driven charity, Free the Children, which operates in 45 countries providing education, health care, clean water and alternative income programs. Kielburger, along with 11 of his classmates, founded Free the Children at the age of twelve to fight child labour. His presentation, "The World Needs Your Kid: Raising Children Who Care and Contribute" not only inspired the teacher candidates, but also demonstrated that we can all be "agents of change."

During the conference, both the morning and afternoon sessions consisted of presentations addressing various social issues from "Embracing Diversity and Equity in Ontario Classrooms" presented by Philippine Ishak, Windsor Women Working With Immigrant Women to "Peanut Butter, Fire Engines, and Polygamy: Teaching Controversy for Social Justice" by the Faculty of Educa-

tion's visiting scholar, Danielle McLaughlin of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. The Partners to the Faculty of Education, all of whom possess a wide, diverse background in social justice issues provided a comprehensive menu of workshops which teacher candidates



could attend including former B.Ed. students Vanessa Hamilton (Bullying Awareness: Reclaiming Our Schools), University of Windsor's, Christine Quaglia of Student Disability Services (Disabilities, Social Justice and You: Making a Difference in Your Classroom), Russell Nahdee, Turtle Island (Aboriginal/First Nations Issues) and Paul Schaffner, Principal of Begley School, GECSB (21st Century School Teacher vs. Classroom Teacher—Is There A Difference?). In addition, the Education Society Diversity Exhibition showcases the work of the teacher candidates in areas of Beginning Teaching Times (Aboriginal Studies), Multiculturalism, Urban Education, Ecology and Wellness, Language and Cultural Engagement, as well as any community activism they may be involved in.

During and after this annual event, Teacher Candidates at the Faculty of Education are asked to reflect, as beginning teaching professionals, on their role as "teachers as agents of change," thereby reaffirming their personal and our collective commitment to social justice in teaching education. ■

Margaret Mayer works in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor.

REBUILDING EDUCATION IN NORTHERN UGANDA

by Dane Macri

Three years ago I came across a DVD in a clothing store. I was very surprised to see a movie in a clothing store. However, this haphazard arrangement of selling garments and videos changed my life. The movie was a documentary called *Invisible Children*. It introduced me to an issue that I have become quite passionate about, the issue of child soldiers in Uganda.

The thought of a child being abducted, abused, forced to kill or be killed and ultimately conscripted under extreme duress to join military ranks is a difficult notion to accept. It is fair to suggest that if this tragedy were occurring in North America public outcry and media attention would cease such a heinous practice. In Northern Uganda however, this tragedy has been a reality for the past 20 years. During this time over 30,000 children have been abducted by the rebel group the **Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)** and forced to become child soldiers. The question we must ask ourselves is why would we not tolerate children being used as soldiers at home but we but we remain indifferent to such practices in Uganda? The question of life and human dignity is for everybody, regardless of residency, economic status or colour. Awareness is the first step in inspiring and facilitating action. Therefore I engaged on a journey of learning about this practice and raising other people's awareness.

After having become aware of the plight of these children in Northern Uganda I found it difficult to sit back and become apathetic to such a gross violation of human rights. Since watching the documentary I have done what I can to increase my knowledge of the conflict while becoming involved in awareness efforts and fundraisers to improve the quality of life for these children through the groups the Invisible Children and Gulu Walk. My interests in the injustice of these seemingly forgotten children in conjunction with my Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Windsor have led me to a particular initiative with the group *Invisible Children*.

Invisible Children is a reputable Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that uses film, creativity, and social action to raise awareness about the use of child soldiers in Joseph Kony's rebel war, to inspire campaigns to end it, and to restore Northern Uganda to peace and prosperity.

I have also realized that Northern Uganda has become devastated by the war. Recently I have been accepted into a teaching exchange program through Invisible Children organization in conjunction with the New York University (NYU) to participate in an education program involving the teaching and emotional rehabilitation of war affected youth in Northern Uganda during the summer of 2011.

What should move us to action is human dignity, the inalienable dignity of the oppressed, but also the dignity of each of us. We lose dignity if we tolerate the intolerable.

Dominique de Menil

The Invisible Children's Teacher Exchange initiative facilitates dialogue among an international collegium of progressive educators under the *Schools for Schools* program in an effort to support educator advancement in northern Uganda, and around the world. The Schools for Schools program was created in an effort to contribute to the holistic rebuilding of secondary schools in Northern Uganda destroyed by the rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army. Knowing that teachers play a vital role in monitoring and providing quality schooling, Invisible Children's Teacher Exchange Program examines teacher education, engages teachers in collaborative classroom explorations, facilitates cross-cultural dialogue and relationships, and develops strategies to engage a variety of learners, all through the lens of team teaching. This initiative is necessarily based on the time and efforts of volunteers from around the world.

Although I am a little nervous to be working in a war-torn country, I am excited about this amazing opportunity to evoke change for individuals who are in great need. I would like to thank all my friends and family for their support. However, I would like to close this article with a slightly refurbished quote by Edmund Burke. "All that is necessary for injustice to triumph in our world is for good people to do nothing." We have the power to create change simply by refusing to accept the unacceptable. Do not be a bystander to suffering and injustice: DO SOMETHING!



Dane on a recent trip to Haiti.

Dane Macri recently graduated with a B.Ed. from the University of Windsor.

THE CHARTER PROJECT

by Naphtali Silverman

There are many important student-led social justice initiatives that are started or continued every year at the University of Windsor. Many of these initiatives raise significant amounts of money that help support and fund a multitude of local charities and community events.

Students in the Faculty of Law at the University are, by the nature of their program, more segregated from the rest of the student body than students in other faculties. As a result, the law students tend to associate more with other law students, and are not as active in many programs being run by students in other faculties at the University. However, this is not to say that the law students do not take social justice seriously. It is quite the opposite. Many students come to the law school in Windsor **primarily because of the law school's reputation for focusing on social justice programming.** Although many social justice initiatives are constantly organized and participated in by law students, one such initiative, the Charter Project, stands out from the pack.

The Charter Project is a social justice initiative, started by a group of law students at the University of Windsor in 2009, with the goal of educating Canadians about the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Unlike many initiatives, where the sole purpose is to raise money, the **Charter Project's main goal is education. One of the Project's primary substantive goals is to "create a dialogue among citizens about the Charter, its role in Canadian society, and the many different points of view regarding various Charter sections, and the repatriated Constitution as a whole."** While the education aspect is primary, **the Project also aims to "endow a Canadian Social Justice Fellowship at Windsor Law, enabling a Windsor Law student to provide summer legal assistance to a social justice oriented Canadian charity or organization."** So, although education is the primary goal, the Project also aims to raise enough money to support an endowment fund for a law student to contribute a summer to a social justice oriented Canadian charity or organization, as well as for legacy initiatives, such as bringing their classroom *Charter* education modules to additional students each year.

The Project will use *Charter*-themed Public Service Announcements to educate the Canadian Public about their rights under various sections of the *Charter*. This education will allow Canadians, who might not have a legal background, to gain a better understanding of the impact

that the *Charter* had when created, and continues to have today, on their rights and freedoms as Canadian citizens.

During their first year at law school, two students quickly realized that they would be graduating in 2012 – in other words, on the 30th anniversary of the coming into force of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. **These students, Byron Pascoe and Michael O'Brien, understood that the Charter was such an important piece of Canadian legislation, that the Canadian public should be more informed about it. This upcoming 30th anniversary seemed like an ideal time to "educate the people of Canada regarding the history and contents of the Charter, as well as the judicial interpretations which give it vibrancy."** (www.jointhediscussion.ca)

This Project was not meant to be a quick month-or two-long fundraising campaign. The organizers of the Project held a student-wide meeting in their first semester of law school last year, and recruited over 40 student member volunteers, as well as a group of eight management level organizers. This Project was intended to be a three-year commitment. Over the past year and half, the Project has recruited new first year students, raised thousands of dollars for their campaign, successfully gained "charity" status under the Canada Revenue Agency, created a website (www.jointhediscussion.ca), interviewed Canadian celebrities, legal scholars and justices for both scripted and substantive Public Service Announcements, and most importantly, created a buzz about one of the most important pieces of legislation in Canadian history.

Ideally, over the next year and a half, the Public Service Announcements "will be aired online, and potentially distributed through a variety of television networks and in other innovative avenues, such as in movie theatres and on airplanes." (www.jointhediscussion.ca) This publicity will not only raise attention and educate Canadians about their rights, but will hopefully allow the organizers to raise enough money to endow a Social Justice Fellowship at the University of Windsor Law School, so that this great social justice initiative can continue to help others, long after the organizers have left the halls of the Ron W. Ianni Law Building. ■

To get involved with the Charter Project, or to become a sponsor, please visit the webpage at www.jointhediscussion.ca

Naphtali Silverman is entering his 3rd year of law school at the University of Windsor this coming September, after completing his Honours Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from York University in 2009.



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Ride your bike to campus and get a free breakfast.

Breakfast will be available for all campus participants from 8:00 to 10:00am.

For more information see www.uwindsor.ca/bike

SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT OF THE YEAR: LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT

by Nicole Myers



Nicole Myers, Prof. David Tanovich, Michael Pierce & Melissa Crowley at the Social Justice Project of the Year Reception, March 24, 2011.

With 23 active student volunteers, working on six progressive initiatives, the Law Enforcement Accountability Project continues to provide law students with a unique opportunity to critically evaluate issues relating to police accountability from a variety of perspectives and to advocate for systemic change. LEAP's volunteer law students adopt multidimensional approaches to social justice advocacy, incorporating public education, community outreach, legal assistance, policy, research, and training.

Working with a variety of stakeholders, including but not limited to, community groups, individual complainants, and law enforcement agencies, students scrutinize present legal rules and concepts and consider social science, which has traditionally been excluded from the Court. LEAP student reports have been presented to the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, Ottawa Police Services, Ontario Human Rights Legal Support Centre, and the Windsor Police Services for incorporation into business plans, official policies and legal approaches in the courtroom.

Reflecting on her experience as a first year student, LEAP Blog writer, Melissa Crowley, notes how the practical and specialized experience affected her personally, "I've had my eyes opened to situations that I had not previously considered a problem prior to my involvement. For example, prior to researching the Special Investigations Unit, I was completely unaware of the lack of accountability for officers involved in serious situations." Speaking to the public impact of LEAP, Melissa highlights the community aspect, "LEAP's impact goes beyond my

own knowledge and sense of involvement. I have experienced increased awareness within the entire law community including everything from commenting on the blog, to discussion in person, to sharing personal stories. LEAP is an inclusive group that is filled with passionate people who clearly care about the social justice issues at stake."

Jeremy Tatum came to LEAP with previous legal ex

perience, looking for a fresh perspective and new way of engaging with the community. "I have never been part of a project, let alone a student-led one, that achieves social justice at such a local and national level for more than just a fixed group or class. LEAP is a very diverse group of students, not only committed to achieving social justice for the most vulnerable and oppressed people but also working with law enforcement and policy-makers to streamline systemic problems affecting all Canadians." Armin Sethi who has written reports concerning the G-20, echos Jeremy's sentiments, "LEAP is an excellent social justice project of the University of Windsor. It educates both students and aids the greater community."

An organization is only as strong as its people, and for LEAP it is our students. As a collective, public recognition of LEAP provides vital "buzz" to the greater communities (academic, legal and Canadian) of our mandate and services. However, individually, the Social Justice Award is the kind of support students engaged in social justice need. Dedication to social justice largely goes unnoticed, and the award is a wonderful acknowledgment. On behalf of Professor David Tanovich, LEAP students and myself, thank you Windsor! ■

For more info on LEAP:
<http://windsorlaw-leap.blogspot.com/>
<http://web4.uwindsor.ca/LEAP>
<http://twitter.com/leapwindsor>

Nicole Myers is a Law Student at the Faculty of Law, University of Windsor, and is 2010-11 LEAP Student Director

INNOVATION IN THE DRC THE POWER OF SMALL IDEAS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

by Kate Murray



The Friday market in Lukanga



In Lukanga, North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) survival is a daily struggle. Families farm to eat, some women sell produce in local markets (most are selling the same things), and a few individuals—mostly young people who have their families or someone else invest in them—open small shops. These shops sell cellular phone airtime to the few locals who can afford it, and other snacks and sodas to the people who work at and attend the local university. Most of

the community's wealth is concentrated within the university grounds. Fresh fish and meat are rarely found in the community because they don't have refrigerators or freezers. As a result, meat is scarce and they salt-cure their fish. There is no medical clinic, there are 3 primary schools (where students struggle to pay their fees), and there is one high school. About half the village is Seventh Day Adventist. Any wealth that does circulate in the community circulates in a small fraction of families; mainly those who work in the Seventh Day Adventist university or those who have small shops. Farming families live on what they farm.

This type of village certainly is not unique in the country. Yet, after visiting the village this past April, I witnessed how people struggle to overcome adversity, and I had the opportunity to observe a few unique projects which have a lot of potential to change the community.

ELECTRICITY

Recently, a man from a neighbouring village created a hydro-electricity project powered by a natural water source. We toured the project which took us into a valley where sugarcane was growing, and where we had to cross quickly flowing streams over a tree plank, neatly laid down for us. The water flowed from a river into a large tank area where electricity was generated. There was a larger generator in a shed, and lines powered out through **Lukanga. Thanks to this engineer's innovation, about half the village now has power. Additionally, a second generator is in the works.**

CHICKEN COOP

In Lukanga, most families who have a few chickens just let them graze anywhere. In a village just north called Rwese, there is a chicken coop project started by a local church which has people in Lukanga talking about doing **the same. The coop houses 200 chickens, and there's plenty of space for them to move around. They have 2 full-time keepers, and every day the keepers keep the chickens fed, watered, and let the out once per day to exercise in a fenced-in grassy area. These chickens provide eggs for the village of Rwese, and once they have chicks, they'll be able to use some chickens for meat too.**

BREAD FACTORY

A university professor from Korea has shipped various machines and some vehicles from Korea to start a bread

factory in Rwese. People bake loaves of bread which are loaded up in a large van and brought to Butembo to sell in a small store. This has been quite profitable and not only provides people with fresh bread, but also part of all the sales of the bread goes back into the community, helping orphaned children and children who cannot pay their school fees.

WATER

Young kids in Lukanga usually wake up at the crack of dawn to fetch water before school. Some time ago, it used to take hours to fetch water. Recently, a local engineer came up with the village taps project and members of the community pitched in what they could in order to pay for the system. Now in Lukanga there are water taps all around the village giving residents access to fresh water and making these water-carrying trips much shorter for children. In turn, the kids get to school well-rested, an on time.

These are just a few of the projects I witnessed in **Lukanga and the surrounding area, and I'm sure there are many more.** In the two short weeks I was there with my travel partner as representatives of Kujali Congo—a Windsor based organization raising funds to support primary education and community development projects in Lukanga such as the ones mentioned above—we had about ten different projects proposed to us. There is no doubt that people in Lukanga are innovative.

We shared experiences and ideas with a variety of community based organizations, and international NGOs while in Lukanga. Our friend Bernard, from the war-torn region of Bukavu was perhaps the most inspiring and **committed development worker I've met so far.** He currently works for the organization REACH Italia (Render Effective Aid to Children), which shares the same goals as Kujali Congo yet as a well-developed organization is currently able to act on a larger scale. The way he put it, Congo is a very rich country. There is vast mineral wealth, fertile land, and plenty of innovation. After so many years **of turmoil, people just need a springboard and they'll do great things in Congo.** I truly believe it. ■

Katelyn Murray is an undergraduate student in Social Justice and the director of fundraising for Kujali Congo.



(Continued from page 3)

tribes, and they were encouraged to speak about their experiences during the post-election violence. We drafted a peace treaty at the end of the workshop which put down in writing the hopes and desires of the youths for the future of Kenya. These youths established a group called the Youth Ambassadors for Peace, and their task was to encourage peace-dialogue and programming in each others' communities.

In the last two years, we have established four different projects under the banner of the *Youth Ambassadors for Peace*. We have an annual soccer tournament that is played between teams from the three tribes. The most recent tournament on April 2nd, attracted a crowd of 3000 spectators to the final game. These youths have also created high school peace clubs in a number of local high schools so that the message of peace is taught at a younger level. There is also a drama club now which performs skits, recites poetry and sings songs at public gatherings such as marketplaces and different schools, teaching about peace in a less formal and more entertaining way. Finally the youths have founded a chicken farm, in which they buy chickens and donate the eggs to people in their three communities who have recently been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. It is by no means a way to alleviate the suffering, but rather a way to demonstrate to those suffering that they are in the minds of the youths and will be taken care of in some way.

The successes are entirely the result of the committed youths on the ground. Their dedication to the progress of these projects has demonstrated that their goal is to ensure a peaceful future for Kenya, and that the next general elections in December 2012 do not result in violence. My role has been fundraising to ensure the continued successes of the project, and a bit of guidance in terms of feasibility. Involvement in this project however has changed my outlook on life, and has made me more hopeful about the future of both Africa and the world in general. It has shown me that when people realize they have the ability to take action, they then acknowledge the responsibility to take action, and from there, anything is possible. ■

For more information, or to make a much needed donation, please visit www.kenyapeaceproject.com

Adam Hummel has just completed law school at the University of Windsor, and will be an articling student with Davis LLP in Toronto.

Kujali Congo is a Windsor-based organization which supports community development in rural villages of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) through sponsoring primary education and through investing in sustainable community projects with the goal of generating income for rural families. Kujali's current project is in Lukanga, North Kivu.



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