

Young People Around the World Tackle the MDGs

Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Hunger

SECTION 1: United Kingdom



Rachel

“We can all help [end poverty] with simple measures; just buying a fair-trade chocolate bar or coffee makes a difference. This small gesture can give a worker the little extra money needed to lift their head above the poverty line.” Rachel, 16 years old, UK

For 16-year-old Rachel, who lives in the United Kingdom, there is no doubt that her generation will be the one to make the world a better place. The most important part of this global change? Eradicating poverty.

Rachel was a participant at the first C8 Children’s Forum, held in Dunblane, Scotland in 2005. Young people from around the world came from countries as diverse as Cambodia and Bolivia to work together to write recommendations to the G8 leaders gathered at nearby Gleneagles.

The C8, says Rachel, was about allowing young people to get their issues across and creating a vital partnership for change among young people.

MDG 1 aims to reduce the number of people living on less than a dollar a day by half, and the first recommendation that Rachel and other C8 participants made was to eliminate poverty now.

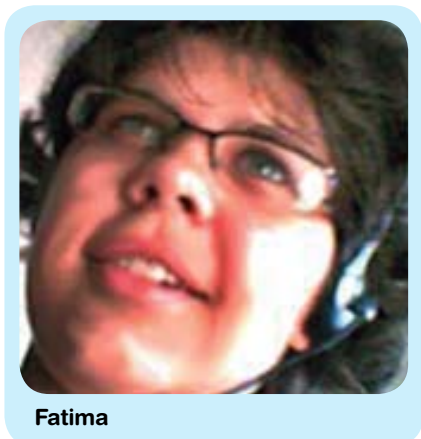
“Although the G8 has made some good progress in areas,” says Rachel, “they could have seized the unique opportunity further, and made some more steps to ending poverty. We all feel that there is a lot more that can be done.”

Source: http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_2357.html

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Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women

SECTION 2: Morocco



Fatima

"As a 16 year old girl, I am a future woman. I believe in the idea that I have to take on the responsibility as a representative of my country to be an agent of development, by participating in political and associative life." Fatima, 16 years old

Looking back on the years she has spent in primary and secondary school in urban Morocco, Fatima feels lucky that she was given the same rights as the boys. Most of her teachers were women, and she says that urban areas in Morocco have made great strides toward establishing gender equality in all school activities.

But she is worried about the number of girls living in rural areas in Morocco, where female illiteracy rates are high and many people believe that girls should stay at home and meet the needs of their husbands and children.

Though all of the MDGs are important to Fatima, the most important is MDG 3 on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. She believes that women are the key to development because they play such an important role in educating their children.

"The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals," says Fatima, "depends essentially on girls' education and women's empowerment."

Fatima believes in leading by example. She knows that change happens slowly and that minds are changed one at a time. She speaks frequently about gender equality with the boys in her classes and is confident that she will make a difference, however small it may be.

Source: http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_2365.html

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Fighting HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases

SECTION 3: Nigeria



Jennifer

“My interest to embark on an HIV project grew when I saw how young people are the most affected by HIV. I feel that as part of my contribution to the emergence of an HIV-free population, I can help by first finding out more about this virus and then disseminating this knowledge to other young people who share in my vision or are otherwise interested in saving humanity.” Jennifer, 20 years old

Jennifer lives in Nigeria, where HIV/AIDS gets a lot of attention. But even though the issue is all over the media, Jennifer knows that young people still engage in high-risk behavior that could expose them to HIV. “Being informed is one thing,” she says, “but being well informed is another.”

As an intern at Journalists Against AIDS (JAAIDS) Nigeria, a media resource centre on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, Jennifer has learned all about HIV and other diseases and is determined to share this knowledge with other young people. She is busy organising youth-based projects, including an upcoming roundtable with both youth advocates and young people living with HIV to discuss ways of achieving behavioral change.

MDG 6 aims to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other deadly diseases by 2015. Jennifer hopes to build a network of young people who will be fully committed to sharing their knowledge and working together to see the emergence of an HIV-free population.

“Working towards the good of everyone is a passion-driven thing that goes beyond personal interest,” says Jennifer. “I am happy to see so many young people both at home and abroad who recognize the importance of volunteering and dedicating their time and skills towards building a fairer world.”

Source: http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_2366.html

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Ensuring Environmental Sustainability

SECTION 4: India



Stuti working at the H2O Water Sports Complex.

“The UN has aimed to [improve the lives of slum dwellers] by the year 2020 and I think Mumbai is a good place to start. I think young people should join forces to combat this problem all over the world. How can we sit back and watch young children wade through garbage and drink water which is contaminated, without trying to at least help out?” Stuti, 17 years old

On the evening of 26 July 2005, Mumbai, India was struck with the heaviest rains recorded in Indian history. Within 4 hours, the downfall left millions homeless, but the real damage would be the spread of epidemics in the wake of

the flood. Leptospirosis, Cholera, Dengue fever, diarrhea and “unknown fevers” sprang up all over the city, and thousands of people were infected.

For 17-year-old Stuti, the greatest worry is the general lack of concern in Mumbai following this tragedy. Garbage still covers the slum areas and people continue to eat and drink from roadside vendors.

MDG 7 aims to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and to achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. Mumbai alone has at least 10.8 million slum dwellers, says Stuti.

A year ago, Stuti founded Windz of Change, an international website about global problems, created by young people, for young people. And in the wake of the flooding, she decided to use the website to raise money for the children of Mumbai’s slums.

She has since found support from the H2O Water Sports Complex in Mumbai, where she once worked as an intern. They have provided her with equipment and a team of 30 volunteers to help in the relief effort.

“Today we can provide temporary relief to these people,” says Stuti, “but what happens in the next monsoon? We need a more permanent solution to the problems that slums pose. We need to make sure that there is proper sanitation, clean drinking water and hygiene.”

Source: http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_2367.html