

Disarm News!

Mexico DF Mexico 10 septiembre 09

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The Ticking Time Bomb: Mentally Disarming the Youth

By: Chinyere K. Ojini

During a campaign promoting nonviolence in the Philippines, a young boy buried his video game console in a peace garden to denounce violence. Later, rather than encouragement, he faced chastisement from his parents for destroying an expensive toy, explained Alfredo Ferrariz Lubang, Regional Representative at Nonviolence International Southeast Asia.

At the second round table event titled "Removing the Tools of Armed Violence," Lubang along with other panelists analyzed issues surrounding disarmament like the effects of media and toys on the youth in addition to the need to collaborate to reach solutions.

The moderator of the event, Pablo Macedo, Director General at the United Nations Department of Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the media plays a major role in the lives of children because when kids see violence on television, they want to reproduce it later.

Said Lubang, Toys like guns and swords contribute to the culture and mentality of violence among the youth. This will affect the future and future leaders of the country.

Alexander Galvez, co-founder and Executive Director at the Transitions Foundation of Guatemala also discussed the introduction of toy guns for the first time in Guatemala by Wal-Mart and its possible implications.

However, the responsibility of disarmament does not solely rest on the shoulders of toy distributors, and despite the reaction of the young boy's parents, it also spans further than parents. Rather, in order to achieve disarmament, collaboration among various parties is necessary.

In order to decrease or eliminate weapons, the whole community needs to work together. The government's destruction of arms sends out a good message to the community about being nonviolent and burying the violent past, said Lubang. However, Lubang also believes that the government must take more responsibility than the physical removal of arms.

"Don't control arms, get rid of arms, said Lubang. Get rid of production so that we do not have to worry about controlling them. Said, Christiane Agboton Johnson, Deputy Director at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research said, Disarmament is not just a physical removal of arms but a complex purification of political, economical and cultural elements. As a result, you must also evaluate the context in which violence occurs.

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“One cannot plant peanuts in a brushfire” so if society’s unstable, you cannot just go to the market, the hospital or school because you have to stop the cause of that fear, said Johnson.

However, as proven by an example in the Philippines, the implementation of these methods have time-constraints.

In the Philippines, there were many armed groups that said that when conflict ends, and victory and social stability begin, they would disarm. But we all have to disarm from the beginning and stop prolonging the process, said Lubang.

Said Johnson, “The time is ticking.” What do we have to wait for in order for us to take action?

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World Youth 2010

By Stephanie Salvador

The World Youth Conference is scheduled to have their first youth world meeting in Mexico City next year for the first time in ten years. The meeting will take place August 24-27 2010.

The organization feels that we are at a crucial turning point in our world history in which the youth generation can promote the advancement of worldwide nuclear disarmament and peace.

Representative of the World Youth Conference, Eduardo Aguilar, strives for the participation of 5,000 youth representative and organizers. " Our goal is to establish a dialogue between the youth and government.

We hope to have 26 representatives from each country to make this an effective platform for new ideas," he said. Due to the goal of full participation from each country the organization plans on holding a preconference in each major region in order to recruit as many youths to attend the conference in 2010.

Although the exact details have yet to be arranged, Aguilar anticipates that each preconference will take place in January and February of 2010.

The preconference will also serve to bring awareness of the World Youth Conference to youths that may not have access to Internet. Tentatively these preconferences will be held in Brazil, Russia, the Czech Republic, and South Africa.

On October 7th the World Youth Conference committee will meet to organize the details of the conference, taking place in August 2010.

The organization Premio Del Milenio Mundial (Global Millennium Prize) will also promote their cause as part of the World Youth Conference. The campaign will begin on October 15, 2009 and will continue to January 15, 2010.

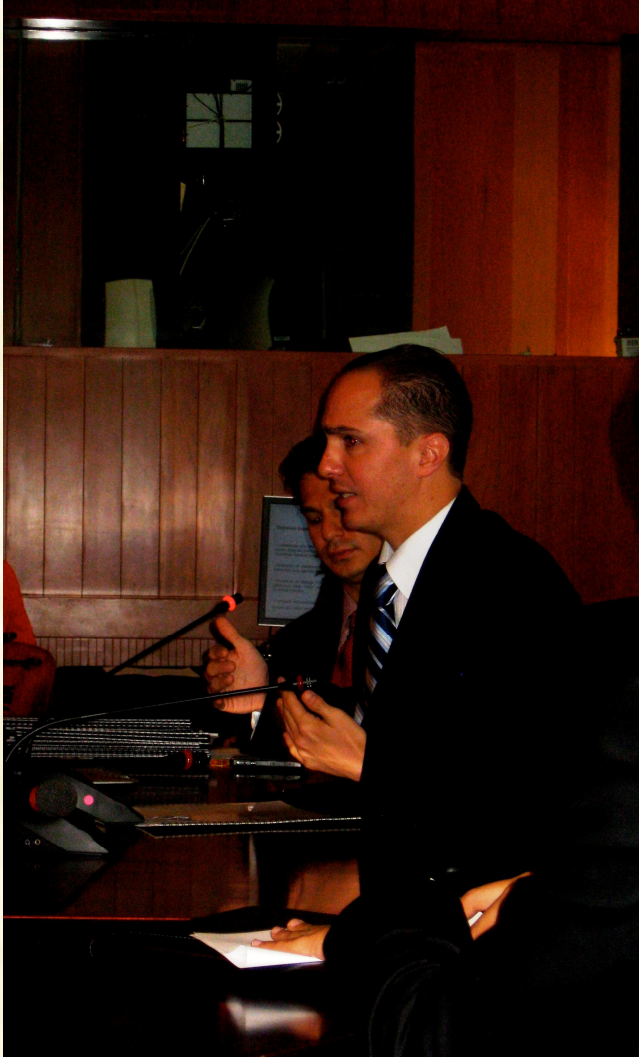
The campaign will focus on many aspects of socioeconomic issues facing our world today.

President of the Mexican division of the campaign, Concepción Olavarrieta, encourages youths to participate in order to implement global change for a more peaceful tomorrow. Her message to the youth generation is to get involved in campaigns in order to learn how to help. " When I was young the greatest challenge I faced was, to learn the steps it takes to become involved to implement change"

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There are many youth grassroots initiatives that today's generation can become a part of. Olavarrieta urges youths to join these efforts to introduce new ideas.

Emillo Cardenas, representative of the World Youth Conference, is also in full support of youths getting involved in grassroots campaigns. Although full specific details of the World Youth Conference are not yet available he urges representatives of NGO's and students to visit the website www.youth2010.org for more information.

On this website, visitors will have access to youth lead ideas and campaigns of the past geared toward peace and disarmament globally.

Cardenas enthusiastically welcomes the eager participation of youths representing NGO's as well as students interested in becoming involved in the effort.

As the Youth Conference approaches applications will be submitted online. It is the goal of the entire organization to receive full participation of 5,000 youths coming together and uniting for the goal of peace and nuclear disarmament.

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Abolishing Tools of War, Creating Projects of Peace: Promoting Models of Citizen Activism for the Improvement of Psychosocial Health of the Communities.

By Jonathan Kahan.

Among all the NGOs attending the conference, in this workshop we have seen some of the most creative and innovative ones.

The basic question is clear: how do we increase the awareness of the average citizen on the issues of peace and disarmament? And in particular, how can we make the youth concerned in such issues as well as involve them in activities for peace?

A good example comes from the youth branch of the WFUNA (World Federation of the United Nations Associations). This organization defines itself as a “people’s movement in support of the united nations”, and one of its key areas of work is disarmament. In 2006 WFUNA launched the program “Students for a Nuclear Weapons Free World”, encouraging students to use their creativity to promote campaigns for nuclear disarmament. David, the association’s representative in the panel, stressed the fact that students are not only participating in short-term projects and contests, but they are actively involved in the movement, continuing to collaborate with it.

An interesting outcome of the student’s project are the designs of logos for anti-nukes campaign: a packet of cigarettes with rockets instead of butts and the governmental health warning printed on it: Nukes kill. Or even wittier, a tub of margarine with the “Nuclear Arms” logo and the writing “stop the spread”. Thus, through creativity and a touch of sarcasm, students have a chance to make their part in the struggle against nuclear weapons.

Among the other speakers in the panel, another interesting perspective was given by Marina, from the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. She underlined the importance of education of the youth to peace and cooperation in the Scout movement. In accordance with the principle of “learning through doing”, future leaders are educated on refusing violence and the empowerment of women. The movement founded by Baden-Powell has something to be proud of: it has been running and giving its benefic contribution to the society for more than a century.

As a conclusion of the workshop, participants have been involved in an inspiring, although slightly corny ceremony: holding the flags of countries in war, they have stated aloud their wish for peace in the world; and a song on the same topic ended the panel.

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Diverse panelists share humanitarian work in vibrant workshop

by Juliane Casey

The panel was undeniably young at the 3:30 pm workshop, “Abolishing Tools of War and Creating Projects for Peace: Promoting Models of Citizen Activism for Improvement of Psychosocial Health of Communities Now and in the Future.” Representing independent nonprofit organizations, youth from Mexico, the United States, and the UK spoke on the work they are doing for disarmament and women’s rights with passion not always heard in formal conferences.

Dr. Judy Kuriansky, media psychologist and United Nations representative, and Dawn Marie Lemonds from Soroptimist International hosted the event. Alongside a photo presentation, Dr Judy described the UN Youth Pre-conference to Mexico. Occurring more than a month ago, the conference invited international youth to attend a day of poster sessions, professional presentations, and video conferences with students in other countries. Soroptimist International, Lesmond’s organization, works similarly with women and girls to “inspire action and create opportunities” for underprivileged women worldwide. By action, they mean action. “We do work. We are not rhetoric, we are reality,” said Lemonds. Kate Moore, also a member of SI, further specified the needs of women survivors of war and her work in Land Mine Action United Kingdom.

Despite the seriousness of the presentations, Dr Kuriansky kept the energy up between the speakers with talk of love and peace, and jested about butter. The punch line of the joke? “We need to stop the *spread* of nuclear arms.”

The workshop came to a crescendo with a piano and vocal performance by Russell Daisey, a member of Dr Kuriansky’s peace band. Daisey taught the audience a simple melody about individual uniqueness and solidarity. After singing words of togetherness in both English and Spanish, the guests seated around the table raised flags representing different countries, wishing peace to each one.

The music clinched the spirit of solidarity in the room, between different countries and generations. “It’s great to have a voice and to know people are listening,” said panelist Sarah Walker from Our Cabana, a Girl Scout- associated center in Cuernavaca, Mexico that offers life experience to young girls. Marina Walker, the second panelist, added, “We feel like we belong.”

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The Role of Civil Service in the Construction of Peace. Universities and NGOs: An Alliance for a Global Community

By. Brady Collins

A University can in many ways function like a non-governmental organization. It is a hard comparison to make, but after listening to international students and NGO workers speak about the ways in which the civil service--or the student body--can organize themselves to build a network towards sustainable development, the line between academia and public service becomes minute.

The DPI/NGO workshop titled "Communities of Universities and NGOs for Sustainable Development and the Creation of Peace" demonstrated that at a closer glance, both have similar attributes that give them great potential for power. Ultimately, in each assembly you have a group of like-minded individuals with a mutual sense of belonging. Their situation is shared, and when properly empowered they become more than the sum of their parts.

Marco Tevanti, a Professor at De Paul University in Chicago, explained what he sees as the roles for both academic institutions and NGO's, "creating a space of understanding, a table for dialogue, and offering journey's of action." The latter is the most pointed of his speech, given that he has been in charge of a study abroad program that has sent De Paul students to the small village of Chiapas, Mexico, where the indigenous people have been struggling against a hostile paramilitary force.

The program gives students an unwavering glance at communities in a human rights battle who are unfit to fight

given their lack of resources.

The students are organized into different legal organizations aimed at resolving the local conflicts while educating the population about their fundamental rights. Alfaro were present to share stories from their time in Chiapas, and explain how it has permanently touched their lives. Since returning, they have shared their experiences to create their own organization, "Flames of Justice", that raises funds to aid in the development of indigenous villages. Diana remarked, "I began to notice how much work goes into nongovernmental work."

Yet they are not alone. The challenges they face are innumerable but with a diverse set of actors the load is significantly lighter. NGO workers from Chiapas and representatives of the Inter-American Court of Justice spoke in detail of their efforts towards peace building at the community level. In this manner, local and international institutions can work together towards peace and disarmament. Peace activist Carmen Megallón stressed the importance of such a coalition: "Universities need to approach social movements and social movements need to call on Universities."

With a population spread all across the planet, seemingly distant actors have the best chance for concentrated aid given their capacity for extensive alliances. Research and investigation from both NGOs and Universities harnesses their resources to inform and mobilize the unrepresented.

"There are issues we need to work on in the community to create a better world," Tevanti concluded. A better world is a *global* community.