



the Manila Symposium report 2013

4TH UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS
LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

SHARE MOMENTS . SHARE LIFE



A LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME IN SOCIAL CHANGE

CONTENTS

About

Introduction	P2
The Organiser	P3
Message from UNESCO	P4
Keynote Address by Senator Bam Aquino	P8

Speakers / Trainers

Pamela Wigglesworth	P12
Tony Meloto	P23
Geraldine Cox	P33
Peter Baines	P42
Francis Kong	P50
Lloyd Luna	P63
Pushpa Basnet	P67
Miguel Martin Bermundo	P74
Ibu Robin Lim	P80
Simerjeet Singh	P90

Programs

Plenary Discussion	P99
Voice in Social Change	P103
Learning Journey	P110
Closing Ceremony	P116

Others

Government Press Statement	P125
Media Report	P126
Universities Report	P132

Acknowledgement	P137
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Introduction

Over 700 student leaders from 45 countries attended the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium in Manila, Philippines on August 1 to 7, 2013. The Symposium was held at the Philippines International Convention Centre.



A few of the delegates came to the 4th Symposium, organised by Humanitarian Affairs United Kingdom, already as humanitarian workers; some delegates came with prepared pitches for projects that were presented to their peers and mentors; many delegates came thanks to opportunities given by their respective universities and a growing interest to reach out to the less privilege in this World.

Every delegate came with the genuine desire to learn about older generations' efforts in ending poverty-stricken suffering, with the desire to converse with others from all walks of life, and with the desire to grow into the biggest shoes they will be have to fill in this world and life, their own.

Manila was an ideal location to hold the 4th Symposium as the history and the status quo of globalisation in the Philippines was widely evident. Overall, the Symposium's most lasting achievement is in establishing mentor and peer networks among tomorrow's young leaders, and in mobilizing and preparing them to create a more equal, peaceful, and humanitarian world.

The theme of the Symposium was **SHARE MOMENTS - SHARE LIFE**.

The Organiser

Humanitarian Affairs United Kingdom was founded with a vision to set an action-based example for young people interested in making a difference to people less fortunate than themselves. It runs many more programs than the University Scholars Leadership Symposium (USLS).

There are people who take action by talk alone, and there are people who take action by directly intervening where change needs to occur; Humanitarian Affairs works to be direct action-takers. There are numerous initiatives operating in Southeast Asia to improve education services, provide food to those who need it, and provide bicycles and stationery to young people to make their ability to go to school easier.

To help others, you need to have sustainable personal wellbeing and resources, which require significant personal and financial support. Humanitarian Affairs offers a foundation of support for any young person interested in and willing to pursue humanitarian work either as a volunteer, an intern or as a professional.

As a social enterprise, Humanitarian Affairs is a member of the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations. It is registered as #6582565 with the Registrar of Companies in England and Wales, and is incorporated under the Company Act of 1985. Its Asian Secretariat, Humanitarian Affairs Asia, administers the USLS and the many projects in the Southeast Asia and Pacific regions.



Message from Dr. Qian Tang
Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO



Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to address the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium 2013 organised by Humanitarian Affairs United Kingdom.

As young scholars, you are a particularly cherished group for UNESCO, the United Nations' specialized agency for education.

In the last few years, across the world, we have seen young people taking to the streets, demanding to have their views taken into account. In many cases, these youth are the first generation in their family that have had a chance to go to university, or to finish – or even start – school.

Your generation is the most-educated generation that has ever walked the earth. Through your intellect, your energy, your activism, you can contribute to building a more equitable and sustainable world – one in which all people can access the right education to build better lives for themselves and their communities.

Simply put, you are the future. It is therefore particularly timely I am speaking to you today, at a moment in history when the international community is debating what the education agenda of tomorrow should look like.

As you may know, 2015 is the target date for reaching two important milestones: the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals represent an unprecedented commitment by the global community to spur human development, to eradicate poverty and, for education, provide quality basic education for all. Just two years from now, we will be able to look back at these important goals together which were set at the turn of the millennium – and determine our successes and our failures in improving the lives of so many throughout the world.

We need to analyse our progress to date, and learn from lessons past. What has worked? What has not worked? What have the current EFA and MDG agendas missed? Did our action meet our ambitions? These are the types of questions that are being raised in consultations and reviews across the world.

What have we learnt so far? First, progress is possible. Since 1999, the number of primary school-aged children has decreased by almost half, from 108 million to 57 million. India alone accounts for a drop of 18 million out-of-school children! Girls have been the major beneficiaries of this improvement: while they faced extreme disadvantage in 16 countries in 1990, the same was true of only one country – Afghanistan – in 2010. And Afghani girls themselves have made major progress in recent years. Adults have also made strides – globally, the literacy rate increased by eight percentage points between 1985-1994 and 2005-2010. But this progress is far from enough. Fifty-seven million children out of school, and 69 million adolescents, is simply not acceptable in today's world. Seven hundred and seventy-four million adults still cannot read and write, and most of them are women. Many children miss out on early childhood learning opportunities, and even when they are able to attend classes, many fail to learn for a variety of reasons – an inadequate learning environment, overcrowded classrooms, lack of access to the right materials and poorly adapted teaching methods, among others. Disparities in access, participation and learning outcomes at various levels of education are particularly persistent among the most vulnerable groups and minorities, meaning that inequity remains a major – and even growing – problem.

As you can see, EFA remains an unfinished agenda. This must be taken into consideration when drafting any new education agenda.

What can we do? It is clear to those of us in the educational community, and indeed in the broader development community, that quality education is the key to equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills and competencies to lead better lives. Education must be the foundation of efforts to achieve human fulfilment, poverty eradication, sustainable development, peace and democracy. This has been a key outcome of global consultations on the future development goals.

Within education, we see that countries have different concerns. These can include, for example, the need to expand and improve secondary education, technical and vocational education and training and skills development, and higher education. Many countries see a need for more comprehensive teacher training, and teacher policies.

Environmental challenges and climate change have brought the importance of education for sustainable development to the forefront; and the need for learning to live together through intercultural understanding and peace education is increasingly felt.

At the same time, we need to be aware of the fact that our world has changed profoundly since the establishment of the MDGs and EFA goals. Any discussion about the future of education beyond 2015 must pay close attention to these fundamental developmental changes, which have serious implications for education: increasing economic interdependency, globalization and technological development, growing pressure on natural resources and increased energy consumption leading to environmental degradation; rapidly changing labour markets; greater interconnectedness, shifting geopolitics; youth bulges and large migrant populations; older and more urbanized populations; growing unemployment and widening inequalities. Future orientations for education must reflect these trends.

What, then, are the current thoughts on what education could look like beyond 2015?

Any future education agenda must be underpinned by the key principles of education as a fundamental human right for every people and a public good that should be made available to all. As scholars, I am sure you will agree with me on this one.

Furthermore, any post-2015 development framework must be of universal relevance. At the same time, it should be flexible, so that it can be adapted by individual countries and regions, allowing them to set targets that correspond to their social, economic and cultural contexts.

Education in the post-2015 development agenda must also go beyond primary education. Equitable and inclusive access to quality learning should be ensured for all – children, young people and adults – at all levels of education, according to each country's contexts and priorities. This includes early childhood care and education, technical and vocational education and training, and higher education.

Success or failure in achieving education for all hinges not just on countries providing access to education or delivering more years of schooling; the ultimate measure lies in what children learn and the quality of their education experience. This is why the quality of education and learning has been identified as the key area of focus for UNESCO in the development of the post-2015 agenda, with particular focus on learning outcomes.

As mentioned above, a sharper focus on equity is required to address persisting disparities in access and participation in education and in learning outcomes. In order to ensure that education goals contribute to narrowing disparities within a country, it is crucial to set targets for – and systematically monitor – disparity reduction.

Finally, education must equip young people with a new set of skills and competencies for life and work that will allow them to be full and active citizens in a connected and

constantly changing world. Education for the future should train learners to be innovative, able to adapt to and assimilate change, and able to continue learning. It's no longer enough to learn facts and figures – graduates today need to be critical thinkers, problem solvers, collaborators, communicators, creative types, flexible and adaptable.

Finally, learning should take place throughout life, given that learners need to continue to master entirely new skills throughout life. This requires providing multiple learning pathways, multiple entry points and re-entry points at all ages and at all educational levels.

Higher education is of course an important part of this, as you well know.

With all this in mind, the recent Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post- 2015 Development Agenda endorsed the overarching education goal of 'Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All' in March 2013, which is echoed in the recently proposed education goal 'Provide Quality Education and Lifelong Learning', formulated by the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post- 2015 Development Agenda in June of this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have given you a brief overview of current thinking on the future education agenda – the outcomes of which will resonate in the corridors of governments, in the boardrooms of educational stakeholders, and most importantly in classrooms across the world, for the next several decades.

In 2030, today's young people will be beginning to assume responsibility for guiding their communities' policy decisions. What kind of world do you want? Who better than you can tell governments what the key education challenges you face are? Who better than you can explain the types of knowledge, skills and competencies you need to be able to find decent work and make an active contribution to the development of your communities? Who better than you can help educationalists to make learning relevant to your needs and expectations?

This is why it is so important that you, today's young leaders, contribute to this debate on the future of global education. I encourage you to get online, engage on these issues – starting with the United Nations' website on "The World We Want" at www.worldwewant2015.org – and think about how you can make a difference.

As university scholars, you are among those who have been privileged to have a higher education.

Together, let's make education a reality for all !

Senator Bam Aquino **Republic of the Philippines**

Senator Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aguirre Aquino IV, better known simply as Bam Aquino, officiated at the Opening Ceremony of the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium in the Philippines International Convention Centre.

He is the second youngest ever senator in the Philippines government at age 36.



In 2007 he established a social enterprise, Micro Ventures Incorporated, which focuses on poverty alleviation by developing business ventures for poor people. He was officially recognised as one of the Ten Outstanding Young Persons of the World in 2012.

Senator Bam opened his speech by asking delegates if it really was “More fun in the Philippines”, as the tourism advertisements proudly proclaim on billboards and on the nametag lanyards. Bam said the 4th Symposium was being hosted in an appropriate country, as Filipino people are known for their reputation of reaching out to their own and surrounding communities.

Senator Bam introduced the theme of his address : Connecting the Connected Generation. Our generation is the most connected generation yet, thanks to social media and technology that allows real-time face-to-face interaction. Senator Bam said: “I believe our generation is more connected than ever, but these days, it is more difficult to connect.” Although we are connected through the internet and phones, sometimes it is harder to connect within a physical presence than in past times.

Senator Bam shared with the delegates his thoughts on the youth, the world today, and initiatives happening in the Philippines. He said the Philippines has a history of young people being involved in social change. The Filipino national hero, Jose Rizal, was still in his 30s when he was executed for his involvement in the Philippines Revolution. He said that a lot of social change happens in the Philippines because of young people. Although the Philippines has been free of a dictator for almost three decades, there are still many people in poverty.

Senator Bam used himself as an example when saying you're never too young to begin working to make changes to society. He was just six years old when he began making speeches in support of restoring a democratic president as the leader.

Senator Bam spoke of the importance of patience. He said that young people may be too impatient, and aren't willing to take the time to develop something credible. Senator Bam said that his social enterprise, Micro Ventures Incorporated, is seven years old, but it took three years for the company to start being economically successful, and has taken the company five to seven years to develop a great model.

The major issues the world has to deal with, according to Bam, are hunger, poverty, climate change, and unemployment. They affect all countries of the world in different ways. He said: "If you think about it, how absurd is it that all of us here today can eat three meals and probably have leftover food, and still many people are hungry in our own country." He said how absurd it is that countries that produce high quantities of food weren't sharing their surplus food with countries that can't produce enough.

Senator Bam said that poverty is simply a lack of opportunity. Some people may be just as smart and hard-working as another person, but without the opportunity that someone else is given, disparity is established. Opportunities are not given to all, but to Bam, one of the greatest results of eradicating poverty is in giving more opportunities of education, employment, and success, to more people. He wants all people to reach their potential, and show what they are able to do, with the same opportunities given to all.

Connecting initiatives together as a local, national, and international community is crucial, and even essential, to making real, sustainable improvements. Bam mentioned a number of initiatives that young people have created. 60% of Filipinos are classed as poverty-stricken, so there are so many individual humanitarian ventures required to improve the entire population's lives. If all ventures were in a way united, economies of scale would bring greater ease of mobilisation and allocation of financial and tangible resources, and would create exponential communications opportunities and scope.

When macro-statistics are considered, and when such facts as climate change evidence and national unemployment rates are raised in conversation, it may seem overwhelming, especially as a young person, to know where to start to help alleviate poverty and disadvantage. On an individual or smaller scale, change can be achieved, and as Mother Theresa said, "If you can't feed a hundred people, feed just one."



Senator Bam was the chairman of the National Youth Commission in the Philippines in 2002 at the age of 25. One of the programs Bam developed in this time was the annual award ceremony for the Ten Accomplished Youth Organisations, also known by its acronym TAYO. In Filipino, *tayo* can mean 'us', or 'we', but it can also mean 'stand up' when said in a different way.

A group in Mindanao runs a food program for a local primary school, delivering 45 noodle soup meals, which have been proven to deliver a sufficient nutritional level for the students who fortunately benefit. The Brotherhood for Peace in Baguio City is another TAYO winner, which is a group made up of former gang members who have lived a past life of reckless crime. A group member was once hacked in the head with a knife, and he realised he was living a fast, dangerous life. It helps gang members get out of the destructive life through support, employment programs, work with the social welfare department and the police to help young gang members live a different life.

An association in Cebu focuses on the issue of climate change. The group utilises an indigenous technology to assist flood-prone communities close to the shoreline. The work includes filling large holes with pyramid-like structures made of wood, while also refilling the hole with soil. The technology creates a sinkhole, simply somewhere for water to go if it happens to reach the point where it isn't welcome. The villages the association has helped no longer flood, and the action has been taken by youth that

have experienced disadvantage, such as dropping out of school or youth that have gone through the social welfare system.

Bam's theory, or belief, is that even if problems are extremely expansive, worldwide problems, we can all give our share of effort and help in our local communities. One more village that no longer floods thanks to the association based in Cebu is a step in the right direction, regardless of whether the rest of the world sees the benefit or not. The rest of the world is bound to feel the benefit, as each action has a ripple effect of affecting all other things directly and indirectly linked with the origin of the ripple.

Senator Bam said: "If we are able to connect all of these different projects, and all of these different activities, which is probably something all the organisers would want to do, then I think we can create that impact we are looking for in the world." Now that the world is more connected than ever, and that young people in particular are impatient for results, there is a great chance for the global community to unite and mobilise efforts together.

Senator Bam said that everything we need is literally at our fingertips. When Bam was the age of the delegates, in the late 1990s/early 2000s, when he went to events such as the Symposium, he would part with his newly made global friends, never to see most if not all of them ever again. Today, we can keep in touch with hundreds of fellow delegates on Facebook, through phone apps, or other online means. Back when Bam was an undergraduate student, the main communication tool was a landline phone, and that was about all there was to offer.

Such technological and lifestyle dichotomies in the space of 15 years are unprecedented in world history. Our generation has the potential to wield more power, change, and influence than any other generation the planet has ever seen. All great work that has been before can be done easier and more efficiently. Therefore, existing initiatives, and new initiatives, can be enhanced due to technology and connectedness. It is easier to attract advocates for your work with cheap, free technology.

It is time for our generation to move from advocacy and just being interested in helping others and become the action-takers, and the nation-builders of our world. Bam said the most rewarding part of making a difference to other people's lives is seeing the positive change that has occurred due to your efforts and work.

**Pamela Wigglesworth, Managing Director
Experiential Hands-On Learning, USA**

Pamela Wigglesworth is currently the managing director of a training and development consultancy firm, Experiential Hands-On Learning. At the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium, Pamela focused her speech on the idea of ‘following your bliss.’

‘Following your bliss’ means listening more to your heart than your head; it means knowing the passions within yourself, and actively practising them in your daily life, in not only your occupation, but also the values, attitudes, and principles you define for yourself.

It doesn’t mean to throw all caution to the wind, withdrawing your life savings overnight, hitting the road, and living a life of pacifistic freedom. It means caging that lizard in your brain Simerjeet Singh spoke about at the symposium, and what Steven Pressfield refers to as ‘the resistance.’

Seth Godin says “the lizard hates change, achievement and risk.” There is seemingly a part of our psyche whose purpose is to keep us safe, keep us in our comfort zone, and encourages us to relax when the going is easy; when our circumstances grant us every necessity for survival, and a little luxury that keeps us happy enough.



But what if your real-life circumstances aren’t the ones you see when you close your eyes? What if every night before you lose your consciousness to dreams, you watch yourself living your ideal life? And all night you are content to be achieving the goals in your heart, but when you awaken, you return to the confines of your head. Your

garden has lush, green grass, but the beautiful flowers don't grow. They haven't grown since you were a free child, oblivious to life's trials.

Enter Pamela Wigglesworth, who was able to illustrate her speech with personal experience. In her early 20's, Pamela had been studying Bio Chemistry for over three years when during a third quarter exam, she wished her professor well, and walked out of the exam room, having not known the answer to any of the exam questions. Her explanation was "this isn't for me." That exam was the last straw; she could no longer go on not following her bliss.

Pamela made a decision that could only be made by herself. Others could look on and say she might have been 'rolling the dice.' Others could think she was going crazy, with huge unrealistic dreams. Others might not have had the ability to envision what she envisioned for her life. But there was something in her that needed to be expressed. There was a glimmer of gold that had always been told to only shine within, and hide itself from the world, but Pamela rejected those expectations. She took the road less travelled, and that has made all the difference. She vowed to do whatever it would take to follow her bliss.

After withdrawing from her Bio Chemistry degree, she worked for a year until she saw a small advertisement for a fashion school. The spark set the fire ablaze, and there was no telling on face-value whether the fire was in her control, or more sinister. But she stayed true to her bliss, and climbed Mt. Everest harder and faster than ever.

The tuition fees were too high, so she deferred her studies and got a job at Jack In The Box Burgers. At this point she was 24, and flipping burgers. But just as Bill Gates says within his 'Rules Kids Won't Learn In School', "your grandparents had a different word for burger flipping – they called it opportunity." Pamela was taking every opportunity to follow her bliss.

Yet Pamela experienced another setback; her parents went through a financial crisis, and had to borrow money from Pam, so it looked like her studies would be postponed for a second year. Pam refused to accept such a fact, and took on another job; sewing. She had three jobs going by this time, and set about applying to every possible scholarship and grant she could. She was sent over 20 rejection letters, but they were to prove her keys to the city of Los Angeles.

When she met with the dean of the fashion school in LA, he couldn't believe she had as many rejection letters as she did, that someone was so determined to achieve something so simple, yet so circumstantially difficult, to follow her bliss. The dean knew he had a prospective exemplary student in Pamela, so agreed to reduce her fees by a third. She made it; she could finally afford to move far away from her home and make her dreams reality, something afforded to only the persistent, and only the courageous.

Pamela threw caution to the wind in the sense that she didn't have her ideal world at her feet; she had to first climb Mt. Everest for her ideals to be in her reach. She had to overcome the doubts of her parents. Whether you like it or not, your parents or

guardians will be a major influence in your life, and when you are just beginning to have responsibilities, your parents are a major source of advice and direction. But what if their advice and direction is too constraining on you? What if their ideas are on a different road from your bliss?

There are two choices: the first is to allow them to decide the road you take, and try to please them by pursuing a career they have recommended for you. Pamela was in the common situation of being encouraged to get a 'real job', to invest into a stable profession that would guarantee her financial and occupational security. But is not every job a 'real job'? Are there not jobs in fashion?

If your preferred job is in a competitive industry, you will simply have to become the most valuable candidate for your desired position. Bob Dylan said as much in a 2012 interview with the *Rolling Stone*. He said:

You have to be the best at whatever you are called at. Whatever you do. You ought to be the best at it – highly skilled. It's about confidence, not arrogance. You have to know that you're the best whether anybody else tells you that or not. And that you'll be around, in one way or another, longer than anybody else. Somewhere inside of you, you have to believe that.

As Pamela said during her speech, "negativity does not need to be your reality." The doubters who discourage you from following your bliss are merely manifesting their fear of the unknown, and the insecurity they feel even amidst security. Their irrationality has the potential to work as toxic poison to your entire destiny, and in Pamela's case, many years of her life were spent pursuing dead ends and going around in circles. However, Pamela's story isn't a blame game, for she ultimately could have decided her direction at any time as a mature adult. Yet the truth is this; it is clichéd, but it is true: you cannot get anywhere without the support of those who believe in you.

In her speech, Pamela urged the same-old but never hackneyed adage: Surround yourself with positive people. The late Jim Rohn stated the general truth that "you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with." He also advised people not to join an easy crowd, to "go where the expectations and the demand to perform and achieve are high." Pamela provided the perfect way to surround yourself with like-minded people, people that want to better themselves, that want to exceed the success their upbringings and circumstances predicted for them, that want to follow their bliss. She calls it a 'Mastermind Group'.

A Mastermind Group consists of like-minded people with similar goals, who provide support, and challenge each other to realise their ambitions. Pamela said she has a group she meets with every Monday morning, at the start of the working week to plant the motivation seed earliest in the week. Members of a Mastermind Group report their progress regularly and spur others to overcome their hardships, and are expected to overcome their own. They keep the dream alive, they remind you that the sky is the limit, and you must keep pressing on persistently to achieve what you want.

Pamela also offered a notion taken from the Machiavellian textbook: “if you are the smartest person in the group, it’s time to get another group.” When you are the one doing all the talking, when you are the one everyone is looking up to, when you aren’t being inspired so much as being inspiring, it would seem that you are the leader of your company, and the most valuable in the room. While this is a wonderful thought, and a credit to you, it isn’t serving your drive to personally better yourself.

Dave Grohl has been known as one of the greatest musicians since the early 1990’s having drummed for Nirvana and singing, playing guitar, and songwriting for the Foo Fighters, among other music and film projects. But in 1990, he was torn between his then-current band, Screaming Trees, and the budding grunge act, Nirvana, who would go on to record the genre-defining *Nevermind* in 1991. When Nirvana’s frontman, Kurt Cobain, offered Grohl a spot in his band, Grohl consulted his mother. She told him “there are times in life when you have to do what’s best for yourself.”

Grohl evidently concurred that “sometimes you just have to be selfish.” While there is no need to renounce your past friendships, or be fooled into arrogance, you must reshape your social circle, your mentor contacts, and your support groups, as you continually grow and develop. One of the only constant things in life is change, and as Japanese fashion designer, Rei Kawakubo, says, “the fundamental human problem is that people are afraid of change.”

Don’t be afraid of change. Take a step back from the train platform of your mind. Don’t tamper with the tracks, or derailment is sure to happen. The late Steve Jobs is a treasure trove of inspiration. The success of his company, Apple, is testament to his superior entrepreneurship and self-belief. At the 2005 Stanford University commencement speech, Jobs said:

Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma – which is the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of other people’s opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

Pamela said an essential tool to following your bliss is to be authentic, to be yourself. In theory, it seems that being yourself is the most natural thing you can be, and it should be the most unextraordinary thing about you, the fact that you act exactly as your inner self feels.

To me, the challenge to being yourself as a young person is a Catch-22 situation, for it takes a great deal of time and commitment to determine your identity, and identity you are proud and secure in enough to manifest from day to day, with no fear or anxiety of the consequences of this existence. Forging and manifesting your identity requires confidence, a healthy and high sense of self-worth, and can only occur if you hold yourself in high esteem. The dilemma is that adolescents and young adults are undergoing so many changes on a cognitive and behavioural level.

Essentially, young peoples' brains may be in turmoil just at the time when some of the most major life decisions are to be made. To compound the problem, other people add their influential voice into the mix, and there is little wonder that many young people can become alienated from their circumstances and self. Therefore, to be authentic, and to be yourself, may be an insurmountable task at certain stages of your life, but the advice is always there for you when you are ready to take it. In Pamela's case, she was ready to be authentic, and to be herself, the moment she decided to walk out of that fourth year/third quarterly Bio Chemistry exam.

There was a time in Pamela's life when she was bullied for being herself. As a young girl, her family moved to an area stricken with low-socioeconomic demographics. She was laughed at, teased, and ridiculed for speaking fluent, decent English. She lived in a place where academic achievement wasn't an option, so the disadvantaged students had shut down to the possibility of bettering themselves. Don't be mistaken that these people were in any way malicious or bad; they just didn't have the right living circumstances to ensure they received a great education.

Even so, they were bad and malicious in that they called Pamela terrible names, and whenever she spoke, her classmates laughed at her. She was curious as to what was so funny, and her teacher said "oh, they're just laughing at your good English." She endured three months of this injustice, to be oppressed for doing the right thing, but reaped a lot of positive energy and determination from it. She ensured that she had perfect and articulate English, to prove how distinguished she was from those who tried to bring her down.

Pamela's teacher also told her "you represent something they've never had before, and something they're never going to have." The jealousy and envy of others of your position and situation in life may prompt them to act in hostile and dangerous ways. They may verbally abuse you by calling you names, excluding you, making you feel like you don't belong with them, or gossiping and spreading lies about you. Or they may physically abuse you in any form of escalation. The key is to be unphased by their animosity. It isn't even about you; you are merely an outlet for their discontent. It is more important to protect your own dignity and self than to be the subject of other people's unfulfilled desires and dreams.

There are people who project an image of authenticity, but truly they are just wearing a 'mask.' They aren't at ease within themselves, and so will mask their insecure feelings by appearing to be at ease, calmly confident, more successful than their actions deserve, and superior to the company they keep. However, as Pamela says, authentic people know when you aren't being authentic. She posed questions of where, and why, are you wearing a mask?

Posing and pretending to be something you're not is a mysterious concept. It isn't hard to explain on a collective basis why people mask and falsely escalate their status, but on an individual level, questions can be the things posing. Explore your inner self; work out what makes you insecure; what is the root cause of your discontent; do you need professional, medical, or emotional help to overcome your insecurities and inner

problems? You must do whatever it takes to follow your bliss, and that includes defining, and refining your identity. It is an ongoing process, and will take many years to develop into a consistent and relatively constant structure, but it is effort and commitment that will never go in vain. Essentially, forging an identity is one of the greatest personal investments you can make in life.

According to a Chinese Proverb, “it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.” Finding the positives in a situation, no matter the challenge, hardship, or loss, is an unconscious, automatic habit of happy, persistent, and ultimately successful and fulfilled people. Pamela closed her speech on following your bliss by telling the symposium delegates to always ‘fail forwards’. There are many notorious quotes on failure. Michael Jordan said “I’ve failed over and over and over again in my career, and that is why I succeed.” Henry David Thoreau said “Men are born to succeed, not to fail.” Virgil said “They succeed, because they think they can.” Anthony J. D’Angelo said “In order to succeed, you must fail, so you know what not to do the next time.” Winston Churchill said “success is stumbling from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm.”

Pamela added to these quotes by saying “failure is just a stepping stone to success.” She paraphrased Churchill’s quote by saying “success is keeping your enthusiasm failure after failure after failure.” Did the Wright brothers awaken one morning to find an aeroplane waiting outside in the front yard? Did they not work tirelessly for years to develop their work of engineering genius? Did Martin Luther King Jr. attract millions of listeners on his first sermon at the pulpit? Did Thomas Edison whip some glass over an old bit of wire and develop revolutionary technology? Did the Beatles acquire a record contract with their first audition? The answer to all these questions is no, of course not.

Every great person you have ever heard of had to overcome extraordinary hardship to become what they became. They climbed personal mountains, career ladders, and steep circumstantial steps. But one thing unites all great people, and it is the certitude that they all succeeded in following their bliss.

As a businesswoman, it isn’t a surprise that Pamela has experienced a lot of failure in life. A financial crisis that hit in 1988 caused the mall her business was in to become deserted, and the business was quickly bleeding its profits away. Ultimately, she was forced to shut up shop and bail herself out of bankruptcy by paying a \$US 42 000 rent debt from her personal savings account.

Many would see these circumstances as an utter failure, a businesswoman by which her business only had front. But for Pamela, it was irrelevant that she had a failed business, except for the fact that she needed to work on her marketing and branding, for if they had been more skilfully dealt with, perhaps she wouldn’t have found herself in the red. She made this experience an opportunity to educate herself on why she had failed, and to ensure it didn’t happen again. By professing this attitude, Pamela failed forwards, and ultimately made the experience a positive one, as what didn’t kill her made her stronger.

It wasn't Pamela the person who was the failure; it was the business. She evidently hadn't the skill base to execute contingency operations. But now she does, and has become the more successful for the hardships she endured. And this is where you must grasp the truth that your work and effort isn't to reach a destination as much as to have a more content journey through life. The only reason why Pamela classed herself as a 'failure' is because she didn't feel successful until she was the owner of successful businesses, until her entrepreneurial visions became reality.

Success is relative. Failure is relative. In a purely secular sense, you have no one to answer to but yourself. When the house is dark and quiet for the night, the branches are scraping on the roof, the breeze is blowing outside, and the wispy clouds are moving across the luminescence of the moon, and there is nothing you can hear but the gentle beating of your own heart, that is when your life is at its truest and purest. You are the best friend you will ever have. You will love yourself more than anyone else ever will. That is why you mustn't be hurtful to yourself; you must embrace the identity you forge for yourself and express it truly and unabashedly for the rest of your days.

I deem success as relative because, in the words of Bob Dylan, "a man is a success if he gets up in the morning and gets to bed at night, and in between he does what he wants to do." Obviously, this quote is equally applicable to women. I deem the successful person satisfied with their occupation, be it the most skill-demanding job, or the simplest job ever created in the history of civilisation. Martin Luther King Jr. put it this way:

If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'

Even a street sweeper may have to fail forwards. Picture a war refugee who has recently migrated to another country, having no family, money, extra set of clothes, or any knowledge of local customs and language. There will be mountains of obstacles to overcome, there will be stones the size of boulders in that person's passway. This person's situation couldn't get much lower on an individual scale, disregarding whether he or she has family present to provide for.

They can only escalate their chances of employment by failing forward. They could go to the supermarket and show by charades they are willing to pack shelves if a position is available. The shopkeeper may say no, because they haven't provided a resume. So the next step on the road to employment for this person is to produce a resume. Once they have a resume, they could return to the shop, only to be required to answer questions. They will then need to learn the language to do this. Alternative strategies could be getting the attention of any particular manager, thinking of astute ways to show how committed you are to being as good a worker as the street sweeper Luther

King Jr. was talking about. While this hypothetical person admittedly has incredibly high barriers for employment, it is fair to say they can overcome these difficulties and succeed, if they fail forwards, if they fail again and again and again without loss of enthusiasm.

Eric Thomas is one of the more extraordinary stories of success. Also known as the Hip Hop Preacher, Eric speaks about how he overcame his circumstances to ultimately follow his bliss. At one point in his life, he was homeless, and he was tired of being homeless. In some situations, the only place is up, but when you are deep underwater, the golden orb of the sun can seem like the glitter of unobtainable gold. It took him 11 years to complete a four year undergraduate course. He underwent over a decade of constantly failing forwards.

He has spoken about turning up to class at the start of course. He had no textbooks, and he was dressed in old, shabby clothes; in fact, he couldn't even read. He sought out people he thought would probably give him a helping hand, and he learnt from him. He knew where he needed to go to be taught what he needed to learn. He befriended someone who gave him advice about what to wear to look like more gentlemanly, someone people don't instantly write off, but are actually interested in. He sought and found access to the resources he needed to become literate, and his uphill battle finally levelled off to calm, flat terrain when he gained his degree. He is now a published author and an in-demand motivational speaker, as well as a husband and father of a son and daughter.

Eric's story expands the notion of failing forwards, and even challenges it. Turning up to class and being unable to read doesn't have to be seen as failure. Eric simply didn't have the foundation requisite to complete, let alone attempt to complete a tertiary qualification. This is where you realise success isn't so much enduring indefinite failure, but is more based on process.

You must determine the process needed for your individual self to carry out in order to become successful, which is to follow your bliss. Eric Thomas had a grand vision of completing a university degree; he just needed to learn how to read first. Henry Ford once knew he was able to invent a commercial car; he just needed the personnel with specific skills to help him carry out his vision.

Don't be worried about what you don't know; instead, focus on what you do know. If you don't know something, there is someone else who knows it. All you need to do is seek out this person and receive their assistance and advice, and then work on emulating their ability. There is no need to compare your own skills and achievements to others, for there is an expert in everything. Just as there is an expert in lions, there is sure to be an expert in dolphins.

Having listened to Pamela's speech on following your bliss, her inspiring advice is taken in and is exciting, but how can it be used as a tool for your own self? This is when the legwork part of success comes to the forefront of attention. No one becomes a success overnight. In fact, every legitimately successful person will have constantly

been crafting their skills, whether it was consciously or unconsciously, with glee or with trepidation; however they did it, they did it. They planned; they committed a lot of time to deliberation and preparation.

Pamela says “if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” Similarly, Eric Thomas says “the will to succeed is important, but the will to prepare is just as important.” Consider some of these people who have become some of the most successful people in their respective professions. Bruce Springsteen’s first album was released in early 1973, but he had been playing in bands since 1965. For six years before he recorded the songs to his debut record, he was mastering his skills as a guitarist, vocalist, keyboardist, and songwriter. He said in a 2010 interview with the American *Today* show that by the time he was in his late teens he had already performed over 1000 shows. That is the preparation he had committed to before the Columbia record company even knew his name.

Bear Grylls is another prime example of someone who has had a lot of preparation to achieve what he is best known for today. The host of seven seasons of *Man Vs. Wild*, and the author of numerous books, Bear conquered Mt. Everest at 23, 18 months after a debilitating back injury. He also worked in the SAS for three years, a regiment notorious for its extremely challenging recruitment process. He had been educated at a prestigious college, Eton, and is the son of a late British politician who was knighted in 1992.



Admittedly, Grylls had a lot of circumstances in his favour, but favourable circumstances are merely superficial. Anyone can have favourable circumstances yet not have the ability to follow their bliss. Bear simply upped the scale of his bliss; he needed to physically recover and endure mortal danger in climbing Mt. Everest in

1998, and gained his position in the SAS only after an invitation to have a second shot when he failed his first attempt.

Therefore, it isn't favourable circumstances at birth and a nurtured upbringing that guarantees your trail of bliss to be built for you. The truth is you must walk your own road, and you must build it all yourself. Pamela made this very clear in her speech. She had to confront her parents and gently tell them their expectations could no longer sustain her. She had to overcome the dread, anxiety and fear that comes with an unstable financial position. The propensity for people to panic when they aren't certain of their income stream is very high, but is the death knell to hopes and dreams, the crippling factor for so many people's visions. That is why preparation is key.

Preparation is key to all success and happiness, because to be successful, you must first be unsuccessful, and to be happy, you must first be unhappy. To arrive at such discontent is the result of a long passage of time whereby habit has developed into automated neural processes. One day these processes are jilted awake again, be it from the death or accident of a close friend or family member, be it after having heard speakers such as Pamela, be it a psychological breakdown, or be it the mouse that sinks the boat.

Pamela shrewdly pointed out that now is the best possible time to become an entrepreneur, due to the tools of technology. Communication has never been simpler, information has never been more accessible, and opportunities have never been more available as they are today; even fundraising websites exist. There are more resources than ever to draw from, so theoretically it should be easier to follow your bliss today than say 50 or 100 years ago.

The defining factors for success all lie within your psyche; your mindset is the most fragile, yet most valuable thing you possess. All forms of progress have escalated from the foundation that first provided the means of progress. In the words of Gautama Buddha:

The thought manifests as the word. The word manifests as the deed. The deed develops into habit. And the habit hardens into character. So watch the thought and its ways with care. And let it spring from love, born out of concern for all beings.

Lao Tzu, traditionally considered the founder of Taoism, voiced a very similar thought:

Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.



Therefore, we may deduce that the preparation to following your bliss is merely a process of adjusting your way of thinking so that you are able to stably and productively pursue your goals. This may require you to work on your mental strength, to communicate to people close to you your motives for personal change, and to endure expedient circumstances in the short-term in order to benefit in the long-term. It is a worthwhile lifestyle adjustment, and one that will make life a whole lot more interesting, passionate, and beautiful for you. It will also benefit the wider society, as a passionate, blissful person is a positive, hard-working person intent of devoting a portion of their efforts to the local, national, and global community.

Tony Meloto, Founder
Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation, Philippines

Tony Meloto is the founder of the Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation (GK). 'Gawad Kalinga' means to 'give care' in Filipino, and its mission is to end poverty for 5 million people by 2024 by building the foundations of a sustainable and healthy community.

Tony's speech at the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium focused on retelling some moments that forever changed his identity and values, and on providing advice on how to be a successful humanitarian entrepreneur. We all might have beautiful visions on solving problems borne out of poverty, but if we don't have the business sense to put plans into action, our plans will never translate to action, and ultimately positive change in the lives of the destitute.



During the 1950s and 60s, Tony grew up exposed to the poverty in his living area at Bacolod, Negros Occidental, a province of the Philippines at an island south-east of Manila. He was offered a position as an American Field Service scholar to complete his senior high school year at De Anza High School in Richmond, California in 1967, and graduated from Ateneo de Manila University with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics in 1971. Upon graduation, he was able to find work as the Purchasing Manager of Proctor and Gamble, and his career built from there.

Tony says it was only through education that he was able to be free from poverty. He found his way out of poverty through his educational success, but having achieved that and holding admirable positions in companies, Proctor and Gamble 1971-77, and becoming the founder and head of a printing and trading company 1977-91, he felt unfulfilled. He said “although I had everything, I had nothing.”

He observed through his worldly experience that many people at the top universities only see the world from the top. Many people cannot understand or empathise with disadvantaged and impoverished people, because they have never experienced the traumatic and primal emotions attached to having to fight to survive. If you have lived a life of comfort, entitlement, and ease of access to services, you may become blind to lack of others, becoming disinterested in anyone without your status. But such narcissism can only have a limited pleasure, and having seen the truer travails of life in his upbringing, Tony wasn't content with the direction his life had taken.

During his speech, Tony said “those who get out of poverty never go back to the places they left behind.” It is the nature of humans that they'll avoid things that caused them pain, and if they were able to better their lives enough to live in the comfort of air-conditioned homes and offices, they generally will be disinclined to return to such crippling conditions as poverty grants.

This is where Tony is distinguished from other people in the most significant sense; he treats the poor as family. This position is not a mere sentiment; he demonstrates his standpoint every day by his actions. Every morning, he rises at 5 o'clock to spend time with the poor. During his speech, Tony said “I have expanded my idea of family. The poor are my family. Trust is only built by presence, and if they're my family, I will never abandon them.”

Tony's genuineness to his cause is indisputable, as he has integrated his work into his life so that his identity is significantly defined by his work. Tony offers solutions the world as a community and business entity must embrace if we are to become a more equal and wealthier community; wealthier not necessarily in a monetary value, but in quality of life.

The world has globalised; that fact isn't new. In fact, the twentieth century's earliest moments indicate how the global society was actively moving towards a more interdependent world. The Wright brothers first achieved flight in 1903; in 2008, it was estimated by Zurich University of Applied Sciences that there are 93 000 commercial flights per day, operating between 9000 airports worldwide.

States from multiple continents engaged in total war throughout the twentieth century; it was no longer the Spanish conquering the Incas and colonizing the Philippines, the Europeans conquering the Native Americans, the French colonizing Vietnam, or the British Empire colonizing Kenya. The struggle for European territory in World War II was of interest to all the world's people, and the ideologically-driven Cold War involved the global population. Nowadays, the oil-dependent world has a

great stake in maintaining cordial relations with oil-rich nations especially in the Middle East, and for this reason we see global powers intervening in those states.

Considering modern history, the status quo, and Tony's revelations, I believe the world's problems can only be achieved when we unite as one people. During his speech, Tony said "we need to be one global family for a safer, happier world." In an environmental sense, we have nations with independent carbon-pricing taxes, and we have failed to sign global agreements at the talks in Copenhagen. Countries continually wish to act in their own economic self-interest, disregarding the dire warnings our global scientists are heralding with their research publications. We clearly need to make economically expedient agreements as a global economy, but we as a global population haven't got the communication skills to achieve such measures. I believe once we have undisputed, affordable renewable energy sources, communication will be much easier. States are most concerned with how their economic position will be affected by investment into renewable energy, therefore creating durable, affordable electricity sources should be the priority.

In the sense of eradicating poverty, we also need to be on global family for a safer, happier world. There is a disjoint in that humanitarian visionaries often don't have the financial capacity to pursue and make their visions reality. This is where Tony's entrepreneurial mind is indispensable to the work he does, and the goals he sets.

Tony unabashedly implies that if you want to do the things you envision to do in this world, you have to have the money to do it. There are a number of ways that you can have access to money. According to Tony, to get money, you must "beg, work, or steal." A common source of money is by working for it yourself, but when the required sum is vastly more than what you can make for yourself, you can also attract sponsors in individual people or companies, if you have the ability to. Again, we are obliged to have sufficient communication skills to achieve our ends. If we wish to be provided with money by someone or something else, we must be able to communicate our need for the money in a way that presents the benefits the benefactor will reap from such an investment.

During his speech, Tony said "there is no justification that 18 million Filipinos consider themselves food-poor," and in the company of decent human beings, he would certainly receive universal agreement to his point. Many wealthy individuals and companies like to allocate a small proportion of their budget to philanthropy, but because so many would approach them for money, they naturally are cautious in deciding who they give money to.

Tony said "there has to be value for the rich and powerful" in whatever they are supporting. He said "my role is a storyteller, to share a vision with the big boys. You have to come to them with big ideas. They don't have ideas for small ideas." He sees his role as connecting the rich with the poor, a mediator of sorts whose skill is unleashing the generosity of the human heart.

To help the poor, Tony has to get “the trust of the rich.” They must see him as honest and genuine, not a charlatan trying to siphon money for his own self-gain. He practices the doctrine that by detaching oneself from something, they receive what they would want to be attached to. He said “by detaching myself from power, I gained the trust of the powerful; by detaching myself from profit, I gained the trust of the richest.”

Tony envisions an ideal society “where the money is not just in the hands of a few.” For too long, the capitalist style of society has allowed a tiny proportion of the population to possess the majority of wealth and, as Tony said during his speech, “the ones with power and riches cause poverty. It is them who neglect the poor.”

Tony said that as a businessman before he envisioned and established GK, “success made me comfortable; success made me a coward.” Beforehand, Tony wasn’t someone who spent most of his energy helping people less fortunate than him, but now that he has for decades, he knows that “it is the highest honour to give back.” There is something special not just in the action of helping others, but the desire to, for if you have a true desire to help others, your worldview changes.

When you desire to help others less fortunate than you, it means you have looked at your own life, and made judgments of your own circumstances and can appreciate how fortunate you are to have all the things you have. It is a state where you have set yourself free of the lonely mentality of self-gain, which can only distract you from the inevitable reality of isolation and quietness of self-interest.

Tony’s grand vision may be described simply as combining business with humanitarianism. It makes sense. Who would object to businesses wishing to make maximum profit with nothing but positive implications for the wider community? GK has seven development programs that give insight as to how Meloto’s foundation is working to end poverty for 5 million people, which includes making the Philippines slum and squatter-free.

1. **The GK Child and Youth Development (CYD)** has three major components to it, each focusing on progressive age groups. The program as a whole works to provide a high educational level within its pupils by developing values that bring out their full potential, and by nurturing their personal talents, interests and skills.
 - **GK SIBOL** – means “to grow”. This is a community-based pre-school program for children aged 3-6 years old that aims to instill positive Filipino values in each child, and prepare them for formal schooling in their futures.
 - **GK SAGIP** – means “to save.” The acronym SAGIP means *Sagipin Ang Galing Isip at Pangarap ng mga Kabataan*, or ‘save the talents, minds, and dreams of the youth.’ This program holds weekly values formation activities to nurture hope in the 7-13 year old GK youth, and to “promote love for God, country, family and fellowmen.

- **GK SIGA** – means ‘to give light.’ The most senior sub-program in the GK CYD, SIGA seeks to empower youth aged 14-21, and help them hone their skills and talents that will make them the most positive and valuable citizens they can be. They are provided with weekly sessions known as *barkadahan*, or ‘group of friends.’
2. **GK’s Community Building** program assists communities to become self-reliant and sustainable, to be self-governing, and to ultimately be a service to other communities. Improvement and building is a perpetual process of escalation, and GK’s Community Building is a perfect example of escalating a project from working on one community and making it the best it can be, where from there the community can build further by becoming a hub for other communities to be given sustenance and hope.

Teams of committed community caretakers have been mentors to communities, and have operated under the codes of *padugo* (bleeding for the cause), and *bayanihan* (being heroes to one another). They have witnessed the transformation of their focus residents into vibrant, organized communities. Regular leadership and community values formation sessions are held where community residents are encouraged and empowered to become program implementers in their own communities and can be partners in the priority to build a national community with the prosperity and positive structure of a GK developed community.

GK villages have seven features they aspire to have as constant points of pride and identity, including:

- **A faith community** – there is freedom for residents to practice religious beliefs publicly and openly with equally given respect and reverence.
- **A peace zone** – neighbours live in harmony, and disputes are settled with the “higher principles of neighbourly love and the common good.” Such principles mean dangerous and life-threatening violence and aggression is not how conflicts are settled, but are settled based either by amicable negotiation, or by the proper process of the law.
- **A tourist spot** – Tony says that “poverty is where a human being is treated like an animal.” A poverty-stricken life is the most difficult a human being can live, and the deficiency of safe and nourishing means of survival distorts peoples’ psyches and shifts their priorities to be desperate; just to keep oneself and your family alive is a monumental challenge. A poverty-stricken place has very little to offer as a tourism destination; the lay person will avoid that place like the plague. But when a place has a sense of order and beauty, it will be an attractive place for holiday-makers, which will provide the local economy welcome injections. Essentially, pristine, safe and high-quality living

conditions will deliver exponential growth, economically and in a humanitarian sense.

- **A productivity centre** – The growth and development of the community is provided by human and natural resources found in the local community. In a globalised world, natural, and increasingly human resources, are either outsourced, or imported. However, if a community can be as subsistent as possible, there will be invaluable lifestyle and economic benefits, namely related to productivity.
- **An environmentally healthy community** – During his speech, Tony stated that all people need to understand that climate change will affect all of us. Rising sea levels will put entire island-based countries at risk, unpredictable, extreme weather patterns will reduce the viability and productivity of agricultural sectors of the economy, and will have a negative impact on communities in which agriculture is the major industry sustaining their livelihoods. The environment needs to be preserved, conserved, and enhanced by practices like creating renewable energy sources, managing the harvest of natural resources by such acts as reforestation, and limiting natural habitat destruction to its necessary minimum.
- **An empowered community** – Members of the community actively participate in the governing of the daily life and activities of the community. An empowered community is unified and has pride in its people. A community should be responsible for its own laws and liberties to be fully engaged with life. The favoured ethos and worldviews of the people will ensure the most agreeable customs of a particular place.
- **A secured community** – When conflict arises, be it from within the community, or outside it, the people are prepared to defend their freedom and peace by resolving conflict by any means necessary. Life and property must be preserved for the continuation of the community.

3. **Green Kalinga** is an environmental program focusing on educating a community about the importance to maintain a healthy environment for the benefit of themselves and the natural world. Green Kalinga's aim is to make the people of GK communities good stewards of the land, with ready access to clean air and water, and productive soil.

Poor people are the most dependent on their natural environment for their survival, but unfortunately may also cause significant destruction because of this. Environmental degradation may come in the form of slash and burn farming, destroying mangroves to make charcoal, and disposing of wastewater and raw sewage

into water bodies. As they are most dependent on the environment, poor people will also be most affected by its degradation.

Green Kalinga works to shift a community's values and principles of their environment, and works to make the people active in protecting and rehabilitating their environment. This program is run on an individual basis, with each GK community assessed, with the appropriate Green Kalinga components implemented.

There is a need for a shift from collective to individual action, especially regarding how local and national communities treat the environment. There is a great deal of comparison between states' policies on an international level. Countries seemingly legitimise their standpoint by comparing another nation's standpoint, and therefore one is unable to identify a nation's values and beliefs beyond one of a self-serving machine concentrated on maximum monetary gain.

It is a different story regarding a poverty-stricken community, as their priorities are on a more humanitarian level, but the individualised model Green Kalinga takes is pragmatic in that it creates a more personal action plan. Advocacy can create universal awareness, and technicalities can be adopted, but there will be no true change until a shift in lifestyle occurs.

The government of a state may provide figures of a small percentage decrease of greenhouse gas emissions compared to a point in the past, achieved through their carbon emissions tax or trading scheme, but until the population and its economic industries acknowledge the necessity for reduction of emissions to an absolute minimum, regardless of the cost of achieving such a thing, there will be no true process in tackling the very real problem of climate change.

3. **GK Food Security** – An essential foundation for a sustainably-growing and prosperous community is for every family to be well-fed and properly nourished. Although there is 9.7 million hectares of arable, idle land in the Philippines, up to 4 million households, or 20 million people, experience involuntary hunger (Social Weather Stationsurvey 2009).

Bayan-Anihan, or “community harvest”, believes that to solve the problem of hunger, poor people must be taught and given the means to produce their own food. Providing someone with something will only be sufficient for the time it is there, but education can ensure the ability for people to provide for themselves for the rest of their lives, teaching the generations that follow to continue the newfound tradition.

Bayan-Anihan is the first family-based sustainable farm program in the Philippines. A 10 square-metre plot is given to each family where at least 10 kg of vegetables can be provided a month, providing 30 meals.

The program is the result of great efforts and support from many partners. Farm inputs and technical training has been provided by the Department of Agriculture, while local governments provide land and water systems and on-ground monitoring. Farm technology and management is taught by the areas' respective Agricultural State Universities. The program becomes part of the school curriculum

while the university is converted to a Bayan-Anihan Training Center, where model-plots are set up, and both faculty members and students are involved in the education. There are many corporations and individuals that adopt farms and actively participate in the project of delivering self-sufficiency to communities.

The return stakeholders receive for their investment is measured in the harvest achieved by the farms, and the transformation of each individual and family as they become able to provide for themselves. Community members commit to establishing and maintaining a productive farm, and a sense of pride and self-worth grows along with the vegetables. An identity can be forged of a people empowered to grow with the security of such a fundamental human necessity.

5. GK Kalusugan – Healthcare is another human necessity GK works to provide in their communities. In the Philippines, 10 mothers die each day due to pregnancy and childbirth-related injuries, and 6 out of 10 Filipinos will die having not received any medical care. Four million children are malnourished, and half the population doesn't have access to healthcare.

There is no way to justify the lack of healthcare for poor people. Poor people differ to well-off people by bank balance only, and they deserve to be entitled to the same healthcare anyone else would expect. Consistent with other GK programs, the solution is to empower the local community to provide for themselves, and that includes healthcare. There are three strategies to GK Kalusugan.

- **Capacity Enhancement (SIGLA)** – The people of the community need to look out for their own health, and they are empowered to do so through SIGLA. Health leaders are chosen within the community and are trained to become first contact health providers, counselors, and mobilizers. Partners provide financial assistance and volunteers and healthcare experts provide technical skills and mentoring.
- **Services Delivery (SERBISYO)** – Services provided include tuberculosis treatment, a Nutrition Program, and PhilHealth Enrollment, to name just a few. Partners and health professionals provide sponsorship and technical skills, and the trained healthcare workers are also involved in implementing and monitoring the services.
- **Systems Development (SISTEMA)** – a better health system and better access to health services and facilities is the aim of SISTEMA.

6. GK Community Infrastructure Program – The GK Community Infrastructure Program (CIP) works to build and maintain a beautiful and structurally-sound community, providing families a better quality of life. Homes are painted with bright colours, and communal facilities are provided, with buildings such as multipurpose centres, preschool buildings and clinics. The buildings are constructed by paid skilled labour as well as local effort.

At least 4.5 million Filipinos are at risk to natural disasters, living in danger zones. Homeless families are forced to live in slum environments. I saw homeless people in Manila on a daily basis by the bay, and out the window of my hotel room. In slum environments, people are exposed to serious sanitary and health issues, high criminality rates, and other degrading challenges that reduce their sense of being a human.

The GK Community Infrastructure Program aims to restore humanity to poverty-stricken communities by building modern domestic improvements. According to the GK website, “GK CIP is the most visible and palpable physical expression of the transformation of the residents.” There are three major components to the GK CIP.

- **Land Security** – Each site has its tenure secured through the provision of legal documents. To reduce the risk and consequences of natural calamities, each site is cleared by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.
- **Sweat Equity** – GK community residents provide sweat equity by helping with the construction of their homes and communal facilities, granting a sense of ownership and unity, as they work on the construction together. Sweat equity promotes sustainability, as the families become connected, and take great efforts to maintain the structures they worked so hard to build.
- **GK Estates** – GK builds traditional villages of 30-100 homes, but also builds for greater efficiency and scale, providing up to 300 houses in estates. Systems and technologies are improved to set national standards.

7. Center for Social Innovation (CSI) – The Center for Social Innovation is a business ecosystem that encourages, nurtures and develops social entrepreneurship. A business ecosystem is an environment forgiving enough to allow business failure to occur for the sake of active experimentation of ideas, for testing prototypes and new business models. The CSI is also a space demanding enough for global Filipino brands that have real social and environmental impact.

The Center for Social Innovation provides access to experts and volunteers from the academe, business, government and other fields. Social enterprises are also given an opportunity to achieve scale, sustainability and impact. Economies of scale are necessary for sustainable business in the modern world, and the most positive consequence of scale is that directly improve the lives of more Filipino families, and environmental concerns can be more efficiently addressed.

Social entrepreneurs are people who have the skills to deal with experts and professional businessmen, and are able to develop Filipino brands, but also have the ability to immerse themselves in communities that need to become more sustainable. The Middle Brother Model places social entrepreneurs in the middle, also known as *Diko*. Above them is the *Kuya*, or the existing businesses, government, and academe, and below them is the *Sangko*, or the community residents.

The CSI makes efforts to bring young people into business. Tony himself can be regarded as a social entrepreneur. During his speech he said “I connect the rich with the poor.” He is the middle brother in the business of ending poverty. He is the middle brother in the business of improving the quality of life for 18-20 million hungry Filipinos, 4.5 million Filipinos that live in natural disaster-prone areas.



Tony Meloto is a Filipino working for Filipino people. In the final moments of his speech, he voiced the oft-used but never hackneyed adage that “Without a vision, people will perish.” Tony, as a Filipino, also said that for 350 years, during the Spanish rule in the Philippines, his people were conditioned to think the grass was greener somewhere else. He has unconditional pride in being Filipino, and he said “God did not make a mistake when he made me Filipino.” Tony has a deep sense of religion, and it is clear that his love for poor people, the Philippines, and his own work, is one and the same with his love for God. He is a perpetual source of positive energy and lives a life true to his beliefs and principles.

**Geraldine Cox, Founder
Sunrise Children Village, Cambodia**

Geraldine Cox, the president and operator of the Sunrise Children's Village orphanage in the province of Kandal, Cambodia, is an original Humanitarian Affairs speaker, having spoken at all symposiums. Over the four years of speaking, she has seen the number of delegates double, and this is testament to the success of the symposium and its organisers.

The major reason why Geraldine set out on an adventurous life with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs is because in her mid-20's it was discovered that she couldn't have her own children. Her expectations were to travel the world, where her chief duty would be swanning around in a black cocktail dress seducing James Bond-types in a nice, sophisticated, sexy place like Paris, Rome or London. Contrary to these rosy visions, she was in for quite the opposite when she was posted to Cambodia at the beginning of the country's civil war in 1970.



During her speech, Geraldine said "the sights, the sounds and the smells of Cambodia are as alive for me today as they were when I was the young girl of 25." Geraldine was also posted in Manila, Bangkok, Iran, Washington D.C., before returning to Australia in 1987. She describes her life in the diplomatic corps as one of glamour, with stimulating work, a fabulous social life, and she would recommend it to anybody as a fabulous career. However, she says it didn't really make her happy. Something was missing inside, to the point when she would ask herself "Is this it?" During her speech, she said "There was a hole in my heart, and I didn't really know how to fill it."

She joined the Chase Manhattan Bank in Sydney as the Executive Assistant for the Country Director, with a harbour-side apartment, diamond rings, and first-class travel. However still, that hole in her heart was still there. During her speech, she said “It took me until 50 to realize that stuff doesn’t make you happy.” The turning point was when she got fired from her assistant’s job in 1995.

She decided to return to Cambodia and worked for the Prime Minister of Cambodia in his Cabinet office, and worked with the Princess of Cambodia’s children at an orphanage with the princess on weekends. She began to feel the void in her heart being filled by the children she encountered. However, during the military coup in 1997 the royal family was overthrown, and Geraldine once again found herself unemployed. It was then that she began to devote all of her time to Sunrise Village.

During the military coup, Sunrise Village had 60 children in its care, but all forms of funding from sponsors had ceased to be received, and Geraldine was facing having to abandon the children and return to Australia with the grave realisation she couldn’t even support herself, let alone 60 children. She needed a miracle to keep the orphanage running, and that is exactly what she got. While down to half a tank of fuel in her car, and \$80 on her person, the universe sent her an anonymous donation of \$10 000; during her speech, she remarked on how the universe truly does help you. There is an unnamable force that operates in the world, and if you live your life courageously and honestly, there may be instances where the universe ‘bails you out.’ However, there was an even more remarkable saving grace to occur during the coup.

A group of soldiers approached the orphanage one day, intent on capturing what once was their barracks, and thus destroying the whole orphanage operation. Geraldine approached the soldiers, who she described to be around 18-21 years old, and gradually they laid down their weapons, and left in their tank. A staff member of the orphanage told Geraldine that it was her hair that had saved her. Anyone who has seen Geraldine will note her unique style of dyed red hair, and it proved to be a godsend that day.

There are a great deal of superstitious people in Cambodia who believe in ghosts, spirits, and portents of different sorts. In Cambodia, there is the belief of a “particular witch that women go to when their husbands have been unfaithful.” The witch has great power over unfaithful men, causing unfortunate bodily changes. The soldiers decided Geraldine was that witch and thought it best to leave her alone.

Today, Sunrise Village is the home to hundreds of children, children with TB, children with HIV, children with other various diseases and mental problems, children without the people who brought them into the world. The disabled children will live at Sunrise Village for life.

Geraldine has many stories so tragic and utterly harrowing that you can’t control the tears that come to your eyes when you hear them. The stories are of children abandoned out of desperation by their parents, and of heinous acts committed to children either for money or for base gratification.

She told the story of a seven or eight year old girl who was sold over the border to Thailand by her mother into a begging ring. Every day she would be dropped off by the head of the begging ring and be picked up at the end of the night. After a short time she was told she wasn't getting enough money, so they proceeded to burn her eye and ear with a blowtorch, which has caused terrible damage to her face. She was placed back on the street without any form of medical treatment, and after a time the leaders of the ring decided she still wasn't getting a satisfactory return, so one day they simply didn't pick her up, and she was abandoned and homeless. Fortunately, the Austrian consul gave care to her. She was medically treated and taken to hospital, and now lives at Geraldine's orphanage.

Another story is of a girl who was skipping out in the street with her mother. The wife of a man the girl's father was having an affair with appeared and poured battery acid over the girl and her mother, who both eventually became fused to one another. They had to be cut from one another in the hospital, and her mother ultimately died. The girl had burns to over 80% of her body. The woman who did this was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for murder, yet the lawyer working for the girl took the money given for her. Geraldine said this story illustrates how corrupt a place like Cambodia can be.

During her speech, Geraldine said she usually isn't shocked by the stories she hears in Cambodia, but that this one did shock her. Once she was in a restaurant, and she approached some distressed Americans to possibly help them. They introduced themselves as Rotarian well-builders who had just been approached on the street by a man with A4 sheets with pictures of seriously disabled children, blind children, children in wheelchairs, and were offered to buy sex with those disabled children. Geraldine's reaction was one of absolute horror, and she thought "where have we come to in this world where people want sex with a disabled child?"

The next day, she went to the Ministry of Interior where she knew someone working in the anti child-trafficking unit, and raised the issue of the sex ring. Geraldine was given the reply that the unit knew all about the issue, but couldn't do anything about it, because the police were getting a cut from the trade. Upon reflecting on these disturbing developments, Geraldine made a realisation that she mentioned in her speech, "I cannot waste my precious time and energy worrying about things I cannot change." She decided her energy would be best spent concentrating on the children whose fate it is to walk through the doors of her orphanage and be a part of the Sunrise family.

There is an endless supply of terrible stories about the unfortunate and unfair lives some children have been forced to live, but Geraldine also raised many success stories. At the time of the August 2013 speech, there were 10 Sunrise kids in Sydney and other parts of Australia studying at universities.

Geraldine said:

These are kids just off the backs of buffaloes, whose parents and grandparents were illiterate. From the opportunity that Sunrise gave them, their academic ability just shone, and they will come back and part of a generation of Cambodians that will really take the country forward, and I'm awfully proud of them.

There some members of the Sunrise Village at Cambodian universities studying law, tourism, architecture and engineering. Once a Sunrise child is 18, they are helped to find a job if they aren't interested in studying, and they can work in the IT industry, tourism, marketing. There is a couple that married each other and started a wedding business. A Sunrise kid always remains a Sunrise kid, and some come back on weekends to spend time with Geraldine and the children. A lot of the boys come back as it's a reliable place to pay someone to wash their clothes for them. Geraldine depends on her staff to keep the orphanage operating, and she described her staff more as family than employees.

Geraldine told another story of a boy at the Siem Reap Sunrise orphanage who was once also sold to a begging ring by his mother. This boy has cerebral palsy with badly crippled legs. Every year Geraldine sends out questionnaires for the children to fill out to send to sponsors, with questions like what's your favourite colour, favourite food etc. She also posed the question one-on-one with some children "if you had half an hour with Buddha, what would you ask him for?"

She said typical boys' answers are a sports car, motorbike, or a great computer, and the girls typical would ask for jewellery or a nice house with a rich husband. The particular boy with cerebral palsy, who was about 10, who replied by saying "Oh, I wouldn't ask him for anything, mum, he's too busy and too important, I wouldn't ask him for anything." Geraldine replied, saying "Just say one thing you would want, what is it?" The boy replied "Well there's one thing I want, mum. I would ask Buddha to make me a better person in this life, because in a previous life I must have done something very, very bad for my mother to sell me and not love me, and for me to not walk like other children. So if Buddha can make me a good person in this life, maybe in my next life I'll have a mother who loves me, and I'll be able to walk like the other kids."

The children that Geraldine receive come to her from physical and sexual abuse, domestic violence, neglect, insufficient treatment in hospitals, trafficked children from begging rings, prostitution rings, slave labour or from cruelty. When they are rescued, the Ministry of Social Welfare deliver the children to orphanages including Sunrise Village. Geraldine says she can't even describe how it feels to see in the eyes of the children that come to her, some as young as five or six, the fear, suspicion, and distrust. Fear, suspicion, and distrust is all over the faces of these children not because Geraldine is a foreigner, not because she has silly red hair, but because she's an adult,

and every adult in their life has harmed them, and they wonder she is going to do to hurt them. For some children, it takes a very long time for them to realise that Geraldine and the orphanage has love and care to give them, and that their life at Sunrise is going to be happy.

Geraldine provided a very realistic snapshot of life in Cambodia, and it is so far removed from life for an average person in a developed nation. Someone who has had a relatively peaceful and loving upbringing could never relate to the pain and suffering endured by such young orphaned children, and it is true the only way to have a chance to develop empathy for someone is something is to experience something for yourself. Of course, as a fortunate person having been brought up in a developed nation, I would be unable to share empathy with an orphaned child, but by immersing myself in the general local environment they would have been in may be the start to understand how their life has been lived.

During her speech, Geraldine stressed that she isn't trying to discourage people to want to live a materialistic life complete with comfortable luxuries. However, she did urge the symposium delegates not to wait until they were 50 to realise that "real happiness and joy comes from helping other people." She said although it took her a long time to find that out, today she has never had less materially and more emotionally. She said:

The unconditional love of a child is something you just can't put a price on, and that's what I have. Every night when I go down to the dining room for dinner with the kids and have our nightly meeting, the wave of love that I feel when I walk through the door is just something that fills me with joy every night when I go down there.

Geraldine didn't ignore the realities of the future. As a 68 year old woman who is unfortunately also a cancer patient, she is projecting a time when she will be a retiree in Cambodia. Due to the genocide that occurred during the Pol Pot regime, there are relatively few old Cambodian people, so instead of being an 'obligation' to care for aged people, in Cambodia it is seen as a great joy if you have someone old to care for; Geraldine figures "why would I want to retire anywhere else?"

Geraldine is also self-assured that in her work at the orphanages, she has been doing what she was put on this earth to do, a piece of knowledge she describes as wonderful for anyone to have. She describes herself as an agnostic believer in a supreme being that guides us, protects us and helps us through life's challenges, but she just isn't sure whether his name is Jesus, Allah, Buddha, or Krishna.

She mentioned the absence of any man in her life, and said "I guess the only grey spot in my life is that I don't have a partner." There is no one she can dance with at the weddings of Sunrise children she is blessed to attend a few times a year, and there is no one to help her with heavy suitcases when she's traveling.

She is optimistic about Cambodia's future. In her 17 years living there, spanning over 40 years, she has seen huge improvements, but there are some things that may not ever change in Cambodia, such as the corruption.

She is perpetually fighting to secure funds for Sunrise Village, as its operation depends on sponsorship. Once a friend of hers in Sydney overheard a colleague describe Geraldine as "loud, aggressive, and pushy", having seen her on television the night before. Geraldine replied to her friend's email freely acknowledging she was those three things, and she said "If people don't know what it is you need money for, your ventures will die in the water." It is necessary to be loud, aggressive and pushy to get peoples' attention enough so they are convinced to contribute their hard-earned money to your cause.

Geraldine spends no sponsors' money on promotions and publicity. She directly contacts all the organizations she can think of that have conventions, be it for doctors or engineers etc. She pretends to be Mandy Smith, Geraldine Cox's promotions manager, and pitches herself to be a speaker at conventions. When she gets a call back she pretends Mandy is at lunch and speaks as Geraldine to the enquiring person. This way, Mandy doesn't cost a penny, and does everything Geraldine says!

Geraldine is an authorized voice in saying "you are never going to be happy until you find your passion and throw yourself into it," and she literally bounces out of bed every morning, and doesn't know whether it's a weekday or weekend. She also said "being out of your comfort zone is a very exciting place to be." She said when she returned to Cambodia in 1995 it was scary, challenging and exhilarating. She was no longer under the diplomatic umbrella, so she didn't have any security backing her up; she was out there all on her own. She said:

Never be afraid to step out of your comfort zone; so many people live their whole lives never knowing what they are capable of, and I had no idea what I was capable of until I had my back against the wall.

One of the hardest things Geraldine has had to do is turn kids away. It is so unbearable for her that she won't personally do it anymore; she has guards at the gate who do it when they have no other choice. The last time Geraldine turned a child away, she said the grandmother of a child came in barefoot, very poorly dressed with a shaved head. She had with him her nine year old grandson who was spitting up great amounts of blood. Geraldine could see the child was in the last stages of TB. The grandmother said "I love my grandson, but he's dying, and I can't afford his cremation. I want him to be cremated as a Buddhist, and I know if he comes to Sunrise you will do that."

There was no way Geraldine could take the boy for Sunrise Village's communal living. The dilemma of giving the grandmother the money for the cremation, a meagre \$6, was that inevitably it would attract everyone needing money to fix a problem. There was nothing for Geraldine to do but to say "I'm sorry, I can't take the boy; you'll have to go somewhere else." She describes the grandmother walking away, saying "Where is somewhere else?"

The old woman looked of the age of someone who would have been brought up during the French colonisation, survived the Vietnam War, survived the Pol Pot genocide, survived the 13 year military occupation of the Vietnamese, and survived the 1997 coup. Geraldine said “she had been through all of this, but she still could not care for her dying grandson. She soon realised that she couldn’t handle turning kids away at the gate.

There was a young girl Geraldine had to turn away as she didn’t have the skills or resources to help care for her. When she was 9 or 10, the young girl’s father sent her to start a career as a prostitute. The man who had bought her cut her open to complete the sex act, and she was abused for many weeks, receiving no medical care whatsoever. Geraldine said the girl was in an almost catatonic state, and she had to be taken to another facility.

Near the conclusion of her speech, Geraldine told a story she says she tries to tell every time she speaks, which is of the boy she ‘failed’. She often buys silk scarves at markets to sell in Australia to help raise money for Sunrise. One day, she was made aware that there was a little boy at the markets who needed to be taken in. His name was to be ‘Noodles’, as he was abandoned at a noodle stall.

The baby was a healthy 8 month old boy, and Geraldine told him, and herself, that she didn’t have time to take him back to the orphanage, as she was leaving for Australia the next day and needed board approval for the salary of an extra nanny to care for him, but the next week she would be back. She had been back in Cambodia for around a fortnight when she remembered Noodles, and returned for him. But while she was away, someone had harvested his eyes to sell the retina on the black market. She looked at the boy at the market, and in her speech said “I lost it. I threw things and started shouting and I screamed. The people at the noodle stall were afraid the police would come, so they packed up, and they left.” She says now because of this, she takes any child she deems as vulnerable, and doesn’t wait for board approval. She feels she failed Noodles because she didn’t take him the day she first saw him.

Geraldine is someone who left school at 15. She assured the symposium delegates she would be the least educated person in the room, having not ever studied for a degree. She said that if she wanted to do the kind of work she was doing overseas back in Australia, she would be asked ‘what are you trained in? Are you a nurse, are you a teacher etc.’ She said “For the kind of work I do, you don’t need a university degree.” She then described in the way a truly passionate and loving mother what it means to be the carer of children. She said:

When you look after children and have them in your life, you shelter them, you feed them, you clothe them, you educate them, you keep them clean, you let them grow, and teach them the difference between right and wrong, you look after their mental, medical, and dental care, you protect them, you comfort them, you wipe away their tears, you hug and you kiss them, you play

with them, you make them laugh, you wipe away their tears, you encourage them, you fight their battles for them, you make them feel safe, you find their talents and nurture them, and bring them to their highest potential, you forgive them, you believe in them, you trust them, and you guide them, and you let them know they do have a future, and that you will always be there for them.

Upon finishing this awe-inspiring job description of someone who has cared for thousands of children through her work at Sunrise Village, Geraldine asked “I ask you where is the need for a university degree for the many people like me in the world who do what I do.”

Geraldine concluded her speech with words from the children. She asks the children to give a message to the people Geraldine speaks to in her fundraising efforts. She said the kids around 10 years old and up “went away and had a little meeting,” and came up back with a message. Here is the message:

The children of Cambodia wish all of you and your families in this room long life, health, strength, wisdom, and (what we all need most in the world) peace.

Geraldine said she looked at the list and said “Kids, wealth isn’t on there.” One of the oldest boys at Sunrise got up, rolled his eyes, and said “mum, if you’ve got long life, health, strength, wisdom, and peace, you are already rich. You should know this.” Geraldine said she loves how the children of the orphanage teach something new to her every day.

Geraldine can’t escape her age, and her health conditions, and has worked to ensure a smooth transition for when she is no longer the leader of Sunrise Village. While it is extraordinary that she is still operating at such a demanding pace, the load is lightened by the fact that she is truly passionate for the work she is doing. She is the woman responsible for a monumentally positive organisation in a place that has experienced negativity for such prolonged amounts of time. There will be flow-on effects from her great work, with the children that are nurtured all the way to adulthood hopefully going on to create nurturing and loving families, and contribute to the positive future of Cambodia.

While she is the hands, mind and body behind amazing, positive work, Geraldine acknowledged that her efforts provide care and shelter to a group of extremely lucky children, for many don’t have the chance to be given such a life-changing opportunity. She spoke about how she refuses to take in drug-addicted children. Unfortunately, there are some children already dependent on drugs, and they are generally too far gone to help rehabilitate. They simply cannot have a place in the orphanage, for there is an endless supply of children who haven’t fallen to self-destruction who could use a place at Sunrise. There was also one instance of a boy who was a kleptomaniac, and had to be expelled from the orphanage. Some habits necessary for survival might become so engrained that reconditioning of a child to positive and constructive habits

is impossible. These are the realities faced in Cambodia, and every other poverty-stricken, developing place.

Geraldine is an example of someone who was a regular Australian with her own set of personal problems. She was dealt with a set of cards that didn't allow her to be the mother of her own children. Instead of taking such a hardship bitterly to her grave, Geraldine eventually found her peace in her work at Sunrise Village. It was her maternal drive that found her living in Cambodia since 1995.



Geraldine's strength and selflessness reach the limits of the comfort zone of humanity itself. She has enlightened the world with her honesty and love, and in this speech has provided a 60 second lesson on how to be a great parent. Just drop the negativity and bad feelings in your life. Make your actions positive and full of love. Every action. And then you will start to live a life Geraldine has been enjoying for decades. Just know compromise is a given requirement. Make sure that what you compromise for is the greatest source of your happiness in life.

Remember that each child Geraldine nurtures has a beating heart, two observing eyes, and big dreams they probably once thought might never come true, if they had the ability to dream after the pain, suffering and struggle to survive they endured before Sunrise. Remember it was Geraldine who allowed them to dream again and believe that they can come true. Let's hope she can watch those dreams come true for many more years to come.

**Peter Baines, Founder
Hand Across the Water, Australia**

In 2005, Peter Baines, became the founder of the Australia-based charity Hands Across The Water. Prior to the devastating Boxing Day 2004 tsunami, which left between 250 000 and 300 000 people dead, and over one and a half million people displaced. Hands Across the Water is described on its website as a “boutique Australian charity that gives at-risk Thai children and their communities a helping hand.”

After almost a decade of development, Hands has built its very own orphanage in Barn Tharn Namchai, and supports hundreds of children throughout Thailand with a number of centres, refuges, and projects. Hands raised \$7 million in its first six years, money that was directly injected into humanitarian work that has improved the lives of countless disadvantaged Thai people.



Why Hands has been so successful is testament to the great leadership skills of Peter, which were displayed in his speech at the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium. His perspectives and attitudes in his speech, and his inner passionate drive make it totally clear why a former police forensic specialist could become so moved by the disaster that befell south-east Asia in 2004 that he would completely redirect his career.

Peter commenced his talk with an evocative image: imagine a ten metre high wave approaching you, and there is very little you can do to escape. Try to imagine the fear that would be coursing through and crippling your body. It is a strong emotion, but there is one emotion stronger than fear, and that is hope.

Peter's first involvement in the aftermath of the tsunami was as someone helping to identify the bodies of those who had lost their lives. 5395 bodies were identified in Thailand in the largest body identification operation to have ever occurred, a fact still accurate to this day. Peter's speech however was focused on "what happened next" on a personal level in the aftermath of the natural disaster. He said there is very little of himself that is as it was before, and everything changed on his last appointment in Thailand, when he met 32 Thai children who had lost their families as a result of the tsunami.

When the life-threatening natural events have passed and the land is calm again, there is a simple truth that "we can't change what has happened, but we can all change what happens next." Peter said he knew he couldn't change the fact that these children had lost their parents, but he felt it within his capacity to change what happened next for them. While still working fulltime with the police, Peter established Hands Across The Water with the purpose of trying to fundraise to support the 32 orphaned children.

Peter gave himself a 12 month commitment to raise enough funds to change the living arrangements of these children, who were then living in a tent. He was honoured that commitment and relocated the children into the orphanage. The number of children Hands supports has increased tenfold to over 300 children, and projects have grown from one orphanage to seven separate ventures. Hands' projects have expanded from tsunami victims to caring for children suffering from HIV, children who were trafficked in the sex trade, and, as Peter puts it "children who through no fault of their own in areas and in ways of living that isn't right, and isn't fair."

Hands Across The Water currently has seven new homes under construction in addition to the seven projects they are already managing, so they are expanding operations at an exponential rate. Peter finished working for NSW police in 2009, and spent the last two years of his time there on an international secondment. He worked with Interpol in France in a counter-terrorism group seeking to determine CBRN threats, i.e. chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats. He then spent the next year working in part with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in Southeast Asia in a capacity-building role around leadership and terrorism.

Peter has also worked with the Saudi Arabian government in the fields of crisis mitigation and leadership. In 2011, he worked in Japan following the devastating Tohoku earthquake and tsunami that left over 15 000 people dead. He said "it's the power of these shared experiences that have brought me here today, and it's the power of these shared experiences that enable me to do what I want to do." He then stipulated that the focus of his speech at the symposium was on shared experiences, "because when we get the shared experiences right, we can do so much and bring

about so much change.” For Peter, shared experiences are the most important thing in his life.

He told a story of a courageous woman who joined Peter and his fundraising team of 17 members taking part in an 800 km bicycle ride over 8 days. To be eligible to ride, each team member had to raise AUD\$10 000 and pay for their own expenses during the trip. What makes the rides so special is the participation of extraordinary people such as a woman in her mid-50s, Mae Tiew (Mother Tiew). She is the founder of the Home Hug Orphanage, which was established in 1987 in the northeastern province of Yasothon. The orphanage is exclusively dedicated to children with HIV, or children who had lost their parents to HIV.

Mae Tiew wanted to participate in the bicycle ride to lead by example for the children, to be able to say to them “just because you face challenges in your life, don’t give up. Just because the cards have been dealt against you doesn’t mean you shouldn’t pursue your dreams.” Mae Tiew, whose real name is Suthasinee Noi-in, is a woman who was diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer in 2004. She was predicted to have six months to live at the time of diagnosis, and how she’s still alive today, according to Peter, is “a bit of a mystery.”

During the bicycle rides, she would rise at 3 a.m., three hours before any of the other riders, and go through her body-detox routines before riding 100 km for the day. Peter said that when the team retired for the night at their hotel, “no one got off their bike and dared complain that what we had done had been too hard; no one dared complain in her presence about much at all.” That is the power of shared experience, that being in the presence of such a “supermum” as she is described by *Reader’s Digest Asia*, such a purely strong, soulful spirit.

Peter expanded his story of Mae Tiew by saying there are a number of levels by which we develop ourselves. On one level is that of professional development, engaged through by university studies, and extracurricular events such as the symposium. The second major form of development is of your soul in a health and welfare perspective, which would mean looking after one’s mind and body, and ensuring we conduct ourselves to our true personality. The third element is the one Peter thinks we don’t spend enough time on, and that is spending time on feeding our souls, doing things that truly enliven us, and make us see life in a different way to the constantly busy corporate life that we become so immersed in.

Peter posed a question to the audience of “when was the last time you did something that was food for your soul?” For him, cycling 1600 km a year through Thailand with amazing people like Mae Tiew is food for his soul. Is the food for your soul learning to sing, or doing something you’ve always wanted to do, like trekking through Nepal, or spending time in Paris with the person closest to you? Whatever it is, you should be actively pursuing it.

“Don’t wait until the time is right to undertake these things, to pursue these dreams, because if you wait until the time is right, that time might not come,” Peter said. He then indirectly quoted a title of the amazing Tracy Chapman song, “If not now, then when?” He continued with the question “If not you, then who?” He said the reason why the bike ride is so successful is because of the experience, and said “it’s something that you have to experience to understand why it makes it so special.”

For the charity, such a shared experience as the bike ride brings about a deeper sense of engagement. To build engagement within a charity, an organisation, a team, or within a family, create shared experiences, because people need a deep level of engagement to become connected and devote part of themselves to a cause or belief.

Peter said the highlight of the bike ride isn’t at the beginning when you turn up, having raised the \$10 000, and isn’t in the last moment when the children of the orphanage are at the finish line to greet you, but it is in the last climb of the last stage of the last day of the ride.

He shared a story about one of the riders named Suzan, and what the ride meant for her. Suzan isn’t the most natural cyclist, weighing in at over 100 kg, and isn’t the most avid fitness freak. However, she made it clear that she wanted to ride, but Peter admitted he had his doubts about whether she would be ready to ride by the event time in January. A 4.3 km hill that is 750 km into the ride is scaled on the final morning, and is conquered in about 12 minutes by the average serious cyclist, but at Suzan’s pace she would have taken 43 minutes. However, 2.8 km into the journey, Suzan stopped and got off her bike. The support driver in the car behind her and Peter, who rode back down the hill to support her, reached for her bike to put it in the car, but Suzan wasn’t finished.

What Suzan had achieved was already monumental. She had fulfilled the requirement of raising \$10 000 to be part of the team, and had ridden 750 km. Peter saw she was facing down to the ground, but it wasn’t for the sake of despair; she just needed to find a water bottle. In due time, she climbed back onto her bike and continued riding; she refused to give up. She reached the summit of the climb, and was riding with “sheer determination” as Peter puts it; her body was in pain, but still she pressed on. Peter said:

What was waiting for her when she got up to the top was the 43 other riders, and the power in her climbing the hill is that at the top there was this team of people waiting to support, it was this shared experience which brought it all about.

Peter said the bike ride has made their family a lot closer, as he rides it each year with his sons and father. His father took up cycling at the age of 72 to be a part of the ride, which is a remarkable achievement in itself. Peter said the bike ride also proves that for shared experiences, and real action and change, to be achieved, there needs to be real commitment. It does not do just to say you are a supporter of someone’s work. While it is good that you may support someone’s work, there also needs to be results,

and that is where taking action comes in. By personally taking action, you are committing a change and positively contributing to a cause.

Hands Across The Water was formed in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean Boxing Day 2004 earthquake and tsunami, while Peter was working with response teams in Thailand. The first orphanage run by Hands was opened in 2006 in Baan Tharn Namchai. The next year, construction of the buildings was commenced and the orphanage was officially in use.

Peter said, “you can’t just keep relying on your sponsors” for financial support, so in 2009, Hands began investing heavily in sustainability. The first bike ride occurred in this year, the second orphanage was opened. 2009 was the first year that Hands raised over \$1 million. In 2010, Hands took on the Home Hug Orphanage, and in 2011 a community centre was opened in Baam Nam Khem, and two bike rides were held.

The community centre cost AUD\$1.4 million to build, and it provides support, training, and healthcare to the worst affected area in Thailand, where the unemployment rate was 50% due to the breakdown of the local community and society after the tsunami. Such a large rate of unemployment brings higher crime rates, increased teen pregnancy, increased domestic violence, and substance abuse. Peter said those issues needed to be addressed if Hands were serious about helping the community.

2012 was the year that Hands really started to grow, opening new premises at Chumpon, Kanchanaburi, and Chanthaburi. They also entered into a relationship with a new building and organisation in the hill tribes of Chiang Mai, dedicated to supporting victims of child sex trafficking.

It costs Hands \$1.2 million just to meet annual costs. They are able to raise the necessary funds, but Peter acknowledged money doesn’t buy wisdom, and just because they are able to raise the money doesn’t mean they automatically know what is best for the Thai children. It would go without saying that the people who know what is best for the children in Thailand are the Thai people. Hands believes in giving without imposing conditions, and embraces the preferable situation of the children being taught the religion, values and beliefs that are abundant in Thailand. The money doesn’t impose upon the children decree on how they should live their life.

Peter said, “If you want to bring about long-term change, long-term commitment is what’s required.” He said during his work in Indonesia, Japan, and Thailand, he would see the large humanitarian organisations turn up and stay for about 6 months. When they were around, the aid money would flow to them, but when they left, Peter said it felt as if the message to the local community was “you’re on your own.”

To create long-term commitment, Peter said that you need to constantly stick with your financial partners, and consult directly with the local community to grasp what would be most effective to improve the living conditions of the particular area. You must operate with complete transparency. Trust is essential for a charitable organisation’s survival; the best thing to do in a charity is to show benefactors what the money is being used for, show them your expenses. At the end of the day, the

money isn't your money; you are merely a conduit, or middleman, for the money to go from the benefactor to the people who need to be helped by it.

Peter also touched upon the inevitable fact that each key person operating a charity needs to have an exit strategy. Running a charity is like any other job, and eventually people will leave, get sick and have to take a break, or retire. If key people who are instrumental in raising funds are no longer a part of the charity, there needs to be measures in place to compensate for the loss of that person. It's as simple as this: in Peter's words, "you need to be building succession planning into what you do. And in a charity, if you create that very early on, you are heading in the right direction."

Peter said "one of the most powerful things you can do as a charity is share the results that you make." The 'But-for theory' works well when showing your results as a charity, when you can approach a benefactor and say "this would never have happened *but for* your support", that is where you get engagement. Whether your results are putting a child through school, university or an apprenticeship, buying new beds, or building a new structure, you need to be able to show and share your results. You need to know that you have structure and strength enough within your charity so that expansion of operations isn't at the detriment of other areas of the charity. For that reason, Peter can't take on every offer he receives, which are many in multiple countries.

When Peter first got the call from Mae Tiew's Home Hug Orphanage asking him to support it, he agreed to travel to Yasothon province. What he saw was a struggling organisation, with sick, skinny children, some smelling bad, some dying on a weekly basis. Peter said, "the children were loved, they were happy, but they continued to die. They weren't dying because of a lack of effort from Mae Tiew, they were dying because not enough people cared like she did." Her challenge each day was deciding on whether to spend her limited resources on food or medicine. She didn't have enough money to do both, but without both, the children wouldn't be sustained. HIV isn't the dangerously life-threatening illness it was in decades past. With the right treatment, sufferers can live a relatively long life, yet still children were dying at Home Hug.

Peter learnt from his visit to Mae Tiew's orphanage that you can't continue to do the same thing and expect a different outcome. This realisation is similar to the Albert Einstein quote, "Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." Without changing the conditions at Home Hug, the children would unfortunately continue to die. Peter was frightened, as he knew that when he returned in six to eight weeks, some of the sick children he had held in his arms would no longer be there. They would be dead.

Peter said that when you enter into something, you won't have all the answers, and you may not even know what questions you want to ask, but with action comes clarity; "the more you do, the clearer you will get about what those challenges are." There is a certainty of what will happen if you do nothing: nothing will change. It takes courage, and unbelievable commitment to achieve something like running a successful

challenge. And you can take the option of saying “I don’t know how, so I won’t,” or “I don’t know how, but I will.” Because when you do take action, that is when you will find the answers.

Since Peter has begun supporting Home Hug three and a half years ago, the children’s T-cell counts have risen; in fact, not one child has died since he has given his support. If a T-cell count is below 300, the HIV sufferer will be susceptible to developing AIDS. There are now just two children out of 83 whose counts are below 300. The children’s suffering of AIDS has been reversed, and when Peter questioned why such an achievement has happened, he put it down to the personal experience he had when visiting the children. He became engaged with the Home Hug Orphanage, to the point where he was so moved by the children’s suffering that he needed to help them the best way he could, and he has done that by including the orphanage as an ongoing project with Hands.

“What we need to do is celebrate, and share our results,” Peter said. “The best thing you can do as a not-for-profit charity is to share the difference you are making, because that’s what people want to attach themselves to. People want to be part of success.” The paradox is that you need to become successful enough to have momentum enough to attract sponsors, but once you have the success and momentum, the sponsors will be there.

Peter spoke of the want to create a legacy, and the legacy he has envisioned is “planting a tree under which you will never sit. It’s not about you; it’s about doing something that is fundamentally for the good of someone else.”

Since beginning Hands Across The Water’s work after the 2004 tsunami, nine of the organisation’s children have gone on to study at university. A boy who’d lost his parents in the tsunami went to live with his aunt, who had lost her husband. He would have had to go to work to support himself, but fortunately his school saw his potential and asked Hands if there was a place for him at the orphanage. He is now finishing his business and law degree at Phuket University, and has been offered a job with Thailand’s Justice Department.

With long-term commitment, you can bring about long-term change. Hands Across The Water doesn’t wait until a child is 18, and then tell them “you’re on your own.” As Peter said, “children need the support of their parents forever, don’t they?” Peter’s charity wishes to support their children as long as they can as well.

Instead of approaching potential benefactors in a doorknocking style, Peter said that Hands “creates experiences for people.” A family of four all rode last year in Thailand; to be able to do this, they had to raise \$40 000 and pay for their own expenses on top of this. They had such a strong and engaging experience that they came back for a second ride the next year. Therefore, one family raised \$80 000 in the space of 18 months because of the invaluable experience they had with Hands. So instead of getting engagement and commitment by ‘asking for money’, Hands ‘offers experiences’.

Peter elaborated on the sex trafficking industry in the highlands of Chiang Mai. Young children are raised to work in coffee and tea plantations until they are old enough to be used in the sex trafficking industries. Sex trafficking yields greater returns than selling drugs; while drugs are a one-time sale product, a young girl will go to school in the day, but then be forced to sleep with strangers, night after night after night.



He doesn't claim to have the answers to solve this tragic injustice that is the plight of so many Thai girls; he also acknowledges that his efforts against child sex trafficking are not even making a dent in the industry. In the Chiang Mai area alone, there are over 100 000 children trafficked for sex. Peter cannot help every single child, but he can provide a home to some, where they will live in safety, where they will go to school, where they will be given healthcare and shelter. As Peter said, "we can't help everyone, but we can all help someone."

Essentially, Peter's strategies to successfully maintaining his charity is to create experiences for people, get their engagement and commitment, and from there, get the results. If you focus on the experience, you will get the engagement that is so important.

Peter concluded his speech with the wise words "Enjoy what you do, or change what you do, because we only get one go. Seriously, we only get one go."

**Francis Kong – Director
Inspire Leadership Consultancy, Philippines**

Francis Kong is involved in a great many things: he is the director of Inspire Leadership Consultancy, president of the Success Option Publishing Company, a business columnist, business consultant, corporate trainer, author, and last but not least, an international speaker. He spoke to the delegates at the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium about how to become respectful, productive, and well-adjusted adults in a high-pressure world that demands ‘perfection’ in business, social, and personal life.

Francis started his speech by introducing his wife in the crowd. They have been married for 33 years, and were with each other 9 years before their marriage. He described her as “the one and only love of my life”, and “my one and only treasure.” Though it was only early August at the time of the speech, Francis said it was his 190th official talk for the year, which means he had been averaging over one a day. In 2012, he gave 336 talks, and he said he loves what he does. He paraphrased Confucius in saying “if you love what you do, you’re no longer working, right?”



Francis spoke at a rapid pace and interspersed serious discussion with stories and humour. One of his first proverbs in his speech was “The person that keeps on learning never grows old.” He made his speech interactive as delegates turned to people by

their side to say such things as “never tell a lie,” “fun is important,” and even “you look very funny.”

Francis posed the question “are you aware that the world is changing so fast?” Technology drives change; this fact isn’t new. The fact however is that technology is changing more rapidly than ever, as larger economies of scale enable development, research, and productivity to increase exponentially.

The object of Francis’ speech was to give certain ideas that would challenge and provoke the delegates to go deeper into thinking. Francis has noticed in all the countries he visits to give talks that many young people aren’t engaging in serious critical thinking; most young people watch more YouTube videos than read books, and the few books they do read are about vampires. Rather than necessarily having an open mind, Francis said he would rather young people think, and think well.

Hollywood movies are all about emotions; they make you laugh, cry, get mad, be lost in suspense, be frightened, be shocked, or be awestruck. Like a Hollywood movie makes you feel and not necessarily think, Francis feels that young people are feeling their way through life, not thinking. He urged the delegates “don’t just feel your way into living; you’ve got to think your way towards success.” The next interactive section of the speech saw Francis getting the delegates to tell each other “You’ve gotta start thinking,” and then the interpretative “speak for yourself.”

According to Francis, there are two types of speaker that work at such a convention as the Symposium; the first kind stands on the stage trying to impress the crowd with what he or she knows, and these speakers are rarely effective. The second kind of speaker expresses truths.

Indeed, the world is changing at an incredible pace, but Francis made the pace feel like breakneck speed when he said, “by the time you have completed your resume, you are already obsolete,” because by the time you graduate with a degree, there are new emerging skills that are required. Therefore, your purpose in going to university isn’t simply just to gain knowledge and skill, but it is also to equip you with the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn.

Francis reiterated his point that technology drives change, and pointed out a fascinating fact: four of the most pioneering computer and internet-related entrepreneurs, Michael Dell, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and Steve Jobs all dropped out of college. They have all been some of the richest men in the world. Francis said, “I made the mistake; I graduated.” He also said there are two words that can describe the most important thing a successful person can have in the 21st century “skills agility.”

The focus of Francis’ speech at the Symposium was on leadership, and he posed an age-old question that continues to be divisive: “are leaders born, or made?” Socrates is asked the very similar question in Plato’s 4th century BC dialogue, *Meno*, “Can virtue be taught?” Francis’ answer to the question, in his trademark deadpan style, was, “leaders are made, but they have to be born first.”

He elaborated by saying “leadership is a skill. You acquire it, you work on it, you shape it, you excel in it, you study it... leadership is both an art and a science.”

“The ability to change ourselves first gives us the equipment to be able to lead others,” Francis said. Many notable people have given proverbs about personal change; Mahatma Gandhi said “Be the change you want to see in the world”; Socrates said “Examine yourself”; Plato said “An unexamined life is not worth living.” That is why change begins within yourself.

The higher you go, the more responsibility you have to take care of others. Some people are ill-equipped as leaders with such responsibilities, and compensate for it by developing an inflated ego that is like a fortress for the weak person inside; their position and stature can ward off most criticism for their shortfalls, but they continue to set an undesirable example upon the people they are responsible for. This is why “leadership begins with you”; you must be able to govern your own being in order to govern other things.

There were a number of quickly expressed ideas that Francis briefly focused on; the first was on the subject of becoming successful. According to Francis, “to be successful is an outcome. To get to be successful, you need behaviours.” Wrong behaviours equals to wrong outcomes, and right behaviours equal to right outcomes. Essentially, being successful is the result to committing to behaviours conducive to success. You must do the right things in order to get to the right outcome.

Francis continued by giving phrases that he hoped would help the delegates. The first was “what delights you will direct you.” A classic example of this idea in practice can be related back to secondary school when you were free to choose electives, subjects you were interested in more than others. If you were forced to study all the electives you didn’t choose, chances are you would have performed much less successfully than how you performed studying the subjects that delighted you. Your chosen career is hopefully the career you most want to do; you have chosen a direction that most delights you, and you take the steps to live that life, with what makes you passionate and vibrant directing your life’s course.

Therefore, if your delight is in making money, your life will be lived serving your personal pursuits for material wealth, but if your delight comes in helping other people, then social change, and your ability to serve your community, will sustain you. People whose only pursuit in life is to make money should beware, because chances are they are always unhappy and miserable. Once they get the money they want, it is never enough, so they want more, then more, then more again. Desiring money is like building a fire; the larger the fire, the more fuel needed to sustain its hunger.

Francis’ delight is in helping people realise their potential, and that is why he commits to speaking over 300 times a year, and why he sometimes speaks in schools free of charge, and when he speaks, he doesn’t get tired, for he is delighted to be doing it.

You must also be mindful of other things in your life beside your career. When you have a partner and family, if you are too focused on your career, be it for the pursuit of money, fame, or success, you must be mindful of balancing your life to fit other important things into it. Not only your direct family, but your extended family, friends, hobbies, physical and mental wellbeing, learning, and planning unforgettable shared experiences, need to be a part of your life if it is to be lived fully. You must not put all your eggs into one basket, for one day, as Francis said, you will wake up, look yourself in the mirror and say “is this all I have?” As Francis said “many people are so poor, the only thing they have in life is money.” From the speech, questions should be posed to yourself and the people you are close to: “what is your delight, and what directs you?”

Francis offered some fundamental life principles: the first being, “learn to appreciate what you have.” This principle is commensurate with the idea of not taking your delight in the pursuit of money. If you are always pursuing money when you have enough for a comfortable living, the message you are sending out is that you are not happy with what you have, and you aren’t appreciative of your position in life. Francis pointed out the dilemma that many in advanced countries face: they have so much comfort and materials in their lives, but they forget to appreciate them. They take them for granted, and therefore rob themselves of the appreciation they could easily develop with such a prosperous life.

If you do appreciate what you have, you won’t be stressed and worried about getting more, and doing more to get more later. You will be relaxed enough to notice the small thrills in life, like watching a bird foraging for a minute, or playing a few extra minutes with your children, pampering somebody special to you, or choosing a toy for your pet. When you appreciate the things in your life, you want to show them your appreciation, and by doing so, you are creating and sharing more love, which leads to a much happier and nobler lifestyle.

Even if you have little comfort, you must learn to appreciate that comfort. By developing an ‘attitude of gratitude’, you can also appreciate the little thrills as Francis said, “the happiest people in the world learn to appreciate the small and simple things in life.” They look at a rainbow and admire it; they walk on the grass and say, “these are things that cannot be bought by money.” They help the poor, and realise that such a thing gives them fulfillment.

Francis saved the most important points until the conclusion of his speech. The first that was mentioned was “never allow others to live your life for you.” Living a successful and true life requires responsibility, so you mustn’t allow the losers in life to influence you.

The second very important point Francis made was something many people have heard of, but few people embrace: “true love waits.” He said that many young people rush into relationships before they know it is right for them, and when they fallout they are emotionally damaged, and their confidence and self-image is shaken to the point where their dreams can be vaporised, and they lose their way in life.

If you want to change something else, you start with changing yourself; if you want to change the community, you start with changing negative things within your family. Francis urged the delegates “after you have left this conference, don’t make a difference to the world; make the world different.” When you find what is the most important thing in your life, you focus on it. You practice skills constantly, you immerse yourself completely in your work when the time is right to, and you build your identity and confidence around your occupation, which is not just occupation for the purpose of money, but also for the purpose of living truly to yourself.

You network with friends and colleagues, you seek mentors, you become someone who matters to other people. Francis said there will be a day when people will look at you and say “there goes that leader.”

There are no tricks to personal development. Just as Whitman says “the greater the reform needed, the greater the personality you need to accomplish it,” Francis said “If you take a look at successful people, they have all gone through fire.” This comment was made in answering a delegate’s question of how a challenge could be seen as an opportunity. A person unwilling to face immense difficulty is a weak person, and their position in life will reflect their unwillingness to be pushed out of their comfort zone and challenge their limits. Essentially, that person will be unable to inspire others.

Francis advised the questioner and delegates, “be willing to face the challenges in life.” You shouldn’t sit back and bleat, “why is this thing happening to me”. Rather, it is much better to ask yourself the question “What can I learn from this challenge?” When the lesson has been learned, and the experience has passed, you will then be able to use it to guide others.

The next question raised the issue of speechmaking, and that sometimes it was difficult to engage listeners. To answer the question, Francis gave some tips on what makes a speech great. Firstly, he said that the content of a speech is important, but the delivery of the speech may sometimes be more important. People will never listen to you unless they can sense that you care for them.

Another essential factor for successful speech giving is confidence. When you have an audience listening to you, you have the authority to engage with them as deeply as you can. You cannot abuse that power however, or you won’t be respected as a speaker. Another extremely important thing is to always be smiling; positive and confident body language go hand in hand, so smiling at the same time as looking confidently authoritative, knowing that what you have to say is important to your listeners, and that they will benefit a great deal from it, will ensure that your audience is engaged with your speech.

To be a speaker with great respect and appreciation, you must practice what you preach; as Francis said, “The message should be right, but the messenger should be righteous. If you say something, but then you do something else, you will never get

the respect of your people.” It is also very important to include humour in the speech; put some funny bits inside. Humour brings all people back into engagement.

A question was raised that mentioned the words “old people”, and Francis answered the question by asking his own question: “what do you consider an old person?” He said in the modern age, there is less of a concern of demographics as of psychographics. You may be old in the physical sense, but if you have the enquiring mind of a child, with the sensibility of a young adult, then your classification as ‘old’ becomes one tethered to the physical sense alone. Conversely, if you don’t exercise your mind, and if you cease to think freely, and fall into a life of habit, you may be ‘older’ than people that are physically, but not mentally, older than you.

Francis elaborated on the discussion of generational differences. He announced: “old people only want one thing: respect.” On the flipside, when Francis speaks to older people, he tells them that young people want to learn from the old, but old people should not control, but they should influence. Francis reminded the delegates that one day they too will be old.

The next question raised the issue of what to do when logic would advise you not to do something, but your gut feeling, or your instinct, is telling you to go ahead with whatever idea you are pondering. Francis paraphrased the enquiry to say what should you do when the logical thing to do is reasonable, but your inner feeling is telling you otherwise.

Francis first replied to this question by proclaiming: “faith is a friend of logic; logic is a friend of faith.” Your logic should be based on moral principles that you have decided to uphold within yourself, and these principles should be correct in the sense of respecting yourself, your neighbours, and your environment. Your morals need to have a reference; therefore, you need to be attuned to your own moral references. A typical moral reference could be holy scriptures, but they could also be advice given by your family or people close to you, a particular book or movie that really influenced your worldview, a favourite quotation, or a favourite historical or public figure. Moral references will naturally vary between people, but the obligation that binds all references together is that they need to be consciously known by the individual in order to take their full effect.

Francis offered some moral references that should be common to all compassionate human beings. The first was to never hurt another person. The second was linked to the first, which was an explanation why the cliché “the end justifies the means” is completely false. If the means to an end involved damaging other people in any way, how can the end possibly justify the conduct that occurred to reach that destination?

One of the most important questions Francis had for the delegate was “Where do you get your essential moral references?” It was a rhetorical question of sorts, as it isn’t something that can be answered without long, self-reflective thought. Francis said his moral reference was the scriptures, and there were values he placed above all others that can be found in the scriptures. First and foremost, he values the moral principle

of staying faithful to his wife. Another is that he won't steal money, even if he needs it.

Therefore, you will be able to trust your decision-making if you have faith in your moral reference. If you have the belief that what you think is honest and right, there will be no second-guessing within you, for you will know what is wrong and what is right, and you will be disciplined and righteous enough to make the right decision every time you are faced with one that could otherwise equally be considered logically or selfishly.

The next question prompted Francis to speak about self-awareness, and self-knowledge. He spoke in the simplest possible way: "you should know who you are." You should have the ability to be able to say that you know yourself with complete honesty; you should have the ability to know your strengths, and you should have the ability to know your weaknesses.

One person's strength will be another's weakness; one person's weakness will be another's strength. Therefore, there is no reason why someone should be insecure about not possessing the strength that someone else possesses, for just as that other person possesses strengths, they will also possess weaknesses. Each person is unique, and each person has one skill they are particularly better at than anything else; we already know this.

There is no reason why people should be comparing themselves on the basis of identity, for we all have different identities. No one should want to be like someone else, unless they are attempting to emulate someone's strength of character, ability, or judgment. Francis expressed this idea by saying: "we are all experts, but only in different subject matters, so there is no need to be proud, there is no need to be uncomfortable with our weaknesses." You should work more on your strengths, and then become better at what you do, in order to help others.

A young mother of two, who is also a student leader at her university, was very emotional expressing her dilemma of juggling university commitments with motherhood, and felt upset about missing out on spending more time with her children. She approached Francis with a question of how to better cope with this problem.

Francis immediately replied by saying "your most important community is your family." It was very clear to see that this woman was, as Francis said, a woman with a kind heart who wanted to serve her community. He reminded us that time passes by so fast; parents will grow old, and children will grow up. He said the most tragic thing for a child would be that they don't have any memories of time spent with their parents; Francis very clearly stated that it was family that should be given priority when it came to serving any kind of community.

Francis listed the things he had going on in the year of 2013: 300+ talks, books coming out, work on radio and television, his family to spend time with; the list could go on.

Although he is such a busy man, he said: “There is no such thing as time management; there is only task, and energy management.”

He outlined the priority principle, which plainly states that you prioritise activities that will give you the most long-term success. In order to make your life easier and more manageable, you must work out what will add to your success the least, and cease to devote time on these things. Life isn’t about having an either/or decision to make. First of all, you must devote yourself to your family, and then you need to further serve the community by eliminating the things in your life that do not add value, or success, to yourself.

It is so important for young people from everywhere to be the best they can possibly be, for it is young people who hold the future of a country in their hands. Young people may not yet be influential in the status quo, but you can be influential in whatever sphere you are a part of. If you wish to be an influential youth therefore, you should pitch your ideas to an audience of young people.

The next questioner asked another clearly stated question: what is the road to success? Francis immediately said that the traditional argument that success is achieved by education can’t be defended convincingly today. Many successful businesspeople haven’t been the most academically and technically educated people, but they had other gifts. They understood where their strengths and best skills lay, they had great people skills that enabled them to be very accomplished businesspeople, they continued to learn, they were forced to learn to survive. All these qualities culminated in developing completely new skills, processes, and ways of operating.

The engineers of technology, the drivers of research, they all felt a deep passion and commitment to what they were doing. No matter how much education you have undertaken, you cannot learn about things that don’t yet exist, therefore, any revered inventor wasn’t necessarily a genius at written exams. They did, however, have an inquiring mind, a persistent attitude, and a vision of accomplishment that sustained them and enable them to be progressive contributors to society.

Francis’ point essentially was that “education alone is no guarantee for success.” There is an emphasis now on creativity, innovation, and ideas being the x-factor for employability. This emphasis is an accurate reflection of my above inventor analogy. Francis mentioned the author of the 2008 book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell, who developed the “10 000 hour rule”, believing that the key to success is to commit 10 000 hours to whatever given skill or profession you want to have. Essentially, as Francis said, to gain mastery of a skill, “there’s no magic, there’s no short-cuts; it’s hard work.” Figures in *Outliers* that Gladwell puts up to the test include The Beatles, Bill Gates, and Steve Jobs, who were all extraordinarily successful in their respective professions.

The 10 000 hour rule would argue in the same school that believes leadership is a teachable skill. Natural ability may encourage and attract you to be interested in a

certain thing, but without practice, you will not succeed. The difference is the passion, drive, and lack of self-doubt you have that makes the lengthy process of practicing 10 000 hours possible. In fact, historians have told us that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart would have already committed to 10 000 hours to music by his mid-teens, so rigorous his time was spent developing his virtuosity.

For anyone who believes they have reached their potential, and they feel disheartened, or let down by themselves for not being 'better', or more accomplished, Francis provided very clear advice that that viewpoint is absurd. No matter what position you are in, you can become unstuck, for humans are not trees. If you are discontent with your position in life, or your inability to rise above a level you have held for longer than you would like, you must tell yourself "I am better; I don't want this anymore." When you have come to this mindset, you can work on ways to be in a position more agreeable with yourself.

The next question was deliberately vague and interpretive; it was simply "what makes someone a good leader?" Francis' immediate answer was "there is a major difference between management, and leadership." Francis compared them by saying "Management is all about control; leadership is all about influence." This statement can be directly related to the point he makes when he speaks to older people on how they should guide younger people.

Francis then changed his focus to be on parenting as leadership. He said when children aren't old enough to keep themselves safe, that is when parents need to be in control, to 'manage' their children. But once children are in their mid to late-teens, instead of controlling them, parents need to influence them, to be leaders. The difference between control and influence is immense. Picture a parent controlling their teenage child, and then picture a parent implicitly influencing, or giving worthy, appropriate advice, to that child.

Francis elaborated on leadership by saying any leader should have five particular traits. Firstly, a leader should have confidence; someone afraid and not prepared to have responsibility isn't leadership material.

Next, a leader should have communication skills; what good is a great idea if you don't have the skill to express it, and what good is a leader if the people they lead aren't well informed on decisions and expectations of the leader?

Thirdly, a leader should have consistency; your decisions as a leader should bare the same morals and honesty as they did yesterday, and as they will tomorrow. This doesn't mean to say that you should keep the same mindset forevermore; it simply means that you shouldn't change your leadership processes unpredictably or whimsically, for if you do, you will very quickly lose the trust of those you are responsible for.

A leader should have compassion; you shouldn't have the mentality that because you are the boss you can be forceful and not consider input from others, or an individual's circumstances; you should never say 'do what I say, because I am the boss.'

The most important feature of a leader is their character. Francis said: “without character, everything collapses.”

Francis moved on to answer a question directly about confidence. He said he believed confidence is the result of two things: a happy perspective of yourself, and a happy perspective of what you are doing. If you are happy about these two things, there is no reason why you shouldn't feel confident, and people should remember that it is their right to feel confident. Confidence starts with a basic acknowledgement of who you are, what you can do, and why you are doing what you are doing, and when you do things that are right, you will automatically feel confident.

The next questioner wanted to know how to find a good leader; there are so many bad leaders in the world, so how can you tell who is a good leader? Francis asked the delegates to give names of people they thought of as leaders. The names raised were Barack Obama, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi. Francis then raised the names of Hitler and Stalin, people who were thought of as leaders, but had caused so much death and misery.

The author, John Maxwell, has been quoted as saying that all these leaders had something in common; they had supportive followers. Francis elaborated, saying: “whether that person (a leader) is good or bad, that person has influence. He refocused the question to ask how you can determine that a leader will be good, instead of bad. He reiterated the five features of a good leader he had stated earlier. He added to them by saying a good leader is someone who fulfills all of his or her duties and responsibilities, and who is focused on helping others to become successful, or helping others in whatever capacity the leadership position expects. Such a leader will be a leader with promise.

The next question asked whether money could buy happiness. Francis immediately replied by saying money isn't everything, but it is almost everything. He said “money is a tool you can use; you don't allow the tool to use you.” Money can become the lord of your life; money is a beautiful slave, but a terrible master. Paper money is simply an object that denotes the price that you have the power to pay, but it doesn't reveal anything concerning value.

A delegate of the Symposium, Duong Tran, has written a blog entry on whether money can buy happiness, and she concluded that it can, provided you spend it on the right things. For example, paying for flights to visit your family or someone very dear to you is a way that money can buy happiness. You can buy experiences that can add value to your life, educate you, and give you a wider existential perspective. You can buy time if you can afford to take time off work, you can buy better quality personal items, you can buy healthcare, you can buy reunions of friends if you are able to organise and afford to do it, you can make investments in yourself and others, and even being able to afford a simple pleasure like an ice cream or your favourite treat can add value to your life.

Therefore, from considering both these perspectives, I deduce that the ability for money to buy happiness is relative to the individual person. Money can buy great unhappiness, if it is money that supports a bad or self-destructive habit like drug-taking, drinking, or smoking. Money can create tension between family or close friends, as greed may cloud your or someone else's judgment, as they may, even temporarily, value money over friendship and family, only to be faced with dire consequences of distance and isolation.

The developed world is at its most isolated ever; social media can be viewed in two lights; one school of thought can argue that social media brings people closer together, as even if someone is thousands of miles or oceans away from you, you can talk and see them in real time. Though a Skype or Face time chat truly only is one person looking at a pixelated screen, the human mind interprets the encounter as real. Having video-chatted with many people in the past, I am almost tricked into thinking I personally met with someone, face-to-face. You can do everything with someone on a video chat but touch them; nevertheless two of the most vital senses are stimulated.

But is the payoff worth it? I video-chat with people I truly feel connected with, and who I receive much of my emotional wellbeing from. But would it be realistically better for me to experience interaction that stimulates all five senses, that is personal, real, face-to-face interaction? It seems social media eliminates the impossibility of such stimulating interaction with another, but it also may limit your desire to meet people in your immediate location.

You can argue that certain people know you better than others, and that the wealth of connection grants social media more than communication of expediency. But how would it be if there was no choice but to fluidly change your friends; if you met someone who lives countries away from you, you would naturally grow apart as the only form of communication could be phone calls and postal letters. Perhaps there would be more emphasis on local interaction, and therefore your alienation with your local area wouldn't be so as the fact that that alienation exists would mean that more effort would be taken for like-minded people to find each other. Now that such a venture can be achieved in the comfort of your own home, and extremely like-minded people can be found relatively quicker, it seems that social media is becoming a more and more popular, perhaps even preferred by some, method of making, and maintaining, friendships.

Having said all of this, this entire idea may not have ever occurred to me had I not read Duong's blog entry, which is an example of social media. The idea would still be relevant even if social media didn't exist, but I wouldn't even know the idea. Perhaps the ultimate consequence of social media is that it can make us more intelligent, but it can make us more physically isolated from our local community. It seems collective local community could become obsolete due to the elimination of geographical constraints on community; community now doesn't have to be determined by geography. Therefore, individual, or smaller communities can spring into existence; large communities also can, which aren't tethered by location.

Essentially, tying this discussion all back to the alternate perspectives on money, everything in your life is determined by the way you see things, for if you change the way you see things, the things you see change. Just as you can be your own best friend, you can be your own worst enemy; the same fact can apply to social media, and it can apply to money. That is why, truly, all things are reliant on your individual perceptions and perspectives, for they are at the root of all your actions and beliefs.

The next question asked how the delegates could improve their decision-making skills. Francis answered the question by saying you will never have made the right decision unless you have a great idea. To have a great idea, you must have many ideas, and you can only have many ideas if you read books, observe life, ask questions, approach speakers, approach experts, and always seek out knowledge and new experiences. Essentially, if you have more knowledge, you will have more ideas. Francis said “in other words, the best way to be able to make good decisions is to read, read, read, learn, learn, learn, attend seminars like this, and always learn from your past experiences, whether they were good or bad.”



The next question focused on the fact that with such a globalised, highly populated world, it is very competitive and difficult for young leaders to distinguish themselves. Francis said the best way to distinguish yourself is to understand your best strengths. Francis used himself as an example by asking the audience:

What area in my life do you think I am strongest in? Communications. Therefore, I will improve more of my core strength. If I can speak, and if I can write, I will improve more my speaking, and I will improve more my writing. If you try to improve yourself in everything, you will end up with nothing.

Francis then recommended the book *Discover Your Strength*, by Marcus Buckingham. Once you discover your strength, you should not be the best at what you can do, but you should be the *only* person that can do what you do. That is how you become invaluable, and that is how you can distinguish yourself from everybody else.

The best way for you to know whether you are a good leader is if the people you are leading are inspired by you. Ask yourself whether you are bringing out the best in them. Do you see the fruit of your labour? Are you getting good results as a leader? Are you yourself getting inspired to do more of what you are doing?

Towards the end of the speech, Francis mentioned the national tourism slogan 'It's more fun in the Philippines.' He pointed out how everywhere you go, you see people smiling.

Francis then closed his speech, and he implied that he had saved his most important material until the end. He said:

There are people you come to meet only once in your life. There are people who can be your friends for a day. There are people who can be your friends for a week. There are people who can be your friends for a few months. And there very very few people who become your friends for years. Take it from me, apart from your learning things at this conference, what's important for you is to develop friendship.

What is the number one reason for prejudice, and for racism? Ignorance. The more you get to know people from other countries, the more you appreciate their culture and their life, the more you will be inspired. That's why, as equal importance as learning is your ability to reach out to other people.

Francis' closing remarks praised the Symposium, and he urged people to return the next year, and to bring their friends with them, for not many conferences deal on the important issues like valuing, helping, and developing the community, like the University Scholars Leadership Symposium does.

After leaving such an inspiring and intense week like the Symposium, it is important not just to remember what you have learnt, but also to let your newly acquired knowledge to digest into your identity. Let your knowledge develop into your heart, and then into your hands, so that you can commit to action influenced by the positive and uplifting advice given to you.

I am sure everyone attending the Symposium would like to thank Francis for giving such a powerfully motivating and encouraging speech. Instead of making success feel like it is achieved by only a lucky few, he let it be known that success is achieved by those with the ability to learn, relearn, unlearn, and to actively be mindful of their strengths, and to put in the hours of genuine hard work. Good behaviours bring about good outcomes, and it is less the goal that counts the most; all that matter is the process, for success isn't made by luck, it is made by hard work, and leadership isn't a natural gift given to few, but five things: confidence, communication skills, consistency, compassion, and character.

Lloyd Luna – CEO
Lloyd Luna Communications, Philippines

Lloyd Luna is a young Filipino motivational speaker and author. He focused on the topic 'If you want to get something, get up, stand up, leave the crowd, and get it.' He made the point very early that "in real life, you don't get what you want, you get what you work for."

A sense of entitlement early in life is dangerous, as you may mosey your time away believing you are more developed, or in a position higher than what you truly are, only to receive your just deserts later. The race of life is run with your entire life part of the race; many people receive a great headstart early in life, by being born into more favourable circumstances. However, when you become an adult, and you are responsible for your own future, no matter how much financial or career support you receive, you ultimately need to pull your own weight. Therefore, even with the greatest possible circumstances, you don't necessarily get what you want; rather, you have a much greater chance of getting what you work for.



Lloyd made a valid point that while you are at university or college, this is the best time to fail. It is better to fail something early in life, rather than in your 30's or 40's. You need to learn your strengths and weaknesses early in life.

Lloyd raised the topic "you have a life to live, and your time is running out." It is inspiring to live your life with a sense of urgency, as we all know our days are finite, however, if you focus too much on urgency, you may find yourself leading an unbalanced life. However, being mindful of the transience of life is important.

Lloyd also said: “never insist authority.” Respect should never be asked for, or forced; rather, it should be implicitly earned. This is how true respect comes to be; insistent, superficial respect is contrived and weak, while truly earned respect is trustful and can transform the situation on an individual and collective level. He also said “don’t let your achievements define you; you define your achievements.”

Lloyd said: “if you want to get more, you have to give more value.” Essentially, if you want to be in a higher position, if you want to be entitled to more things, you have to become a more valuable asset, be it in business or personal life. Essentially, if you want to get more out of life, you must increase your value.

Lloyd’s definition of success was “success means freedom from things you hate doing.” Also, if you want to be free, you have to find what you love, and if you are doing something you don’t love, you have to find how you can become free. Lloyd said he has met a lot of people with many businesses, possessions, and monetary wealth, yet they aren’t happy. They have the most of everything, but they are simply doing it for the sake of having money, and to building fortune. A lot of the time, money is in between what you do, and what you would love.

Lloyd touched upon his past, and claimed that at times he only had one meal a day. He did all his schooling in public schools. He said that: “life’s rewards seldom exceed your personal development.” He said that whatever you have right now, you have had to earn. He was very clear by repetitively saying if you want more in life, you have to be more.

Lloyd spoke about how people were doubtful about his rapid success, how he achieved so much so quickly. He said the reason why he has achieved so much because he refused to believe the people who said: “you can’t.” He said it’s very easy to give up, rather than fighting for something, and it’s very hard to not listen to people, especially family members, he say you can’t do something. But truly, other people don’t have an entire idea of what you can and can’t do; he said “We cannot judge other people, because we do not know (completely) who that person is.” He also said: “If they say you can’t, prove them wrong.” He refused to lose by simply believing them; he said:

I don’t want to believe them; I want to believe in what I can do with my gifts and talents... I refuse to lose by believing in people who don’t believe in me... you have the power to write your own life story. Don’t let other people write your life story, for you will look bad, and they will look good.

He made a truly profound observation that some stories can save the lives of others; some stories can change a person. I can advocate that point, with a lot of music, film, and books that have had major influences on myself.

Lloyd made quite a few statements that could be ambiguous; he said: “nobody is perfect; I am nobody, therefore I am perfect,” and “When you have nothing more to lose, you have everything to gain.” Such statements sound original and genuine enough to have come from his own honest thinking; these thoughts may derive from

a character that was very oppressed and downtrodden at once stage, but had the stoicism to stick up for itself by refining and openly expressing its intelligence.

It is believe Lloyd has a satisfactory amount of positivity to give to the world by sharing these sentiments. For it is how some people become great; when they perceive themselves to have nothing left, to be the lowest they have ever been, that is when they develop the talent to become truly great, and more valuable than the average person.

Lloyd said he made a lot of mistakes in his earlier life, but it didn't bother him, for life isn't about getting a perfect score and perfect life, it is about getting a life so much happier than before. When he was asked to give advice to his younger self, he chose not to give any advice, for at the time, he was operating with the knowledge he had at that time. Such a sentiment relates to a quote found on Tumblr: "never regret, because at one time it was exactly what you wanted."

Lloyd came out with an interesting thought, that you should become so valuable that you don't have to look for jobs, but jobs come looking for you. He said: "Instead of competing with many other applicants, all you have to do is make yourself so valuable that companies will start calling you up." He said he finished his first book's manuscript in 15 days, and he approached many publishing companies, who all rejected it. He felt dejected, but became more self-reliant. He spent all the money he earned as a web designer to publish his first book.

He said he started an online business when he didn't have his own internet connection. He said: "when you don't have something, what you need to do is get it." He used internet cafes for the internet to start the business. He also gave himself the positions of president, vice-president, secretary, accountant and janitor of his business. Though people said he couldn't achieve what he did, he refused to believe it. He feels his book was successful because people are looking for an answer to the question "is there a job waiting for me?"

He next spoke about ambition; he said: "if your ambition is to serve the many, I think your ambition is legitimate." But having said that, he acknowledged that not all ambitions are achievable. He said that in your journey to achieve your ambition, you will meet four kinds of people: good but broke, bad and broke, bad but successful, and good and successful people. With these four kinds of people, two are good, but they both have different fates. He said the reason why good people fail is down to carelessness.

In his book, *Why Good People Fail*, he compared two good people who built a house. One person built a house on sand, the other on rock. One house failed. The person who built the house on sand was too careless to check the foundation for the house; without mindfulness, and great time to prepare and organise yourself and your career, you will fail. Even if you are bad, but are careful, you will succeed.

The question and answer session began, and one of the people that ran up to claim a book, pointed out that the book called, *Why Am I In Love With You?* is full of completely blank pages. Lloyd revealed that in 2007 he contemplated suicide after a break-up.



On how to keep the momentum after the Symposium going, Lloyd said that you have to find the reason why you are doing what you are doing right now. He said that there are losers out there that will make your motivation expire, but you have to be a highly motivated person; you have to focus on what is important to you. Additionally, life isn't about what you have or don't have; it is about what you do with what you have. From the Symposium, delegates had the opportunity to develop motivation that they can store inside of them, and protect by keeping it close to their heart.

**Pushpa Basnet – Founder
Early Childhood Development Centre, Nepal**

Pushpa Basnet works in Nepal to provide a home for children with incarcerated parents. She is the founder and president of Early Childhood Development Centre (ECDC), and Butterfly Home, both based in Kathmandu, Nepal. She was honoured with the CNN Hero Of The Year award in 2012, and she spoke at the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium.

Pushpa's introduction, the video shown at the Hero Of The Year event held in December 2012 at Los Angeles, retold a story when she was visiting a prison one day, and felt a gentle tug on her clothes, only took look down and see the beautiful eyes of a little girl. The little girl didn't let go, and neither did Pushpa. Over the course of her speech, she kept returning to that moment when she truly knew that she wanted to devote her life to help children with parents in prison. Despite having to fight for support from key figures in her life, she remained steadfast to her determination, and she has succeeded in making a monumental difference to the lives of children who previously were living behind bars in total innocence.



In Nepal, if a parent is sentenced to time in prison, and there is no trustworthy guardian for a child to be taken care of by, the only choice is for that child to live in prison with his or her parent. It is the Butterfly Home that these children are taken into, why they can go to school, and receive the best possible care. ECDC is a day-care

for children still too young to leave their parent. She walks them herself every day to and from the prison, where they learn to read, draw, and imagine a life lived in freedom.

Pushpa's first words at the Symposium were that watching that video makes her cry every time. The focus of her speech was to tell the delegates how her work with the children has changed her life. She explained how when she was 20 years old she didn't have a passion in life, and didn't know at all what she wanted to do with her life. She had been brought up with the expectation that she would carry on the family business.

She grew up in a good environment in Kathmandu, going to a good school and eating good food, but she wasn't the best student, being one who would barely pass her exams. Once at her school, there was an exam that 120 students sat, and she was the only one to fail it. That day she saw her father crying because of her result, and she realised she was unhappy with where she stood. Throughout the speech, Pushpa spoke a lot about her relationship with her dad, and in those moments when he was despairing at her result, she knew deep down that one day she would make him proud, she just wasn't sure how.

She somehow got accepted into a Bachelor of Social Work at one of the best Nepalese universities. In her second year she got an internship at a police station, and asked one of the officers if she could take her to one of the local prisons to see what it was like inside the prison.

Pushpa still remembers the feeling of entering the prison for the first time, how different it felt from the outside world. She felt as if it was an entirely different community. There were people who were studying, and there was even a small shop, but she had never realised that there were still children within. Pushpa saw an eight-month-old girl in one of the cells; the baby was moving around, and she simply grabbed Pushpa's clothes. She then picked the baby up, but was told not to get close to the baby, because her mother had killed her husband. Pushpa put the baby down, and after received a big smile from her. She says that was the moment when her life changed.

Pushpa returned home and explained to her father what she had experienced that day. The reply from her father was that there are so many children in orphanages and homes, and there was nothing she could do by herself. But the conviction Pushpa felt from her experience was undeniable, and she knew she felt something overwhelmingly strong.

Pushpa was then suspended from her college for a year because she had failed all her classes. Her goal to help the children in prison persisted. Her father thought she meant she wanted to end up in prison herself! She returned to the prison and explained that she wanted to help the young girl she had met, but was refused as they thought she was too young. She was 20. She shrugged off the fact, and the prison guard then asked her if she wanted to start something within or outside the prison. She was

dumbstruck, as she didn't yet have the means to achieve her ultimate goal. She didn't have the money to start something.

Pushpa never knew it would take so long to start something up to help these children. She approached her sister friends to help her establish a non-profit organisation. When Pushpa went to register the organisation, the government workers used to make fun out of her. They told her that her organisation wouldn't even last for a year. Today however, they stand and give her a chair, which she sees as a blessing.

The most important thing, Pushpa said, was to convince a child's mother to allow her child to leave the prison. The children were so happy to come out of the prison, but when they realised they would be living away from their mothers, they began to continuously cry.

Pushpa struggled a lot to keep the organisation going. While she got publicity and was given grants to continue, her work was infinite, and a massive effort. She said although the organisation has been going for 10 years, and feels more like 30 to her.

The Butterfly Home came to be when one day she went to visit a child she had spent time with, and he was living in squalor. With such great efforts to improve their lives while they were still living in prison, it was a terrible shame that they would be on their own two feet, but struggling. To remedy this, Pushpa established a residence for the children, where 44 children currently live. Her work has expanded to include 18 prisons nowadays, not just Kathmandu. BY chance, Pushpa's brother met a woman in Thailand who was so supportive of Pushpa's work that she contributes to the finances to run the organisation.

Last year, one of her former college classmates nominated her for the CNN Hero Of The Year award, which included nine or ten months for researching Pushpa and her work. The child that first changed Pushpa's life is now nine years old, and her mother was released from prison two years ago. Instead of parting ways with the child she has such a special connection with, Pushpa also took in the child's mother, who now works with Pushpa.

Pushpa acknowledged that the truth that the children's parents have committed crimes can't be ignored, and it isn't. However, she tells the children that they should look at the positives in their own lives; they have a good education, and they have a loving home. But deep down in the child, they still miss their parents, especially their mother. Such a fact makes Pushpa sad, but in her speech she said "you can't have everything in your life."

Pushpa emphasised that it was in that moment when she saw the eight-month-old girl that her life changed. She never thought that she would be on a stage speaking to almost 1000 people one day; she was the kind of person who held back in class, and was very shy. But thanks to that moment in her life when everything changed, and her ambition became crystal clear to her, she was able to do things she once thought she never could.

After getting such positive exposure through the CNN Hero Of The Year award, things have changed a lot. She said she now gets calls from prisons saying there are children that can be looked after. She said that she was very young when she started, and she believed in her dream. She was very clear in her mind about her dream, mission, and vision.

She had a 5-year plan to be able to own her Butterfly Home. In the past and up to now, she has rented houses and had to relocate a number of times. She was awarded \$300 000 for being the Hero Of The Year laureate, and she used the money to buy land for her home. She mentioned how she signed the papers; when she bought the land, she was the happiest she had ever been.

Pushpa said her biggest struggle in her was facing her father. He was the kind of father who wanted his children to be connected to his house and not make their own ventures, but Pushpa was adamant that she wanted to establish her organisation. She said that she is sure today that she is proud of her.

Pushpa said to achieve something that she has achieved, you first of all need to believe in your dreams. If you stop believing in your dreams, everyone will stop believing in them. Not every moment will be positive; you will have moments of struggle. There will be moments when you have to face your family, and “you have to face everything.”

Pushpa concluded her speech by urging the delegates to believe in their dreams no matter what, repeating the point that if the individual stops believing in their dreams, then everyone will. She also urged delegates to realise the moment that may have passed, or that may be yet to come, when everything changes for the, when they are hit so hard by something that their entire life instantly changes. She said the reason she was on the stage speaking that day was because of the children she helps, otherwise, “who is Pushpa Basnet?” Since the moment her life changed to now, it is the children that changed it.

Pushpa moved on to answer questions. Someone asked the question of what really inspired Pushpa to begin her work, and she elaborated on her experience with eight-month-old baby girl. She said the little girl in a way communicated to Pushpa by saying: “this is not my place, take me away from this place!” Pushpa grew up in a family where she was provided with anything she wanted, but she saw a small child who would be denied the things Pushpa was granted, just because of her that child’s parents were. Pushpa figured that if she had the ability to help these children, she should. She simply thought “I should do something for this girl,” but she never thought that it would be such a struggle to be able to. She was willing to completely devote herself to helping the children, and that is what she did.

One delegate asked what is the thing most of all that children in poverty need from people that are able to provide for them. Pushpa replied by saying “respect”. More than give them love, more than give them education, you need to respect them.

Another delegate asked about the psychological impact life in prison had on the children, and how Pushpa's emotions were after being exposed to these children's lives. Pushpa replied by saying some of the children have seen the murder of one of their parents take place before them, and others have gone through other traumatic experiences like rape. Pushpa helps as much as she can through storytelling and art therapy. She reemphasised her point that you constantly need to look at the positives in life, and if the people who run the organisation don't do that, then it is very difficult to run it in the first place.

The next delegate asked about her daily life, and Pushpa said what gives her energy at the start of the day is hearing the 44 children rising, screaming, and banging doors, as young children are liable to do very early in the morning! During her answer to the next question, she said that every day is a challenge to her. Though she was in the Philippines when she made her speech to the Symposium, her mind was back in her home country, thinking about the children. However, she can keep on contact with them through Skype.

Volunteers are able to work with Pushpa's organisation and participate in fundraising. There are young students who visit Nepal for a few months and then return home and continue fundraising work.

The next question was what motivated her to do her work. Pushpa said what motivated her most of all was her heart. Another motive was the smiles she receives from her children. During the answer to the next question, she said the most important thing in life is her parents, but the children are so important to her that she left her parents six years ago to live with the 44 children she takes care of, and "they are everything for me."

The next question could relate to Pushpa's desire to please her father, but the delegate wanted to know more about how she could convince her father that her personal decisions were for the best, even if they conflicted with her father's plans for her. Pushpa explained that after she was suspended from college, her father figured the best thing would be to find a worthy suitor to marry Pushpa and for her to start a family, but this certainly wasn't Pushpa's plans for herself.

Pushpa said she needed to find herself, to find out who she was. After finding herself, every day has been a struggle, because her father is very strict in his views. However, she can see now that her father is happy with what she is doing. Her ultimate advice was to stick with what you want to do, that nobody is perfect, but you will do something better by sticking to your own plans. Influence yourself; don't allow yourself to be influenced more by others.

Her father is a businessman, but Pushpa always wanted to do something different to running a business. Pushpa said until she won the CNN Hero Of The Year award, her father had never hugged her, but when she won it, he finally did for the first time. She said it was the best thing that could happen in her life, the best reward for the work she has done. She thinks her dad is just scared about Pushpa's involvement with

prisons, and doesn't want to have problems from that, but ultimately, he is of course in support of her work.

The next questioner was worried about the fact that she would like to help children from her own country, Japan, rather than children from other countries, and she asked Pushpa for some advice to know who she should help. Pushpa said that it isn't important whom you personally help; it isn't about helping *this* or *that* child, it is about knowing that you are helping to make the world a better place that truly counts. Therefore, you must feel in your own heart who you would most like to help, and go ahead accordingly. Just feel that the children you are helping are very special children, and that tomorrow they will be the nation of this world.

The next questioner asked whether the best action for people to take when they want to help non-profit organisations is to personally volunteer and attract other volunteers, or to commit efforts to fundraise. Pushpa said the kind of work she does obviously needs funds to keep it going, but it isn't all about the money; she would prefer people to volunteer than to fundraise. When people volunteer, they experience the conditions of another country, and they are directly involved with the children, so it is a much more powerful and personal experience, and is more valuable than fundraising.

Pushpa's extraordinary success is even more remarkable when you consider the barriers to achieve she had to overcome. During her schooling years, she failed many exams and always had low marks. She was made fun of in class, and even her family didn't want to talk to her as much as they just viewed her as a failure. But it was her mother that said: "no matter what happens, you need to believe in yourself; Pushpa, you need to try." Pushpa said that if you fail one time, don't give up. Give yourself a second chance, a third, fourth, fifth and sixth experience. It is so important to keep trying.

Pushpa said one of the things she regrets most in her life is that she doesn't get to spend much time with her parents, who of course are getting older, and who need to travel to see their daughter. Otherwise, she said she doesn't have anything to complain about.

Pushpa distinguished between people who have always succeeded in life, but one day experience a failure, and people who have always failed in life, but one day experience a success. She said when a usually successful person fails for the first time, it is very difficult for them as they aren't used to it, but people who have always been used to failure find succeeding very easy, because they are used to feeling the oppression of failure; that is why it is probably better to become successful first by having experienced failure, so that you know what it is like to be in that difficult and challenging position.

The next questioner wondered how often the children get to see their imprisoned parents. Pushpa explained that within two months of a child coming to live at the Butterfly Home, they return back to the prison to visit, and whenever the younger

ones have school holidays, they return to the prison during that time to spend time with their mothers. The older ones go for day visits during the holidays. They also send photographs to the imprisoned mothers, and speak on the phone each week. She makes sure the parent and child still communicate and maintain a relationship, as one day the parent will be back in normal society and the child will return to live with their mother.

The next questioner asked how Pushpa balances her life between the things she needs to do, and the things she wants to do. As a young person, you have so many roles to fulfill, like being a student, working, being a son or daughter, being a friend or partner to someone else; as Pushpa said, getting the right balance of life can be really difficult. She said that she is the mother for the 44 children, but she is also the daughter of her mother and father, but in reality, you can't play both roles at once. She said: "you have to sacrifice something in your life, so I will sacrifice my personal life for this life, because it's very important for me."

The next questioner asked Pushpa what true happiness is to her. She said her true happiness comes when she gets the chance to take a child out from prison and give them her care. It makes her very sad when it isn't possible to take a particular child out of prison, but when she gets to take the children out of prison every day it is the best moment for her, when she can think "I did it."

The next questioner asked how Pushpa manages to tell the children why they are being taken from their parents into the Butterfly Home. She said it is very difficult for the smaller children to understand. She said prisons in Nepal aren't typical to the general cold, solitary prisons you expect; Nepalese prisons are like a different community where you are granted a bit more mobility, even with shops within. Once a child is about eight or nine years old, they begin to understand that their parent had committed a crime. It takes time for them to realise why they are in the position they are in.

The next questioner asked what is the best way to deal with self-doubt. Pushpa said when she doubted herself she used to go to her room and cry and cry and cry, because she couldn't possibly hold the feelings inside of her. That was her way to get relief, to let out her negative energy, and to start the next day fresh again.

The final person to speak to Pushpa explained how she needed to overcome her own doubts and lack of support and continue her work with a humanitarian NGO. It was fitting for the session to end this way, as the person who made the comment sounded like she was in a similar situation Pushpa once found herself in, and was able to overcome. We are all extremely proud and happy that she overcame her doubts and those of others. Humanitarian Affairs United Kingdom showed their support for Pushpa's work for presenting her with a US\$10 000 donation. We wish her the best fortune and results in her work for many years to come.

**Miguel Martin Bermundo - Director
Dream Big Football Association, Philippines**

Miguel Martin Bermundo is the director of Dream Big Pilipinas Football Association (DBP), soccer program developer, and FIFA-licensed soccer coach. He spoke about how DBP came from just a small idea, and skyrocketed.

One of the first images Miguel showed the delegates at the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium was of a three year old boy captured about to kick a soccer ball. The point isn't in how far the ball went; naturally, a three-year-old boy wouldn't be able to kick the ball very far. However, the image captures the commitment the boy already has to perfecting his kicking technique, and Miguel likened this commitment to what he expects and strives for with his association.

Miguel said he began his venture when he was 26. He had been working in advertising for five years but became a teacher and a FIFA-approved football coach. It was difficult to make his decisions, as in the Philippines financial and job security is so highly regarded. He had worked in business management and marketing in the past, so his career change was monumental.



Reality struck when Miguel was about to graduate. He didn't feel as if he was ready for the real world, and he didn't feel he had studied the right course for what he truly wanted to do. The only thing he knew was that he wanted to be financially stable. He

got a job at a small advertising firm, and worked somewhere that advertised for Coca Cola, and eventually was getting job offers from other places. He was financially stable, but he wasn't happy, and was unsure of whether that was it for him.

Miguel then talked about 'the voice'; the voice in your head that talks to you, reveals your thoughts and emotions, and you don't really know where it's coming from. The voice in your head is quite hard to control, and a lot of regular daily thought is uncontrollable. For Miguel, there was a voice in his head telling him there was something more he needed to have to be happy, and advertising wasn't what could make him happy. He realised it wasn't it; he felt that he wasn't living, just sticking to financial security.

He would blame his unhappiness on his environment, saying: "that's life", "life can be unfair" etc. But in weighing up the alternatives of how he could live his life, he thought he could either go on living the life working in the advertising job he didn't really like but kept him financially safe, or he could really try and make a dent in the world. He even brought up the fact that if he stuck with his safe advertising life, his tombstone would read "This is Miguel; he existed." Miguel's attitude is quite reminiscent of Achilles' in Homer's *Iliad*, when he has to make the choice to live a short yet glorious and courageous life in Troy, or return home to Achaea and live a long yet lusterless and cowardly life. Miguel clearly chose to take the risk, and the risk has reaped many well-earned returns for himself and the children he helps through DBP.

When you find something that you are very passionate about, you then know that what you aren't passionate about isn't what you want to be doing, which is just as useful as knowing what you don't want to be doing. In finding out his true passion, he thought about what he could do that would combine work and play, and he came up with teaching. He said he had always enjoyed teaching when doing volunteer work and at internships; even though he would be tired afterwards, he will have enjoyed his day, and his life would be a lot more wholesome.

On one hand, he weighed up the possibilities of being a teacher; he thought being a teacher he may not be financially secure, and he may not even make enough money to support a family of his own. He emphasised the point that in the Philippines many families pressure their members to just get into a position where they are financially stable, regardless of the kind of work they are doing and would prefer to do.

The first thing Miguel did to realise his dream as a teacher was join a weekend program with Tony Meloto's Gawad Kalinga charity. He painted pavements with two children, and played with them on weekends. Some biodata was taken of the GK children, and got them to write down their dreams. Many of the dreams children wrote were things that didn't apply to the average person, or were things most people just take for granted, such as "I wish my father would get out of jail," or "I wish my brother would stop hitting me."

Miguel described the wishes as cynical wishes where the child was trying to avoid the realities of their surrounding environment. There comes a point in a child's life when

they realise their environment isn't conducive to achieving their dreams, and they stop dreaming. Miguel's vision is to allow children to keep their dreams alive, no matter their upbringing, social class, or age bracket, and a major way to keep a dream alive is through nurture and education.

The biggest reality that struck Miguel was the fact that if he wanted to show children that they can still believe in their dreams and pursue them, he had to go through it himself, and shut out the voice in his head that made him fear the decision he truly wanted to make.

Miguel's vision is to positively intervene in the child's life in three ways; life at school, life at home, and life with friends. When a child enters the DBP program, they participate in the free football sessions on weekends, but to be a part of it requires a certain level of commitment. The first commitment is to stay in school, and to achieve consistently good marks. Many people that come to DBP are out-of-school youth, but can be given free public schooling if they are willing to attend.

The second commitment you must fulfill to be a part of DBP is to attend a values education program in their community. They must attend review classes provided by Miguel's organisation, attend special events. Most importantly, the children are not to be subjected to child labour. If families are especially poverty-stricken, parents may get their children to beg or sell things in the street to help supplement their income, but that is what DBP discourages this heavily. Miguel figures that without intervention in poverty-stricken families, the poverty cycle will never be broken, and DBP's goal is to try and break that cycle as much as they possibly can.

As soon as Miguel quit his advertising job, he approached the Philippine Football Federation and enquired about how to become a licensed coach. He was warned that because he had never been a professional player and had never taught at a university, if he took the test, he wouldn't be expected to pass it, but nevertheless, they allowed him to attempt. There were 35 aspiring coaches, with many that had coached at universities; less than 15 ultimately passed the test.

Miguel was one that passed. He then got a job in an international school, coaching soccer and teaching P.E. After getting licensed, Miguel fine-tuned the DBP program, and the children have benefitted greatly. From starting out with two children, the program has now attracted over 300, mainly based in Metro Manila. The program also trains coaches. There are teams dedicated for girls, and ages from six to sixteen competing.

Football was never the end result of the program; it was education. Much can be learned on a football field however, and can be translated into education. Such lessons learned can be in discipline, teamwork, camaraderie, and helping each other out. The football is a great structure in the child's life, and through the discipline of being in a football team, children can achieve a sense of direction and determine what they want to do with themselves in the future.

Miguel and the program tell the children they can't wake up overnight and become football superstars, or immediately get perfect scores in tests, but you will see the results starting to change after you have put in extensive time practicing and working on your disciplines. They keep the long-term in mind, that if you think of long-term goals and stick at them, you will achieve them in time.

The DBP partnered with other institutions to help open libraries for the children that contain not only books but also educational games that the partners have donated to help the children learn science and maths. Miguel has also partnered with various universities to help the children get to college, and a few are about to graduate, so the program is about to see the true fruits of their labour. 15 scholarships have been awarded to children within the program, including three in international schools. Scholarships aren't just for the academically gifted; Miguel has the viewpoint that it doesn't necessarily take academic excellence to earn a scholarship, but commitment. Children that once didn't speak English are scholars at international schools.

The program earns its money not only by donations, but by another program they run in private schools. The programs aren't just run by Miguel and volunteer coaches; 14-year-old children also have the chance to coach, so the same children that have participated in the program in the past can run programs. The program got its first major sponsor in the Starbucks Foundation, and the DBP has just formed a relationship with the Homeless World Cup, or the Street Football World Cup. The world cup, which is to be held next in Brazil, gathers children and adults from marginalised communities and flies them to where the Cup will be held to compete. The DBP also gets a lot of promotion opportunities through speaking events like the Symposium, on radio, in magazines, and on television.

They were also invited to be a member of the World Economic Forum in Switzerland, attend the talks and promote the program. They were able to establish some international engagements and share knowledge with many diverse bodies.

Miguel found it a bit overwhelming that he was on such a prominent international stage when just four years earlier he was wondering what he should do with his life. He reflected on the last four years, saying the time was spent constantly achieving small steps, which ultimately led to his participation in Switzerland.

The DBP now competes in Division 1 youth leagues against national universities, which is the top level in the Philippines. He and the program are working on getting invitations to play on an international level to get the children the exposure, and to hopefully further promote this worthy program.

Towards the conclusion of his speech, Miguel mentioned how DBP ran a program run by the children involving children with autism. Miguel said that autistic children have a great ability to focus on the task at hand, and therefore the potential for their development is exponential. Miguel saw results that rang true to this claim; some of the autistic children included in the program developed very rapidly.

Miguel closed the speech by referring to the name of the program, Dream Big, that it is important to dream big, but even more important to live the dream, and that is what he and the other directors of the program focus on doing. The entire program itself came to be because Miguel saw that he couldn't go through life not fulfilling his dreams, the things he would prefer to do if given total freedom to pursue what he wanted. He gave himself that total freedom by setting himself free of his advertising career and his mindset where financial security was the defining value of his life. The directors of the program need to live their own dreams so that they can set a real example to the children. Living your dream is all about taking action.

Miguel mentioned a quote that one of his mentors told him, that courage isn't the absence of fear, but taking the right and proper action in the midst of that fear. He also mentioned a highly popular talk at the World Economic Forum entitled 'The Secret to Happiness'. Scientists led the talks, and through research-based information tried to explain what happiness is. Firstly, they said what it isn't; it's not power, and it's not monetary wealth. The audience was shocked when the scientists said that happiness doesn't derive from success. Based on the research the scientists carried out, happiness comes from a commitment to compassion.

During the question and answer session, Miguel explained that the reason why the program is focused on soccer is simply because that is how it began when he first joined Tony Meloto's GK organisation on weekends. Circumstances presented football, and he embraced it. He started with two children, and they began to bring friends along, and pretty soon he had 30 children coming to play on weekends. He said that by the time the kind of program he ran gets to about 20 children, the quality starts to dwindle, so he decided to teach coaches, and that is how it expanded so much.

Miguel has also compiled a football-playing manual to guide interested parties on how to develop foundational football skills, and then how to duplicate what Miguel and DBP are already doing. He is very transparent and open about his operations, and would be happy to export them to anyone interested in spreading the kind of work that he is doing.

The way Miguel decided that the program and teaching was what he wanted to do was when he was still in college and he realised what he was doing wasn't exactly what he wanted to do. When he is helping the children, and is with them on weekends, he wouldn't prefer to be anywhere else, and he truly lives in the moment. He said that in the most special moments of your life, like graduating, getting your first boyfriend or girlfriend, and getting married, you are living in the moment, and if you can achieve that in everyday life, you will be living a life that is truly worth living.

Miguel mentioned an interesting fact, that no matter what you will do, you will have problems. Miguel said there is power within you when you get to choose your own problems, rather than wait for problems to come to you. He said some of the problems he faces, such as financial security, can attract ridicule in a place like the Philippines, but it is the problem he chooses to have, and when you have the ability to choose your

own problems, it usually means that you are doing exactly what you have chosen to do yourself.

Other problems Miguel has chosen to have is the fact that he has had to become a morning person, and he doesn't go out socially with his friends, and doesn't see them as much as he used to. His way to see his friends is if they join the program! But his chosen problems have also taught him the need to fulfill promises you make to children, and how heartbreaking it is to let them down.

He is responsible for running the program for 300 children, so he needs to be responsible for being there for them; there are 300 children in anticipation, expecting you to be there, so if you aren't there for them, it can be a terribly bad and damaging experience. The agreement is that he is there at 6 a.m. on Saturday morning. If he's late, they wait; there is no way to cancel out on them as they don't have phones. One day he woke up at 9 a.m., and the whole crowd was still there. There is no way for him to undo his promise. While it is tempting not to commit, if you make a design where it is impossible or essential that you don't break your commitment, you will be a lot better for it.

Just as having the problem of financial security present when he runs DBP, if he had stuck with advertising and had never set out on teaching and running the football program, he would have the problem of regret, dreams unfulfilled, and resentment of his present life. He would never have the opportunity to live in the moment. Therefore, to choose your own problems is a great thing to have the power to do.

Miguel next spoke about commitment, and that commitment isn't about having it at the start of a venture; it is something you have to embrace everyday, regardless of how you feel on that day. He said that the plans for Dream Big were never to become as successful as it has become, but it happened because of the great work they have done. There were moments when Dream Big wasn't supposed to exist, but Miguel maintained his day-to-day commitment, and was able to persevere through the lower times to achieve the high success DBP has experienced.

Miguel has made some very realistic observations during his time with DBP. He has noticed that the children that are most likely to commit to the program have the most support from their parents and at home, and the children least likely to commit are those with less support.

He has also observed the differences between the children aged 12-14 that have been a part of the program for a few years compared to children that aren't involved with the program. DBP has the intervention programs Life at School, Life at Home, and Life with Friends, so the programs are very much based on social structures in a child's life. Children with structures that nurture their growing identities have a much healthier life. They use proper language, have hobbies, and don't experiment in undesirable activities, which children aged between 12 and 14 not involved in DBP are more likely to do. Every child needs to be part of a community, and DBP is a trustful and secure community that also requires effort to be put into school and values education.

**Ibu Robin – Founder
Yayasan Bumi Sehat, Indonesia**

Ibu Robin Lim is the founder of Yayasan Bumi Sehat (Healthy Mother Earth Foundation) in Bali, Indonesia, and has been practicing midwifery there for the last ten years. She is also the winner of the 2011 CNN Hero Of The Year award, and her speech at the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium was preceded by videos of the acceptance speeches she gave at the ceremony in Los Angeles.

In her acceptance speech for the award, Robin said in a shaky voice as she tried to hold her tears back: “Today on our Earth, 981 mothers in the prime of their life will die, the same as tomorrow and yesterday. And I’m asking you to help change that. We don’t know how many babies are really lost, but we can change that.” The best way to help mothers and babies is to support midwifery to ensure mothers receive the safest and most nurturing care.



Robin introduced herself to the delegates by pretending to be in labour, and called for a student midwife to help her. The baby was safely delivered, placenta and all. She said she knew she was at the Symposium to inspire the delegates, but it was her who was also inspired to see all the young faces who would be world leaders in the future.

Robin immediately began explaining to the delegates her ideas about childbirth and midwifery. She demonstrated through her mock-birth that the baby’s umbilical cord hadn’t been cut so that the nutrients and blood from the placenta could circulate

through the baby for the next three to five hours. She showed that each baby and placenta born today shares about 450 mL of blood, and if the baby's cord is cut immediately, one third of the baby's blood supply is lost. If you cut the cord immediately, according to proven medical evidence, the baby will have anaemia.

The leading cause of baby retardation in the world today is anaemia. Because of this, one of Robin's visions and missions is to allow every new baby born to remain attached to their placenta for the first few hours of their life. She said the Balinese people believe that the placenta is the physical body of your guardian angel. The placenta will die shortly after the baby's birth, but the guardian angel will stay with you through this life, and will remain with you beyond.

Robin then got the delegates to repeat loudly "YES I WILL BREASTFEED MY BABY!" Breastfeeding is so important because research has shown breastfed babies are more intelligent and healthier. It is a gift you can give your baby, and fathers also have a responsibility to help their wife or baby's mother breastfeed.

Robin spoke of the disconnect between superior technology and birth mortality rates. She said of the 14 wealthiest countries in the world, the United States has the most neuro-oncologists, prenatal and neo-natal intensive care units, but has the highest infant mortality rate. There has been an increase in doctors delivering babies, and not midwives.

The disconnect between more advanced technology and healthy birth rates is demonstrated by the clamping and cutting of cords, but is also demonstrated by what Robin referred to as "prenatal scare." She said mothers aren't getting the prenatal care they need, they are getting prenatal scare. Delivering your baby has become more of a medical procedure than a natural and essential event for humanity. While there could be arguments that the ever-increasing populations and tight budgets cause the medical systems to be the way they are, that doesn't help the reality that mothers and babies may be getting harmed, or not receiving the best care they could be given.

Nowadays, the official statistic for mothers that die during childbirth or due to post-birth complications is 800 a day, which is almost the equivalent of two 747 jets falling out of the sky daily. While that statistic has improved somewhat, that fact can't justify anything but the need for more work to be done to lower it further.

Robin explained how her sister, Christine, had died due to complications during pregnancy. She died in the US, saw an obstetrician, and had health insurance, but still she died; her death could have been preventable. She had the simple condition of pregnancy-induced hypertension, which caused her blood pressure to rise. Had she been prescribed the right medication, she would have been fine, but she wasn't, and

she died. This is why Robin stresses the need for more midwives to give more care to high-risk mothers.

Midwives can deliver babies in disaster zones with no electricity and shelter. Robin and other midwives were able to help mothers in Aceh affected by the 2004 earthquake and tsunami, and got there three weeks before the Red Cross. She and her midwives have also helped during other disasters, some including at Jogja, Indonesia in 2006, and at Haiti in 2010. Midwives are such effective aid-givers as all they need are their hands and their love.

Robin expressed that she isn't deploring science and medicine, but she is saying that you can't completely rely on those things for the world to be its best, and for care to be its best. She said:

If we are to save lives in the world, we need to stand on three feet. The first foot is science and medicine. It's very important, but if you stand on that one foot, you're going to fall down. The second foot is respect for nature. On two feet you can stand up, but we still need more as human beings. The third foot is something that we call in Indonesia that means culture, spirit, and respecting the soul of your patient.

As medical providers, you need to respect the soul of your patient. For many of you that go into business, you need to respect the soul of your colleagues and the soul of your business customers. For people who go into government, you need to respect the soul of the citizens; this is very important.

Robin said that to master the first foot, you need to study hard and acquire the skills that are required of you, and to work with the technology that will aid you. You need to respect nature, and you need to respect the souls of the people you are dealing with; you need ultimate compassion and respect, and if you are mindful of those three feet, you will be sturdy and strong in an upright position, and you will achieve a great deal of good in your life.

Robin tried to get the delegates to try and remember how it felt to be in our mother's womb. She made the delegates put one finger in their mouth, as that was the temperature inside your mother, and that was how it felt for the entire time you were being developed inside her. After getting used to this, she said:

When you come out, you're in a big room, the lights are bright, and the sounds are really harsh. And in most hospitals, as soon as you're out, they cut your cord, take you away from your mother, and put you in a big box. So suddenly, your whole universe has changed; you're no longer in the warm, safe, wet, tight, really comfortable place of your mother. You no longer hearing the sound of your placenta squishing, you're no longer hearing your mother's heartbeats; you're no longer hearing the music of your gestation.

You're suddenly up here, and they're dropping stainless steel pans and the nurses are yelling, and doctors are saying: "get the suction!" It's like an alien takeover. All of you that were born in the hospital were abducted by aliens; someone five times the size of you and with a mask and glasses on.

Suddenly, you have been violated with injections and thermometers, taken away from your mother, and put in a box, and as you can only see the blinding lights, you think "oh my gosh, it's all over. Everything good and wonderful is over." Robin said that as a newborn baby, you have no concept of time, and so every second that you are away from your mother in those critical first moments literally is forever; it isn't just a few minutes, hours or days, but is forever.

Birth trauma is something that can stay with a person for many years of their life, generally until they confront their feelings of isolation, and a lack of love and trust for their fellow man. However, Robin believes every human is 100% healable, but how do you heal it? You heal it with love. Robin then showed the delegates a typical gentle birth at Yayasan Bumi Sehat. The parents of the newborn had parents that were doctors, and they said that if the couple wanted a gentle birth, they would need to go to midwives, and not doctors.

Robin then mentioned the love hormone, oxytocin. Most people get an oxytocin injection after delivery in a hospital to prevent bleeding, but Robin said if a woman is supported by her man while giving birth, feels his love, and if she is given her baby straight away after birth, she won't need an injection as her natural oxytocin levels will prevent the bleeding. So the injection in the hospital seems like an artificial supplement to compensate for the fact that a woman has just gone through 'pre-natal scare', and not pre-natal care.

Oxytocin is shared in normal human interactions, but is also extremely important during birth, and when you fall in love with someone. You perform better in everything you do when you have high levels of oxytocin. Oxytocin is also instrumental in breastfeeding. It has traditionally been considered 'the trust hormone' that makes a couple feel more attached to each other, but it is a very versatile chemical, with many different uses and sources.

Oxytocin is a highly accessible hormone; simply hugging someone, deliberately gazing at someone, or even thinking about someone can release low levels of oxytocin. Playing with pets such as dogs and cats can release it. Oxytocin is considered one of the 'love-drugs', along with dopamine, and norepinephrine, and is essential for couple bonding. It is released in high levels during kissing, sexual intimacy, and cuddling. It stimulates uterine contractions, is transmitted to baby through breast milk, and is essential for a mother to feel attached to her baby. Fathers that have high levels of oxytocin are more likely to be gentler and more loving.

Oxytocin can help people with crippling shyness and social anxiety to become more social, due to the increased feelings of optimism, self-esteem, and trust that boost in oxytocin levels can give someone. It is also a possible treatment for people with autism, which is essentially a disorder whereby social communication and interaction is severely hampered. Its administration may also be helpful to sufferers of post-traumatic stress disorder. Damaged relationships can be healed if the right dose of oxytocin is added to interactions.

Oxytocin has shown to even give pain-relief, with a mild anti-inflammatory property that can combat headaches, aches and cramps. A higher level of oxytocin also appeared to allow trial mice to lose weight, whereas a deficiency caused obesity. Therefore, an option in the fight to lose weight could be to make efforts to improve your oxytocin levels, either naturally or artificially. The mice with boosted oxytocin levels also showed less glucose intolerance and less insulin resistance.

Oxytocin can also have an antidepressant effect, particularly in mothers with postpartum depression. Mothers suffering from this condition were shown to have low levels of oxytocin. There are also predictions that oxytocin will be able to assist people with clinical depression and anxiety disorders. Oxytocin is also shown to be a reliever of stress reducing the stress hormone, cortisol, in the brain, lowering blood pressure, and improving digestion. Oxytocin has been found in the intestinal tract, and higher levels improve gut mobility and decreases inflammation of the intestines.

Oxytocin has also been found to increase generosity levels. A study showed that people with higher oxytocin levels gave up to 80% more than their counterparts with no increase in oxytocin, as oxytocin increases humans' empathy, and increases feelings of connection. Therefore, be it to the cost of someone or not, higher oxytocin levels may translate into greater generosity. Essentially, oxytocin is an extremely major reason why our species can be how it is, and therefore it is extremely important for us to be mindful of it and to make conscious efforts to increase it on an individual, community, and universal level.

Robin even related gentle birth to an essential solution to climate change. Giving a baby a gentle birth will keep in tact their capacity to love and trust; the minute you cut the cord and take the baby away from its mother, a part of itself inside shuts down in order to protect its heart, thinking "I can't trust my surroundings," and it takes a lifetime to recover from such trauma. Going to something like the Symposium was an exercise of regaining trust. Robin said:

The people who overcome birth trauma by taking care of their own hearts are going to be the stewards of our land, our earth and our water. You're going to change everything. You're going to make the world a better place; you're going to heal it. You're going to stop the destruction. The survival of your species depends on it.

Robin revealed the fact that at the time of everyone's conception, they competed against 125-500 million sperm cells to reach the female's egg. Robin said she believed it was our generation that is going to heal the planet, and that we are going to do it with love, because what previous and current generations are doing isn't working. She said the world has tried business, politics, war, and succeeding with aggression, and it hasn't worked. Robin said she's really worried about the planet, and that we're about to destroy our home; the solution is not through aggression, but through love.

Robin got the delegates to raise their hands and then said: "These are the hands that are going to make change. Don't wait for someone else." She said when you start your day whatever it is that you do, if you work morning, day or night like doctors, midwives and nurses, you aren't going to mind when you do your work, because it will be sacred to you. Whatever work you do, you must be passionate to do it and you must consider it to be sacred work. She said that this generation is going to need all the help the universe can give it to save the world. She closed her formal speech with the entire Philippine International Convention Centre to shout "I LOVE YOU!"

The first questioner asked how psychology could play a role between the connection between mother and child. Robin said that psychologists could play a big role because they will be sitting in front of the people who are wise enough to say that they need a little help navigating this life. A psychologist needs to remind them they are the winners and a hero in life because they are here, they came to be alive in this world. Remind them that they are loved, and give them the love a mental health support worker is entitled to give a client, support them through their hardship. Robin said: "just say I believe in you. How wonderful is it to know someone believes in you? It's so simple, and it's so powerful."

The next questioner asked about the last time a baby had died at Bumi Sehat. It was on Valentine's Day 2013 and a baby had stopped breathing. Robin performed mouth-to-mouth resuscitation for 40 minutes, and hadn't been told that the baby's mother had AIDS. The mother was extremely sick, suffering from dementia, syphilis, and Hepatitis A and B, as well as HIV/AIDS. For the next month Robin had to take anti-retrovirals. She was really scared that she might have become HIV positive. She found it terrible to be scared, as it blocked her ability to be openly loving.

But Robin also described the experience as good in that it spurred her to urge people to practice safe sex and to get tested for HIV. She wondered why so few people got tested in Bali, and she figured it was because people were scared the test and its results wouldn't be confidential. She raised the money to establish a testing centre at her clinic and has a 24 hour, on-call HIV/AIDS that performs the free, confidential tests. In Indonesia, you are able to get free HIV medication, and had the woman been tested and treated for HIV, she wouldn't have passed the disease onto her baby, Valentino, and he probably would have been alive today. The laboratory was named the Bumi Sehat Valentino Laboratory in honour of the baby that lost its life that day.

Robin said the reported number of babies that die in the first few hours of their lives is 22 000, and the major reason why they die is because their mother is malnourished. Robin urged people interested in focusing on food sovereignty as a career to go ahead with their plans, because you can't seriously talk about health and wellbeing without food security and food sovereignty as a major factor in achieving such things.

The next questioner asked how Robin finally decided that she wanted to be a midwife in Indonesia. She said that she was already a childbirth author before becoming a midwife, and again she mentioned how her sister, Christine, died around 23 years ago due to a preventable death caused by a pregnancy complication. She became very angry knowing that the death was preventable, and she said to herself: "this anger's gonna eat me and my family alive, or I can do something with all this angry energy." She decided to transform the anger into action. She said most people in the room would have had experiences in life that weren't optimum, such as loss, dramatic events, or trauma. With all the negative energy that gets produced because of these events, Robin said that you need to use the pain and anger to make something beautiful. She couldn't continue just being a teacher and author; she had to become a midwife, so she did.

The next questioner asked whether she should have her baby in a hospital with the advanced technology and doctors, or with minimal technology and midwives. Robin said that first of all you should take care of your health, because if you are healthy, you don't need to resort to advanced technology and doctors. She advised to seek the care of a midwife, and if the midwife says that you will have a high-risk birth, for example you may have high blood pressure, then get a recommendation for a doctor in a clean, safe, and gentle hospital.

Robin briefly mentioned the fact that one of the most famous religious births, the birth of Jesus, occurred in a manger, and His birth was extremely low technology. Did Jesus get born in a hospital with advanced technology, doctors, and injections? The answer is no. If you have been given the best possible advice that suggests you will have a safe and calm natural birth, then there is no reason why you shouldn't rely on the care of competent midwives to deliver your baby. Robin said: "Don't use technology unless you need it," and told medical students they should use their technology wisely. It is great that technology can save lives in modern medicine, but human skills are still the most essential sources of care.

Robin's clinic receives an estimated 80% of people who are unable to pay for their care, so she is constantly serving extremely poor families. Destitute people haven't the opportunity to access general health providers, and their lives can be very tragic as they fight to just survive and raise their family. Additionally, occasionally baby's and/or mothers will die at the clinic; the next questioner asked what Robin does with all the sadness and things that make her angry at Bumi Sehat.

Robin said that she tries to transform the sadness into positive action. Recently she cared for a woman who gave birth to her third child. The woman was working as a prostitute, and told Robin that her boss had already sold off her baby. She said she wanted to keep the baby, so Bumi Sehat offered to raise the money to buy the baby back as her boss had already received money for the baby. She was given counseling, and was offered help to find another job, but she chose to remain in prostitution as she said her self-esteem was too low.

The woman had been sold into the sex industry by her husband when she was 24, and when she saw Robin she was 30. She told Robin: "I no longer care about my life, I only care about this baby." She interviewed parents, and found a childless family, who ended up adopting her baby. She regularly visits her baby, and the baby's adopted mother has become her best friend. Unfortunately, the woman is still a prostitute, but the positive side to the story is that the baby was saved from a terrible life and given a good family to live with. Robin said in the past she had bought babies back, which is nothing short of the favour of an angel.

The next questioner asked whether the medicalisation of childbirth had gone too far. His question focused on the fact that childbirth is a natural process, therefore, shouldn't the option of keeping the process as natural as possible be a standard option. Robin mentioned 'doulas', who are people that help a mother with prenatal care in a more intimate, non-medical way. Their role is to guide a mother through prenatal care, and to help choose the best birthing option for a mother. Robin said your choice of childbirth is a human right, and healthcare is a human right, though her generation is still struggling to accept that fact.

Singapore has one of the lowest infant mortality rates, at 2.65 deaths per 100 births, and the credit to that low figure may partly go to the many doulas that provide gentle care to expectant mothers. However, the questioner described the situation in Singapore as making childbirth become more like a simple medical process, almost like a factory. Robin replied by saying the way to change mindsets can't be done aggressively; the paradigm for change needs to be altered to be non-aggressive and to generate love.

Robin then gave profound life advice. She said:

Remember when you talk to somebody, first, open your heart before you open your mouth, because when you open your heart, your words are going to be true. Because when you talk to someone with hatred and anger, they have to close their heart to protect themselves, and when they close their heart, they close their ears.

The next questioner raised the issue of child dumping, and the fact that it's a significant problem in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Robin said child dumping happens

because nations and communities aren't looking after their girls. The psychological interpretation suggests that gender-related attitudes can develop in the first moments of a girl's life if her parents are the kind that would be disappointed if their baby wasn't a boy.

Robin said that a lot of families in Asia may not be happy when they have a daughter; she cited the Philippines as an exception. She credited the fact that there are so many professional Filipino women because families are happy to have a daughter and provide genuine love and care for her. She urged the delegates, and everyone, to be happy if they are blessed with a daughter; don't make her feel like she's a lower-class citizen. From the moment of a child's birth and conception, Robin said they know what's going on, and if that baby grows up to be a child and then adult with parents who wished she was a boy, she will be an extremely damaged person. The beginning of solving the problem is changing the status of women.

Robin then mentioned unplanned pregnancy. She stressed that unplanned pregnancies shouldn't be referred to as 'unwanted', because a mother would never want to harm her baby, no matter if the pregnancy is inconvenient, came at a time when she was too young, or was the result of rape. At the 3rd Symposium in Bali in 2012, Robin said that abortions are unnatural, because a woman's instinct will tell her to never harm her own baby, so if a woman does choose to abort or dump her baby due to unplanned pregnancy, it means she is truly desperate. They have no social networking that will take care, or help to take care of the baby.

Robin then told the story of a young girl who had been raped, and at six months pregnant, her father found out and was going to stone her to death. She had seen Robin on television, and fled to Bumi Sehat. Robin and the clinic took her in, safely delivered her baby, and found her a job. She now works as an English-speaking teacher, has a junior nursing degree, and has her baby. Robin said that it's very important to make solutions for unplanned pregnancy, to eliminate any shame attached to unplanned pregnancy. She said there is always some force in the universe, and at least one person, who would want the baby to be born.

The next questioner asked why Robin chose Indonesia to be her new home and the place where she would practice gentle midwifery. She said that her father was a part of an organisation known as Living Dangerously in the 1960's, and while in Bali, he sent a puppet in the mail to Robin, and she fell in love with it, and Indonesia. She said the happiest part of her childhood was spent in the Philippines, so she knew she'd live in Asia someday.

Bumi Sehat also has a clinic in Aceh, Indonesia, which is where Robin provided relief assistance with her midwives after the horrific Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami that hit on Boxing Day, 2004, and left at least 260 000 people dead. She also fell in love with that place, and was moved by the warmth in the peoples' hearts, and how

welcoming they were to her. She said: “When they lost everything, they kept one thing: their hearts.” The area is still heavily affected by the disaster, and the clinic is the last non-profit organisation left in its area.

The next questioner was a social worker, and Robin said the main role of a social worker when working with women was to protect them in every way a social worker can, to feed them, and to nourish them with love. She said that love is the most powerful nutrient, because when you have love, people will provide all they can for you, they will do their best for you. Robin also said she is involved in trying to make two new gentle childbirth centres in slum locations in the Philippines.



The final question for Robin asked her about the biggest challenge she faced in her life's journeys. Robin said the biggest challenge for her was inside of her from her own insecurity, that of not knowing whether she could carry on. She said she has a really supportive family of eight children and a husband. She said when you have a passionate idea, you need to have people who support and believe in you, and Robin has her family who believe in her.

Robin followed her speech up by signing books and talking to those who approached her for hours afterwards. When she was speaking to someone she gave them her full attention unreservedly, and never made anyone feel as if they were a burden on her time, or that she would rather be doing something else. A person that gives love unconditionally truly is rare, but Robin is one of those people. The delegates were blessed to be in her company, and wish her many more healthy years for her to do her outstanding work.

Simerjeet Singh – Founder Cutting Edge Learning Systems, India

Simerjeet Singh is a professional motivational speaker, corporate trainer, and youth empowerment coach. Simerjeet was the final speaker to give an extended speech at the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium, and he described that position as both a challenge and an opportunity. His aim was to repeat things previous speakers had said as a kind of recap, but also to add inspiring words of his own for the delegates to remember. He achieved originality in making his speech interactive as well as a lecture style.

Simerjeet began his speech by explaining the meaning of the word 'inspiration'. In Latin, *inspire* means 'to breathe in'. He then got the delegates to perform breathing exercises to prepare them for his speech. He then set an exciting and dramatic one-minute exercise of meeting as many people as possible in the room.



The catch was we had to meet everyone as if we were reuniting with a long-lost friend. The Philippine International Convention Centre was filled with rapturous glee, all from a simple role-playing exercise; in fact, Simerjeet had some trouble reining in the exercise. I'm sure he thought he must have opened an uncontainable can of worms. He attempted to get everyone's attention by saying he had travelled 20 hours to be here, and he finally got everyone a bit more settled.

He explained that his intention was to move beyond words and to create experiences. He referred to oxytocin as Ibu Robin Lim did in her speech, and how personal interactions increase oxytocin levels and thus makes us feel happier. He urged the delegates to not allow the end of the Symposium to be the end of the way they had

approached life during that special week, and referred to 2013's motto, 'Share moments, share life', validating such an aphorism as completely genuine and positive.

He urged people to become busy building bridges, and making connections, and stated that most people these days are busy building walls, which causes them to become isolated and depressed. He mentioned the sheer beauty of the Symposium in that there was such diversity of culture and nationality. He said: "the world is beautiful not because we are all the same, the world is beautiful because we are all different."

Simerjeet said his speech was going to focus on change, and used Superman as a model of change. He said it was impressive that Superman had finally learnt how to wear underwear. He then posed the question of whether it is necessary for us as individuals, and for the entire world, to change.

Simerjeet spoke about developing new perspectives, and mentioned the quote: "when you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." Such a statement reminds me of the 1989 Peter Weir film, *Dead Poets Society*, when the Welton Academy English teacher, John Keating (played by Robin Williams), gets all the boys in the class to stand on their desks. Keating's explanation for the exercise is: "I stand upon my desk to remind myself that we must constantly look at things in a different way."

Simerjeet mentioned some excuses people might carry around with them to excuse them from believing they can have dreams and fulfill them. Some include thoughts like: "why is it my job to do something? What about them? Shouldn't they be doing something?", and "I am small and insignificant; there is no way I could make any amount of worthy, significant change." Simerjeet said he thinks all people go through those thoughts at one stage, but later learn to refine their goals and dreams down to improving themselves, and making changes in their own selves.

These sentiments are very similar to Francis Kong's; sure enough, Simerjeet fulfilled his want to recap points made by previous speakers. However, he was also able to provide his own angle on such themes. He quoted Mother Theresa, who said: "If you want to promote world peace, first go home, and love your family." Simerjeet elaborated by saying it sure is difficult to think about world peace when your own family life is in turmoil and chaos.

Simerjeet spoke of his discomfort of seeing other Symposium speakers' credentials, and reading about the work they had done. He asked himself "what have I done?" and answered by saying "I have changed my own life from being stuck in a job that I hated." He has shifted into a job that gives him satisfaction, and is something that he is truly passionate for.

Simerjeet said that success is hollow unless it gives you internal fulfillment. He mentioned the young girl, Malala Yousafzai, who has risked her life to speak out about the need for women in Afghanistan to be given equal opportunities for education as men. When she was taking action as she did, she didn't have end results in mind like fame or power, awards or money. She was living in the moment, unafraid to do what

nobody else was doing, and unafraid of the negative consequences could have, and did, befall her.

Simerjeet explained that he could spend an entire day speaking, but only had 45 minutes, so he had picked out three things to focus on that would hopefully benefit the delegates. He continued with the issue of how young people can make a difference to the world by making a difference to themselves.

The first point he made was to “unleash the power of your imagination.” He mentioned Helen Keller, a deaf and blind woman who was able to overcome her disabilities to become a virtually fully functional human being, becoming an author, lecturer, and political activist. She became the first person with no hearing or sight to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. When she was asked whether there was something worse in life than being blind, she said: “Not having a vision for your life is worse than being blind.”

Simerjeet said Helen’s quote relates well to the need to unleash your imagination for yourself, and or the world. He said that the greatest gift you can give to the world is the ability to unleash your own gifts. He said he saw a quote on the Internet that said: “Everyone is gifted, but some people never open their packages.” Simerjeet said if people don’t unleash their core imagination, they will never find their gifts, for every action originated from a thought.

As Albert Einstein said: “imagination is more powerful than knowledge.” This is because imagination is able to collate knowledge, process it, and then come up with completely new ideas and knowledge from it. What doesn’t yet exist can come to be through imagination. Therefore, imagination is infinite, but knowledge is only finite; this is why imagination is more powerful than knowledge.

Simerjeet said one of the first questions you must ask yourself if you want to change is: “do you have a vision for your life?” According to psychology, humans are the only animals that can project their future beyond the natural change of the seasons, therefore we have the reserved privilege of being able to visualise ourselves in a future time, and make that vision reality, if we have the skill and perseverance to.

He also asked the question “are you in the process of discovering your vision?” Things don’t happen overnight; Rome wasn’t built in a day. Simerjeet mentioned how one of Barack Obama’s old teachers recalled how he wrote a poem about his dream to become the American President. He also mentioned that Barack mentioned his ambition at college. He also mentioned the film, *The Secret*, which focuses on a vision of your life that you keep to yourself, and work on making it come true.

Simerjeet mentioned the reticular activating system (RAS), which he described as a filtrating system in our brains that is able to determine what information is relevant to what you as an individual want to achieve. He said right before he goes on stage to speak, he isn’t thinking about what the other speakers spoke about, he isn’t thinking about the time, date, or where he is; all he is thinking about is what he’s going to be talking about. If there were someone in the room talking about the fact a dog had

gotten into the foyer outside, his brain would filter this information out, as it isn't relevant to his survival or immediate task at hand. If your brain pulls you towards your future dream, your RAS will work for you by filtering out all things irrelevant to that dream, and letting in only things that are relevant to it.

He made the point that when you are searching for something new to buy, for example a new computer, tablet, or phone, isn't it strange that you notice so many different deals and offers that stores are running? This is because your RAS searches for things relevant to your projected future, and unconsciously helps you to achieve the task of buying the new item. This, Simerjeet said, is the power of your imagination.

The problem is, Simerjeet said, that we don't see the world as it is, but we see the world as we are. Therefore, if we are looking at the world in a set, narrow point of view, we will see the world in a frame. And for us to truly see the picture, it must be taken out of the frame. Simerjeet mentioned the living root bridges that occur in certain parts of India where people have developed them over time. It is an example of a bridge that isn't simply made of sand and concrete, but is an example of something essential, but made differently from the norm.

Simerjeet played a video of a man that planted a strangler fig 30 years ago in a place where a root bridge could be constructed. The video showed an old man teaching a young girl how to care for the bridge. The bridge is located in one of the wettest parts of the world, the valleys of Meghalaya, where 25 metres of rain fell in one year. Meghalaya has an entire network of living bridges that remain unaffected by the extreme monsoon activities, and are safer for that reason. Some of the root bridges are many centuries old.

Simerjeet said that one of the first ways to stimulate your imagination is to think about why something is done the way it is; to ask questions about any given thing that you see, hear or experience. He then mentioned the fact that every individual's brain is conditioned to do things in a certain way, in habits. Humans are creatures of habit, and if we are not mindful of the things we do in our everyday lives, we can very easily fall into the comfortable, yet imagination-destroying cycle of living according to our habits.

The second theme Simerjeet spoke about was the need to have unshakeable and supreme confidence in what you are doing, and in the kind of change you want to pursue. He spoke of a young girl who was asked what she was drawing, and the girl said: "I am creating a picture of God." She heard the reply "but nobody knows what God looks like!" to which the young girl replied: "hold on, they will in a minute." This was the kind of confidence that this girl had.

True confidence comes when you have the ability to ask not only 'why?' but 'why not?' Simerjeet said that when he made the decision to leave the hospitality job he had been working in for ten years, to become a personal coach and motivational speaker, he heard people say to him "you don't have the right credentials or training for that

kind of work,” and “you’re too young.” But had Simerjeet listened to what they all told him, he wouldn’t have been talking to the Symposium delegates that day.

Simerjeet described such viewpoints that people gave him as demonstrations of ‘excuseitis’. He said that sometimes you will find that to do something you are too young, but then the next minute you will be too old. One day you wake up, look in the mirror, and there are no grey hairs, but the next day you will wake up and see many grey hairs. Experiencing change and making things happen isn’t about taking action tomorrow; it is about taking action today.

The third theme Simerjeet spoke about focused on taking risks, on asking yourself “What if?” You need the ability to take risks, to say: “let me try this,” “what if I try this?” and “let me pitch this idea to someone; let’s find out what happens.” Simerjeet said that you won’t be afraid of failure when you are desperate for something; desperate for survival, desperate for change, and desperate to live life according to your passions.

Simerjeet said that on every wall of the Facebook headquarters is: ‘Move fast; break things.’ What break things refers to is to challenge old mindsets and paradigms, and to put change into practice. It may also be a reason why Facebook changes its user interface so frequently.

Simerjeet mentioned a concept concerning ‘inventors’ and ‘guardians’. Inventors are the people who are able to come up with new ideas, and solutions to existing problems, and guardians are people who try to stop the inventors’ ideas from happening. Guardians can be anyone from your friends and family, to corrupt politicians and businessmen. Simerjeet said that research into this concept suggests that for every one inventor, there are 15 guardians. He said: “don’t listen to your friends when the friend inside you says ‘do this’”.

Simerjeet said he found a post on the Internet that said: “beware of your gunless friends.” It is a poem called *Iyot Tah* by Raymond Butuan:

The dangerous people are not the ones
Who hit you with clubs and rob you with guns!
The thief won't attack your character traits
Or belittle your abilities to your face!
It likely will be a well-meaning friend
Who merely crushes your will to win.
No, he doesn't rob you, at point of gun,
He simply says, "It can't be done."
When pointed to thousands who already are superior,
Personality-wise, and abilities, too,

They're way ahead of what others can do!"

It matters not that his words are untrue

For, you feel "others" must know you!

So, you're robbed of your hopes, your dreams to succeed.

Robbed of the material blessing received,

Robbed of your faith that says, "I can."

And robbed by an ignorant, gunless friend.

So, the deadliest of men is not he with a gun,

But the one who tells you "It can't be done!"

For that taken by burglars can be gotten again.

But, what can replace your will to win?



Simerjeet concluded his speech by getting the delegates to perform breathing exercises and say to the person next to them: "you have something special inside of you," to say to themselves: "I have something special inside me." He got everyone to pat themselves and then the people beside them on the back and say: "I'M SO PROUD OF YOU!" He recapped his themes by saying you must unleash your imagination, and you must excel at your strengths. Simerjeet then said: "Ladies and gentlemen, the best gift you can give to the world is the gift of utilizing your own gifts and strengths.

Simerjeet said that most countries' educational systems were the same as they were in the industrial age. He said the stages of human development have been borne from

hunters and gatherers, to agrarian civilisations, to mass production since the Industrial Revolution. Obviously, we now produce more at less cost. He said in the time when societies were focused most on mass production, people were employed at low-cost to do the same repetitive, unstimulating job, and weren't encouraged to ask any questions or have their own free thoughts. Such attitudes were developed in school, where, according to Simerjeet, teachers considered the best students as those who asked the least questions.

Simerjeet said from the industrial age, we have stepped into the information age, or the age of ideas. In this age, people are encouraged to think and act differently to benefit humankind. Such a proclamation gave a profound interpretation of this day and age, and delivers hope to the world, for if we are stepping into a new age, we must step into a new frame of thought, and we must take affirmative action to fix the problems that need resolving.

Simerjeet mentioned the fact that Facebook is a company worth (as of August 2013) US\$80 billion. What does that money represent? It represents nothing truly tangible, but it is an idea, an idea of providing a platform for people to communicate together worldwide. An idea such as Facebook could only have come about by someone unleashing their imagination, and focusing on their greatest strengths and talents.

Simerjeet then played a video with the late Steve Jobs speaking. The poem Jobs recited was used during the 2002 Apple Switch advertisement campaign, which focused on getting people to switch from Microsoft Windows to Mac. Jobs said:

Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes.

The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them.

About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward.

And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.

Simerjeet also quoted the 20th century theologian, Howard Thurman, when he said: "Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

Ken Robinson said: "Being good at something isn't a good enough reason to make it your profession, unless you love what you do." You need first to find out what gives you deep satisfaction and joy before thinking about such incentives as money. Simerjeet said your income is a side-effect, and it will also come to you through your

profession, but it shouldn't factor in on why you think what you do is your deep passion and joy. Don't chase money, don't chase success, and don't chase fame and glory; find what you are meant to do, and all these things will follow.

Simerjeet then mentioned Salman Khan, a former banker who has established the Khan Academy, an online video tutorial resource that has over 1 million subscribers. In 2012, *Time* named him in their annual 100 Most Influential People in the World list. He is an example of someone who has utilised the tools of the information age to help children worldwide, free of charge, to learn, be educated, and find their gifts.

Simerjeet briefly explained his life history, explaining that although he could have considered himself successful six years ago, after studying abroad and having an international career, he felt that 'something was missing'. So he decided to go back home to India without a certain idea of what he was going to do, but certain that he would start doing exactly what he was supposed to do to make his life more fulfilling. He said: "when you are called forward by a purpose that fulfills you, which really injects life in you, follow it. Listen to the voice inside of you, because it knows what is best for you." He said it was important to have a mission statement so that your mind could filter the best (see explanation of RAS above).

Simerjeet then said that we should always believe "the best is yet to come", because if we believe the best has already been, what is stopping us from becoming stagnant, and to allow our lives to pass us by? We are on a planet surging through space, orbiting the sun; the universe isn't stagnant. It isn't life that becomes stagnant, but our personal selves. That is why we must always anticipate the future and live it in the present.

In the information age, knowledge has become cheap and accessible, but what has remained relatively the same is the process of taking action. The American author and motivational speaker, Jim Rohn, said: "To let your learning lead to knowledge, let your learning lead to more action." Simerjeet said: "maybe the world will never be a better place just because you have fantastic ideas. You can live your whole life saying 'I have the most wonderful ideas ever'". But the world will only ever have a chance of being better if you have the courage, persistence, and vision to put small ideas into practice. Ideas are useless until they are used.

Simerjeet then spoke about opportunity, and he closed his speech with a quote by Napoleon Hill: "your next big opportunity is right where you are now." Many people talk about the potential they have but they aren't in the right circumstances to make the potential reality, and many people talk about ideas they have. The real action-takers know that opportunity is abundantly around them at all times. Opportunities don't have to be the opportunities of a lifetime; opportunities can be relatively small, but worth taking.

Simerjeet then spoke about what stops people in general from taking opportunities: 'the lizard'. The lizard is a part of the human mind that existed through our species' evolution that wants to keep us safe from danger. The lizard wants familiarity, and

could hold you back from a simple enough thing like talking to the stranger sitting beside you at the Symposium, or on the bus for example. The lizard is focused on self-preservation and minimizing failure.

According to psychology, humans are only born with two fears: the fear of heights, and the fear of sudden, loud noises. Every other fear is acquired, such as fear of embarrassment, and the fear of what others will think about you. Simerjeet wanted the delegates to leave the Symposium with a commitment to stop 'the lizard' from being present in their mind.

Simerjeet then mentioned the 'bystander effect', a discovery found after a psychology experiment that saw 51 people pass by someone pretending to be in need of assistance in public before someone stopped. Simerjeet also mentioned the recent rape victim from Delhi who died from injuries sustained in the gang-attack in December 2012. CCTV showed that 61 cars passed by her naked, ailing body, not stopping to give the desperate woman help. If people see someone in need, they will generally stand back and watch, waiting for someone else to take action. A woman who was a street cleaner finally stopped to help the person in the experiment.

Simerjeet said that you are less likely to help someone if you are in a rush and have urgent priorities you have to attend to. These may be reasons why people don't stop, or it may be that most people don't actually care for people they don't know. But Simerjeet raised Mahatma Gandhi's quote of "do not lose faith in humanity." Gandhi said: "humanity is like an ocean; if a few drops are dirty, that does not mean the whole ocean will become dirty."

Simerjeet concluded his speech by reciting the Confucius quote: "The man who moved the mountain was the one who began carrying away small stones." He said don't wait for the next big challenge, for Mother Theresa has said that world peace begins at home; happiness begins with you, and fulfillment of anything begins with self-fulfillment.

He also said that you should take challenges in life so that you can look back on your past with happiness. He quoted Leonardo da Vinci, who said: "as a day well spent brings happy life, so a life well spent brings happy death." What mission, and what purpose will make the life you live well spent?

Plenary Discussion

Making Things Happen

A plenary discussion focusing on 'Making Things Happen', taking action instead of just having awareness was conducted. The panelist consisted of H.A. Regional Director, a medical student, a Dean of Student Affairs and the familiar face Geraldine Cox.

Janice Leong, Regional Director of Humanitarian Affairs Asia start by saying the number one way Humanitarian Affairs takes action is by focusing on each and every delegate that comes to the Symposium, and every other young person that is affiliated with HA. She said HA believes in the energy and ideas the youth have in creating a sustainable, equal world. HA provides training and internships to help in humanitarian projects.



Janice mentioned that some delegates had approached her asking how to set up an HA chapter at their university. Janice introduced Geela Viarra Evvoia A. De Guzman, a fourth year medical student at the De La Salle Health Sciences Institute in the Philippines, who opened a chapter at her university after attending the 2nd Symposium, in Pattaya, Thailand in 2011.

She spoke about how she cried during Geraldine's speech, and herself and some friends got the idea to set up an organisation in the Philippines. However, when the Symposium was over, reality caught up, with exams to study for and missed lectures to catch up on. Her grades were lower than usual, and she wondered how she'd be

able to find the time to establish something worthwhile. She realised that many people who do humanitarian work also have fulltime jobs, so if they could find the time, she could also find the time to do something.

She eventually spoke to the others students at her medical school, and had to think about how to promote HA. She thought the best way for people to empathise with her was to tell them about her experiences at the Symposium. She retold some of the speakers' stories, and cried again when she retold some of Geraldine's stories.

She distinguished HA from other organisations by saying it helps anyone interested to be able to stand on their own, to achieve their personal humanitarian goals, rather than just offer programs that can only be participated in. She spoke of the need to make the people you are helping help themselves, not merely rely on those that are providing them aid; otherwise, disadvantaged people will simply learn to rely on their aid-givers, and not be motivated or confident to help themselves.

After Geela's talk, some people signed up to join the chapter, knowing that HA would provide help, and run support programs such as workshops. The question for the chapter members was what initiatives could they develop, and take action with. They became involved at the university by setting up booths on study days so that people could learn more about HA and donate. Donations were given to HA and also provided some delegates with the opportunity to attend the 3rd Symposium at Bali in 2012.

Geela mentioned that some Filipino children had to walk a total of 6 km a day to attend school, and when it was raining, the only shelter they had was holding banana leaves over their heads as they walked. However, they wanted to go to school, and because they were willing to endure the hard journey, their lives were benefitted with hope, resilience, and an education. Geela likened the pursuit of any goal to the determination those children showed to go to school; if you want something, you simply have to work out how to get it.

Janice said that there will always be challenges along the way when you undertake commitments, but the key is to honour your commitment by persisting.

Geraldine spoke next, and mentioned that if we're talking about making things happen, we should include Kim Solomon, HA's events director, in the panel. She said what herself and Kim are able to do is attract people that are able to help them. When people see the amount of commitment that people such as Geraldine and Kim have, they are determined to be a part of your team, and will keep their own high standard of commitment to you and your organisation.

Geraldine said: "Another way that I make things happen is that I refuse to take no for an answer." To accept no and walk away would guarantee that nothing happens. Geraldine used a real example of herself refusing to take no for an answer. Once she approached a successful Australian wine company to contribute funds to her Sunrise orphanages in Cambodia, but they refused to contribute as they didn't sell wine to Cambodia. She applied for funding the next year, hoping that their policies would have changed, but the policy had remained the same.

The company told Geraldine: "Why would we want to donate to Cambodia when it's not a place we export to," to which Geraldine replied: "Because it's a nice thing to do, and it'll make you feel good." Still they refused, so she approached them for the third time the next year. The third time she approached them she said: "Listen, I know your policy hasn't changed, but if you give me \$2000 I promise you I'll never bother you again." Sure enough, she got the \$2000.

Geraldine said perseverance is critical, because who knows whether you got someone on a bad day, and just for that day they weren't willing to listen to you? Everybody has their own life, and you need to be mindful of that, and not be disheartened by negative results or feedback, but persevere to achieve the positive results. "Keep on plugging away," Geraldine said, "Because sooner or later people will crack."



Geraldine used a quote from one of her favourite musicians, Leonard Cohen, who once wrote: "There's a crack in everything, and that's how the light gets through." All of us have imperfections, but often, Geraldine said, it is our imperfections that make us successful. Light shines through in your life because you have imperfections.

Geraldine said that it isn't her that raises the money for her orphanages, but the children themselves. She, she said, is just the storyteller, the conduit of these little peoples' plights to the rest of the world. People are moved and inspired by the stories she tells, and she is just the messenger.

While these words are Geraldine's own, I would like to say here that yes, Geraldine,

you may be a messenger, but you have a lot more roles within your organisation that you deserve your own credit for.

Geraldine encouraged the delegates to promote HA and next year's Symposium. She was extremely impressed by everyone who had committed the time, effort, and finance to go to the Symposium, and told the delegates that they were the force in the world, so they should go out and become successful in what they choose to pursue.

Dr. Patricia Cecilia Sy-Santos, the Dean of Student Affairs at Geela's medical school, shared how the Symposium helps her students in their own personal development as well as with social responsibility. What she found from the students who attended Symposiums were they came back more aware of reality beyond books, and beyond the four corners of their own little world. She thanked HA for giving her students the opportunity to learn.

Patricia said that she is still a student of life, and has herself learned a lot from the speakers. She said a quote that really resonated with her is: "Leaders are people of influence." She said it doesn't matter where you come from, who you are, or what you have, but if you have the right disposition, you can influence your own world, and change your world, simply by doing one thing excellently, and from the heart. She said she hoped the Symposium had stirred the delegates' hearts so much that they wouldn't just think about humanitarian work, but actually do it.

Janice said that 90% of the applications she received said: "I want to make a difference; I want to make a better world." She said the only way to make a difference is to take action. She quoted Mother Theresa, who said: "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples" She continued by saying:

All of us here need to take action at the same time if we truly want to see a better world, that we can truly see our next generation living in a safer environment, that there will be children who aren't abused, that there are women with equal rights. You will be the movers and shakers of the world, and I pray that each one of you will take action in the future.

Janice offered HA's support for anyone who wished to take action with a project anywhere around the world. If you would like HA's support, all you need to do is contact them.

The Voice in Social Change

Be the Voice of the Voiceless

Humanitarian Affairs has started a search for ground-breaking projects that will help alleviate poverty and support the UN Millennium Development Goals. Participants of the Manila Symposium were encouraged to submit their proposals either individually or in groups of two to five members.

More than 100 entries were received and seven groups were selected to present their sustainable development projects to a distinguished panel of judges comprising of CNN Hero of the Year, Humanitarian Workers and Professional Trainer.

The organisations believe that the youth are able to make a positive change in the world. With mentorship and resource support from Humanitarian Affairs, the youth will be able to furnish projects of the best quality and the highest social impact.

The Symposium presents “A Voice in Social Change” as an opportunity for its young delegates to turn their social development proposals into a reality to ultimately help disadvantaged communities in the world.

CHAMPION

The Fishing Rod Project

First placing was awarded to the team Hormones’ “The Fishing Rod Project”, proposed by Dat Nguyenthanh, LiLin Shi, and Ananya Duangthowset, of the Mahasarakham Business School, Mahasarakham University, Thailand. They described the project as “A self-help, self-sustainable plan to lift disadvantaged Vietnamese children from poverty.” The foundational philosophy of the project is described in its subtitle: “Give a man a fish and he will live for a day. Teach him how to fish, and you have helped him for a lifetime.”

There are still over 10 000 people living within the buffer zone of the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site about 500 km south of Hanoi in the Quang Binh province. One-third of these people live in poverty.

The population within the national park is primarily ethnic, and is accustomed to using the forest to make a living. They use trees for timber and fuel, use plants for medicinal purposes, hunt wild animals and gather honey.

Due to rapid population growth, the ethnic peoples’ way of life has been threatened by government-implemented policies that prohibit the exploitation of natural forest resources. The poor people only receive a little over 300 kg of food per capita per year, and must survive on just \$41 a month. The mere \$500 of money a poor person will receive over a year isn’t enough to pay for anything besides food; it isn’t enough to pay children’s school fees, children’s health, or buying new clothes.

With such barriers to get ahead, children living in this area will be destined to live out an unbreakable cycle if no intervention is forthcoming. Enter “The Fishing Rod Project”. Contrary to its name’s literal implication, this project isn’t trying to teach children how to catch fish from a river, but wants to teach children how to attract tourists and therefore a sustainable economy to their community.



The Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park is a popular tourist destination for both domestic and international visitors. Over half a million people travelled to the site in 2012, which is home to over a thousand high-rated plant (751) and vertebrate animal (381) species.

There is a mountain of resources at the national park, and the Hormones team wondered why with all the available natural resources the people were still poor. The team deduced that the park’s inhabitants weren’t educated on how to take advantage of the area’s natural beauty and attract tourists as a livelihood.

Think of tourists as fish in a river, and the ‘meal’ gained from the fish the livelihood the local inhabitants get from the tourists’ injections into the community’s economy. As the team wrote: “Imagine that the children can see a lot of fish in the river, but don’t know how to catch the fish for their ‘meals’. They need a fishing rod; the fishing rod is the education they receive. Education is the tool they need to utilise the sustainable economic opportunities offered by the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park.

“The Fishing Rod Project” offers three elective educational courses for children. They include courses focused on learning English, creating handicrafts, and playing musical instruments. A room will also be rented and modeled into a store where the handmade products are displayed and for sale.

Aptitude-tested volunteers will teach the English course. The course will have a six-month duration, with half the time devoted to learning modules on “Yourself”, “At home”, and “Market”. The children will then be able to communicate to foreign tourists enough to describe the handicrafts, and talk to foreign tourists in a friendly manner. The next three months will be for children who aspire to become tour guides. This part of the course is optional. Students can work at their own pace in the first three months if they need more time to learn.

Some unique handicrafts will be produced, such as bamboo photo and clock frames, bags, a traditional Vietnamese women’s hat known as a “Non”, and various household objects. A handicraft expert will teach the children.

Children will also be taught musical instruments such as the guitar, monochord, erhu, ukulele, and flute. They will then form their own repertoires and perform as a means of income. Expert musicians will teach the children.

Not only will “The Fishing Rod Project” lift children out of poverty, it will teach them how they can benefit themselves through their own efforts. Hormones expects that more than 50% of the poor children in the area, 1200 children, will benefit from the project. 30% of the poor families are expected to be pulled out of poverty.

With an economy run by the community, the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park people will experience an improved quality of life, and children can live in a better environment. Future generations won’t experience the poverty previous generations had to endure.

The project also provides an opportunity for volunteers to be involved in a socially responsible role that will help them with their own personal development. The proposal says: “Through this activity, other people will know and understand the suffering of the poor.” A profound statement in the proposal is: “Contribution of one’s strength for children will enable them to grow up healthy to make a better future.”

The national park will develop from the initiatives, as Hormones believes once people have adequate food and income, they will learn a better way of life and won’t need to do anything that negatively impacts the forest resources. “The Fishing Rod Project” therefore has scope to develop as a conservation venture.

1st Runners-Up Hope Book Factory

The "Hope Book Factory" is an initiative by The Ladders, a team made up of Yong Min Kim, Yerin Lee, Saemi Han, Seo Yeon Kim, and Chan Hui Park of the Sisophon Christian University, Cambodia. Their project proposal involves printing a 'Job Dictionary' for children in the Taey community in Bakong, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

When the members of The Ladders visited the Taey Primary School in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in January 2013, they asked the children to write down their dream job. The team members were shocked that most of the children's' answers were limited to the four most common occupations in Cambodia: police, soldier, doctor, and nurse.

Students chose these occupations mainly because they didn't know how diverse the labour market is. The Ladders realised students need to be educated on the job market, to know there's a lot more to life than just following in your family's poverty-stricken footsteps.



The Ladders interviewed the Cambodian Ministry of Education, who revealed that there are just 85 secondary schools in Siem Reap, less than 20% of the number of primary schools. Data shows that the national secondary school enrolment rate is just 45%. A lack of education doesn't allow children to realise their full potential, and

therefore will be limited to a lower quality of life. Development of Cambodia will be inhibited due to a lack of drive and purpose for education. However, if children are given resources that teach them about the many careers they can choose from if they receive a good education, they will be more motivated to achieve in school, and to complete higher education than just primary school.

Alongside the Job Dictionary, The Ladders plan to run programs on vocational education in primary and secondary schools of the community, as well as a once-a-month community-level educational workshop with invited speakers from several fields. The Job Dictionary can serve as a kind of textbook during these educational programs.

The Hope Book Factory project wishes to run in the Taey community first for six months, and then expand to other neighbouring communities. Online exposure will be an integral promotional component, with a video for Youtube being produced on the project's success. Successful promotion and collaboration between communities will enable the Hope Book Factory to be a self-supporting development.

The Ladders have stated that it will cost US\$1 for a dictionary to be printed. The dictionary will contain around 20 prospective job descriptions written by Cambodian students already studying at universities in Korea. The Ladders will be in regular contact with all donors and partnered non-profit organisations (NPOs) through email.

The first email they send will be an invitation to donate, and a second email will be sent once the website is created, www.hbfactory.com, and the produced video is available to watch on Youtube. The video will visually and concisely summarise the project's goals and plans. The third email they send will show the final result of the completed Job Dictionary, which they will donate for production costs.

Before the Job Dictionary is compiled, a community meeting will be held to discuss the kind of jobs that are available in the Taey community. The books will be printed at the Siem Reap printing press, and will be distributed to the community door-to-door with the help of the Youth Center. The volunteers will explain the meaning and importance of the Job Dictionary when they are given to the children.

Additional to the monthly lecture mentioned above, teachers will hold a class once a week to discuss the Job Dictionary to acquaint students with various types of jobs. After six months, feedback will be sought in an attempt to measure the initiative's success.

While it is difficult to assess a long-term project's success after just six months, teachers will be asked whether the children are interested and engaged with their Job Dictionary in general and during the weekly classes and monthly lectures.

The Ladders hopes to see a change in both parents' and children's attitudes to education. Parents will hopefully open their mindset about what future career their child may be able to pursue. Hopefully children will be able to find a dream job and work towards being educated enough to pursue that career. The Job Dictionary may

be a great catalyst for development in the Taey community, and the idea can hopefully reap much reward, success, and expansion.

2nd Runners-Up

The Unlettered Letters

"The Unlettered Letters" proposes to establish a training facility and database for poor Indian people to gain employment. It is the initiative of the 'Silent Warriors', Ayush Bhargava, Urvi N Shah, and Pratik Kothari, from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, Chennai. Its motto is: "One slum: one area: one educational institution."

"The Unlettered Letters" ultimate aim is "To enhance the lifestyle of the poor in India." Many Indian cities have high living costs and stiff job competition, and slum areas have significantly higher proportions of low-skilled workers. Many unemployed people must resort to working extended hours for a meagre wage, or begging on the street, to get by.

The Silent Warriors' project will initially focus on 45 prospective employees from Velachery, Chennai, due to the areas close proximity to their college campus. Appropriate people to fill the 45 positions will be determined by two appointed coordinators to scout the slum area.



The project seeks people who most need employment and will have a good chance of attracting employers after training. The target age is 16-40, and course-takers must have proof of identity. A maximum of one person per family is in place, and those

registered must have a clean criminal record. For training purposes, details of each registered individual's size of family, number of employed family members, average family salary, and health and general fitness, will be compiled.

The training course takes two months to complete, and is held on weekends, with four hours of classes on both Saturday and Sunday. Over six months, the project aims to train 135 people, and achieve at least a two-thirds employment strike rate. The course will focus on providing practical skills in finance, personality development, and computer application. Student volunteers will run the classes, which will be held at the college.

Financial training will focus on matters such as how to save, how to invest, and how to efficiently spend money. Personality development classes will focus on how to behave in an official position, and computer application classes will provide lessons on basic computer skills. Another session will be devoted to life skills, which will teach the trainees "the best way to lead their life." This class will be conducted with assistance from coordinators.

A website will be created to market the potential workers to potential employers. Employers can view prospective employees' CVs and select appropriate applicants. All work acquired through the website will be contractual, ensuring that no workers are exploited. One-sixth of the first month's wage will be received by "The Unlettered Letters" to keep the project running for the next round of 45 to be trained.

Employer contacts will be acquired after they go through a formal channel. They will provide details of their enterprise and the kind of workers they're looking for. The appropriate potential employees will be sent for interviews. Successful interviewees will have their contracts supervised by "The Unlettered Letters". One-sixth of the first month's salary will be paid by the employer for the Silent Warriors' services. All profits will be dedicated to purchasing training materials, advertising, expanding the project, and for miscellaneous expenses. The project plans to receive support from the National Service Scheme at IIT Madras, and Engineers Without Borders.

If enough publicity is created for "The Unlettered Letters", the project may be able to attract companies that participate in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Companies that participate include Intel and Google, and collaborate with worthy projects to combat the issues of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. Some companies also have support systems to facilitate vocational training, and to improve literacy rates within slum areas.

Publicity can be achieved through radio, newspapers and distributed pamphlets. Although many people in the Velachery slum area don't have access to the Internet and social media, online publicity will be critical to create awareness within other populations.

Learning Journey

An Experiential Learning Program

The Learning Journey provides the delegates with unique opportunities to better understand humanitarian causes.

Manila sits in the very heart of the Philippines. As its capital city, it is home to the wealthiest citizens of the country who thrive in its fast-paced lifestyle. Despite the economic boom in Manila's richest districts, many poor communities still reside in the slums and streets of the city.

On August 4, 2013, the 700 delegates of the 4th University Scholars Leadership (USL) Symposium participated and see Manila through the eyes of international non-government organisations (NGOs) that work closely with Manila's needy communities.



Humanitarian Affairs Asia partnered with World Vision, Habitat for Humanity and Save the Children to impart a hands-on experience on humanitarian development work through the Learning Journey programme of the USL Symposium.

Habitat for Humanity Philippines



Habitat for Humanity Philippines aims to create a sustainable shelter solution for poor communities and homeless Filipinos all over the country. It works as a unifying catalyst in creating a community building and development model to reach these communities in need.



Three hundred delegates of the USL Symposium took part in Habitat for Humanity's mission of leaving a lasting legacy in the lives of a poor community in Manila.



The delegates built homes for the homeless by engaging in the following activities: brick laying, excavation, brick hauling, sand sieving and painting.



World Vision Philippines



World Vision is a child focused international organisation, which takes on the responsibility of helping children, their families and communities live a better life. World Vision conducted two activities during the Learning Journey: a children's rights poster designing and mural painting.



Three hundred delegates each paired with One World Vision Child in designing the posters for an exhibition. Through this first-hand experience of sustainable projects, Humanitarian Affairs Asia hopes to inspire young people to initiate their own sustainable projects for communities in need in their home countries. The organisation will continue to guide passionate delegates in making positive change in the world.

Save the Children



Save the Children Philippines works to save those who are most vulnerable in times of disasters: the children. When disaster strikes, Save the Children comes ready to provide relief, medical care and education to help rebuild the lives of affected children and their families.



Save the Children understands that playtime is one of the best times to bond and get to know children. At the Learning Journey, 100 delegates got the chance to be closer with the children of Save the Children Philippines through a fun-filled day in their centre.



Truly, the Learning Journey is the heart of the USL Symposium. Not only do the delegates get to impart lessons on the children or to serving the communities in need by building houses; they too take home with them life precious lessons that these activities in turn give it to them. The Learning Journey is one unforgettable moments for the many lives it touches at the end of the day.



Closing Address by Mr. Praveen Agrawal

UN Resident Coordinator ad Interim

The UN Resident Coordinator ad interim, Praveen Agrawal, described the Symposium as “absolutely wonderful”, and mentioned the fact that people from 45 different countries had attended. He said such an event as the Symposium was what the UN was all about, and what humanity should be all about: “making a difference in the lives of people.” He hoped that all delegates would return to their respective countries “richer in experience, and excited to bring about positive change with all the learning and ideas from this great event.”



Praveen said: “when one looks at the word leadership, they say ‘Can I become a leader?’” The answer to that question, he said, was ‘Yes; all of you can be leaders.’ Another question he mentioned was: ‘What does it take to become a leader?’ He said that the occupation of leadership involves having the capacity to translate vision into reality.

He said that the world is at an important juncture in its history, and that we are faced with the challenge of achieving the sustainable, accelerated progress outlined in the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) developed in 2000. He said that unfortunately the world was lagging behind the benchmarks needed to achieve the goals by 2015.

Praveen said that more importantly, we have the opportunity to shape the next set of commitments to be met with the post-2015 agenda, building on the foundations established by the 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, also known as Rio+20. The findings of the high-level panel of eminent persons were presented to the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon.

Their “very enlightening report” was called ‘The New Global Partnership’. The priorities of the report were to eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development. The report constructed a process they recommend to be followed to achieve these two goals. Over a nine-month period, people from all walks of life reviewed the report. Feedback from all demographics ensured that the voices of the people living in poverty and those that are often left unheard, such as people in marginalised groups, could be included.

The main recommendation to come out of the report articulates that:

Without ending poverty, we cannot build prosperity. Too many people get left behind. We cannot allow that to happen. Without building prosperity, we cannot tackle environmental challenges. We need to mobilise massive investments into new technology to reduce the footprint of unsustainable production and consumption patterns. Without environmental sustainability, we cannot end poverty.

Praveen said: “The poor are too deeply affected by natural disasters, and too dependent on deteriorating oceans, forests, and soils. So how do we move from vision to action?” He continued by sharing five priorities.

1. The first priority is to **Leave No Person Behind**. We have to ensure that no person, regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race, or other status, is denied basic economic opportunities and human rights.
2. The second priority is to **Put Sustainable Development At The Core**. We must stick to sustainable forms of production and consumption. Developed countries must take the lead on this priority, and they must act now to slow the alarming pace of climate change and environmental degradation, which pose unprecedented threats to humanity.
3. The third priority is to **Transform Economies For Jobs And Inclusive Growth**. We must strive to diversify economies and provide equal opportunities for all, to drive social inclusion, especially for young people, and we must strive to foster respect for the environment.
4. The fourth priority is to **Build Peace, And Effective, Open, and Accountable Institutions for All**. We must recognise that peace, and good governance, are core elements of wellbeing, not just optional extras. This priority is a fundamental initiative to current thinking.

5. The fifth priority is to **Form A Global Partnership**, which is exactly what the delegates and Humanitarian Affairs United Kingdom did during the Symposium. We must strengthen through a new spirit of solidarity, cooperation and mutual accountability. The new partnership should be built on our shared humanity, and based on mutual respect and benefit.

The Millennium Development Goals are as follows:

- 1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.**

Target 1.A focuses on halving, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people worldwide living on under \$1.25 a day (Purchasing Power Parity adjusted). According to the 2013 UN Millennium Goals fact sheet, this goal was achieved five years ahead of schedule, in 2010. 700 million fewer people live in poverty when compared to the level in 1990, however, 1.2 billion people still live in extreme poverty.

Target 1.B is focused on achieving decent employment for all women, men, and young people. In 2001, 678 million workers lived on less than \$1.25 a day; by 2011, this number had dropped by almost half to 384 million. Unfortunately, we are still experiencing a gender gap in the global labour market. In 2012, there was a difference of just under a quarter between men and women in the employment-to-population ratio.

Target 1.C focused to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the number of people suffering from hunger. The goal's main focuses were to reduce the prevalence of underweight children aged under five years, and to reduce the proportion of the population living below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption. The 2013 report says the hunger reduction target is within reach by 2015, but an estimated 870 million people are still undernourished; that number includes more than 100 million children under five. That reported number of hungry people equates to 1 in 8 people in the world.

- 2. To achieve universal primary education.**

The sole target of this Goal, **Target 2.A**, is to giving every child, girls and boys, the means to complete a full course of primary schooling. The goal focuses on increasing enrollment, and completion numbers. On the positive side of things, more children are attending primary school than ever before, with 9 out of 10 children in developing regions attending (2010), an increase from 82% in 1999.

However, there is still a great deal of work needed to achieve this goal. By 2011, 57 million children still didn't attend school, and the rate of enrollment has slowed. In the three years to 2011, three million more children attended school. While this is still positive progress, a more rapid enrollment rate would be ideal. 123 million people aged between 15 and 24 lack basic reading skills, and of this number, 61% are young women. On the positive side, the gender gap in youth literacy rates is closing, with five more women to every hundred men being literate, compared to two decades earlier (90:100 in 1990; 95:100 in 2010).

3. To promote gender equality and empowering women.

This goal, with its sole **Target 3.A**, specifically focuses on closing the gender gap between young men and women in primary and secondary school education, preferably in 2005, and in all levels of education in 2015. According to the 2013 report, gender equality in primary education has been achieved globally, but just 2 of 130 UN-member countries have achieved the target at all educational levels.

Women are still severely affected by gender inequality worldwide, and such things as violence and discrimination against women continues to undermine efforts to reach all the MDGs. While poverty is a major barrier to secondary education, older girls have far less chance of attending and completing school than boys. Additionally, women are generally relegated to more vulnerable forms of employment; they tend to have less job security with fewer social benefits, and face discrimination in access to education, work and economic assets, and participation in government, the ultimate decision-making body.

4. To reduce child mortality rates.

This goal is essential for the survival of the human race. The goal is more specifically stated as **Target 4.A**, to reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate. The number of under-five children deaths declined from 12.4 million in 1990 to 6.6 million in 2012. This means 17 000 fewer children die each day.

Such an inexpensive and simple care as a measles vaccine has averted over 10 million deaths. Unfortunately though, in sub-Saharan Africa, under-five deaths have increased to 1 in 9, while in Southern Asia, they have increased to 1 in 16. While the overall under-five mortality rate declines, the rate of death occurring within the first month of birth is increasing. Demographics paint the utmost truth, and have shown that children born into poverty are twice as likely to die before the age of five than children from wealthier families, and that children with educated mothers, even just primary schooling, are more likely to survive than children of mothers with no education.

5. To improve maternal health.

A goal just as important as reducing the child mortality rate is to improve maternal health, by, as per **Target 5.A**, reducing by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio, and as per **Target 5.B**, achieving universal access to reproductive health.

Since 1990, reported maternal mortality has nearly halved. By 2010, the number of deaths reduced by 47% to 287 000. All regions have made progress, but for the MDG target to be met, the progress needs to be accelerated. In Eastern Asia, Northern Africa, and Southern Africa, maternal mortality has declined by around two thirds, and the rural-urban gap in skilled care during childbirth has narrowed. However, nearly 50

million births are annually delivered without any skilled care, and the maternal mortality rate in developing regions is 15 times higher than in developed regions.

While use of contraception is still increasing worldwide, the rapid increases in use seen in the 1990s weren't matched in the 2000s. Family planning services are slowly becoming more prevalent, but rapidly increasing demand outstrips the supply of the service. There are fewer teen mothers in most developing regions, but progress has also slowed within this goal.

A very sad statistic in the 2013 fact sheet states that only half of women in developing regions receive the recommended amount of health care they need. Fortunately, more women are receiving antenatal care in developing countries than before, with the 1990 figure of 63% increasing to 81% in 2011. However, a disappointing fact is that the Official Development Assistance for reproductive health care and family planning remains low. It will certainly need to increase, and extra attention will certainly need to be paid for safer and more abundant care for women before, during, and after childbirth.

6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.

The targets pertaining to this goal are all about halting, and then reversing the spread of disease (**Target 6.A** of HIV/AIDS, and **Target 6.C** of malaria and other diseases). **Target 6.B** focuses on universal access for the treatment of HIV/AIDS for all that need it by 2010.

New HIV infection rates continue to decline in most regions. However, there is a quasi-Catch 22 situation whereby the number of HIV sufferers is the highest it ever has been, due to fewer people developing AIDS thanks to more effective and accessible medication. Two and a half million people are newly affected with HIV every year. Unfortunately, the simple procedure of practicing safe sex isn't universally practiced, as many young people are unaware of how HIV is transmitted, and condom use isn't a staple priority. On a more positive note, more orphaned children are enrolled in school now due to expanded efforts of reducing the onset and impact of AIDS.

By 2011, the target to provide universal HIV/AIDS treatment was missed, however access for treatment has improved in all regions. In just one year, from late 2010 to late 2011, 1.4 million more people were receiving antiretroviral therapy, making the total of treated people to 8 million. Eleven countries have achieved universal access to antiretroviral therapy; while this figure is a good sign, there is a tremendous amount of more work to be done.

Since 2000, malaria-specific mortality rates have decreased by a quarter, and the estimated global incidence of malaria has decreased by 17%. During this time, 1.1 million deaths were averted due to action taken to mitigate malaria. The child mortality rates of the countries that had improved access to malaria control fell by one fifth. One such initiative to reduce child-malaria was to fund insecticide-treated

bed nets in sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, treatment for tuberculosis has saved over 20 million lives between 1995 and 2011 worldwide.

There is still a long way to go to reducing death and suffering caused by disease. In 2011, 7 million people still lacked access to antiretroviral therapy for HIV, and four-fifths of malaria-caused deaths occurred in just 14 countries.

7. To ensure environmental sustainability.

Another goal essential to the survival of the human race is maintaining and upholding a sustainable home. The targets within this goal apply to the natural world as well as to human civilisation.

Target 7.A focuses on integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, and to reverse the loss of environmental resources. Forests are disappearing at an alarming rate, though they are a safety net for the poor. Subsistence farming is responsible for almost half of worldwide deforestation, according to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. There are so many negative consequences of deforestation, such as loss of habitat, loss of biodiversity, economic losses, and altered climate conditions. South America and Africa saw the largest net losses of forest areas in the ten years to 2010.

Since 1990, global CO₂ emissions have increased by almost half, more than 46%. On a positive note, consumption of ozone-depleting substances have reduced by over 98% since the adoption of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in the late 1980s. Over half a trillion dollars was pledged toward sustainable development initiatives at 2012's Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in the agreement entitled 'The Future We Want'.

Target 7.B aims at reducing biodiversity loss, with a significant reduction in the rate of loss by 2010. Fortunately, protected areas worldwide have increased by 58% since 1990. However, growth in protected areas varies across countries and territories, and not all protected areas actually protect key biodiversity sites. Protected areas include 12.7% of the world's land area, but only 1.6% of total ocean area.

Target 7.C focuses on halving, by 2015, the 1990 proportion of the population without sustainable access to clean water and basic sanitation. By 2010, the target to halve the number of people without clean water access was achieved. Between 1990 and 2010, more than 2 billion people gained access to safe drinking water, the proportion of people using an improved water source increased from 76% in 1990 to 89% in 2010.

Sub-Saharan Africa is severely affected by the lack of clean drinking water, as over 40% of people without safe water live in this region. By 2011, there were still at least 768 million people without clean water access. As for sanitation, an average of 240 000 people gained access to improved sanitation facilities every day from 1990 to 2011. However, there are still 2.5 billion people without basic sanitation, something developed countries take completely for granted.

Target 7.D calls for a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. According to the 2013 fact sheet, this target has already been met, well in advance of its deadline. Interestingly, the share of urban slum residents in the developing world declined from 39% in 2000 to exactly one third in 2012. Over 200 million people gained access to clean drinking water, basic sanitation, and durable or less crowded housing; therefore, the MDG exceeded its expectation by double. Unfortunately, the amount of people living in slums has been steadily rising. In 2012, an estimated 863 million people lived in slums, compared to 650 million in 1990, and 760 million in 2000.

8. To develop a global partnership for development.

The simple truth is that beyond race, skin colour, religion, language, and nationality, we are all human beings. Just as the name United Nations suggests, we need to act and represent ourselves as one people, if we are to have any hope of efficient and lasting social progress.

A number of targets were created to achieve global partnership for development. **Target 8.A** focuses on further developing an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. After the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008, a number of protectionist policies were implemented by various G20 members, and despite pledging not to resort to trade restrictions during the GFC. Almost 3% of global trade has been affected by these protectionist methods.

Addressing the special needs of the least developed of nations is the focus of **Target 8.B**. Unfortunately; tariffs imposed by developed countries on products from developing countries have been mostly unchanged since 2004, except for agricultural products. Bilateral aid actually fell in sub-Saharan Africa by 1% in 2011. There has been much success with debt relief initiatives that have reduced external debt of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC), but 20 developing countries still have the risk of being distressed by heavy debt.

Another target devoted to dealing comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries is **Target 8.D**. The debt to GDP ratio decreased for many developing countries in 2011, however, 2012 and 2013 were expected to be slower growth years, which may weaken debt ratios.

Target 8.C wishes to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Aid has recently significantly increased for small island developing States, but aid to landlocked countries fell in 2010 for the first time in a decade.

Providing the remedies for survival is a humane priority, and **Target 8.E** focuses on providing access to affordable essential drugs in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, in developing countries. Despite the poor economic conditions of some years before 2011, resources available to provide essential medicines for specific diseases increased. Having said this, there is still much work to be done as, according

to the 2013 fact sheet, little improvement has been seen in improving availability and affordability of essential medicines in developing countries.

The final clause within the 8th goal is **Target 8.F**, which aims to make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications. This target is to be achieved in cooperation with the private sector. Almost three times more people in developed countries are Internet users (74%), compared with only 26% of people in developing countries. Mobile phone usage has almost become universal, with the number of subscriptions worldwide reaching 6 billion in 2011.

Aid delivery is monitored by the Integrated Implementation Framework (IIF), which was developed to record and monitor financial as well as policy commitments made in support of the MDGs by UN Member States and other international stakeholders.

This concludes a brief description of the MDGs. Naturally, there has been much discussion over the MDGs, especially the lack of success and lack of analytical potential, and the ability to provide relatively equal aid services to UN Member States. At the end of 2015, and with a final report released on the outcomes of the MDGs, I encourage the Symposium delegates, and everyone else, to study the positive and negative outcomes, and reason how the MDG foundations can be built upon to construct a sturdy and magnificent palace; the entire planet.

To stimulate the progress of the MDGs, 12 Sustainable Development Goals were outlined to be the agenda post-2015. These goals will work to prove conditions for people worldwide by 2030. These goals include:

- Ending poverty.
- Empowering girls and women, and achieving gender equality.
- Providing quality education and lifelong learning.
- Ensuring healthy lives.
- Ensuring nutritious food security.
- Achieving universal access to clean water, and basic sanitation.
- Securing sustainable energy.
- Creating jobs and sustainable livelihoods.
- Managing natural resources sustainably.
- Ensuring good governance and effective institutions.
- Ensuring stable and peaceful societies.
- Creating global long-term plans that can result in goals being fulfilled.

Praveen then quoted the sixth American President, John Quincy Adams, who said: “If your actions inspire other people to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” Praveen told the delegates: “You can’t afford to go back to business as usual (after this Symposium)”. Each one of us has an important role in shaping the future, and advancing the UN’s important agendas as we move past 2013.

Praveen said that today’s adolescents and youth are 1.8 billion strong, and one quarter of the world’s population. It would take 33 years to count to 1.8 billion if you counted one every second. 1 billion people live in poverty.

As young scholars, we have the power to make a difference in the lives of people. We can harness our potential to contribute to the social and economic development of our respective countries, and build the foundation of the world's future. As future leaders and vital assets of society, Praveen encouraged the delegates to be active participants of decision-making, and agents of positive change in our respective fields.

Praveen said that to improve the quality of statistics and access to information of informed decision-making and improved accountability, there is a call for a data revolution. For sustainable development, Praveen said, we should fully maximize the benefits of our new technology, such as social media and crowdsourcing, as tools of positive change. Reporting and monitoring our sustained and collective efforts around key issues themes that will contribute to awareness-raising, advocacy-building, and deeper engagement for all people on what are important developments for their present and future lives and families.

Praveen closed by mentioning excerpts from Ban Ki-moon's speech spoken at the UN General Assembly that focused on the post-2015 agenda. Ban Ki- moon said:



We are at the beginning of a historic journey. As multiple processes unfold, I trust that today's report will move a closer to a new framework that will build and expand on the MDGs. As well as the progress made in Rio de Janeiro, it will make a difference for generations to come.

The post-2015 process is a chance to usher in a new era of international development, one that will eradicate extreme poverty, and lead us to a world of sustainability, prosperity, equity, and dignity, for all; a world where all people have the opportunity to fulfill their potential, a world of inclusive solutions for inclusive growth, a world that keeps the needs of people on our planet at the centre. Let us continue to share that world together, and build the future we want.

Government Press Statement

Ministry of Tourism, Philippines

About 700 youth leaders from 45 countries will be in Manila from August 1 to 7, 2013, for the University Scholars Leadership Symposium, a leadership program geared towards social change. The event is organized by the Humanitarian Affairs United Kingdom, a London-based social enterprise that initiates and supports humanitarian relief efforts and development programs in poor and disaster-prone countries.

The opening ceremony will be held on August 2, 2013, at the Philippine International Convention Center, to be graced by Senator Bam Aquino, a social entrepreneur himself and a 2010 Ten Outstanding Men of the Philippines (TOYM) awardee.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) have partnered to bring the international symposium to the country. "We are honored to be cohosting this important gathering of young leaders whose common aspiration is to bring about change and make the world a better place. We laud the efforts of the organizers, which all educational institutions worldwide must emulate in influencing the future stewards and leaders of our nations," Secretary of Tourism Ramon R. Jimenez Jr. said.

The week-long symposium will involve immersions with local communities in Manila. Participants will also interact with humanitarian leaders who have dedicated their lives to help other people. The lineup of speakers includes Tony Meloto, founder of Gawad Kalinga Philippines; Robin Lim, 2011 CNN Hero of the Year and founder of Bali-based Healthy Mother Earth Foundation; and Nepali Pushpa Basnet, 2012 CNN Hero of the Year and founder of Butterfly Home.

Also invited to share their experiences are Geraldine Cox (founder of Sunrise Children's Home in Cambodia) and Peter Baines (founder of Hands Across the Water). They will be joined by motivational speakers Pamela Wigglesworth, Simerjeet Singh, Francis Kong, and Lloyd Luna.

Most of the delegates are from developing countries with 92 percent currently pursuing their college education, while the rest are completing their master's and doctoral degrees. The program will focus on the personal development of the participants, recognizing the importance of character in leading sustainable projects.

"The Philippines is proud to host and be part of this gathering of brilliant young minds, who will be the future global leaders. I am optimistic that our future will be less troubled as more and more of our youth are instilled with good values, guided to be caring and sensitive to their environment, and most importantly molded to become compassionate and understanding of the plight of the less fortunate. We would like to engage our young leaders to help promote responsible, ethical, and sustainable tourism to bring about cultural understanding, economic growth, peace, and harmony among nations," the Secretary added.

Media Report

PhilStar - August 2, 2013

MANILA, Philippines - About 700 youth leaders from 45 countries will be in Manila from August 1-7, 2013 for the University Scholars Leadership Symposium, a leadership program geared towards social change. The event is organized by the Humanitarian Affairs United Kingdom, a London-based social enterprise that initiates and supports humanitarian relief efforts and development programs in poor and disaster-prone countries.

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Yahoo News – August 3, 2013

Manila, Philippines -- Over 700 youth leaders from 45 countries arrived in Manila to attend the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium, a Leadership Program in Social Change that opened yesterday and will run until August 7, 2013 at the Philippines International Convention Center (PICC).

Organized by the Humanitarian Affairs United Kingdom, a London-based social enterprise that initiates and supports humanitarian relief efforts and development programs in poor and disaster-prone countries, the opening ceremony was graced by Senator Bam Aquino, a social entrepreneur himself and 2010 Ten Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines (TOYM) awardee.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) have partnered to bring the international symposium to the country.

Tourism Secretary Ramon Jimenez Jr. said the department is honored to co-host the momentous gathering of young leaders whose common aspiration is to bring about change and make the world a better place.

The tourism chief lauded the efforts of the organizers, which all educational institutions worldwide must emulate in influencing the future stewards and leaders of the world.

"The Philippines is proud to host and be part of this gathering of brilliant young minds, who will be the future global leaders. I am optimistic that our future will be less troubled as more and more of our youth are instilled with good values, guided to be caring and sensitive to their environment, and most importantly molded to become compassionate and understanding of the plight of the less fortunate," the statement read.

Jimenez encouraged young leaders to help promote responsible, ethical, and sustainable tourism to bring about cultural understanding, economic growth, peace, and harmony among nations.

Manila Bulletin - August 26, 2013

For a lot of people, the Baseco compound in Tondo, Manila, would be the last place they'd choose to spend their day. After all, the 56-hectare community is infamous for supposedly housing criminals and other characters of ill-repute.

Baseco was even briefly famous for being a living donor community – some of its residents were so desperate for cash that they resorted to selling their own kidneys. But for more than 250 youth leaders from all over the world, that unsavory reputation was the farthest from their minds as they spent a day of their weeklong stay here in the country with children from one of Baseco's World Vision-assisted communities.

These delegates were here in the country as part of London-based non-government organization Humanitarian Affairs' Fourth University Scholars Leadership Symposium,

which aims to gather young individuals from top universities in the world and provide them with leadership development and motivation training. Previously held in Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia, the Philippines played host this year, welcoming over 700 student leaders from 45 countries.

“This conference is a beginning to a humanitarian journey. It focuses on social change and young people. We hope that at the end of this conference, we will inspire these young people to start doing something about their advocacies,” explains Janice Leong, regional director of Humanitarian Affairs Asia. “It’s not the usual conference because we have these learning journeys, where we have a community immersion to reach out to the impoverished community in the host country.”

Aside from the day-long immersion in Baseco, the other delegates also built 18 houses and one community library in Payatas, Quezon City in cooperation with Habitat for Humanity, and conducted a storytelling session in Caloocan City in cooperation with Save the Children.

THE LEADER IN THEM

Just like most symposiums, Leong says that the journey towards becoming a delegate for the University Scholars Leadership Symposium begins with an application form, followed by an interview.

“We ask them why they want to attend this conference, what their motivation is. We ask them how do they want to contribute to this conference. These are the two main questions that we ask. Sometimes a phone interview is conducted for those people that we feel we would like to know a bit better,” says Leong.

Once accepted, the delegate is set for a week of activities and training with their international peers, as well as interaction with humanitarian leaders and motivational speakers.

“They interact with different types of speakers that we invite. We also have humanitarian speakers from overseas and locally to share the qualities of being a good leader and how to be successful because whether they want to reach out to whatever community they have, they need to have leadership in them so they can reach out better,” says Leong.

This year’s crop of speakers included Senator Bam Aquino, Gawad Kalinga’s Tony Meloto, CNN 2011 Hero of the Year Robin Lim, CNN 2012 Hero of the Year Pushpa Basnet, Sunrise Children’s Villages founder Geraldine Cox, Hands Across the Water founder Peter Baines, performance coach Simerjeet Singh, international corporate trainer Pamela Wigglesworth, motivational speakers Lloyd Luna and Francis Kong, Mano Amiga Pilipinas founder Lynn Pinugu, and entrepreneur Merry Riana.

This year’s symposium also introduced the “Voice in Social Change” project, which Humanitarian Affairs started in collaboration with the United Nations. It is a search for

groundbreaking projects that will help alleviate poverty. Winners will be mentored by Humanitarian Affairs for 12 months, and receive cash grants of up to US\$2000.

MOTIVATED TO ACT

Delegates also get to take part in learning journeys, such as the one in Baseco. More often than not, it is the part of the symposium that further motivates its delegates to spur into action.

For instance, 22-year-old Business Administration student Mak Win Yang from Hong Kong's Chinese University says that interacting with the child partnered with her for the immersion made her really want to help.

"I researched on the internet about Baseco, and there isn't a lot of literature about it here. When I came here, I saw that there is a lot of disadvantaged children and I really wanted to help them," she relates. "I have learned the real problems that they are facing and I felt so sad when the child assigned to me, Mary Jane, told me that she wants a better life for her family. I'm wondering what I can really do for her."

She says she plans to share everything she has seen and heard here in the country with her classmates in Hong Kong.

"When I come back to university, I will share my memory here. I will say that there is a lot of people waiting for their help, and I will encourage my fellow students to join these kinds of meaningful events so they understand the other side of the world," she says.

Twenty-four year old Electronics and Computer Engineering student Wang Hai Yang from the University of Macau echoes her sentiment.

"The children in Macau don't have these kinds of problems. I want to start my own business and do more charity using my own money," he says. "There's a lot of knowledge that we've learned here, and we need to integrate and connect it with the problems and issues in Macau and China."

DUBBO Weekender, Australia - 7 September 2013

Leadership trip gives a glimpse of future vision by George Baker

I had felt the gentle thud of the wheels hitting tarmac before but never in the Philippines, so it was with great joy that I disembarked safely at Ninoy Aquino International Airport earlier this month.

I didn't know what to expect from my week in Manila as a delegate of the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium, just as I didn't know the keynote speaker was to be Ninoy's nephew, Senator Bam Aquino.

The senator was making public political speeches in the mid-1980s at the age of six; seeing photographs of him from that time was enough; I could have boarded that aircraft again and been inspired enough to open my mind wider. But there were to be nine other speakers who were equally inspiring.

The symposium meant a week in the presence of people who offered the message that humans can achieve anything – people who have made this manifest in their daily actions and careers. The audience was free to ask questions and could meet each speaker privately during breaks. The approachability of these people who had instantly become role models and mentors was a blessing and honour.

Included in the week was a session of seven student groups pitching projects they had developed to provide humanitarian aid at a particular place with a particular focus. These presentations made me so appreciative of being part of this symposium – whether it was someone from Ishaku Haruna vying for vocational training centres in his home country of Nigeria, or another hoping to raise awareness of terrible crime in the otherwise beautiful Kashmir Valley, India; I felt humbled to be in the company of people passionately working to improve living conditions for their fellow people.

The final day of the symposium was welcomed with 2011 CNN Hero of the Year, Ibu Robin Lim, staggering to the stage, desperately calling for a student of midwifery, and then having her baby delivered on the front stage. I had met Robin at last year's symposium in Bali and I was filled with the meekest gratitude that she remembered my name.

Robin Lim is a midwife for Indonesian low-income women. She decided to practise midwifery after tragedy struck her sister, Christine, whose baby died during childbirth. This spurred Robin to help those who otherwise wouldn't have access to trained medical professionals to assist with the most important moment of their lives.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), it is estimated 800 women die during childbirth worldwide every day. I am in awe of Robin's work and feel beyond privileged to have a connection with her.

After the symposium I stayed in Manila for three more nights, and spent a day at Pagsanjan Falls, two hours south-east of the capital. I had no idea we would be paddling upstream in a 20 foot dugout. In my westernised naiveté, I envisioned a

luxurious fishing boat showing us a distant panorama of the falls. That all changed when I reached the muddy banks of the Bumbungan River.

Two boatmen worked tirelessly, numerous times having to push the dugout through the shallow rapids. One memorable moment was passing within a metre of a woman washing clothes in the river; thumping a shirt against a rock with her palo-palo as we passed. She turned with a smile when I said hello, never missing a beat with her washing paddle.

I saw another woman washing clothes by hand in Quezon City, and it made me aware of the deep love that goes into washing a family's clothes. There are no short cuts, no excuses; so it takes complete honesty to wash clothes by hand.

Honesty is something that can easily go astray in a world where accountability is ambiguous. It's easy to find excuses and short cuts to supplement a lack of honesty, but these two women were practicing it with unconditional love. Those images have has given me a new sense of awareness.

Back in Australia, my life continues – working five days a week, organising myself to return to study next year and keeping the connections between my existing family and friends, not to mention all the new faces I was blessed to meet during my time in the Philippines.

I feel like I have a new sense in my mind. I have experienced beauty and love with strangers and friends, so indelible that I cannot help but be a completely different person inside. I hope to have the ability and support to act on the developing vision of my future.

University of South Australia

Student has "exceptionally special experience" at the Humanitarian Affairs' 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium.

Katie Donaldson, a third year Bachelor of Interior Architecture student has recently had an experience of a lifetime, participating in the Humanitarian Affairs' 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium held in Manila, Philippines in August 2013. Describing the experience as 'truly amazing', Katie considered herself very fortunate to have taken part in the Symposium which she has said was a 'huge personal and professional learning curve', making connections with new friends from a variety of countries including Scotland, Malaysia, Nigeria and Taiwan.

Katie sincerely recommends to other students to participate in future Humanitarian Affairs' University Scholars Leadership Symposiums suggesting they go with "open minds and hearts and be open to new experiences".

The University Scholars Leadership Symposium aims to provide the next generation leaders with an understanding of key sustainable development challenges, motivating them to realise their potential by taking part in training with international peers and inspiring interactions with experienced humanitarian leaders.

Katie's full testimonial can be found below.

"The 2013 Humanitarian Affairs 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium was an exceptionally special experience that I feel extremely privileged to have been nominated for. From the first day of the week-long symposium, I immediately felt part of a family of 700 students from over 40 countries, all working together for the greater good. What I learned about humanitarian affairs has opened my eyes to the world, and the potential for each and every person to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

I have already drawn upon many of the valuable leadership skills learnt, that were both empowering and affirming, and translate into life skills that I will carry with me always. The experience has given me new friends from all over the world who have taught me so much about themselves, their cultures, and subsequently myself. I would definitely recommend the experience to any future UniSA student who approaches the world with an open heart and mind."

Katherine Donaldson
Bachelor Interior Architecture

American University Kuwait

Students Attend the 4th Annual University Scholars Leadership Symposium in Manila, Philippines

Humanitarian Affairs, a UK based organization that aims to initiate and support humanitarian relief efforts in countries that are poverty-stricken and disaster-prone, held the 4th annual University Scholars Leadership Symposium in August 2013, in Manila - the Philippines, where youth leaders from over 45 countries around the world met at the Philippines International Convention Center (PICC). The American University of Kuwait (AUK) was the only university from the GCC to be present.

To represent AUK and Kuwait, 6 students were selected based on their commitment, involvement, and dedication to community service, through which each displayed leadership characteristics. The Office of Student Life received the invitation due to the success of its volunteer program "Refuse to Be Ordinary", which is a program established in October 2011, to provide AUK students with information and opportunities to be significant contributors to the Kuwaiti community through service. Two AUK chaperones joined the 6 students to form the AUK delegation.

The purpose of the symposium is to gather students from all around the world with the aim to train them to become leaders in their own communities through own humanitarian initiatives, to exchange personal experiences, and to recognize the importance of leading sustainable, humanitarian projects.

During the symposium, the participants also had the opportunity of listening to some key humanitarian and motivational speakers. The speakers have dedicated their lives to help others and shared their own personal experiences with the audience.

The AUK delegates were assigned to construction work in the impoverished area of Bistekville Payatas, in the outskirts of Quezon City, where they helped build housing for local teachers. The experience exposed them to what it is like to live harsh conditions, and they witnessed first-hand how the people came together to make their community a happier and healthier place to live in.

At the closing ceremony, AUK's Fadwa Al Ajeel, a Junior majoring in Finance, and Shereen Al Bloushi were selected to participate in the final segment. Al Ajeel acted as a host in presenting the final speeches while Al Bloushi was asked to speak about her week-long experience in Manila.

Coventry University

Students at the University Scholars Leadership Symposium in Manila

by Matt on September 2, 2013 in Blog, External International Activities, Student Stories

Ten Coventry University students have had the opportunity to attend the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium in Manila, Philippines from 1st – 7th August 2013, partly funded by IEMS and the VC's Office. This annual program for leadership in social change and humanitarian affairs is specially designed to provide the next generation leaders an understanding of key sustainable development challenges, and to motivate them to realize their potential as agents of change through challenging training with diverse international peers and inspiring interactions with experienced humanitarian leaders.

This year's Symposium saw a culmination of 700 scholars from various universities around the world discussing issues pertaining to humanitarian matters and sustainable development. The program also included training sessions on leadership and communication, project management and implementation, as well as lectures from expert humanitarians such as Robin Lim (CNN Hero of the Year, 2011), Bam Aquino (2012 Ten Outstanding Young People of the World, TOYP) and Francis Kong (Inspirational Speaker and Corporate Trainer).

Our students were motivated to inspire change and make a positive contribution to local peers by taking part in various activities, talks and the Learning Journey, which was a day-long project that would transform the lives of marginalized communities in the Philippines. The Symposium organisers, Humanitarian Affairs UK, provided an important lesson on the holistic development of global minded citizens, and this Symposium created a great learning opportunity for participants not only in terms of personal development, but more importantly, in reaching out to communities in need.

Manila dwellers Elena Aldea, (BA International Economics and Trade student): "We spent our day with Habitat for Humanity building houses in Manila's slum areas and we were able to talk with dwellers about their own struggles with poverty, unemployment, health care inequity and high illiteracy rates. Some of the families in these communities have been able to break the vicious cycle of poverty via communal support, empowering the younger generation and encouraging access to education. It was truly inspiring to share our enthusiasm for sustainable development!"

Universitas Padjadjaran
Two students join the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium
in the Philippines

[Unpad.ac.id, 10/09/2013] Two students from Government Studies, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP) Unpad had the opportunity to represent Unpad in the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium on August 1-7 in Manila, the Philippines. The event is a gathering of young leaders from all over the world discussing global humanity issues. Both students are Rinaldi Yudakusumah dan Andika Rizaldy Ramadhan.

The event is organized by the Humanitarian Affairs United Kingdom, an international social organization engaging in humanitarian issues initiating and supporting humanitarian aids and development programs in countries suffering from poverty and disasters. As many as 700 young leaders from 45 countries participated in the event. The huge number of delegates made the event more interesting, plus prominent speakers, such as Bam Aquino (the Philippines's youngest senator), Pushpa Basnet (CNN Heroes 2012), and Robin Lim (CNN Heroes 2011) also gave their speech. Robin Lim particularly has inspired the 20 delegates from Indonesia. She is an American woman who has devoted her life for more than 22 years to be a midwife for Balinese community that cannot afford to pay for delivery cost.

Her story has moved all the delegates for her contribution to a community. "As an Indonesian youngster, I believe it is the time for Indonesian youth to contribute for their surrounding community," said Yudakusumah.

Satya Wacana Christian University
SWCU Joins "4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium" in the Philippines

Satya Wacana Christian University (SWCU) joined another international-scale activity. This time, SWCU took part in the "4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium". This activity was held by Humanitarian Affairs for one week at the beginning of this month (8/1-7) in Manila, Philippines. Humanitarian Affairs is an institution that deals with humanity. Its central office is based in London, England. This activity was attended by almost 700 delegates from various tertiary educational institutions all over the world like Asia, Europe, the Middle East, America, and Australia.

Honorary Invitation

SWCU sent the Chairperson of the University Student Representative Body (BPMU) Maya Rahardian Septiningtyas and the Head of the University Student Senate (SMU) Oscar Paulus Parlaungan Karwur.

In addition, SWCU was the first tertiary educational institution from Indonesia invited as an observer to provide feedback about the agendas. Related with the honorary

invitation, SWCU sent Vice Rector III Yafet Yosafat Wilben Rissy, SH., M.SI., LLM, as an observer for this event.

Quality Speakers

For one week in the Philippines, the delegation comprised of various tertiary educational institutions from around the world received various materials about topics related to humanity. The speakers who were invited by the organizer of this activity were individuals with high credibility and integrity in human affairs. The speakers included CNN Heroes like Geraldine Cox Lion from Australia, Robyn Lim from the United States, and Pusha Basnet from Nepal.

Besides receiving material about humanity, the delegation also got material related with leadership and personal development. Several of the speakers who talked about leadership and personal development included Pamela Wigglesworth from the United States and Simerjeet Singh from India. In addition, the delegates were also provided the opportunity to develop their international networking. The delegates were also encouraged to do community service like care for and treat orphaned children in Baxeco, Manila Bay.

Establish Relations

Oscar and Maya conveyed that they got many advantages like experience and new knowledge from joining this activity.

“It was really enjoyable to join this activity, because I got a lot of experiences and knowledge. Besides that, from this activity I was able to make many new friends from various countries,” explained Oscar.

A similar sentiment was also shared by Maya. “Taking part in this event was really incredible, because I could represent SWCU at an international event. Through this activity, SWCU could also establish relations with various universities worldwide. Besides that, I also got new experiences that I could share with kids and the society in the Philippines through doing community service.”

Meanwhile, Yafet, who was met in his office (7/14), stated, “This is a great event because we can meet with about 700 delegates from various tertiary educational institutions around the world. We can establish relations and cooperation with various universities all over the world. I hope this will become a regular agenda of the Student Organization.”

Acknowledgement

Humanitarian Affairs United Kingdom wishes to put on record our sincere appreciation, and to commend all our Speakers, Delegates, Volunteers, Government Employees from the Ministry of Tourism, Police Officers from Philippines National Police and the Police Security Branch, our Caterers, Transport Providers and all other Service Providers for your total commitment in making the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium 2013 in the Philippines a Huge Success !

The results achieved in this important program of Leadership in Social Change Program is indeed commendable.

Without doubt you have done justice to the tasks assigned to you. This is all the more important given the critical role of Youth in advancing progress in the World Today's for peace, security, governance, and social and economic progress.

Your contributions as Delegates are very critical in this important moments, which aims at charting a new, practical and effective sustainable development programs in this fragile World based on pursuit of the Humanitarian Affairs Vision; where every young person has the rights to participate in humanitarian relief efforts.

You have adequately demonstrated that, through your invaluable contributions, sharing of fresh ideas, and making of sound recommendations, this brainstorming consultation has achieved its objectives. You have also impressively embodied principles of gender equality and inclusivity, with young women very confidently showing leadership alongside young men; and by ensuring the views of marginalized communities are heard. Bravo! "The Future Is Now"!!

A special thanks to George Baker for spending many sleepless nights to prepare this Manila Report 2013.



Connecting People with Communities in Need



4TH UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

A Leadership Program in Social Change

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Report of the Manila Symposium 2013