Pub n' Grub
2001 Hamilton St.
June 1st 8:00-11:00pm
Only $10 for cover

Please come out to support Shot@Life and ELIMINATE

Raffle prizes, specials on beer and wine, and the one night only Booster Shot!!!!
"Shot@life " Saving Mothers and Children's Lives"
(by Kiahana Brooks)
On Monday April 23, shot@life and ELIMINATE Philadelphia, working under the umbrella of the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia, hosted a shot@life awareness event called "Saving Mothers and Children's Lives Through Vaccinations". During the event Dr. Carla Campbell introduced the shot@life campaign and gave an informative talk on the benefits of vaccinations in controlling deadly and crippling diseases. In addition to her own talk, Dr. Campbell presented material originally prepared by Dr. Shannon Marquez (Drexel Public Health), who was ill, on rotavirus eradication in Gambia. Dr. Lucille Pilling spoke on the importance of private/NGO partnerships in vaccination campaigns, Etham McBeth presented on the Kiwanis society of ELIMINATE, and Dr. Sanchin Walawalker presented his experiences working with the polio eradication campaign in India. The event was attended by over 55 people including students and faculty from 5 area universities as well as professionals from the department of health, pharmacy, nursing, medicine, the community, and board members of the UNA-GP. At this event, we collected some cash donations for the shot@life and ELIMINATE campaign and some additional pledges for future online donations. We also collected an evaluation of the effectiveness of the presentations and impetus of attendees to donate money or get involved with the shot@life campaign. The results are quite positive and we are currently analyzing those results for a more in depth report.

"Shots for Shots "
(by Kiahana Brooks)
On Friday June 1, 2012 from 8-11pm, the Shot@life Philly campaign will host a happy hour fundraiser to support vaccinations in developing countries at the Pub and Grub in center city Philadelphia (21 and Hamilton, which is 2001 Hamilton if you want a GPS address). This is a chance for UNA-GP members to have a great time and mingle as they socially discuss important health issues which are facing many emerging nations. As a part of this fundraiser, the shot@life campaign will be offering a 10$ wristband special which entitles guests to a half off, beer, wine or special vaccination-themed shot. All proceeds from our cover will go towards shot@life and ELIMINATE vaccination campaigns.

(The UNA-GP members at Shot@Life 23rd event)
From Christiaan’s desk.

While I am writing this, many students at our universities are preparing for a day of celebrations, finishing their studies, wearing the mortar board, and receiving accolades from family and friends. U-Haul trucks and packed family cars are found in abundance around the campuses. It’s good to see all that excitement around this rite of passage. Life goes on.

Most of these students will also face a daunting task in the current labor market. New government data show that more than half of recent graduates are either jobless, or employed in positions that don't even require a college degree. Faced with low pay, many are confronted with student loans that may take decades to pay off. In our national labor market, jobs are scarce, especially in education, and competition is fierce. Nothing indicates that an abundance of well-paying jobs is going to return any time soon. Most futurists actually are starting discussions about how to de-couple work, jobs, income, and quality of life.

I work with students; wherever I can, I tell students to expand their horizon, to look at the global labor market. There are plenty jobs out there for undergrads and grads. On the global market, those with a college degree are still a tiny minority, and in many countries, especially via UN programs, many can find good work and high labor satisfaction. Moreover, working abroad in developmental settings can be structured in such a way that many student loans can be forgiven over time. The global market is also rife with opportunities for business start-ups, fair trade organizations, sustainable technology applications, etc. It is a pleasure working with young people, discussing the UN System, the possibilities of starting your career outside the USA and in general, returning a bit the terrible brain drain that so many countries have experienced.

There is work out there, if you are young, have a good education and are willing to think beyond national borders. However, there are a few caveats, one of them the current trend for austerity as the policy of choice in the Eurozone, the US and Canada (see: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ellen-brown/canada-austerity_b_1394179.html). We are noticing a clear choice for austerity to balance budgets that do not include progressive adjustments of national income taxes, leaving the impression that the nations' elites and high earners are exempt. The anger in the streets about these policies, all influenced by the financial debacle of 2007/08, is now spilling over into politics. While in Rio, in late April, I had a dinner conversation with Fotis S., who expressed intense frustration with the way Sarkozy and Merkel dominated the “at-all-human-cost” approach to balancing the state budget of Greece NOW. While agreeing to the need for structural reform, he was angry for the way such deep, harsh cuts did damage to businesses, universities, and the social fabric of society. “Imagine an immediate drop of 50% in dispensable income for your family, your friends, your neighbors, and your city. It is mindboggling.” He was very much afraid how this style of squeeze opened the way for radical right wing forces; and indeed, in Greece, for the first time since the military junta of the early seventies, have neo-fascists have gained a strong foothold in parliament during last week’s election. Elections results, from England to France, as well as the fall of the conservative government in the Netherlands, indicate that the populations of even the most stable democracies do not embrace the harshness of the measures.

The United Nations has expressed interest as well and is worried about the long term impacts on developmental work and the UN Millennium Development Goals. Especially the International Labor Organization in particular has published several reports, raising the alarm bell about countries like Spain, where unemployment for males under age 30 stands at 50%. Overall, the financial crisis globally is far from over and the impact on labor relations, including the resurgence of child labor, trafficking, and bonded labor, is profound. Clearly, our Universal Human Rights project, started with great hopes in 1948, is under threat.
Preventing Atrocities
(by Christiaan Morssink)

On April 24th, President Obama spoke at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. to observe a Day of Remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust and announce the launch of a new Atrocities Prevention Board. Obama spoke to the need to more formally intervene to prevent mass atrocities and genocide, saying "national sovereignty is never a license to slaughter your own people." He said that "never again is a challenge to us all," adding that "remembrance without action changes nothing."

The President used the speech to outline several key actions the administration is taking to truly achieve the goal of "never again." Chief among these was the issuance of an executive order that allows for U.S. officials to impose sanctions against foreign nations found to have used new technologies, including cell phone tracking and Internet monitoring, to help carry out grave human rights abuses. These sanctions will hopefully help address repression by regimes, particularly Iran and Syria, who have used the internet to control and censor democracy and human rights activists.

President Obama formally launched the above-mentioned Atrocities Prevention Board, created following a presidential study directive last year, which held its first meeting the same day. The Board will include senior representatives from across the administration with the goal of helping "the U.S. government identify and address atrocity threats and oversee institutional changes that will make us more nimble and effective." The Board will host its first meeting today with more than 200 representatives from nongovernmental organizations and activists.

We at the UNA-GP applaud this effort, while emphasizing the complexity of the task. Sanctions would not have prevented the original holocaust, and, if only applied by a few states, often have little direct impact. Actual military intervention should not be used either, unless sanctioned by the United Nations. Moreover, at what stage do we speak of atrocities; when do we speak of a “few bad apples” and when do we hold a whole nation accountable? Just today, 5-12-12, a tribunal in Kuala Lumpur accused President Bush of war crimes. Indeed, who is stating what an atrocity is? We will be watching closely to see how this Atrocities Prevention Board moves forward with its important, and hopefully globally impacting, endeavor. President Obama’s speech can be seen through this link (http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2012/04/23/president-obama-speaks-preventing-mass-atrocities).
Hollande: “I salute the humanists who made this victory possible!”
(by Francesca Martelli)

On May 6th, François Hollande won the French presidency, defeating Nicolas Sarkozy with 51.7% of the vote. Hollande is France’s first Socialist president in seventeen years. During his victory speech, he announced that his first objective was to unite all of France. Although he stressed the importance of nationhood, he also called for the building of a stronger Europe. Hollande asserted that he will also place a high emphasis on social justice and workers’ rights, and he has vowed to renegotiate the terms of Europe’s fiscal pact on austerity.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon congratulated Hollande for his victory. In a statement on May 8th, Ki-Moon’s spokesperson said, “The Secretary-General wishes Mr. Hollande every success and looks forward to working together with him on a variety of issues of interest to France and the United Nations”.

France is a UN Security Council permanent member. During Hollande’s campaign, he promised to bring French troops home from Afghanistan by the end of 2012, although NATO and the US made the decision for forces to stay until 2014. There will be a crisis at the NATO summit next week if Hollande decides to bypass the military alliance. Will his first large interaction with members of the international community be a positive one?
Rwanda 2012: Perspective of Hope?
(by Kiahana Brooks)
On May 8, 2012, Dr. James Plumb, director of the Jefferson Center for Urban Health and professor in the department of Family and Community Medicine, spoke on his experiences working in East Africa over the last 20 years and in Rwanda over the last 6 years. During this event, attendees learned about the intersections between health and the political past of Rwanda. He explained the health education and clinic management projects he has completed over the last 6 years. He also showed the work of his partner organizations, such as Barefoot Artists, who have created genocide memorials in affected villages. Finally, he challenged members of the audience to consider their personal feelings on the future of international development projects and highlighted some of the greater political themes which currently drive the outcomes of societies.
1. UN official highlights role of business sector in sustainable development
4/11/12
As June approaches, critical issues are highlighted on the road to RIO+20. Stanford University performed their own rendition of RIO+20 (RIO+2.0); the main issues talked about were advancing technology to solve global problems more efficiently and the role of business in sustainable energy. RIO+20 will be held in June and will host over 130 Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Prime Ministers, along with more than 50,000 participants from governments.

2. Ban appoints Norwegian general as head of UN mission in Syria
4/27/12
On April 27th Ban Ki-moon appointed Robert Mood as the head of the UN Supervision Mission in Syria and Mr. Karin Landgren of Sweden as his Special Representative for Liberia. Major General Mood brings years of international experience to his position. Ms. Landgren has replaced Ellen Margrethe Løj of Denmark.

3. UN debate stresses need to break down barriers for girls in technology-related careers
4/26/12
ITU (UN International Telecommunication Union) Secretary-General Hamadoun Touré explained that “ICT careers are not ‘too hard’ for girls. ICT careers are not unfeminine”. He asked that girls world wide take the initiative and consider jobs in the ICT field. At the event hosted by the UN, new approaches on how to entice young girls to take up a career in technology were discussed.
UN International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

4. Trade vital to help countries achieve sustainable development, UN conference hears
4/26/12
The UN Conference on Trade and Development, known as UNCTAD XIII, held their 13th session last month in Doha, Qatar. The main focus of the conference was to develop opportunities to increase international trade, as it has proven to promote “inclusive and sustainable growth and development.”

5. UN welcomes new guidelines for couples on HIV testing, treatment options
4/19/12
UNAIDS released new approaches to help HIV infected couples. The World Health organization set new guidelines for serodiscordant couples, such as promoting safer therapies like antiretroviral therapy which reduces the chances of transmission between partners.

6. UN chief congratulates new World Bank President
4/17/12
On April 17, 2012 Dr. Jim Yong Kim was appointed the new president of the World Bank. UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon welcomed the new president with optimistic remarks for the future. Ban expressed his interest in working towards sustainable development and HIV/AIDS research worldwide.
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Upcoming events: incomplete, tentative, never finished. If readers want events added to the list, please contact info@una-gp.org.