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One of the all too many conflicts and humanitarian crises in the world right now is the widening civil war in Syria. The UNA-GP held an event on this humanitarian crisis with an emphasis on the health needs of refugees and internally displaced Syrians (May 8th at the College of Physicians) and I was particularly struck by the magnitude of the desperation faced by millions of Syrians and the unique complexities of this conflict. At the same time, while I was listening to the passionate and deeply informed panel, I recalled one of the things I have from my grandmother: a small, crumbling book of photos called “Serbs in Winter” which she bought at a fundraiser for refugee assistance in the Balkans, at a Philadelphia event in 1915, almost one hundred years ago. The conditions of the refugees pictured in this booklet are essentially the same as the conditions described for Syria and the refugee camps in neighboring countries -- hunger, loss of possessions, fragile shelter against cold and snow, sickness and lack of medical care.

I think we can say that the United Nations is indeed part of the change for the better, at least in responding to crisis and war, and in some cases even in preventing war and building conditions for a better and more peaceful life for all. Even as the panel talked about the Syrian emergency, there were repeated references to the role of the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Although the UN has not yet received adequate funding, still tens of millions of dollars have been allocated and millions of people are being fed and sheltered. Voluntary organizations such as our UNA-GP are being informed and motivated and much of the information on which we rely comes from UN agencies such as UNHCR and UNICEF (the beneficiary of our May 8th event). The international structures of the UN have become such a part of our world that we may fail to recognize what a tremendous difference they make.

Has anything changed since my grandmother was going to fundraisers for refugees one hundred years ago?

In June we will have our annual membership meeting with some business to approve our budget and new Board members for the coming year, followed by a special opportunity to learn about some of the beginnings of the UN as it was being established. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Charlene Mires, author of Capitol of the World: the Race to Host the United Nations which links the UN to Philadelphia and the popular movement to have the UN headquarters located here in the city of the Constitution. I hope as many members as possible will participate -- it is always a great networking gathering. Save the date - June 20, 5:00 to 8:00, at the Carriage House at Penn, 3907 Spruce St. Philadelphia.

Mary Day Kent
President, UNA-GP
From Christiaan’s Desk

I am writing this from Liverpool, the old harbor city that was so central in the English dominance of the seas during its imperial and industrial glory days. I can see from my hotel room the shipyards where the city built, free of charge, three warships for one side in the U.S. civil war, protecting its interest in the cotton trade.

It’s cold here in a very windy city, which has built a quite remarkable modern waterfront to re-vitalize the downtown area. Modern blends well with old in Liverpool, and in that modernization drive the legacy of John Lennon is used with abandon. Attached is a picture of the sculpture “Peace and Harmony”, the European peace monument of the Global Peace Initiative. The White Feather Foundation in Liverpool has replaced the building of warships. Awesome; may Lennon’s legacy provide moral guidance for all of us; we need to stop worshipping warriors and embrace the tools for peaceful handling of conflicts. That’s what we find at the core of the global political need for our United Nations. Let us work towards a day when armed drones will not be built anymore, when battleships become artificial reefs and the

Philadelphia commercial and political elite can do what their Liverpool counterparts did, while embracing the message of our own heroes: Paul Robeson, Leon Sullivan and MLK.

On May 8, UNA-GP’s volunteer Maya Khezam organized an evening about the health crises among the victims of the Syrian civil war. It was a good event, well attended, and with deep emotional appeal. Maya succeeded in illustrating why war is horrible, why war creates enormous pain and suffering for the innocent. Wars are primitive methods of power conflict handling, engaging primitive thinking men using ultra-modern knowledge. Maya’s message may be situation specific, but our lesson from this evening should be that all wars and all war making are manifestations of primitive minds, of a cultural refusal to learn from the horrors of (modern) warfare. UNA-GP will keep working on building modern minds, global minds, and systematically transforming that refusal to learn to an embrace of John Lennon’s message. Onward (or should I say, like Lennon, maybe I’m a dreamer, hence: Dream on?)

Christiaan, Executive Director
Ban welcomes appointment of new World Trade Organization chief
On September 1, 2013 Roberto Carvalho de Azevêdo of Brazil shall begin his term as the new Director-General of the World Trade Organization, replacing Pascal Lamy. Mr. Carvalho de Azevêdo had previously served as Permanent Representative in the WTO and is committed to continue the implementation of a rules-based multilateral trading system.

The Health Toll of Immigration
A growing body of mortality research on immigrants has shown that the longer they live in this country, the worse their rates of heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/19/health/the-health-toll-of-immigration.html?ref=sabrinatavernise&_r=0

UN honours work of three Iraqi women journalist
Suha Audah, Enas Jabbar and Shatha al-Shabibi have been selected as winners of the UN writing challenge to best describe the hardships of middle eastern women. Suha Audah of the struggles for middle eastern women practicing sports while Enas Jabbar and Shatha al-Shabibi wrote on crime and abduction in Iraq.

Pioneering Italian Town Leads Europe in Waste Recycling
Six years ago Capannori, a town in Tuscany, became the first Zero Waste town in Europe. Their ambitious green-thinking has inspired many other countries including Spain and France to implement similar measures. Zero Waste does not mean just door-to-door separate collection. It also requires a series of parallel actions aimed at reducing the production of avoidable waste
http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/05/pioneering-italian-town-leads-europe-in-waste-recycling/

Hollande Signs French Gay Marriage Law
On May 18th, French President François Hollande signed a law allowing gays to get married and adopt children. Hollande said very little on the law but commented that his attention will now focus the economy, as France is suffering its worst economic tension since 2009.

North Korea fires three short-range missiles, South claims
South Korean Defence Ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok informed sources that North Korea fired missiles from their eastern coast on Saturday May 18th. Two missiles were shot in the morning and one in the afternoon. Analysts say the recent North Korean threats were partly an attempt to push Washington to agree to disarmament-for-aid talks.

Number of Syrian refugees tops 1.5 million mark, says UN agency
On May 17, 2013 the UNHCR, a UN refugee agency, reported that 1.5 million Syrians have fled their country in order to escape conflict. Inside Syria, UNHCR continued this week to follow up on the needs and situation of several hundred families displaced in the village of Zamarin, on the outskirts of Tartus, a city on the Mediterranean coast.
April’s U.N. Café focused on the humanitarian and medical crisis of Syria that has plagued the civilians, and most harshly the children, since the civil war broke out now almost two years ago. Our guest speaker, Maya Khezam, gave us an intimate look into how this war is affecting civilians, showing us a glimpse into what we often don’t get shown via media. She gave a moving personal account of family and friends who have been affected deeply by the war, and how the refugee crisis has overburdened neighboring countries. Maya explained the details of receiving asylum in the U.S., how complicated that process is and how improvements are needed in the ways by which the U.S. and other countries can help. Maya also discussed the various challenges Syrians face everyday now, including food shortages, lack of clean water, sanitation failures, and breakdown of community services. The biggest help, it turns out, is sending aid for medical needs and protecting children. The biggest hurdle yet is the lack of support for U.N. and other aid agencies, who are severely underfunded. By getting the word out, by showing non-Syrians that in this war, like any war, there are too many innocent souls being affected, hopefully we can help raise some continuing aid for the innocent people and children who’s lives have been turned upside down.
An Attempt to Solve Real Environmental Issues
Consultation on Ethanol Cook stoves and Fuel at United Nations

By Ruchi Shah, University of Pennsylvania

On 4th April, 2013 The Public-Private Alliance Foundation (PPAF) convened a consultation on cookstove and fuel alternatives in Haiti, held at United Nations Headquarters, and hosted by the UN Office for Partnerships. I was invited to New York to attend this meeting which had two purposes - 1. to advance expansion of a pilot project by bringing together more partners and discussing the further steps, 2. to promote the benefits and possibilities of these cookstoves in Haiti and elsewhere.

The PPAF is committed to improving lives through creating partnerships to help reduce poverty and achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals. PPAF focuses on Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Madagascar to stimulate entrepreneurship, investment and jobs. It has a pilot project to commercialize ethanol cookstoves and fuel in Haiti to help overcome the poverty – respiratory disease – deforestation trap most families face from heavy reliance on charcoal for cooking. PPAF is working with Path To Haiti Business Consulting LLC; CleanStar Ventures, led by Sagun Saxena; other business and non-profit partners. The stoves are fueled by locally produced sugar ethanol.

The combination is environment-friendly and promotes farming and small business.

The meeting had some 70 participants from diverse backgrounds and sectors -- investment; non-profits; academia; Haitian government and experts from different wings of the UN. All were enthusiastic and eager to carry out discussions to promote this project. Starting with a review of program goals and some anecdotes shared by Dr. David Stillman, Executive Director of PPAF, the meeting went ahead with remarks by several experts and in-depth discussions within six working groups.

To understand this project and the issues it deals with in Haiti, we need to be aware of the country’s current situation from an environmental and sustainability standpoint. In Haiti 75% of total energy use is wood and charcoal for cooking, which has led to massive deforestation, erosion and hurricane mudslides. Moreover the fumes from the 4 million tons of firewood consumed each year produce health hazards and reinforce the cycle of poverty. Women and small children are the most vulnerable to what the World Health Organization calls the “Killer in the Kitchen”. The clean burning ethanol cookstoves will help solve these problems. One of major concern in Haiti is the fuel required for household energy. Project Gaia, Inc., which donated an initial supply of cookstoves, manufactured by Dometic AB, believes that such initiatives will promote the use of alcohol fuels for household energy. This can benefit all who have limited access to clean energy. Since stoves and fuel can be locally produced they will create an opportunity for Haitians to become owners of energy systems, from production to end-use. Haiti has a long history of sugarcane and small scale alcohol production operations. However the related farming and distilleries need to be revitalized. Adding cooking fuel production as a new value stream can help.

A 2011 study led by the Haitian Ministry of Public Works, Transport & Communications, with support from the UN Environment Programme, estimated that to reduce the country’s reliance on charcoal for cooking by 20 percent in 10 years would require a million improved stoves. PPAF has identified several issues that need to be resolved. These include the need for investments, a strong marketing and distribution channel to ensure...
An Attempt to Solve Real Environmental Issues
Consultation on Ethanol Cook stoves and Fuel at United Nations

meeting the supply-demand levels; resources and necessary tools to provide information; and developing standard testing protocols to illustrate long term benefits and impacts. As one of the participants said, “There are 250 million cell phones in sub-Saharan Africa; it indicates that this is an achievable goal”.

At the UN consultation we all were asked to join one of several working groups and to consider the cross-cutting issue of gender in all of them. The groups were: (1) Stoves: Consumer-level Issues; (2) Fuel: Consumer-level Issues; (3) Distillation: Ethanol Production and Distribution Issues; (4) Distribution: Availability of Marketing of Cookstoves and Fuel; (5) Finance: Pilot Project and Expansion Phase Resources; and (6) Awareness: How to communicate the issues and the benefits of ethanol cookstoves.

I joined the stoves group, which included Mr. Harry Stokes, the founder and director of Project Gaia, Inc. We discussed advantages and disadvantages of ethanol stoves in general, cost and payment options, microfinance, stove design and availability of cookstoves. Some key points that came out of our committee were: (a) Focus on active involvement of women, since in Haiti they do most of the cooking and, being the first consumers, they would better understand these stoves. (b) Women’s entrepreneurship should be promoted by creating a loan system. (c) It is also important to modify current stove design as may be needed for cleaning with little water, and for holding pots of various sizes. At the end, each group leader came to the podium and reported their group’s outcomes.

It was very interesting to hear the different views of experts, but the main conclusions to be drawn are that this project had truly touched people’s hearts, and that it will surely be taken to a wider and larger scale after this meeting.

I believe these ethanol cook stoves are one of the most efficient ways to reach MDG targets. Project Gaia worked in Madagascar on this issue and came up with a very simple equation: 1 stove + 1 litre of ethanol = 8 kgs or 16 pounds less wood to carry = an average of 20 hours of fuel gathering per week, freed up to devote building a healthy life and avoiding the breathing of harmful air pollutants. This initiative interconnects all the 8 MDGs! To have more accurate analysis on the impacts; cost and benefits of these clean stoves, Life Cycle Analysis can prove to be a useful tool.

Thanks to PPAF for inviting me to be a part of such an informative and exclusive discussion. I gained a more analytical perspective on problem solving and partnerships in this area. Also I learned there is an opportunity for students to volunteer or intern at PPAF, Project Gaia or other partners and get involved in this project. Two major areas for this project are developing a marketing approach and a micro financing model. If you would like to join in advancing this project or start a movement at Penn and beyond to support this effort; with permission from your advisor one can also carry out this project as an independent study. Please feel free to contact Ruchi Shah- sruchi@sas.upenn.edu for more details about the project or Professor Stanley Laskowski- laskowski6@aol.com, if you wish to discuss about any opportunities.

Dr. Stillman and Fritz Clairvil (Path To Haiti) - delivering introductory remarks about the project.
Upcoming Events

June 2nd-4th - UNA-USA Membership Meeting
Rub shoulders with the best of Capitol Hill in Washington DC. This is the perfect opportunity to interact with many people associated with UNA.

June 20nd - Member’s Day
Join us for the annual UNA-GP meeting at the Carriage House on the campus of UPenn. Learn about how Philadelphia was once in the running to host the UN buildings. Get a chance to meet and mingle with your fellow UNA-GP volunteers.

July 21st, from 4.30 to 8PM  Fourth Annual Garden Party (in celebration of the International Day of Justice). The perfect opportunity to have fun and help us fundraise at our garden party! 146 Pelham Rd, Philadelphia. Food, drinks, live music and a chance to interact with friends and members of the UNA-GP. Don’t miss it and bring your checkbook.

September 21st - International Day of Peace, multiple events are planned, from soccer tournaments to workshops on peacemaking and marching for peace.

October 16th - Our third annual world food day event. Details to follow, but keep the evening open for some serious eating and talking about eating; This year probably at Rutgers, Camden

October 24th - UN Day. An evening of celebrations and award ceremonies. In collaboration with The Global Securities Institute and the Project for Nuclear Awareness

November 16th. Our first Model UN Conference on Water Management for High schools students, in commemoration of World Toilet Day, on November 19th.
Japan's Nuclear Plan
Unsettles U.S.

By Jay Solomon and Miho Inada

While we fiddle with Iran, could East Asia burn? The Wall Street Journal reports May 2d that Japan is getting ready to reprocess 9 tons/ year of used nuclear-power-plant fuel, "for civilian purposes", into weapons-
usable plutonium. Problem: Since the Fukushima accident, only 2 of 54 Japanese power reactors are permitted to make electricity, because of
safety problems. What will Japan do with the leftover fuel from the other
52? This is an explosion waiting to happen, whether from a theft-security,
or proliferation of nuclear weapons perspective-- and much more serious
than Iran's potential program. (Nine tons could create 2000 nuclear
weapons. By contrast, North Korea has 6 small bombs, Iran has none,
may have the fuel in two years for 2, if we don't make a deal that doesn't
demand regime change.)

For the whole article visit:
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324582004578456943867
189804.html#articleTabs%3Darticle

A 2012 photo shows the Rokkasho nuclear-fuel processing plant's control
center in northern Japan.
Be Involved: Join Us for the 2013 Annual Meeting and Advocacy Day on the Hill

Register now for the 2013 UNA-USA Annual Meeting — the early bird deadline is less than three weeks away!

The Annual Meeting brings together members from across the country for skills trainings, issue briefings, networking opportunities, and capacity-building. Each year, the meeting culminates with Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill; last year, more than 100 meetings took place between UNA-USA members and their members of Congress discussing the importance of a strong U.S.-UN relationship. This year’s Advocacy Day is Tuesday, June 4. Don’t miss this opportunity to tell your elected representatives about the important work the United Nations performs every day, and how vital it is that the U.S. continues to fund the UN.

Other highlights of this year’s Annual Meeting include:

- A discussion on women’s empowerment.
- UNA Women is hosting its first-ever Annual Meeting strategy session to discuss upcoming goals and activities;
- There is an informal session to learn about UNA Women activities across the country in support of women’s empowerment;
- UNA Women will launch its advocacy platform and highlight opportunities for activism;
- Lakshmi Puri, Assistant Secretary-General for Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships at the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) has been invited to discuss UN Women priorities and strategies for the next three years!

Other highlights include a special screening of the innovative feature film Girl Rising and an opportunity for you to discuss women’s issues with your members of Congress during Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, Tuesday, June 4.

All meetings with congressional offices will be scheduled by the Better World Campaign and UNA-USA. Please indicate on your registration form if you plan to participate in these meetings. We will prepare advocacy packets for you to distribute during your meetings.

Have questions? Please contact Laura Giroux, UNA-USA Membership Director.
GlobalPhilly™ 2013 will consist of a wide array of international and multicultural events and activities sponsored by members of the Global Philadelphia Association, shining a spotlight on the many global dimensions of the Greater Philadelphia Region. From September 15 - October 31, GlobalPhilly™ 2013 will showcase 60-75 events or activities, each of which will be presented by a participating organization, independently or in combination with others. If you are interested in joining this endeavor, please contact Zabeth Teelucksingh, Global Philadelphia Association Executive Director, at zabeth@globalphiladelphia.org. Visit our website at www.globalphiladelphia.org to learn more.
Red Cross Red Crescent’s 65th Anniversary

On May 8th, UNA-GP proudly celebrated Red Cross Red Crescent’s 65th Anniversary by sponsoring “Reaching the Unreached,” an event dedicated to raising awareness and funds for the children of Syria who are currently tragically in need due to the ongoing civil war. Held in the beautiful Thomson Hall of The College of Physicians, the event featured an array of distinguished professionals who either had personal experience with helping Syrian refugees directly in the field, or medical knowledge of the health crisis at hand. The event was extremely successful, filling the hall with intrigued audience members and raising a substantial amount of donations for these children to be allocated through UNICEF. Spiritual leaders, community leaders, and even the Honorary Consul of Switzerland mingled with the overflow crowd who came because of a personal interest or concern about the event, and almost everyone wanted to help in any way they could. The event was organized by Maya Khezam, a Syrian native and doctoral student at the university of Pennsylvania, her passion for wanting to help the innocent was inspiring.
Snapshots from
Red Cross Red Crescent’s 65th Anniversary
Our event was interrupted and cut short, due to a fire alarm, so we never had the chance to announce how to make a donation to UNICEF for the Syrian Health Crisis.

If you are interested, you can donate through your PayPal account to info@una-gp.org.
You can help the United Nations Association out!

The UNA-GP is in desperate need of funds for upcoming projects. In order to continue with extremely beneficial and enriching events, such as the Model UN, we need your help! Please donate whatever you can to the UNA-GP, and in turn, Philadelphians and beyond!

Have any ideas for fundraising events? We’re all ears! With the volume of projects the UNA-GP is constantly immersed in, we are always in need of more volunteers, no matter how much or how (seemingly!) little time you have to devote. Email Manisha Patel, (Volunteer Coordinator and Board Member) with your suggestions or any questions at mpatel@una-gp.org.

The UNA-GP is a chapter of the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA). Our website offers information about our mission, upcoming events, and ways to get involved, including joining and volunteering. In addition, we are on social media sites and send out our monthly newsletter. Take a look around!

Volunteers with all types of skill sets are welcome to work with the UNA-GP, in the short or long term. If interested, please contact:

Manisha Patel
Volunteer Coordinator
Board Member
mpatel@una-gp.org