



UNA Southern New York State Division

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Newsletter
Spring 2008

Welcome to UNA-SNY YPIC's newsletter, which is jam-packed with information and articles for internationally savvy and UN policy curious professionals. Enjoy!

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Welcome to our Spring 08 newsletter!

To many of you who have been involved with YPIC New York since its inception: thank you all for your commitment to discovering more about international issues and promoting the work of the UN.

Today, as the newly elected YPIC Chair, I feel honored to follow in the footsteps of my predecessors and work with the many active committee directors and members whose collective effort is the very essence of YPIC. As the former Director of YPIC's Latin American Affairs Committee, I shared in the joys of being part of a great team of individuals who are passionate about what we do. Now, as YPIC Chair, I will devote a great deal of thought and planning to making YPIC an ever more interactive and meaningful experience to all its members.

I am very excited and driven to continue on this path by placing greater emphasis on making YPIC a household name among young professionals of greater New York and beyond. As savvy professionals, we know the power of branding and image to make our message heard. To that end, I invite all of you to send me your thoughts and feedback on how we can leverage our inherent strengths to make a significant imprint on international cooperation.

Since we are all busy professionals and/or students, I will make it as painless as possible with a short 3-minute survey. Please click on the link below to fill your responses.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=V_2fMWKri7SK6MUq_2ba0UdVbA_3d_3d

YPIC belongs to each and every one of you. Let your voices be heard as we strive to create a blueprint of a better world. For further suggestions, please drop me a line at ypicchair@unanyc.org

In the meantime and as you think of ideas to send me, please enjoy the articles in this newsletter that I hope will serve as inspiration. Hope to see you soon at one of our upcoming events which include the Women's and Youth Forum brought to you by the Human Rights Committee as well as lecture on Malnutrition by the Humanitarian Affairs Committee.

Enjoy!

Patricia Sacristan
Chair
United Nations Association | SNY | YPIC

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We Have A New Website!

Bookmark the home page for easy access:
<http://unasouthernny.org/ypic>

One of the main reasons people visit our YPIC site is to find out what events are coming. When you visit now, you'll also find much more to keep you in the know:

On the YPIC website:

- About Us: our mission, brochure, how to contact us.
- Events: upcoming and archived events.
- Membership: benefits directory, how to join UNA and our email list, a directory of UN and international organizations.
- Committees: our eight YPIC Committees, plus dedicated Web Centers.
- Career Resources: Career event series, career and leadership seminars, a directory of websites to apply for jobs or get help job-hunting in UN or international organizations.
- News: YPIC news alerts, pointers to the UN News Centre, International Crisis Group's reports and bulletins.
- Mobilize: policy groups, blogs, e-action alerts, HERO, Adopt-a Minefield.



This year, we intend to do some new things on our site like networking and discussion forums, so stay tuned. And please send us your ideas, feedback, questions, or suggestions about the website to: ypicmdir@unanyc.org



YPIC Web Centers

YPIC Committees run events throughout the year -- and now we're bringing the news to you. We've launched our first Web Centers with news and developments, insight, and information about how you can get involved in the issues. Check them out:

- European Affairs Center
<http://unasouthernny.org/ypic>
Committees > European Affairs Center
- Latin American Affairs Center
<http://unasouthernny.org/ypic>
Committees > Latin American Affairs Center
- Humanitarian Affairs Center
<http://unasouthernny.org/ypic>
Committees > Humanitarian Affairs Center

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Kosovo: The Newest Nation In Europe

By Sharlene Ratcliff-Korenica

Director, YPIC Marketing Communications & UNA-NY Board of Directors

Did you see the discussion about Kosovo in the Feb 26 Democratic Presidential Debate? Putin's agenda, the potential for conflict with Russia who backs Serbia, and much more. View the replay:

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/23361919#23361919>

Birth of a Nation: The Republic of Kosovo Kosovo Declares Independence from Serbia

February 17 was the first day of the future for the people of Kosovo and for the Balkan region, which has suffered a long period of brutality and uncertainty. The repression, aggression, and massacres by Serbia - against the peoples of Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo from the 1980s through 1999 - ended only when NATO executed a bombing campaign. Since then, Kosovo and the region have existed in a kind of limbo. The lack of clarity around the future, along with unstable conditions, have kept the Kosovan people poor and prospects stagnant, with little opportunity for advancement, investment, or development.

The United States, France, the UK, and Germany immediately recognized Kosovo's independence declared on February 17, swiftly followed by most of the European Union and many other countries. To ease the concerns of some countries, the EU issued a statement that Kosovo does not set a precedent, and leaves it up to each member state to decide on their future relations.



Kosovo's Parliament and Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi declare independence (courtesy of bbc.co.uk)

At the request of the Russian federation, the UN Security Council held an emergency session on February 17 to discuss Kosovo's declaration of independence (<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=25653&Cr=Kosovo&Cr1=>). The next months will not be easy, with Serbia refusing to accept developments, and Russia vowing to block Security Council recognition and to fight UN plans to support the province's move to autonomy. Serb reaction erupted into violence in the streets of Belgrade: the American Embassy was set afire; embassies of other countries who have recognized Kosovo's independence were also attacked; and there has been widespread protests and looting. Serbia has recalled its ambassador to the US in protest at recognition and threatened to withdraw other envoys.

General Wesley Clark, who commanded NATO forces during the Kosovo war of 1999, explores the opposition of Serbia and the "geo-strategic chess games" of Russia in an op-ed piece for Newsweek International: "Playing Games with Kosovo" (<http://www.newsweek.com/id/114690>).

Celebrations In the Streets of Prishtina - and "Independence 2.0"

The histrionics of Belgrade nor the posturing of Russia could dampen the spirits of the long-suffering Kosovars, who celebrated in the streets of their capital (click here for photos: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_pictures/7249162.stm), waving the flag of Albania and those of other nations - most often the United States - who supported Kosovo's independence.

The celebrations swept across the Internet, with supporters around the world watching developments and sharing experiences in cyberspace. This page (<http://www.kosovothankyou.com>) is an example, with people around the world sharing real-time developments including the countries who have recognized Kosovo's independence, as well as a virtual photo gallery of celebrations worldwide.

Want to learn more?

Full text of Kosovo's Declaration of Independence (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7249677.stm>)

International Crisis Group's Kosovo resource page for insight and expert analysis (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3225&t=1>)

This YPIC Newsletter article gives a timeline of Kosovo from ancient time to present, and detail about the years of conflict and abysmal economic and humanitarian conditions (<http://unasouthernny.org/ypic/extras/kosovo.doc>)



Kids celebrate Kosovo's independence (courtesy of bbc.co.uk)

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The U.S. Commits to Helping More Iraqi Refugees, But is it Enough?

By Michelle Chaplin

Co-Director, Humanitarian Affairs Committee

In November, SNY-YPIC's Humanitarian Affairs Committee held a panel discussion on the Iraqi Refugee Crisis with representatives from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, International Rescue Committee and International Institute of Education. One of the key issues was the United States' role in helping and resettling Iraqi refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Since then, the U.S. has taken a number of steps to address the situation, and we think it is important to keep you current on the developments.

On January 28, President Bush signed the Department of Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, which will make it easier for certain groups of Iraqi refugees to find safe haven in the U.S.

According to an article from Human Rights First, an advocacy organization, the Act allows for the following provisions regarding Iraqi refugees:

- 5,000 Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) available each year for the next five years, for Iraqis who worked directly with the U.S. government and are in danger;
- Travel loans and 8 months of assistance for Iraqis with SIVs;
- Direct access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (RAP) for Iraqis who worked with the U.S. government, contractors, NGOs, and media;
- Direct RAP access for designated Iraqi religious minorities with family in the United States;
- A system that will allow Iraqis who are in danger to apply and interview for admission to the U.S. refugee program or the SIV program, without having to leave Iraq first;
- Protection or immediate removal from Iraq of SIV applicants who are in danger;
- Allowance for requests to reopen asylum claims denied on or after March 1, 2003, when the denial was based on a change of conditions in Iraq;
- A Senior Coordinator for Iraqi Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons at the U.S. embassy in Baghdad, and Senior Coordinators at embassies throughout the region; and
- Requirements for the President, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of State to report on implementation of the bill and plans to improve the resettlement process.¹

There are currently 4.5 million Iraqi refugees and IDPs. Refugees have fled to neighboring countries including Syria and Jordan, but these countries have limited resources and therefore are hesitant to take on the burden of such a large refugee population for a long period of time.

Historically, the U.S. has not lived up to its intentions regarding the resettlement of Iraqi refugees. According to a report by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), the U.S. Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM) announced that the U.S. would resettle 7,000 Iraqi refugees in FY2007, which ended on September 30, 2007. As of that date, the U.S. had only resettled 1,608 Iraqi refugees.

Furthermore, the report claimed that the U.S. had the capacity to resettle 20,000 Iraqi refugees in FY2007², putting into perspective the vast shortcomings of the U.S. government's commitment to helping Iraqi refugees and IDPs.

For FY2008, the U.S. BPRM increased its commitment by announcing that it would resettle 12,000 Iraqi refugees during this year. However, thus far only 1,432 Iraqi refugees have been resettled in the U.S. since the beginning of FY2008 in October.

James Foley, the senior coordinator on Iraqi refugee issues in the U.S., remains confident that the U.S. can meet this goal, especially with the Department of Defense Authorization Act in place. He told Reuters, "This is a tall order but it remains attainable." He expects that the U.S. will begin admitting at least 1,000 Iraqi refugees per month by the spring.³

¹ "President Bush Signs Defense Authorization Act, Commits the U.S. to Helping More Iraqi Refugees." Press Release. 1 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/media/asy/2007/alert/392/index.htm>>.

² O'Donnell, Kelly and Kathleen Newland. *The Iraqi Refugee Crisis: The Need for Action*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2008.

³ Cornwell, Susan. "U.S. admits more Iraqi refugees, but pace slow." Reuters. 4 Feb. 2008.

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Additionally, there was a five-month period in which the U.S. was not able to process Iraqi refugees residing in Syria because the Syrian government would not let U.S. interviewers enter the country to process refugees. The MPI report concluded that, "the international response to the humanitarian crisis resulting from the war in Iraq is, thus far, wholly inadequate. ... The added complexity of social tensions and unstable political, ethnic and religious landscape demand greater creativity and urgent cooperation among the members of the international community."

The international community is looking to the U.S., as the initial proponent of the war in Iraq, to set the example in addressing this crisis.

What Can You Do?

- Write a letter to George Bush, requesting that he be more proactive in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Iraq: http://action.humanrightsfirst.org/campaign/refugee_commitment/8swe88b24ww6en5?
- Read the full MPI report: http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/MPI-The_Iraqi_Refugee_Crisis_The_Need_for_Action_011808.pdf
- Support organizations like the International Rescue Committee (<http://www.theIRC.org>) and the International Institute of Education (<http://www.iie.org>) who have programs designed to help Iraqis find safe haven in this time of crisis.

Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

By Brendan Cheney

Committee Member, Human Rights Committee

As an American, I admit that I take for granted the fact that the rights laid out for me in the Bill of Rights and in the Declaration of Independence are enforced and recognized throughout the United States. What saddens me to learn is the extent to which very similar rights, laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are vastly ignored throughout the world.

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It followed World War II, and the genocide and millions of civilian deaths in the course of the war. The United States had a strong voice in developing the text of the Declaration. Eleanor Roosevelt, who led the drafting of the UDHR, hoped that the document would become "the international Magna Carta." The UDHR defines a set of rights, including civil/political liberties and social conditions of freedom, to be enjoyed by all humans.

December 10, 2007, was the 59th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Throughout 2008, the United Nations Secretary-General and High Commissioner for Human Rights, along with other human rights groups, will be celebrating this most important document and raising awareness before its 60th anniversary on December 10th, 2008.

To join in this effort, YPIC's Human Rights Committee has launched a year-long blog campaign (<http://humanrights-ypicny.blogspot.com>). The effort started on December 10th, 2007, and will end on December 10th, 2008. The Human Rights Committee will write individual posts about each of the 30 Articles of the UDHR and how they relate to today's current events.

The Human Rights Committee celebrates the UDHR in order to raise awareness about a significant document that many Americans know little about. A 1997 poll conducted by Hart Research found that only 8% of respondents could name the document and only 24% had previously heard of it. By writing on each article, the Human Rights Committee intends to start a conversation about the very basic rights defined in the Declaration.



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The Committee also intends to show, through current events, how much work is still needed before everyone around the world is protected by these rights. Violence and a lack of human rights in countries like Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Burma are clear examples of countries where people lack basic human rights like those laid out in Article 3, which proclaims that, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

One person at a time and one country at a time, we are committed to working together with partners to raise awareness of each of these rights and to help wherever possible to forward the goal that they are extended to people everywhere. The Human Rights Committee believes that if we can show that these rights deserve to be enjoyed by all people, and many people are denied these rights, then perhaps more people will be willing to advocate for enforcing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Join us as we celebrate the crucial principles of this document each month until its 60th anniversary.

About An Author of the UDHR

As the Human Rights Committee has worked to bring recognition to the UDHR, we have taken particular inspiration from the lifelong work of Margaret "Molly" Bruce, an active member of UNA USA and Board Member of UNA Southern New York. In 1948, Molly Bruce worked alongside Eleanor Roosevelt to craft the UDHR. Since then, she has continued advocating for the protection of human rights through 60 years of service. The Fall 07' issue of the Interdependent chronicled Molly Bruce's efforts for World Peace. The Human Rights Committee seeks to promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights so that it may achieve the potential that people like Molly Bruce saw for it 59 years ago.

Rape & Remittances: Modern Day Slavery in the Philippines

By Justin Hakuta

Former U.S. Fulbright Scholar, Development Consulting for Non-Profits

Rude Awakening

I bob and weave through the after work rush hour following Mylene, a survivor of sex trafficking, through the moonlit urban sprawl of Manila.

The air hangs thick, saturated by a combination of tropical humidity and car exhaust. Reggaeton blasts from the booming speakers of jeepneys, the ubiquitous Philippine "buses" which were formerly World War II era U.S. troop transports. Their gaudy colors and neon lights cast an eerie glow over the darkness and grime of the crowded city streets.

Police sirens blare. Poorly lit huts hawking the latest DVDs, computer programs and porn dot the landscape. The stench of cheap meat and grilled animal innards burns my nose. Prostitutes set up shop on street corners beckoning customers. Pimps, the majority of whom are female, hover over their girls like mother hens, negotiating prices when necessary. Robbers and kidnapers hide in the shadows.

Mylene points to a rundown motel: "I was almost murdered there by a customer a few years back when I was working as a prostitute."

This is Cubao, Manila.

Think Times Square, pre-Giuliani, in the third world; home to prostitutes, stick up kids and corrupt cops alike and one of the many homes of human trafficking in the Philippines.

I recently spent 10 months on a U.S. Fulbright grant researching what non-governmental organizations in the Philippines are doing to stop human trafficking (trafficking).

The following is a glimpse of what I discovered.

Defining the Issue

Human trafficking is modern day slavery.

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The U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 defines trafficking as:

- 1) Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion or in which the person induced to perform such an act is under 18, or
- 2) The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of subjecting that person to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Human trafficking is an umbrella term for various forms of exploitation including, but not limited to:

- Forced prostitution
- Forced labor
- Domestic slavery
- Child soldiers
- Illegal adoption
- Organ trafficking

Mylene

I met her through the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women- Asia Pacific, one of the innovative non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that I shadowed while abroad. Like many of the trafficking victims in the Philippines, and around the world, Mylene was a young girl from the countryside when she was duped into the sex industry. At the age of 13 she made the decision to work so her younger siblings would have enough to eat and could attend school.

Jobs were scarce. Her parents struggled to put food on the table. Her mom ended up in prostitution.

Mylene found a job working as a waitress at a local nightclub. Towards the end of her first week she was offered as a gift by the nightclub owner to a local politician. The politician beat Mylene, burned her with cigarettes and doused her with liquor before raping her.

This was Mylene's introduction to the world of forced prostitution.

The Pearl of the Orient

In the Philippines, trafficking predominantly takes the form of forced prostitution, forced labor and domestic slavery.

In Angeles City, a few hours bus ride from Manila, one can find stages filled with scantily clad Filipinas wearing their "licenses," small plastic tags signifying they had passed their bi-weekly STD test at the local health clinic. Customers pay anywhere from \$20 to \$50 US to take a girl home for the night. According to a UN study, unlike Thailand and other South East Asian nations, the Philippines doesn't yet have, at least officially, a high rate of HIV/AIDS amongst its sex workers, which attracts both locals and foreigners from the U.S., Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Australia.

The thriving, yet illegal, flesh trade is a highly lucrative business for traffickers who, unlike drugs, are able to reuse their "investments", in this case women, over and over again resulting in enormous profits.

Although prostitution alone does not qualify as trafficking, many times the two are intertwined as young women are at first deceived and then forced into the sex trade by the initial promise of a job and the subsequent reality of rape and psychological abuse that follows.

Puerto Galera- Over icy bottles of San Miguel, an Australian sex tourist brags about how he has slept with no less than 2,500 Filipina prostitutes over the course of twenty some years and never caught a sexually transmitted disease. Posing as a sex tourist "newbie", he giddily divulges to me what brothels to visit according to price, age, performance and the services offered by the women. At the next table an old man, American in appearance, fervently snaps pictures of a young girl in a pink tank top and mini skirt wearing too much make up as she shyly sips her drink and looks at the floor, visibly uncomfortable.

The Numbers Game

According to the United Nations, trafficking in persons is the third most profitable business for organized crime after drug and arms trafficking, generating an estimated \$32 billion dollars a year.

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The U.S. State Department estimates that up to 800,000 people are trafficked around the world each year for the purpose of prostitution, forced labor, and other forms of exploitation. This number does not include trafficking within a country's borders.

An estimated 17,000 victims are trafficked into the United States each year.

The International Organization for Migration estimates there are around 200,000 to 250,000 women and children trafficked every year in Asia.

Free the Slaves, a Washington D.C.- based non-profit, estimates there to be up to 27 million active slaves in the world today, more than at the height of the Transatlantic slave trade.

The true scope of the issue remains unknown; however, as many of these statistics are educated guesses at best, especially when it comes to global or regional estimates.

Figures on trafficking are difficult to calculate for the following reasons:

- Trafficking is a clandestine industry- traffickers are highly invested in maintaining its secrecy and protecting their profits
- There is no established global definition of trafficking that countries adhere to
- Methods of monitoring trafficking have not been standardized
- Tracking international trafficking requires coordination between the government and law enforcement agencies in source and destination countries which is, oftentimes, lacking
- Migrants who exit their country through legal channels can still be trafficked once they arrive at their destination making them extremely difficult to track

Although quality quantitative data remains an issue and is one of the topics of an upcoming UN-organized conference on trafficking in Vienna, there is no doubt that we live in a world where slavery not only exists, but is thriving on the desperation and poverty of men, women and children across the globe.

Root Causes

Trafficking is the product of many factors including:

- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Feminization of migration
- Organized crime
- Corruption
- Political instability
- War
- Gender Bias
- Culture

One of the most striking things I noticed about the Philippines was that everyone I spoke to had at least one relative, and commonly many more, who had spent time abroad as migrant workers. From Dubai to Dublin, Hong Kong to Honolulu, Filipinos can be found in almost every country, state and city across the globe.

In the last 30 years, a "culture of migration" has emerged, with millions of Filipinos eager to work abroad despite the risks and vulnerabilities, including trafficking, they are likely to face. For many Filipinos, migration represents the romantic dream of employment and being able to provide for one's family.

Roughly 1 million Filipino workers move abroad each year with an estimated 8 million, or nearly 10 percent of the country's population, working and/or residing in close to 200 countries and territories around the world¹.

Despite the billions of dollars sent home from immigrants abroad, however, the local economy is stagnant and the Philippines remains a country where, according to the World Bank, 48% of the population live on less than \$2 a day, a rate that hasn't changed in the last 10 years.

Poverty at this level coupled with an underachieving local economy has created a large population desperate for work and highly vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers.

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I learn from my interviews with social workers who counsel trafficking survivors that many girls and young women want to go to school, but instead seek employment to help support their families. Sitting on a worn wooden bench in front of a corner store in Manila, Mylene discusses how prostitution is changing. "Nowadays the prostitutes are getting younger," she says. The high demand for young women stems from the belief that they are more pure, that there is a reduced chance of getting an STD. Traffickers increasingly target younger girls because they command a higher price in the sex trade. "Some are as young as 11 years old," she reveals.

Searching for Solutions

Unfortunately, there is no easy fix, no Achilles heel to halt trafficking in its tracks.

The reality of effectively combating modern day slavery is often messy and resource intensive: at the same time that new laws and anti-trafficking initiatives are being created to protect victims and prosecute traffickers, the government, law enforcement, and criminal justice system all have the potential to be under-equipped, mired by corruption, uninformed or lack the motivation/pressure from the public, the media, and/or the international spotlight to make any real impact.

Trafficking is not a simple issue. It is a problem created by a complex stew of social, cultural, economic and political factors and, as would fit the chemistry of the problem, there is no one person, organization or economic sector that can handle the issue on its own.

The situation, however, is far from being all fire and brimstone.

The Visayan Forum Foundation (VFF), a leading anti-trafficking non-governmental organization (NGO) in the Philippines, for example, has created halfway houses at sea ports throughout the country to intercept trafficking victims en route to exploitation. The halfway houses were made possible, and most importantly made effective, in large part due to cross-sector partnerships with the government, law enforcement and businesses. The results are tangible: in six years of operation, the VFF halfway houses have rescued nearly 19,000 potential trafficking victims in the Philippines.

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific has organized young men and women's camps in the Philippines to raise awareness of human trafficking and gender issues amongst student leaders. The camps parse through societal assumptions on topics such as the sex industry and gender biases allowing participants to confront the reality of these issues. The results: young advocates are created who then carry these messages back to raise awareness amongst their fellow students.

It is by learning about the collaborative relationships that NGOs have established with stakeholders such as the Philippine Police, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Philippine Port Authority, universities and high schools and private shipping companies (that's the public, private, and citizen sector working together for those counting) that I see true hope in an otherwise murky situation. Trafficking is not solved by a silver bullet. True progress requires innovation and collaboration- a holistic approach that combines the expertise and resources of multiple stakeholders to address the economic, political and cultural factors that allow modern day slavery to flourish.

Be Aware

The thing about trafficking is that within the economic policies, the legislation, the cultural factors, the corruption, the international aid, the media coverage, the statistics and the hype, you have the people that actually go through it all. You have normal people, like Mylene, who are deceived and then forced into exploitative situations and end up being victimized by this terrible injustice.

Stop and think about this for a minute: people right now, this very instant are being enslaved around the world and no country, including the U.S., is immune.

Everyone stops and stares as I step into the women's shelter for former prostitutes and survivors of sex trafficking where Mylene lives. It is Mother's Day. Children peer at me from in between their mothers' ankles. There are no fathers in sight. The women have formed close ties in the collective pain and trauma they experienced and still share. It is less a group, more of a large extended family. The shelter is a place of healing. As a prayer is said giving thanks and asking for continued strength before we eat, the women begin to weep and hug one another. This humanity and pain that I encountered in the Philippines amongst these survivors makes it impossible for me to turn a cold shoulder to the issue of trafficking. I decided then and there that I at least have to try to make a difference in whatever small way that I can.

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After enduring years of being forced to sell her body, Mylene was able to break free from her exploitative situation and now works as an advocate for women's and sex workers' rights. She has lived the equivalent of many lifetimes yet her journey is far from over-employment still plagues her as well as the former prostitutes and trafficking survivors she now lives with. For now, however, she has to be content with the inner strength and sheer will to live that allowed her to survive her trafficking experience. It is these attributes that she will have to depend on yet again as she struggles to cope with poverty, unemployment and the uncertainty of each new day.

The Human Trafficking Project

See the rest of Mylene's story in the soon-to-be-released documentary "Gimikera" (Streetwalker), which follows her triumphs and struggles as she fights to find stability and healing. Gimikera (Streetwalker) is produced by the Human Trafficking Project (HTP), a New York-based non-profit that utilizes art and technology to raise awareness of modern day slavery.

About the Author

Justin Hakuta is a former U.S. Fulbright Scholar who researched human trafficking in the Philippines in 2007. A graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, Hakuta launched the Human Trafficking Project after seeing first-hand the need for increased public awareness of the issue and the lack of funds available to assist survivors of trafficking during rehabilitation and reintegration back into their home communities. Justin currently does development consulting for non-profits in New York and will be attending Harvard Business School this fall to focus on social enterprise and creating innovative, sustainable solutions for social change.

Contact Info

Visit the HTP's blog at www.traffickingproject.blogspot.com or email Justin at traffickingproject@gmail.com for more information on trafficking, what's being done to stop it and how you can help.

¹ *Asis, Maruja. The Philippines' Culture of Migration. Migration Information Source. Retrieved December 22nd, 2006 from <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?id=364>.*

² *Labor Mobility and East Asian Integration, Siow Yue CHIA, Singapore Institute of International Affairs, Asian Economic Policy Review (2006) 1, 349-367*

The International Art Market: A Force of Positive International Change or a Catalyst of Cultural Ambiguity? (or Both?)

By: Kevin Jamison

Director, European Affairs Committee and Director of Contemporary and 20th Century art at Urbane Artistry

When one considers the forces behind much of the change we see today in the world, some usual culprits include environmental degradation, rapid advancements in technology, global trade, poverty, and religion. Obviously the world has changed much in the last century, and certainly at a much faster rate than centuries past. Democratization of governments worldwide, liberalization of economies, positive environmental programs, falling rates of death and disease and rising life expectancies are some of the most significant trends. One can associate these factors with globalization as a whole, and that is undoubtedly on the right track. But there are also other less noticeable factors in these changes, one of which is the dissemination of art throughout the world through major advances in the art market. What this article seeks to identify is whether or not the international art market is/can be a force behind change, and if so, how powerful is it, and are there downsides.

The art market, unlike many other financial markets, is volatile and in a constant state of flux. For many, the market is hard to track, as there are just a few publicly traded companies involved in the sale of art. Still, investment and interest in art is at a high point, providing many extraordinary long and short-term investments that yield higher rates of return than most investments. In the last twenty years this fact has been recognized internationally and the so-called "art centers," formerly considered just New York and London, have now expanded to locations in Post-Soviet Russia, Asia and the Middle East. Not only have the major art auction houses opened offices in these locations, but art galleries and museums have made the move as well. The Louvre has extended its support and name to a new museum currently under construction in Abu Dhabi, and in that same city the International Gulf Art Fair has seen exponential rise in attendance, participating artists, sales. As well, in response to the new demand from Russia and other Post-Soviet states, art consultancies and auction houses have begun to cater specifically to this new clientele at locations more close to home. In Asia, Communist China has seen a major expansion of its own art market in recent years.

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All of these factors certainly produce expansions of global financial markets. But art – unlike stocks, bonds and commercial commodities – is also symbolic and serves as an important marker of history, society, culture, politics and academics. Art also unique because it is the investment into an actual physical object that can be appreciated for its aesthetic quality, aside from its other perceived values. While economics may well be a big reason behind recent widespread international interest in art, the effects of this phenomenon on the world are much farther reaching.

To illustrate this point, let's look at an obvious example today: China. In China, where the communist government has historically suppressed any type of artistic freedom and flamboyancy, the government and citizens have recently been exhibiting a new widespread acceptance of and desire for contemporary and other types of art. In January of 2008, China received its very first public contemporary art gallery, funded by Belgians, which is mounting its first exhibition with donations from China's biggest contemporary art collectors. For 2007, China has been reported as holding the number three spot in international art sales and activity, behind the U.S. and the U.K. Is it just coincidence that at the same time that this communist country is expanding its capitalistic economy and pursuing more democratic governmental functions, that it is also becoming more artistically open? In the Middle East, and especially in the United Arab Emirates, a feeling of positive change is occurring in the areas of cultural, religious, social and governmental freedom and acceptance. Although many galleries and institutions report that they have been warned to be careful about how liberal they are with what they exhibit, slowly the lines between one culture to another are being artistically blurred through exposure to one another through art. Whereas ten years ago one would never consider exhibiting a "racy" artwork in the Middle East, the Gulf Art fair of 2007 saw galleries more and more pushing the envelope with what they exhibit – and the reason it is happening is because the work sells.

Historically, even into the early 20th century, one could look at a painting or sculpture and easily identify its origin; for example, from the Italian Neapolitan School, from the middle 1600's – and often even be able to narrow it down to a circle of artists known for their style. Today, as many critics have noted, art has aesthetically and literally transcended geography. Contemporary art has become something in itself, not belonging to a specific geographical group or culture. As New York Times writer Holland Cotter wrote in a recent article, "Art is not merely a universal ornament of civilization. It is a cautionary tale in need of constant translation." Many attribute the effects of globalization to this occurrence, yet what should be further explored is the theory that art is a cause of globalization – and ultimately of major international change.

The economic, intrinsic and aesthetic values of art are not the only reasons it is such an integral part of positive international change. More and more we see art involved with international issues and conveying political or social opinions: for example, the Colombian artist Fernando Botero's 2007 exhibition of "Abu Ghraib" inspired paintings. We also see art being used to raise copious amounts of money through charitable donations and auctions. A 2008 Valentine's Day auction called "The (Red) Auction" organized by Bono, Damien Hirst, Sotheby's, and the Gagosian Gallery aimed to raise as much as \$29 million for AIDS relief in Africa. It actually raised more than \$42 million. Many other smaller organizations are organizing such events as well.

Ultimately, the questions of whether art is a force for positive change in the world, and whether art has actually transcended geography to become a catalyst of cultural ambiguity (or if it still serves, as it did in the past, as a market and voice for specific culture) cannot yet be wholly answered. We are still in the beginning phases of this new artistic globalization, and what will come of this vast expansion of the arts is still to be discovered. What we can say is that art itself has certainly changed and is playing an integral part in the way that different cultures understand one other. It is playing a clear role in the advancement of democracy. And though some may label it the advancement of capitalism, trade between states also statistically increases peaceful relations). Art is also playing a major role in international philanthropy, and at the same time is blurring cultural lines through widespread dissemination. So, art as a force for positive international change? Yes. Art as a catalyst to cultural ambiguity? Seems so, but still serves as a valid question to be watched carefully by those interested in the causes of our increasingly, and artistically, globalized world.

UNA-SNY Young Professionals for International Cooperation

Introducing Our Women's and Youth Forum

By *Alycia Gilde*

Human Rights Committee Director

The YPIC Human Rights Committee came together for the first time on September 11, 2007, the anniversary of a day thousands will remember for the lives taken away from them. We chose the day to signify our commitment to value freedom, equality and peace for all human beings through the work we do as a committee dedicated to human rights.

Since our first meeting, we have put our minds together to create and develop a program to raise awareness on the many human injustices facing women and youth around the world. Our decision to focus on women and youth comes from the reality that they are more likely to fall victim to violence, abuse, neglect, inequality, and lack access to fundamental rights. Through the Women's and Youth Forum, the Human Rights Committee has a unique opportunity to explore a number of important human rights issues that are relevant today and discussed in the United Nations.

By carrying out effective and meaningful outreach, the Human Rights Committee will develop initiatives that will inform the public, generate a call to action, and put into motion projects to promote change. Each of our initiatives will emphasize the challenges facing women and youth as they try to overcome injustices that result from violence and inequality, poverty and development, and security. We will explore the linkage of human rights laws and programs that prevent discrimination, uphold political and cultural freedom and equality under the law, and protect women and youth from inhumane and unjust conduct.

Each member of the Human Rights Committee has selected a focus within the Women's and Youth Forum and will research the topic and develop meaningful activities. The topics are: access to reproductive rights, sexual violence against women, exploitation and abuse of female migrant workers, children soldiers, children abuse and neglect in orphanages, and the impact of climate change on human rights.

We invite you to join us for a special panel presentation for UNA members and advocates for human rights.

Woman and Child Crossing: Caution - Lives at Risk
April 17, 2008

We have asked human rights experts to speak on each of our Women's and Youth Forum topics. In one evening, you will learn the urgency of each issue, programs in place to address the issue, and a case study on an individual whose life is being affected by the injustice. Visit our website for more info about the event:
www.unasouthernny.org/ypic

Let us work together to raise the voices of women and youth around the world and strive toward a future that is full of hope and free of violence and inequality.

If you have any comments or opinions about the articles you have read, please email editor@unanyc.org

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The United Nations Association's Young Professionals for International Cooperation (UNA YPIC) is a national nonpartisan network of young professionals that engages in discussions about international affairs, the importance of multilateral cooperation, and the United Nations. Southern New York YPIC is affiliated with the Southern New York Division of UNA-USA, and serves young professionals and students in the greater New York metropolitan area. We offer members exceptional access to experts, diplomats and officials from United Nations headquarters and many international organizations. YPIC runs a year-round calendar of events that encourage professional development, networking, political participation, cultural enrichment, community service, and real ways for each of us to make a difference.

For more information, visit <http://unasouthernny.org/ypic>

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