THE USAU YOUTH

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IN HONOR OF WOMEN DURING THE MONTH OF MARCH

The Housewives of Our Lives...

"I remember having long been uncomfortable to read on my birth certificate, ***mother's occupation: housewife****. I soon realized that no matter her profession, my mother, along with women of all professions, was a praiseworthy woman. In celebration of International Women's Day on March 8 and Women's History Month, we propose an exercise that will provide more insight into the true value of women. For example, as a housewife, a woman carries out, on average, seventeen different tasks per day. So, ladies, please know that you should take great honor in your role as a housewife. Gentlemen, bring out your calculators…"*

Driver, nurse, manager, computer programmer, coach, cook, waitress ... you name it. An American Institute did the math and women who work in their homes spend seventy hours per week on work. If these women were paid at the wage rate recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and approved by the Ministries of Labour, not to mention the organizations in charge of social security, the African housewife should be paid about 168,000 FCFA (approximately $336 USD) per month. Of course that salary excludes her tenderness, attention, and love; all of which cannot be measured financially. For the average man to make himself more aware of the work his wife does in a single day, he is asked to go down memory lane. His mom, who is naturally the first housewife he encounters, is always highly respected. So where does this respect go when it comes to the housewife he has to spend the rest of his life with? So, men are asked to attempt to calculate how many people they would be obliged to hire to carry out, from dusk until dawn, the tasks his wife completes on a daily basis.

And if politicians held on to the words of the housewife

It can be said that the daily housewife is more forward thinking than most politicians. For example, she knows that she cannot spend more money than she receives each month, as even a small deficit in her finances can cause immediate problems in her household. With this knowledge and experience, she manages her budget cautiously, not wanting to cause harm to those living in the household she is responsible for. How many politicians care for their communities this way?

When the end of the month *'starts having teeth,'* she knows the art of leftovers and resizing clothing. She knows how to administer justice among her kids, she has the gift to measure out strictness and indulgence, and she'll never think of favoring one kid over the others because she knows that injustice breeds rebellion and even if she has a favorite, she is careful not to show it. She helps the youngest one with his or her homework, and advises her daughter as she recalls that she too was once that age. She pays attention to everything, even to the slightest detail, and somehow always finds the time to take care of herself. She does and gives everything she can, to make her little world happy.

Renowned journalist, Jean Amadou, found the right words to explain his views on African development: ***Let the continent's development projects be entrusted to housewives.***

EDITORIAL NOTE

'A woman is a full circle, as Diane Mariechild sensibly puts it, *within her is the power to create, nurture, and transform.'* I must admit it, women are the foundation on which the world is built. In Africa it is often said *'Educate a boy and you educate an individual. Educate a girl and you educate a community.'* This is the month of March, which is globally set aside to honor and recognize the accomplishments and worth of the women, from history to the contemporary era. So, I'll begin by wishing women all around the world a gender equal, satisfying, secure, and sound month.

We welcome you to the March edition of *The USAU Youth.* If you missed out or you're unaware of the updates on the African Youth Charter and youth with disabilities, be sure to get enlightened on page 2 and 7 of our newsletter. Get ready as well to *'Work hard, believe in yourself, be spiritual and help someone'* as you read through our conversation with **Dr. Stephen Omollo** of the ICRC on page 8. There's so much more in store for you.

During this month, we'll carry on with February's topic on *heart related ailments*. So kindly send us pictures and short videos with brief explanations on what is being done in your country, either by you, someone else or your government in this regard. You can reach us through our email: USAUyouth@state.gov

We will be more than honored to share this on our Facebook page.

Enjoy yourself!

Bari Fanso
USAU Youth Liaison to the AU

If our women began by correcting the error that is committed over time

An author once wrote, *"Does the woman who dreams of being equal with man simply not lack ambition?"* It is a mistake to think that this day and month is all about women taking over the place of men in the society or that, the day and month is all it takes to give women an equal place with men. This mindset leads many to apply the awkward mathematical operation that states Man = Woman. Frankly, this sort of thinking by women is completely wrong.

The month of March is a time for women to appreciate the role they have played, and who they are and have been, throughout history into contemporary time; it is a time for them to think big without losing their identity, fighting, or competing with men. It is a time for women to use the power and strength they possess, to change their local communities and even the world, to the best of their ability.

Let every day and month of the year serve as a time to commemorate your value as a woman.

Eddy Patrick Donkeng
African Union Youth Volunteer , Department of Social Affairs
Journalist

THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION CHOOSES ADEOLA AUSTIN OYINLADE TO DIGITIZE AND POPULARIZE THE AFRICAN YOUTH CHARTER

Adeola Austin and the U.S Ambassador to the African Union, H.E. Michael A. Battle

On November 4, 2011, Nigerian Leadership Initiative Associate, Adeola Austin Oyinlade was chosen by the African Union to popularize and digitize the African Youth Charter. While announcing the decision and speaking to young African leaders at the AU Youth Experts' meeting in Addis Ababa, Dr. Raymonde Agossou, Head of the Human Resources and Youth Division under the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union Commission, announced that Adeola, a United Nations Youth Ambassador for Peace had used law, social media, radio, and other mobile applications as successful problem-solving tools.

At thirty years old, Adeola has contributed immensely to expanding the frontiers of liberty, human rights, and democracy to Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike, through the *Know Your Constitution Initiative*, an organization that educates people on their legal rights and provides solutions to personal legal issues free of charge. The program works through on-air programs, social media sites, mobile applications, street campaigns, and international conferences.

As a speaker at the plenary session of the African Youth Forum, Adeola addressed the forum on the *"Readiness to Reform National Laws and Legislation in Compliance with the African Youth Charter."* The forum resolutions were then presented to the Africa Union Head of States in July 2011 at the 17th Ordinary African Union Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

The agreement signed on November 4, 2011 at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia between the African Union Commission, the Youth Division, and the Know Your Constitution Initiative, calls for the development of mobile and Facebook compatible versions of the African Youth Charter in the six official languages of the AU: English, French, Arabic, Portuguese, Swahili, and Spanish. Additionally, Adeola is charged with more generally

popularizing the African Youth Charter so that after the mobile applications are developed, every phone user in Africa will have access to the charter at the push of a button. ***"The African Youth Charter dictates the rights and duties that are critical to the African youth. Being an international treaty, it has to be signed, ratified, and transformed into the local laws by each of the AU Member States before implementation,"*** Adeola observed in Addis Ababa.

In 2011, Adeola carried out online opinion polls along with other young social developers from across Africa and realized that about 85% of African youth had not yet heard about the charter. This means that they were not engaging with their government on efforts to sign, ratify, transform into local law, and implement the charter. Adeola, along with many others believe that African youth cannot engage their leaders to implement the charter if they are ignorant to the content contained within the document.

Speaking on the expected results of the project, Adeola said, ***"It will go a long way in making young people across Africa understand their civil, political, and socio-economic rights, alongside their duties toward national and international development. Moreover, it will allow all AU Member States to sign, ratify, transform locally, and implement the charter as a means of empowering the youth to get involved in the drive towards sustainable development in Africa."***

Adeola added that it would take twelve months to complete the project as it would not only involve mobile applications but also massive awareness campaigns. His team will work with the Pan African Youth Union (PYU), the National Youth Councils of AU Member States, young technocrats, youth advocates, and young Africans and organizations who believe in this project.

In May 2011, Adeola was featured on a U.S. Department of State blog for his efforts to educate Nigerians about their rights, as well as his immense contribution to the development of Africa. His feature can be found here: http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2011/05/20110512102321esiuol0.3676678.html#axzzIVPO3Th00
For more details about Adeola Oyinlade and his work, please visit: www.adeolaoyinlade.com.

Emeka Benedict Onyeabor
General Secretary, Know Your Constitution Initiative
Lagos, Nigeria

MONTHLY PROVERB

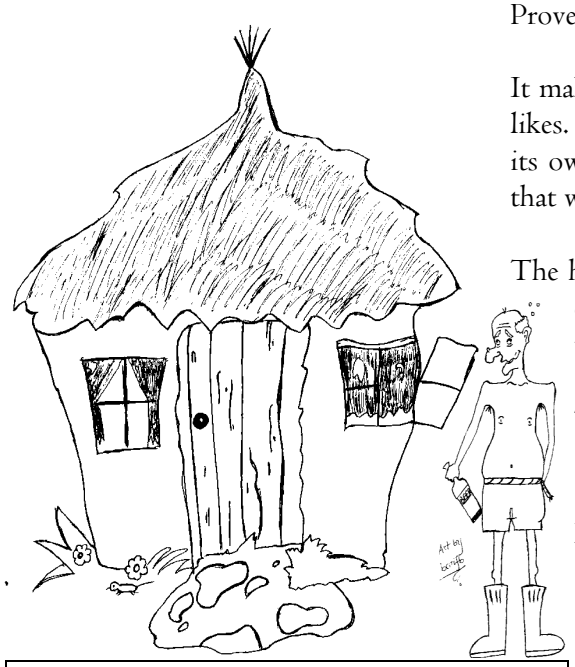
"A house has the character of the man who lives in it." – North African Proverb

It makes perfect sense that your house should reflect your likes and dislikes. While this may not be true all the time, a house is a safe haven for its owner and will not often contain things or be arranged in a manner that will irritate the person who lives in it.

The house symbolizes the person and since people live in houses just as our habits come from within us, the man who lives in the house is the symbol of the human personality.

This proverb means that ***a person's actions and the environment he or she feels comfortable in greatly mirrors his or her character.***

Have a wonderful month.



Welcome to my humble abode.

Bari Fanso
African Union Youth Volunteer (AU-YV)
USAU Youth Liaison to the AU

ANAS AREMEYAW ANAS – AN UNDERCOVER JOURNALIST

A conventional journalist names and shames, but Anas Aremeyaw Anas, an undercover journalist, names, shames, and takes the culprits to court.

Anas Aremeyaw Anas - Due to the nature of Anas' job, he always keeps his true identity hidden.

Anas a young Ghanaian in his early thirties, who works for the newspaper *New Crusading Guide,* decided 13 years ago to work in one of the most risky fields of journalism. He studied political science and has a law degree, which has helped guide his undercover research. With his motto, ***"name, shame, and jail,"*** Anas has forced many Ghanaians as well as other Africans , who engage in unlawful activities, to quiver in fear.

Anas' journey, as a young man who has been continuously courageous enough to risk his life for the truth, began when he realized that civil society reacted more positively to the evidence they saw, rather than just words. As such, he decided that if he accused someone of being a thief, he had to show with images when the person plotted to steal, what was stolen, how it was stolen, as well as where the stolen item was kept. His journalism is all about hardcore evidence. According to Anas, ***if he doesn't have a video then it never happened.***

Anas has done innumerable undercover operations, ranging from disguising himself as a school boy, a bartender, a reverend minister, a prisoner, and even a factory worker, to name a few. He is often trusted by western media corporations like the Cable News Network (CNN) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). These news corporations call him whenever they want to know what is currently happening in Africa.

His work as an infiltrator has led to the arrest of several people in his home country of Ghana, who were involved in the trade of girls to Europe, where they were forced to work as prostitutes. Anas exposed the Chinese sex mafia on the abuse of the sexual rights of young girls in Ghana and China, which also identified many immigration officials who accepted bribes in facilitation of this trade, and ended up sending the officials for 42 years in prison. Apart from the arrests, he also facilitated the rescue of 17 Nigerian women and in Tanzania, Anas was able to confront and throw behind bars a witch doctor who incited fatal attacks on albinos with the widespread belief that owning their bones increases wealth.

When asked about his thoughts on the role of women in African journalism, Anas said in a round table conference during the Second International Festival for Freedom of Speech in Cadiz, Spain that, ***"There is no way to tell a story without women, we cannot build anything if it is not built by everyone."*** He further commented that the contribution of women in African journalism is already fantastic.

Anas' greatest challenge in his career, are the constant threats he gets from the people he exposes. However, he feels a great sense of pride in his work. Over the course of several years, Anas has received numerous awards and accolades from around the world, including a Hero Award from the U.S. State Department. What Anas considers his greatest reward however, was to hear President Barack Obama recognize him as a courageous journalist, in front of millions of people during his visit to Accra, Ghana, his first trip to Africa as President of the United States of America.

Anas Aremeyaw Anas wants to be remembered as a journalist who was able to prove everything with evidence; a journalist who protected his continent and put criminals behind bars, with the aid of his undisputable evidence. As a word of caution to the bad guys out there: ***No matter where you are on this continent, Anas and his team are coming after you.***

For more details on Anas and his work, kindly visit: **http://africansonthemove.wordpress.com/**

Sandra Jules Sendze
Africans on the Move
North Carolina , U.S.A

&

Bari Fanso
African Union Youth Volunteer
USAU Youth Liaison to the AU

SUDOKU PUZZLE

THE NEW PUZZLE - MARCH

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FEBRUARY'S PUZZLE

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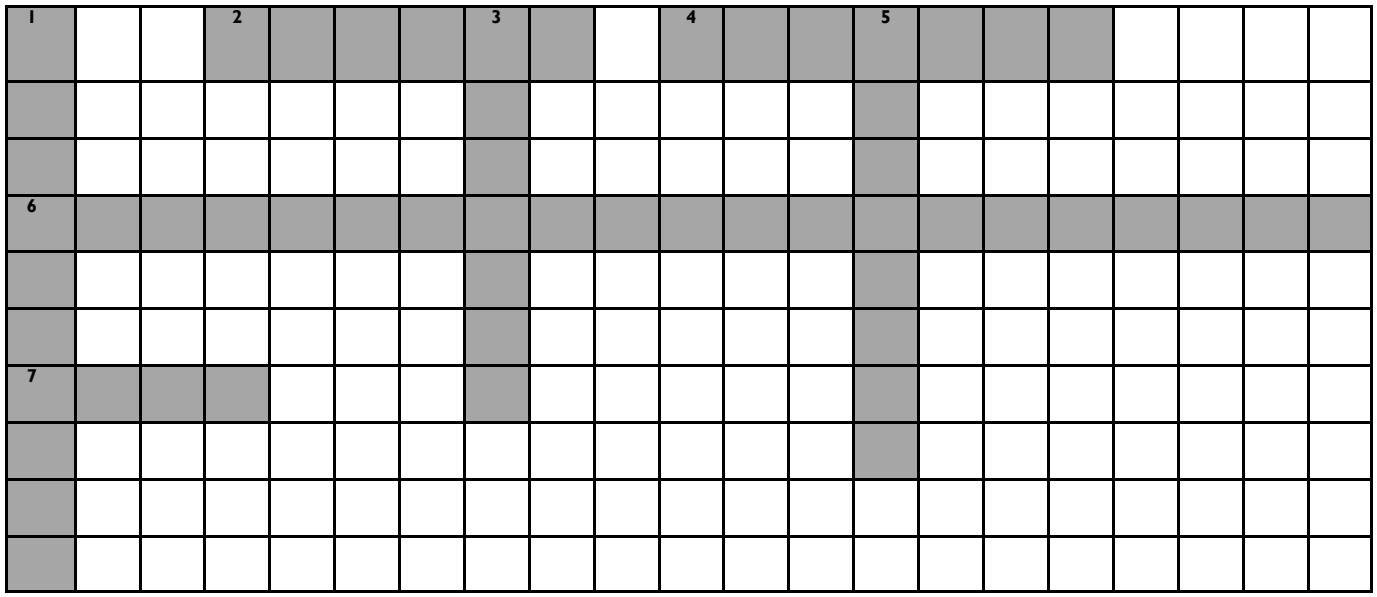
7	1	4	6	5	8	3	9	2
2	6	5	7	9	3	1	8	4
9	3	8	2	1	4	6	7	5

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Read through our articles on our ***'Did You know? ... Let's Discuss on Facebook'*** column in order to answer all the crossword puzzles. In this case, kindly refer to February's edition on ***'Cardiovascular Diseases in Africa'***.
Thank you!



DOWN

1. Another name for heart muscles

3. A green leafy plant that is used to make cigars and cigarettes

5. Activity that requires physical or mental exertion, especially when performed to develop or maintain fitness

ACROSS

2. The general condition of the body

4. The state or condition of having little or no money, goods or means of support

6. Another name for a heart disease

7. A regulated selection of food for medical reasons or for weight loss

ANSWERS: DOWN - 1.Myocardium 3.Tobacco 5.Exercise ACROSS -2.Health 4.Poverty 6.Cardiovascular Disease 7.Diet

ANNOUNCEMENTS

USAU Announcements:

Following the article *"Child Labor in Uganda"* in the February edition of **The USAU Youth**, Mr. Alitia Elia's organization, **Straight Talk Foundation**, was listed incorrectly. We apologize for whatever inconvenience this may have caused.

On March 16, Ambassador Michael Battle held a conversation with Steve McDonald, Africa Program Director, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars on *'U.S. Engagement with the African Union'*. The discussion was moderated by Cheryl Benton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, and will be available on demand for viewing soon on DipNote, the Department of State's official blog, and on State.gov. You can also follow the discussion on Twitter, using the hashtag #AfricanUnion. The video of Ambassador Battle's conversation is available here: http://www.stateondemand.state.gov/Latest-Stories/u.s.-partners-with-the-african-union-on-strategic-and-tactical-goals/s/a80ea8d2-08d9-4305-8f51-7cff520f1c47

AU Announcements:

African youth from across the continent and in the Diaspora, are informed that applications for the African Union Youth Volunteers Corps (AU-YVC) are open and currently going on. To apply and become a youth volunteer, kindly visit: http://africa-youth.org/programmes/au-yvc.html

RECOGNIZING THE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Young People with Disabilities

According to a UN estimate, 10% of the world's population that is, about 650 million people live with a disability. Among them are between 180 and 220 million youth, with 80% of them living in developing countries. People with disabilities are up to 3 times more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse, and yet they have reduced access to physical, psychological, and judicial interventions. *UNESCO's 2010 – 2011 Year of the Youth Fact Sheet* states that, ***"Youth with disabilities are the most marginalized and poorest of the entire world's youth."*** Before you begin asking any questions about disabled youth, let's draw your attention to their plight, or call on youth organizations and peer educators to join hands and address the challenges they face. There is a tremendous need to highlight the situation of these young people, in relation to their reproductive health (RH). *Article 1* of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* states that, ***"persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."***

The Plight and Reproductive Health of Youth with Disabilities

Poverty and limited access to resources erode the economic and social rights of disabled youth, while ***patriarchal traditions*** present obstacles to their involvement in decision-making and community participation. People with disabilities face exclusion from social services including reproductive health services. Some of them are even deprived from getting an ***education.*** The vast majority of Africans with disabilities are excluded from schools and opportunities to work, virtually guaranteeing that they will live out their lives in poverty. School enrollment for the disabled is estimated at no more than 5 to 10%, only 1% of disabled women living in developing countries are literate. In regards to ***employment***, employers often have the misconception that people with disabilities are less productive than their peers or require too much assistance, leaving many of them chronically unemployed.

One of the most pressing difficulties for disabled youth pertains to their ***sexual and reproductive health***. Access to RH information is not often made available to them, or is often disseminated through unsuitable means such as inaccessible clinics, or by providers who cannot properly communicate to the disabled. Few education programs cater to the reproductive needs of youth with disabilities. For example, in several countries, youth with disabilities often do not receive advice on HIV/AIDS, as the clinics are physically inaccessible, materials are not available for those with visual impairments, and providers are unable to communicate in sign language. Moreover, most health care professionals have no awareness of the needs facing the disabled and thereby feel unwilling or unable to adequately address the situations presented to them. Due to this lack of understanding, the disabled face the risk of violations of their right to reproductive health, including forced sterilization, and infringements on their right to marry and form a family. Disabled adolescent girls and women are particularly at risk of sexual abuse and have limited autonomy as well as diminished access to education and employment. The lack of social acknowledgment of their sexuality has several negative consequences for youth with disabilities. Many of them absorb and accept these negative beliefs as fact and refrain from sexuality and intimacy. Some parents do not acknowledge their disabled children as sexual beings and thereby discourage them from expressing any form of sexuality.

Other youth with disabilities will have relationships without receiving appropriate education and consequently engage in high risk activities. Some might go through several uncertain relationships, as the marriage of people with disabilities is frowned upon in a number of places and in some cases even legally prohibited. In polygamous societies, young women with disabilities are unlikely to become the first wife. There is therefore a diligent need and an urge to ensure that the RH needs of youth with disabilities are identified, communicated, and addressed.

In most cases, many disabled youth are forced to live in denial and dejection, not believing that they have a future. This should not be the case. **YOU** and **I** have a role to play to address these issues. While the number of youth with disabilities is likely to increase, considering statistics from several countries which show that spinal cord injuries are highest among youth, and given the fact that youth are also increasingly affected by armed conflicts and warfare, resulting in the severe risk of injury, abuse, and violence, **WE** serve as a great tool for creating an effective approach to give a voice to an often neglected groups of individuals, and in turn, achieve our goal of Zero HIV/AIDS, Zero New Infections, and Zero Stigmatization by 2020.

Akampa R. Johnson Tanbull
Uganda Youth Adviser to Washington D.C. - U. S. Mission/ National Peer Educator (NPE) - WSWM SCHOOL NET
Rukungiri , Western Uganda

A WORD TO THE WISE - DR. STEPHEN OMOLLO

Dr. Stephen Omollo is the Head of Delegation and Permanent Observer to the African Union of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The IFRC is the world's largest humanitarian organization and is known for the remarkable work it does in Africa and the rest of the world.

DR. Stephen Omollo: IFRC Head of Delegation and Permanent Observer to the AU

The USAU Youth: Dr. Omollo can you tell me a little about the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society in Africa?

Dr. Stephen Omollo: The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement wherever it may be is a non-religious, voluntary, and membership driven organization. It is comprised of three components.

The ***National Red Cross and Red Crescent Society*** with 187 chapters globally. Member countries have a local chapter which could be the Red Cross or the Red Crescent. The second is the ***International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)*** and they work mainly in conflict situations, dealing with international humanitarian law, they are also the custodian for humanitarian interventions which are also known as the Laws of War. The third component is the ***International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,*** the ***IFRC.*** It has two main functions. First in *Disaster and Emergency Response,* which involves disasters like floods, earthquakes, climate change and so on. Secondly, the IFRC has the *lead role of directing and coordinating the relief period.* It brings together all the other components and that is why it is called a Federation. That is also the position I represent in the African Union and why we work on coordinating disaster relief efforts in Africa.

In Africa, we have 54 national societies, we could say 55 because South Sudan will be recognized next year once it completes the normal procedures. Our main objective in Africa is ***preventing and alleviating human poverty on the continent.*** We work with partners; mostly the local branches of the Red Cross in each country. It's a huge network and that's why we are almost present everywhere you go, which aids in our quick response. This large presence is what makes the unique feature of the Red Cross in general. Our office represents the international wing of the Red Cross at the African Union. We support Africa in capacity building, and have the mandate to work beyond borders. For instance, if there is a disaster or conflict in Somalia, the Ethiopian Red Cross cannot go beyond the border to assist in Somalia which is a Red Crescent Society, but we can. That explains our Red Cross and the Red Crescent emblems. However, I will not be allowed to work in places like Israel because neither the Red Cross nor the Red Crescent is used in Israel. The red crystal is used in place of the Star of David which is a religious Israeli symbol.

The USAU Youth: What is your opinion about African youth volunteering in Africa? How does their involvement add to youth empowerment and the sustainable development of the continent?

Dr. Stephen Omollo: I represent a volunteer based organization. Youth are the most effective volunteers and I'll use the example of the Red Cross. We have 15 million Red Cross volunteers in the whole world and 1.2 million are active volunteers; who carry their first aid box everyday to assist people in various communities with medication, condoms, and blankets. 60% of these volunteers are people between the ages of 18 and 30 as defined by the Red Cross and 50% of all our volunteers are within that age group. The Red Cross understands that the youth contribute as, ***effective agents of change***, in areas of ***conflict***, ***peacebuilding*** and ***non violence***, as well as in the fight against ***diseases*** like HIV/AIDS, and in the ***use of innovation***.

As ***agents of change***, numerous statistics have shown that when a youth is asked to make a statement at either a conference, a community event, or even to Heads of State at the African Union, the power they have in influencing the minds and attitudes of the listeners is massive. The simple statements they make, makes all the difference. For instance when the South African government refused to give anti-retroviral drugs to its citizens, it took the statement of a young boy who was dying of AIDS, in an international conference in Durban, where he called on the President and, the Minister of Health saying ***'please, give us***

antiretroviral drugs or we're all going to die; you will not have the next generation in this country.' That simple statement changed a country, that's the power of the youth. The youth are in the forefront of humanitarian diplomacy and by bringing this power to the table, they make a strong case about issues that affect not only them but the community, and thereby contribute to development in all aspects of life. In the case of ***peacebuilding and non violence*** which are big issues on the African continent, we can say Africa is ravaged by conflicts as seen in the cases of Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, and Cote d'Ivoire, we had Kenya the other day; Somalia, South Sudan which is not yet quite out of it; and countries that are heating up like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Central African Republic, and Zimbabwe. It's like we are sitting on land mines, yet we talk about peacebuilding and send special envoys to go and talk peace. The vital component these special envoys are missing is that **they don't involve the youth,** who are the people fighting. It's no wonder we never achieve sustainable peace, we are involving the wrong people. Bring the youth to the negotiating table and I'll tell you why; they are the ones who are jobless, frustrated, and manipulated and are at the forefront of the conflicts. Someone living comfortably in the middle class does not care. I'm stressing on this point because it is absolutely important to use the youth. Moreover, if there is no peace, there is no development. Involve the youth so they become active - that is the contribution the Red Cross is making; get the youth active so that they don't get into doing the wrong things out of idleness.

I'll now link the issue of ***diseases*** with the ***use of innovation***. In the Red Cross we realized that no matter what we did in relation to the distribution of antiretroviral drugs and TB medications, some people still failed to take the medication properly so we were faced with a problem - how could we ensure a level of discipline in the community? The answer was the **YOUTH**; we targeted mobile companies in order to use their innovation and social networks because mobile phones are found in even the remotest villages in Africa. You might not find a computer or an iPod, but a simple mobile phone will be there. The youth are fascinated by mobile phones, so we thought we could develop a technology where the youth can send SMS messages to people to remind them to take their medication. They would send messages like *'It's medication time'*, or *'You need to have a mosquito net'*.

The youth are therefore at the forefront of development in whatever sector you think of, and especially when it comes to volunteering.

"You should never let yourself be brought down because you or other people think you cannot do it. No Way, YOU CAN DO IT."

The USAU Youth: Can you tell me in what ways African youth volunteers can be beneficial in promoting the work you do?

Dr. Stephen Omollo: Volunteerism is the essence of what we do. The Red Cross cannot function without volunteers. The activities in which we involve the youth volunteers are **first aid activities, relief distribution, the dissemination of information, and tracing lost people in wars and emergencies that is, linking people with their families.** They are also involved in **development, in the areas of diseases, innovation, conflict, peacebuilding, and non violence** as I stated earlier on. The youth are the best in doing these things because they have the tenacity to carry on until they achieve what they want. Adults easily give up sometimes. We however provide tools for them, to help them work effectively but they help us to bring our activities to conclusion. The greatest percentage of our membership is the youth and 60% of our work is also done by the youth.

The USAU Youth: Kindly tell us about yourself and your upbringing?

Dr. Stephen Omollo: I'm a Kenyan from a family of 9 children. I was, however, born and raised in **Uganda** under Idi Amin. Growing up in Uganda was tough, it was a place for the survival of the fittest. At that time, you could either do the martial art or kick boxing; football was considered a sport for the weak. You had to choose a sport where you could defend yourself or your family if you were attacked by Idi Amin's soldiers, a necessity in the difficult times we faced back then. So my brothers and I, took up to boxing for self-defense. My motivation was that I had to protect my family. ***Boxing however, taught***

Continued on page 10

me a lot about self discipline and having preventive measures in life.

Then, we left Uganda and went back to **Kenya** where I stayed for just 3 to 4 years and left the country for **India;** another learning point for me. India was a very complex society at the time but it was there that I learned ***perseverance***. For Indians, there is nothing that is impossible and they will never take no for an answer, even in the smallest things. So I learned from my time in India that ***you should never let yourself be brought down because you or other people think you cannot do it. No way, YOU CAN DO IT.*** Eventually, I left India and went to **Europe** where I lived for 18 years, met my wife and began a family. All of these journeys have given me the opportunity to have an African, Asian, and European background, which has helped me to relate to people of different cultures and realities.

The USAU Youth: What are some of the challenges you've encountered in your career and what lesson did you learn from them?

Dr. Stephen Omollo: I'll talk about one. There was a distressing scenario I encountered in the northern part of Somalia in 1994 when we were doing a nutritional assessment for the Red Cross. There was widespread famine and we had to take care of a group of malnourished children; we got up at 5am in the morning to do the assessment before heading out to get them food. By the time we brought the food at noon, all the children had died. We were too late and everyone was weeping in the community. I can never forget that day because those are the kind of memories that haunt you for the rest of your life.

So what I learned from this which has carried me this whole time is to ***help people***. Help people as much as possible, even if it's just a simple gesture, just do it so that no one suffers.

The USAU Youth: Who were your role models when you were a youth?

Dr. Stephen Omollo: My ***dad, Philip Omollo***. I admire him for two reasons; first, he was the one who really pushed me to do humanitarian work. Second, he was the one who gave me the opportunity to travel around the world and, because of that, the lessons I have learned from those journeys are priceless.

My background is in banking but my dad told me to leave banking and go and work for the Red Cross. When I left, everyone thought I had swindled some money from the bank or had done something wrong. But my father kept encouraging me. Therefore, he saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. One piece of advice he gave to me when I began this work was that, ***'you are working for an organization that is helping the needy, serve it with integrity and honesty, don't get tempted.'*** He was a very honest and humble man, and, in fact a very active politician who deliberately dissuaded all his children from doing politics, perhaps he knew something we didn't.

The USAU Youth: Now, we need a word from the wise. Can you tell us in one statement, some principles that have assisted you in becoming the person you are today?

Dr. Stephen Omollo: "Work hard, believe in yourself, be spiritual, and help someone." **Work hard** to get an education; it'll enlighten you as a person. **Believe in yourself** for there is nothing that should be considered impossible, so never be put down by another person, or even yourself. To be **spiritual** does not mean you must be a Christian or a Muslim or whatever faith you practice. The faith you practice is simply because it helps you to become more disciplined. And finally **help someone.** When you help someone and see that person has a better life and a better feeling overall, the satisfaction you feel from that is incomparable to a feeling from anywhere else. That is why these multibillionaires, who have money and everything could desire, always end up going to philanthropy. It seems as if helping people is the only satisfaction they have not yet had. In fact, they often wish they had done it earlier because there is an immense feeling of satisfaction when you help people.

"Work hard, believe in yourself, be spiritual, and help someone."

The USAU Youth: Thank you so much Dr. Omollo, I believe many African youth have been inspired by all you've shared.

Dr. Stephen Omollo: Thank you very much and you are most welcome.

Bari Fanso
African Union Youth Volunteer (AUYV)
USAU Youth Liaison to the AU

THE VOICE OF VOLUNTEERS - ANNE FELDMAN

Anne Feldman and one of her host siblings, during Anne's farewell party in Cameroon.

Before arriving in Cameroon for my five month study abroad program in spring 2011, I made sure to have no expectations and a promise to myself to take in every experience with an open mind and an open heart. However, despite my attitude, I couldn't help but feel wholly and completely shocked. As a white girl, or ***la blanche*** (the white) to my Cameroonian peers, I was truly a fish out of water. On a daily basis, I struggled with the heat, the French language (since I lived in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon and one of the French regions of the country), and illness which only fell under the larger tent of issues relating to my own identity as an American college student in Africa. Yet, while difficulties abounded during my time abroad, living in Cameroon remains the foremost and most profound five months of my life and I wouldn't so much as give up a day of it.

While there were many struggles abroad, there were infinitely more joys as day by day I grew to discover the city and the Cameroonian ***joie de vivre.*** Perhaps most importantly, nothing can compare to Cameroonian hospitality. My host family, whom I lived with for those five months, took me in with open arms and taught me the Cameroonian way, it wasn't long before I, myself, knew how to prepare groundnut soup and kill a chicken (Oh, was I a long way from home!). Despite my white skin, my host siblings still introduced me to their friends as their 'sister' and my host Dad said I was his 'first daughter,' a reference to being the oldest child in the house. I never thought I could love a family as much as my biological one, but here I was, halfway around the world and finding a second home.

"I never thought I could love a family like my biological one, but there I was, halfway around the world and finding a second home."

My family was just one of the many wonderful experiences I had in Yaoundé; there were also endless adventures around the city as my friends and I traveled to various neighborhoods shopping for bright, joyful fabric to be made into *'kabas'*, a common design worn by Cameroonian women across the country. On Mondays and Thursdays, my friends and I would trek across town where we attended African dance class, learning to move to the beat of the drums, no matter how poorly. And, of course, there was the beer and the street food. Perhaps the only thing to rival my host mother's cooking was a night spent enjoying a "33 Export" ***bien glacé, s'il vous plait!*** (a cold one please) and a plate of soya (roast meat) which still, upon discovery, made me completely forget about my homesickness for American pizza and hamburgers.

However, living in Cameroon wasn't all play. One of the most rewarding experiences was volunteering for CAMYOSFOP (The Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace), a non-profit youth organization dedicated to peace through youth empowerment initiatives. Working at CAMYOSFOP proved to be one of the highlights of the semester and gave me a greater understanding of the issues within Cameroon as well as the efforts put forth to solve societal problems. During this period, which lasted from April 23 to June 15, I was able to research the problems facing many of the youth in Cameroon and the efforts to eradicate these societal ills through AIDS awareness events, educational opportunities, and legislative measures. Perhaps, the most exciting day of work was meeting with the leader of Cameroon's leading opposition party, seeing parliament and then, attending a UN meeting. As a student studying political science, CAMYOSFOP broadened my horizons and in the future I hope to work with the U.S. government on matters related to foreign aid, youth empowerment, and gender equality.

While I could never honestly say living in Cameroon was an easy time in my life, it remains the most incredible five months and every day I think about my time there and miss it desperately. Upon saying good-bye, I only had to say this: **A bientôt, Cameroun!** (See you soon, Cameroon!).

Anne Feldman
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U.S. MISSION TO THE AFRICAN UNION

The USAU Youth is a platform for African youth around the world and the views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the United States Government.

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The USAU Youth thanks all the readers who sent in articles for this month's edition. Please keep sending in the articles, announcements, and information on any subject matter you would like to see in subsequent editions of the newsletter to USAUyouth@state.gov. Kindly share with us activities and pictures of what you or your country is doing in relation to cardiovascular diseases in Africa. Thank you.

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