



## Take Action-Vol 1

# *! Youth for a Change !*



## Article 2





# Introduction

We, the youth from Article 2-Voice of Youth, welcome the youth of the world to our newsletter. We invite you to see, read, and learn what young people like you are doing to make a difference in the world we live in!

## What is ARTICLE 2?

We are a group of young people from five continents who decided to make the world we live in a better place. We are determined, enthusiastic, dedicated and inventive. We believe youth have the right to express their opinions and put in practice their initiatives. We know the moment to change is NOW and we want to use our talent and energy to help our planet have a brighter future.

## Why This Newsletter?

We are convinced that our **ideas** can solve great problems. We feel that our **actions** can change people's attitudes and reactions. We don't give up and we believe in our **mission**. We can find answers and we know how to fight for our **dreams**. We discovered we have the **power** to determine a change. We know that we have no more **time** for waiting and talking. We, young people all over the world, need to take position and think of possible **solutions**.

cause we are decided and because we have **hope**.

## What Can You Do?

**You can join our fight for an improved world!**



Open up your **eyes!**  
Let your opinions be **heard!**  
Remember to **care!**  
Say "**no**" to violence, pain and suffering!  
Don't **give up!**  
Fight for your **human dignity!**  
Fight for the **integrity of your country!**  
Fight for the **future of humanity!**

## TAKE ACTION NOW!

Imagine a better world!  
**Now it's possible!**

- Get involved!
- Write an article!
- Join "Article2"!  
AND
- Fight for YOUR IDEAS!

**ARTICLE 2-YOUTH FOR A CHANGE EVERY STEP YOU TAKE BRINGS A NEW RAY OF LIGHT INTO THE WORLD!  
BE PART OF THE YOUTH REVOLUTION!  
LET'S CHANGE THE WORLD TOGETHER!**

## Contact us at:

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## ❖ Young People Taken Part in the Tsunami Relief? (Part 1)

### ISSUE OF THE MONTH

The tsunami that struck Southeast Asia on December 26th 2004 gave rise to one of the biggest humanitarian movements and concerns from populations all over the planet. Millions of dollars of emergency help were collected. More moving than the huge funds raised for this cause is the human effort from people of all ages, who were determined to bring their contribution in. This article deals with the participation of young people all around the world in the intense relief and a commentary from Hantu Lina, a young teenager from Malaysia who witnessed the massive help flock into her country.



It is ironic how a tidal wave can affect the majority of Southeast Asia's population. The tsunami has not only altered this region geographically, but many courses of lives have been marred by this predicament. The scar will never heal, but it is up to the citizens of the world to make it stop bleeding.

Young people from all around the world got involved and gave a helpful hand to Asia. From Europe, to Africa and Latin America, they all organized fundraising events such as "school-shows" or "support campaigns" in their cities. They also sent needed things for the tsunami's victims. On the UNICEF forum, the members sent letters and drawings through the internet. They

addressed the letters from the Voices of Youth members to the affected regions who delivered them to the children.

Even children have been helping in the tsunami relief by raising funds and sending letters. With the help of DO SOMETHING, an organisation for young people who are making a difference, children have been able to send letters to victims, especially children, in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India. DO SOMETHING created the Do Something: Kids Tsunami Relief Fund so that young Americans could directly help young people in Asia who have been affected by the disaster. All funds contributed to the Do Something: Kids Tsunami Relief Fund will go towards rebuilding three schools, a medical clinic and an orphanage. Fun ways to raise money for the victims have also been suggested: babysitting, holding a neighbourhood carwash, raking leaves or snow for money, going door-to-door to collect donations, etc. Not only have these creative ideas given children a fun way to help out, they have become aware of the situation in Asia and have been trying their best to raise money. For more information, visit [www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org).

Another very popular idea that has helped raise funds, especially in the United States, is selling custom molded silicone bands with the saying 'Tsunami relief' on them. You are provided with about one thousand bands in the colour of your choice, with the saying of your choice, and it is then up to you to sell them around you.

People on the Voices of Youth Forums of the UNICEF have related the fact that they have been able to raise more than two thousand dollars with these bracelets! The best part is that people who make a donation by buying these bracelets carry on their wrist the symbol of their support towards the tsunami victims. To participate, you can buy silicone bands on <http://likelance.com/>.

The youth of Malaysia has stood up and faced the challenge. Numerous activities have been organized by the NGO's and have been a success. It has been involved in the events that have been carried out. Below are some of the major events that have been held in Malaysia for the past few months.

#### DIRECT PLEA FOR DONATIONS

There have been various ways of collecting funds:

- Electronic Media: donations by sending short text messages (SMS)
- Donations through newspapers: Most of the Malaysian newspapers are involved in getting Malaysians to help out by donating; it was a big success because people in Malaysia have been sending checks and money in large sums.
- Major coverage by teenage newspapers (BRAT's) to attract more participation by teenagers in Malaysia.
- Shopping malls and teenage fashion outlets are willing to contribute a percentage of their sales to help out.
- Booths have been set up to collect second-hand items such as clothes and blankets, in major shopping complexes.

**Norhalina Binti Mohamad Termidzi, 18, Malaysia**

**Camille Chouan, 16, France**

**Luciana Grosu, 17, Romania**



### **A Smile on Every Child**

Communities throughout the world should strive towards a common goal: creating an environment where there is a smile on every child's face. Children deserve to live a life of happiness and contentment- no matter who they are or where they come from. Children are to be loved and cared for; they are not to be abused and exposed to violence.

Children are to be in good hands and free from any harm; they are not to be used as child soldiers in times of war or conflict and exploited by their countries.

Children are to be in school receiving an education and accessing good health facilities; they are not to be on streets shinning shoes and begging.

All children deserve to live a lifestyle that allows them to smile.

You see pictures of children malnourished, consumed by disease, homeless, and crying. Although we are capable of making a difference, we opt to remain ignorant to their conditions. We choose to take the easy way out and turn a blind eye to the truth behind their unfortunate existence. We have the finances, the resources, have claimed to have the intelligence, and have the technology to make a difference. However, that apparently is not enough. We are missing the compassion. We are missing the sincerity. Until those with the ability to make a difference develop a genuine concern for helping those less fortunate than them, changes will not be made- it must come from the heart, and that is where we are lacking.



Far too frequently, people are aware of the situation, but consciously overlook it. Ignorance is bliss. Although initial attempts are made, if the effort is not upheld, and attempts are not continual, the cause is forgotten.

Discussions and big conferences are held but most of the time the supposed ground-breaking changes that are proposed end up on paper- no one is willing to implement them where and when it matters.

People gain comfort and a sense of personal reassurance by talking about ways they can help others. How many of them actually fulfill their empty statements and follow through with their promises?

Although it is hard, by no means is it impossible. Together we are capable of making a difference. We are all capable of taking action in some form or another. It is not always about donating thousands of dollars that most of us don't even have; little things can make a difference. Showing that you care, and helping those in need is what matters. No matter where you live, there are always people who need a helping hand. There are always people who are willing to accept your assistance if you are willing to offer it. Look around you- there are always people who can benefit from a smile, a greeting, a kind gesture, and the offering of help in a time of need.

If you want to make a difference and help out those within your community find out what you can do. There are always people who will accept your assistance. It is up to you to make the first step. Gain experience and contribute in any way you can within your community. Volunteer where you are needed. Keep your head up and never give up hope. It is amazing the difference you can make when you are willing to try.

If every person adopted a pact to make a difference within his/her community the world would be a better place for all of us. One person at a time-one step at time-positive changes can be made. There is hope for a brighter future if you are willing to do your part and believe in it.

Zuhur Yassin Ibrahim, 19,  
Somaliland



## ❖ **YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND MASS MEDIA**

### **What's wrong with the media?**

Nowadays, many young people have access to the radio, but they listen only to music programs. There aren't any programs that inform the youth how they can get involved in social activities and take action to make a change. For this reason, we affirm that young people aren't given the opportunity to participate in interactive radio programs. Of course, there are indeed some radio programs created by youth. Nevertheless, these are only entertaining programs about minor issues. Youth are not interested only in knowing which songs are the latest entries in music's top hits list. They also want to learn about relevant issues and how young people can get involved in solving different social problems.

### **There should be radio programs for teens that do care about the world!**

Newspapers and magazines are still the most popular media. They reach people who never watch a TV program or never have access to the Internet. Yet, **the youth can't even participate to these important publications; their opinions, ideas and attitudes find no place in the pages of big journals.** Although social, economical, political and cultural changes directly affect young people, we can't

express our views, we don't have the right to participate at taking decisions, and we are not allowed to propose solutions, not even for **our** problems!

School magazines available for student writers usually cover only education-related themes and their addressability is restrained to those working in this field. Teen magazines are really interesting and exciting, but because of their "cool-attitude", they are actually never read by serious adults. Teenagers who win writing contests are allowed to collaborate with literary magazines, yet they can't use their imagination for improving our real world, too. TV channels don't have programs about social issues and aren't dedicated to young people who are eager to fight to make their countries a better place. **Although the impact of images is a very, very big one, there are no reports focused on youth volunteering or presenting NGO activity in a specific field.** How can young people get involved if they never find out about what is happening around them?

**The difference between what we are shown in media and what we want to see :**

Society's belief is that adolescents don't care about anything and are only enjoying themselves and thinking of pretty things like clothes, parties, dating, etc. As a consequence, mass media shows only what the shallow young persons want to see, such as soap operas, violent TV shows, small-minded programs, advertisements of fashion clothes, etc; this makes us all look like completely trivial and cold people.

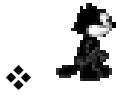
Although some adolescents are indeed indifferent and insensitive, there are a lot of us who do care. We are not all selfish teens who don't have a single idea of what is happening in the world and don't care about it. Mass media has put a fake label on all of us about what we like and how we act. But our concern goes beyond the trivial things that are shown through the media. We want to be informed about what is going on; we want to know where to go, what to do, and how we can make a change. If teenagers were given the opportunity to participate in the media, everybody would see what we really are: youth wanting to make a change.

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However, this article isn't just a complaint. Our aim is YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN MASS MEDIA! That is why we came up with a plan so mass media can provide us a space in for us. You can read about this in the next issue of the newsletter in which this article will continue.

**Luciana Grosu, 17, Romania**  
**Ailén Laura Rey, 18, Argentina**

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## ❖ Youth taking action in the developing world

Today, third world countries are facing many political, economic, and social challenges in order to cope with the rapid changes that our world has experienced. And the youth are one of the major agents for development. But are young people aware of the importance of their role in society? How are they taking action? Are the governments contributing to encourage the youth to take action? Young people over 15 years represent more than half of the population in Morocco. So, everyone can deduce the importance of human resources in this country. But, it seems like they aren't properly used, since most of the young people here aren't motivated to get involved into development work. "Unfortunately, there are few young people devoted to act in favor of the progress", says a young member of the Children's Parliament from Rabat, the capital of Morocco. He adds: "My experience in the Children's Parliament permitted me to get in contact with people who are really committed to determine changes in the Moroccan community". He also explains that the phenomenon of the youth's lack of participation in social work is due to economical problems. "Some parent's think that their children only have to work hard and pursue excellent studies for becoming engineers", he also says. Another member of the same non-governmental institution (which seeks to introduce the youth to democracy and promoting the principles of citizenship) from Berkane, a city in the North-East of Morocco, recognizes that nowadays youth only want to amuse themselves. And even if some of them want to take action, their voices aren't heard. Sometimes, they can't reach their goals because they are not supported financially. That was her case when she wanted to create a youth newspaper with her classmates. In fact, in her city, youngsters prefer to affirm their personality through cultural activities such as theatre.

A young parliamentarian from Smara, a city in the South of Morocco, finds that even if there are young people working together in associations, it is only because they are unemployed, and also because they are looking for a new way of entertainment. He adds that most of them are not attracted by the idea of using their abilities in favor of their environment's progress. He also thinks that one of the causes of this situation is the absence of resources. "Youth need more freedom of expression and also a governmental back-up in order to let the ideas flourish" is his proposal for working out these problems in his town. Despite this situation, many youngsters are working in associations; as a responsible worker in a Moroccan NGO says, "Some young people are trained in order to sensitize people about the danger of HIV/AIDS in poor areas." One of these parliamentarians has focused on the importance of multiplying youth forums and meetings, more media coverage on youth issues and exchanging experiences between Morocco and other countries. He adds, "Why not give a chance to more students to become parliamentarians, instead of allowing participation only to the excellent ones?" The government's encouragement plays an outstanding role. But Moroccans felt this more when the King Mohamed VI of Morocco has announced in a special speech given last Wednesday, May 18, at the launching of "The National Initiative of Human Development", which gives priority to social issues into governmental decisions. Education was, is, and will always be the base of development, based on the principles of active citizens that have to be promoted by family, schools and the media. If well-educated youngsters try to unify

**Are young people aware of the importance of their role in society? How are they taking action? Are the governments contributing to encourage the youth to take action?**

their ideas in order to determine positive changes in their society, they have to know that they are assuring in this way their welfare and a better future for themselves and the next generations. It's also a way of acquiring competent skills and dealing with the rules of working in a group. And the politician's role will always be essential. "Since youth embodies energy and vitality, try to benefit from it as much as possible according to your abilities. Move on, trust yourself. There is always a hope".

**Fatima-zahra Ben fkira, 16, Morocco**

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### ❖ **A life long "curse" on innocent children.**

It was May 11, a day supposed to be the happiest day for many families and their children, in a small rural village in Gujarat, India. It was "Akha Teej" (third day of the Chaitra of Hindu calendar), an auspicious day when most marriages take place as no consultation from the pundit (Hindu priest) is required. Six-year-old Sejal was all dressed up like a bride, little knowing that she will soon be tied up in nuptial knot with a boy barely two years older than her. She is not the only one, there are a lot of children of her age maybe a little older or even younger, who are also going through this ritual, blissfully ignorant of its implications.

During the ceremony the child grooms are led in with processions. They arrive wearing colorful costumes with customary swords in their hands. Sometimes due to long rituals the brides and grooms are falling asleep in their parents lap until the time of "saat phere" (a custom which requires the bride and groom to go round around the sacred fire seven times) approaches. After the ceremony the children are taken away and will meet again with their partners after 10 to 12 years .To the kids, it may seem like a game, but a big decision about their lives is being made even if they remain blissfully ignorant. Child marriages may be illegal in modern independent India, but are still a living reality in the distant rural districts of India.

In the past marriages were performed on the sly during the night, now it is done in broad daylight in the presence of political leaders and administrative officials. From my point of view, I think that the political leaders do this in order to gain popularity at election's time, as people living in rural areas might elect them as a guarantee for keeping their centuries old traditions and practices alive.

Hundreds of children fall prey to this social evil every year. To avoid these practices concerted efforts from the government, social agencies and the cooperation of local people are required in order to remove this "curse" put on the children .But no such initiative has been taken yet to end with this practice and children who have been married in their childhood are condemned to live knowing that in 12 years time , they will re-meet a person whom they have never seen or talked to for the past decade, and that they will have to live with that person forever ,whether they like it or not !

What have done these innocent little children to deserve such a life?!

**Kathleen Soares, 15, India**

**Acknowledgements: Story of Sejal- UNI**

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## Extreme Violence on the Internet

Yesterday, I read an article in Readers' Digest that chilled me to the spine. I would hope that sexual pornography on the Internet is something that people have become familiarized with. However, many of us are unaware of the presence of something equally, if not more horrifying-violence on the Internet. The last degradation of human culture shows horrifying and gruesome executions, murders, suicides, genocide, etc. in wincing detail.



Among the first movie posted on the Internet is the gruesome execution of two American Jews who were kidnapped and beheaded by Islamic terrorists. Upon initial viewing of this website, many of us are mistaken. Don't be fooled however, this website not sponsored by militant Islamists. Shockingly, it is a site based in the USA with the main purpose of displaying hundreds of images of dead corpses, mangled bodies, and dying persons.

The Internet is full of such violent web pages. Another website boasts that it "collects images and information to present the viewer with a truly unpleasant experience." Upon further observation, it becomes evident that these accusations are in fact true. The site's recent photographs are of a man being hit by a car, and one of the most grotesque is that of a person killed by a shotgun blast (In Reader's Digest).

What has happened to the human sense of respecting the dead or dying and also their family members? What has become of the good sense society once had of protecting children from violence? As a result of the accessibility of Internet connections and PCs, especially in modern countries, it is really easy for minors to gain access to such horrifying sites.

Children are so impressionable that they may think that such violence is a normal part of our lives, therefore, they will become less sensitive to it. This will ultimately create violent young adults in the future. Consequently, it is not surprising that children are currently being brainwashed by the excessive quantity of violence in the media into thinking the use of violence is an acceptable part of their lives.

Can you imagine your relatives, siblings, friends or family appearing on one of these websites? Wouldn't you feel furious at the thought that they were not given the proper respect even after their deaths? One family posted a message on a website claiming that a photograph of their nephew, who committed suicide by throwing himself in front of the train, was published on the website.

The website posted this cruel response: "We ask that, in the future, this family conduct their suicide in a less public manner." It is almost as if the website producer derived some form of excitement from mocking the family who is mourning the death of a loved one. As a result, young people are led to believe that not only is violence an enjoyable aspect of life, but it is....cool.

I think that these websites should be boycotted. Parents MUST stop their children from viewing these sites. It is imperative that parents realize the urgency of protecting their children from such evil. The environment that they live in has a tremendous impact on their lives. That which they are subjected to constantly influences their minds. Do we want this aggressive behavior to mark their innocent minds and turn them into violent adults in the future?

Please give your suggestions on how this can be curbed. It is clear to me that we must take action immediately in order to prove a bright future for the child- who is

the future of our world. Otherwise, the future will be black indeed for all of us (because violence will prevail). Do we really want this to happen?

**Yuzi, Malaysia**

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## **BEFORE THE COCK CROWS**

I surrender...  
show me a way  
a channel, a route  
through which I could  
reach out to this hurting world  
and wipe out that tears rolling down her cheeks

I know, I know  
I must tread only on that path I know well  
else I cramp my style with stinking gibberish

My wallet is flat tonight  
please don't count on that  
Still this urge to belong  
an undiluted desire to serve  
yearns so loudly I can hold back no more

I surrender  
in total submission my heart cry  
"use me Lover of my soul"  
to be a helping hand in my society  
to learn to give without asking for a refund  
to be able to influence others into aiming for the best  
never to try playing god over my peers  
to you my king I obediently surrender

Why not? It is just too easy for us all to sit and blame the past for the present.  
Everything now looks so gloomy, the future seems even more uncertain. Chaos and suffering hits the headline of our News everyday. Will this scar ever heal?

I refuse to waste my ink on the lies that have been chattered on this path before. The lies that ridicule and spell impossibility on every dream, the lies that say there is no future for us, young faces, who long for a better tomorrow.

A generation is rising today, above the norms. A group of young people who is defying all past limitations imposed on their ability to make a change.

No more barriers! No longer will our voices be counted as naught! Today, we don't talk because we want to talk, but because we have something to say...Listen to us!

We are the change makers. We believe in our vision and dream for a better world.

We surrender whole heartedly and passionately, dedicating our individual skills to collectively work towards building a world of love, peace and unity. What more can we hope? With God's help, it can be done!!!

There is hope in our future, there is a future in our hope! Hear the cock crow, signaling the dawn of a new day... a positive significant change. E ka bo means welcome! I welcome to a better tomorrow!

Breaking Barrier,

**Jennifer Ehidiamen, 20, Lagos Nigeria**

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**Everything  
now looks  
so gloomy,  
the future  
seems  
even more  
uncertain.  
Chaos and  
suffering  
hits the  
headline of  
our News  
everyday.**