

QuakerAction

We dream a world

While local and global crises fuel fear and conflict, a movement of peace-minded problem-solvers is moving the world toward a future with justice for all of us.

Teambuilding activity at "Sharing Experiences Inspired by Peace," a summer camp in Villa Canales, Guatemala.
Photo: Ruben Ruiz Cruz



**American Friends
Service Committee**

www.afsc.org





Photo: Fuad Hindieh

“To be realistic, we have to think about the impossible. When I work with people, I say, ‘Let’s try to create what we want to see.’ We need to create it visibly.”

—CARLOS “ELMO” GOMEZ

Growing a movement one person, one community at a time

Friends,

In October, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) had the privilege and the pleasure of sponsoring Elmo and 18 other young people from AFSC’s programs in six U.S. states and six other countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East to the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Warsaw, Poland.

These young people joined 160 youth delegates from around the world. As part of the Youth Civic Academy, they took workshops with Nobel laureates like Muhammad Yunus and Mairead Corrigan Maguire, and they shared with each other what they’ve learned about the power of nonviolence and what it takes to build peace in their communities.

Each AFSC delegate is a leader and a change maker in his or her community, working for justice and creating the peace “we want to see,” as Elmo says.

Elmo worked with AFSC in our Roots for Peace program in Los Angeles. Recognizing access to fresh produce as a pressing need in the Mar Vista Gardens housing project, Elmo’s class turned an unsightly, weed-filled lot into an organic garden. The garden proved so successful that AFSC’s Roots for Peace program soon expanded to two additional schools.

This year, Elmo returned to AFSC as an intern, pursuing a dream to bring a garden plot to every residential unit in Mar Vista Gardens.

In this low-income neighborhood caught in the cycle of violence and poverty, Elmo found many people who shared his vision. “One of the great things about this project was getting the whole community and youth involved,” he says. “People are really excited to grow food.”

Elmo worked closely with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and, in response to their concerns, adapted the plan to create a single community garden rather than many residential plots. He organized workshops for residents in which master gardener Millie Alegro shared tips on what to grow and how to prepare the soil, among other things.

In June, the housing authority gave its approval, and the community got to work preparing the gardens. The beds were first planted in September, and the fruits of the community’s labor are now becoming visible—and edible. Elmo hopes the project will expand as more and more residents experience the value of growing their own fresh food.

Elmo and the other young delegates in Warsaw learned that the situations they each face aren’t so dissimilar. Communities trapped in poverty and violence need the same things in order to be at peace: the end of violent conflict, jobs or opportunities to create their own livelihoods, access to education. And they need support

to change the systems that allow racism and economic exploitation to persist.

I was inspired by the commitment and vision these young leaders brought to the community of delegates and by the empowering stories of success they shared with one another. Whether from Los Angeles, Baltimore, Zimbabwe, or Indonesia, they brought the hopes and dreams of their communities.

And leaving Warsaw, they brought back to their communities a profound awareness that they are not working in isolation—that they are part of a global network of AFSC programs and like-minded partners seeking lasting peace with justice. They are already finding ways to stay in touch and continue working together for a transformed world.

When I was the age of these young people, a friend offered a powerful metaphor that still inspires me. He said:

Our life is a brick. You can choose what you do with a brick—you can throw it through a window, you can use it to hold open a door, or you can work with others so that your brick becomes part of a building, a house, a cathedral, a complex structure that makes a lasting difference in the world.

The AFSC young people at the Nobel laureates summit and those profiled throughout this issue of Quaker Action are using their lives to “create visibly” the world we all would like to see.



In peace,
Shan Cretin
Shan Cretin
General Secretary

In this issue



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Structural violence is rarely covered by school curriculums, but many students know they’re not learning the whole picture. In Seattle, Marcel Purnell and Dustin Washington provide an alternative education, equipping young people with organizing skills that they’re using to undo institutional racism.



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Culture change and reclamation usually precede political change, and that’s one reason why undocumented immigrants in the San Francisco Bay Area have decided to tell their stories publicly. They stand to lose a lot by doing so—but they have much more to gain by claiming their power and shifting the narrative.



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Nearly two billion people in the world are between ages 10 and 24. Take a look at the story that statistics tell about their lives, including the opportunity to learn and make a living, and hear what young leaders want for the future.



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A grassroots movement committed to diversity is bearing the Peace Torch throughout Indonesia, bringing an emotional message to areas touched by religious and ethnic violence and threatened by intolerance.

Curriculum for racial justice

Through anti-racist training and community organizing, teens and 20-somethings—people most intimately acquainted with Seattle’s education and criminal justice systems—are working to undo the racism that pervades these institutions.

When the city of Seattle screened “Broken on All Sides,” a documentary that examines racial inequity in the American criminal justice system, the event’s organizers asked Marcel Purnell to sit on a panel alongside the chief of police and a civil rights attorney. In the post-screening discussion, Marcel brought up the issue of a proposed new youth jail, the Children and Family Justice Center in King County.

“I said youth don’t need to be incarcerated,” recalls Marcel. “We don’t need state-of-the-art prisons, we need state-of-the-art education. I talked about the pain that

“WHITE PRIVILEGE DOES NOT NEED TO BE WHITE GUILT”

YUIR members were invited to deliver the keynote speech at the Seattle Race Conference in August 2013. They spoke about their campaign to end the prison-industrial complex, and encounters in their daily lives that offer room for people to transform guilt into activism.

Watch their speech at afsc.org/seattle-race-keynote.

comes with youth incarceration and policing and surveillance.”

Debating the security state and racial profiling with police officers operating the institution that he is working to change is nothing new to 26-year-old Marcel.

In the less than four years since he moved from Baltimore to Seattle, his determination to dismantle dehumanizing systems has established him as a respected community organizer and a go-to facilitator for conversations on racial justice.

Finding truth

Growing up between worlds in a white neighborhood in the middle of a predominantly black city, the third-generation educator was skeptical of institutions from the start.

“When I was really young, I had the sense that something wasn’t right with what I was being taught,” Marcel says. “It was incomplete; things were more nuanced than they were presented.”

“Whatever the institutions told me, I needed to fact-check,” he says.

Marcel read everything he could get his hands on—partly to keep pace with his older brother’s learning, but also to satisfy his urge to understand the world in which he lived.

“Just being a black man, and realizing how those who look like me relate to certain structures of governance which are also structures of dehumanization, gave me a desire to dismantle those systems and work to create more equitable systems,” he says.

Marcel started working with AFSC after meeting Dustin Washington, a longtime AFSC staff member, at a gathering for black

SPEAKING TRUTHS TO UNDO RACISM

For over a decade, the Tyree Scott Freedom School has been teaching young people in the Seattle area about institutional racism and community organizing.

Learn more in an essay shared by Freedom School participant Elizabeth C. Brown at afsc.org/seattle-freedom-school.

men involved in racial justice work in Seattle.

He now coordinates Youth Undoing Institutional Racism (YUIR), a project of AFSC’s Seattle Community Justice Program; coordinates the Tyree Scott Freedom School; and speaks at Pacific Northwest high schools and universities on a regular basis.

Seeing racism

YUIR’s membership is multiracial, which is notable in a city that is 70 percent white.

Young people of all backgrounds join through word of mouth—when a classmate invites Marcel to speak at their school, when a friend shares their Freedom School experience, when a teacher refers them to Dustin and Marcel.

“When I’m out in the community, what I’m saying [about structural violence] is very real, and it’s a framework that often isn’t provided to young people, even though the impact of structural violence is all around them,” says Marcel. “It’s something they want to change, so they become involved.”

Within Freedom School and YUIR, Marcel and Dustin’s roles are more about getting youth to question deep-seated

RACIAL JUSTICE READING LIST

“It’s really crucial that you understand the paradigm as you endeavor to shift it,” says Marcel. “Without a real understanding of the logic of white supremacy and anti-blackness, nothing will make sense.” Recommended reading:

Are prisons obsolete?

Angela Y. Davis

Educating for critical consciousness

Paulo Freire

Red, white, and black: Cinema and the structure of U.S. antagonisms

Frank B. Wilderson III

Black skin, white masks

Frantz Fanon and Richard Philcox

Marcel Purnell has worked with AFSC in Seattle for three years. Photo: AFSC/Bryan Vana

distortions of reality than about giving the “right” answers. Marcel explains:

We talk about how youth have been disempowered by the political process and all structures of governance. I really try to help them understand their position within society, and I think that’s something they really appreciate on an existential level.

Due to the nature of formal education, that’s never happened before. Youth haven’t been encouraged to understand. I take the time and labor to help folks with that. Not just so folks can understand, but so they can begin to do something about it.

YUIR encourages young people to acknowledge their lived experience and inherent power—to insert themselves in the conversations the city has about them.

Presently, YUIR is working to abolish the prison-industrial complex.

Dialogues among the multiracial group members reveal the disparate experiences of Seattle teenagers when it comes to policing and incarceration.

“The white youth in the room own that they are profiled positively,” says Marcel. “The youth of color, like most youth of col-

or in this city, live in the south end. That’s where surveillance is highest, where policing is highest.”

Drug use is no higher in south Seattle than in the north, around the University of Washington, yet the arrest rate and allocation of police resources are higher in the south.

The process of comparing their lived experiences gives youth of different backgrounds insight into the way racism operates.

Marcel tells a story about one young white woman who came to last summer’s Freedom School, skeptical about the experience in front of her. Over the course of the two weeks, “she was moved quite a bit,” he says. “She saw the myriad ways that she has a totally different position in society than what she thought, and what that affords her.”

Now she’s vocal, out in the community, delivering human rights education and speaking about the school-to-prison pipeline.

This transformation from skeptic to activist is “a beautiful thing to watch,” says Marcel.

Setting the agenda

Marcel and YUIR member James were part of the AFSC delegation to the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Octo-

ber 2013, where they connected their local struggle to a larger, international, youth-led justice movement.

“It’s one thing for us to talk about global capitalism or worldwide oppression in this really small city, but it’s another thing to hear about destructive systems from folks who are experiencing the impact of our foreign policies,” says Marcel.

While this grassroots youth movement builds, YUIR is setting a standard in Seattle for ensuring that young voices are heard in policy discussions.

“Now, when there’s an issue of racial justice and a given group wants to address it, they often reach out to me to ask if my youth will be involved and be a part of the conversation,” says Marcel. ■

—NEAH MONTEIRO

TIPS FOR ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZING

Go to afsc.org/anti-racism-tips to watch Dustin Washington, community justice program director in Seattle, talk about understanding the historical construction of racism, the interrelation of racism and poverty, and creating vehicles for young people to take leadership in a society historically founded on race and racism.

Undocumented and unafraid

The lives of undocumented immigrants get covered up, made invisible, and erased every day. But through storytelling, a group of young, fearless activists is building the movement for immigrant justice.

Maria Cruz emcees a mural unveiling event in Oakland, Calif.'s Fruitvale Village.
Photo: Brook Anderson

Young undocumented immigrants in the U.S. are typically characterized as either angels or demons: angels who are valedictorians and student body presidents, or criminals who are gang members, coyotes, or drug runners.

Left out of this binary characterization is the majority—people no different from most “documented” teenagers. Sure, some are exemplary students, and some get sucked into crime, but the regular kid goes to school each day and tries to make the best of his or her situation. By some estimates, 67 percent of undocumented youth fit among these “regular kids”; legislation such as the DREAM Act doesn’t necessarily speak to their needs.

The AFSC program 67 Sueños (dreams) works with young, undocumented immigrants in the San Francisco Bay Area to support one another to tell their stories, so that those most impacted by immigration policy become visible and help to shift common understanding of their experience. The students create safe spaces for one another to tell their stories, and then find ways to bring the stories out into public view, whether through videotaping their stories or making public art.

67 Sueños begins the process by hosting “encuentros”—encounters, or meetings. Through networking, director Pablo Paredes connects with undocumented youth in Oakland, then brings new contacts together for an afternoon led by more experienced young immigrants.

The leaders tell their own stories and lead activities that make it safe for the others to tell theirs. They start with less risky stories, then invite others to tell stories of their migration to the U.S. or stories of members of their family who have been deported. Some have experienced the trauma of deportation multiple times—losing a parent or sibling and, in many cases, being unable to contact them or find out what happened to them. Telling these stories helps them to begin to heal.

These first sessions create community; the students now know that others have stories similar to theirs and don’t feel so alone. They often continue to work together and tell their stories anonymously on video or audio, and some of them are brave enough

to tell their stories in public, unafraid.

Pablo developed the program based on his understanding that culture change and reclamation usually precede political change. If the narrative around an issue is shifted, that makes way for a shift in politics as well. His thinking has been influenced by journalist Jeff Chang, who says, “Movements must change hearts and minds in an enduring way. They must change the culture.”

Inspired in part by James Lawson, who trained youth and supported them in building their capacity and skills during

the end of the story: You screwed up; you didn’t go to school; you had marijuana on your person; you got caught tagging the school.

But that’s not the whole story: Your father got deported when you were 10 years old; your mother was working 80 hours per week and couldn’t spend time with you at all; the only family you had were the kids on the corner stealing cars and spraying up the neighborhood. That’s how we go into the work. We tell stories. We get



At an encuentro in East Oakland, migrant youth share their stories in a safe space and learn about migrant rights. Photo: Brook Anderson

the civil rights movement, Pablo is also clear that in addition to shifting the narrative, young immigrants must be the leaders of their own movement, setting the priorities, strategies, and goals for what they do. Pablo says about the program:

Our work in 67 Sueños became, “How do we humanize a community that has become so dehumanized?” How do we talk about a young person who might have a criminal record, or might have dropped out of high school, or might be 16 and pregnant, and still present a picture of a person who deserves human rights? Usually these youth are met by society at the

people to see the human being inside that person, the light inside that person, the beauty inside that person.

The members of 67 Sueños are unafraid to tell their stories. I recently interviewed two of the students who have been working with 67 Sueños for the past three years, Guisela Mishel Ramos X (Mishel) and Maria Cruz. They openly told me their stories and shared their dreams. Despite their immigration status, they were willing to publish their names in Quaker Action. A woman who heard them speak said, “It’s a big deal not to be held down by fear. Just saying that you are undocumented, you take power over it. That’s something to honor.”



Top, from left: Maria, Dariel Ramos, and Mishel leading a workshop for graduate students at the University of San Francisco. Photo: AFSC/Lucy Duncan
Above: Pablo Paredes speaks at the mural unveiling in Fruitvale Village. Photo: Brook Anderson

It really is. When I talked with Mishel and Maria in November, I could hear in their stories and voices enormous courage and a willingness to claim their power to create justice and peace for their people.

Interview with Mishel and Maria

LUCY DUNCAN: What problems do you see that you hope will be changed?

GUISELA MISHEL RAMOS X (MISHEL): Most definitely what I would want to be changed is the militarization of the bor-

der, because I feel like it's giving people a license to mess with our people that are by the border. Borders were built by men. That doesn't give them the right to shoot people if you come to this place. Their excuse is that you crossed the line and you have to do it in a legal way. But there isn't really a legal way.

I'm also affected by laws like stop and frisk. This is another way to get more of my people and lock them up. It's all connected and all one. It's not right, they are looking

for more ways to lock people up and deport them, criminalize us when we are trying to give our best for our families. Criminalization of my people needs to be stopped.

MARIA CRUZ: Our people need to be deported less; right now 100 people get deported per day. Our people need to stop being harassed by ICE and by the police.

LUCY: How does the current immigration system impact you?

MISHEL: ICE agents came to my uncle's house at three in the morning and took him; they left his wife, luckily. She was saved from being deported by her kids being there; they couldn't leave them unattended. It's not right to come into the house and kidnap the parents. That's really wrong. My uncle was in jail for three months, then got deported. My uncle was the main provider for the house. The struggle was so hard for my auntie. She moved in with us into our two-bedroom apartment. There were six of us plus her family. We were really tight. My auntie looked for work, but was rejected because of her status. My uncle came back, but he could get deported again anytime.

MARIA: My uncle was deported two or three months ago. He was deported back to our home town in Mexico. He's still there. When Anastasio Hernández-Rojas was killed at the border while he was being deported, that really impacted me. He was killed facing 18 Border Patrol [agents]. He wasn't resisting. He had children and a wife, a family. That could have been anybody crossing the border. That really impacted me.

LUCY: What are your dreams for yourself and your community?

MISHEL: I wasn't going to school when I first came to 67 Sueños. I was really low when I came to 67 Sueños. Learning about how we are oppressed, learning about the system, has really helped me. I want to graduate high school, want to get my diploma, prove that I'm not just a statistic. I want to be an ethnic studies teacher and help my people, or be a lawyer. I'm on my way to accomplishing this.

It's important to have programs that will benefit us for the long run, having programs that will work with the youth, that will be empowering, that will make a difference like 67 Sueños has. A lot of problems with my

community, nobody is trying to help.

My biggest dream is having my youth to not be afraid of going out in the streets, my youth being together. My biggest dream is for my people to unite, my people to be together, to be able to say "We are undocumented and unafraid, we are not a minority." I want us to stop being afraid to speak out and to realize we have people power. I want our parents to be safe, our children to be safe. I want kids not to be shot by police because they look suspicious. I want people to live together united, and not be afraid of talking about their stories.

MARIA: My dream is to go to college, have a career. I just got approved for DACA [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals] a week ago. I hope to apply for scholarships; my parents won't have the money to pay for a four-year university. I plan to become a teacher in ethnic studies.

My dream for my community is to see no police, no violence, no borders.

LUCY: What's special about the way 67 Sueños works for change? What has helped you in 67 Sueños to claim your own power?

MISHEL: I've been with 67 Sueños three years now. Before 67 Sueños I never said, "Yes, I am undocumented." I was afraid peo-

ple wouldn't play with me or would judge me. Now I have a place to say I am undocumented and unafraid, I'm proud to be who I am and where I come from. 67 Sueños holds that space, holds space for you to share your migration story, holds space to

"I want kids not to be shot by police because they look suspicious. I want people to live together united."

—GUISELA MISHEL RAMOS X

share what's on your mind, your torments and struggles. We have a space where you can heal yourself. When you talk, someone will listen, not listen to respond, but to understand, and take action to help you out. I feel the love of the new family I have here. I'm fighting for people, not just my people, but people who come from Jamaica, China,

Africa, Asia. The struggle is bigger than that, beyond my people.

LUCY: Tell a story about a powerful action that you were a part of with 67 Sueños.

MARIA: The most powerful action we've done recently was stopping the deportation bus in San Francisco. Pablo and a couple of allies stopped the deportation bus. Because of our status, we arrived after the bus was stopped [to reduce the risk of being arrested and deported]. The bus was filled with a bunch of people about to be deported. We stopped it for three hours. There were a lot of police—immigration enforcement agents—there. It was an amazing feeling, standing there chanting, and the people inside were banging with chains on the windows just a few feet away. It really hit me; those people will leave and not see their families again. They are being forced to leave people behind. It was so powerful. We didn't stop the people from being deported, but we were there for them, we were witnesses.

LUCY: What advice do you have for other immigrant activists working for change?

MARIA: Don't give up, keep going, we're doing this for our people. Be creative. Give it all you got because there is going to be a change. ■

—LUCY DUNCAN

Breakdancing for Peace

Carlos Ricardo Garcia Cobo, 22, was for years written off by his neighbors based on negative stereotypes that affected how he saw himself. Since he started breakdancing during high school, that's changed—now, he's a recognized leader in the community, committed to finding ways for other young people to express themselves artistically. He's part of a local peace platform in Guatemala City, through which he works to change living conditions and build a sense of community in his neighborhood.

During my childhood, I had really good moments while I was studying and bad moments because there were so many problems at home.

When I was studying high school, I got involved in breakdance and other

artistic activities like hip-hop and b-boy. I have been practicing for almost six years now.

[Breakdancing] defines me as a person and a member of the community. ... I dedicate myself to instruct and give classes to other young people. At the same time I talk to them and try to give them some advice to prevent them from getting involved in illegal activities and gangs in the area.

Inside the arts world, there is a group harmony, and if there is harmony, we can be comfortable with each other and like that build peace. Also, in art there is an expression. Others, by observing, they get motivated to imitate.



Carlos Garcia prepares to perform.

What do we need for peace?

More at: afsc.org/peace-video



You would need first of all for people to have better opportunity. People to have jobs. People to have money. When you have things of that nature, just your basic needs being met, then you don't have a reason to be doing negative things.

Wahid Shakur, Baltimore



If people would stop rearranging each other and stop all the gentrifying and displacing people from their own communities and cultures.

James Fontanos, Seattle

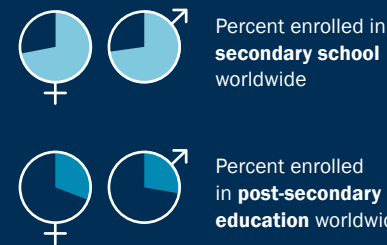
YOUTH TODAY

Political instability and conflict are devastating to young people—subjecting them to violence, interrupting schooling, disrupting health services, and inflicting psychological trauma.

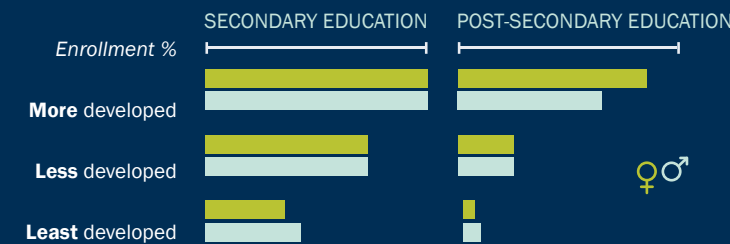
There are about **1,809,600,000** young people in the world between ages 10 and 24.

Almost **90%** of them live in **less developed countries**.

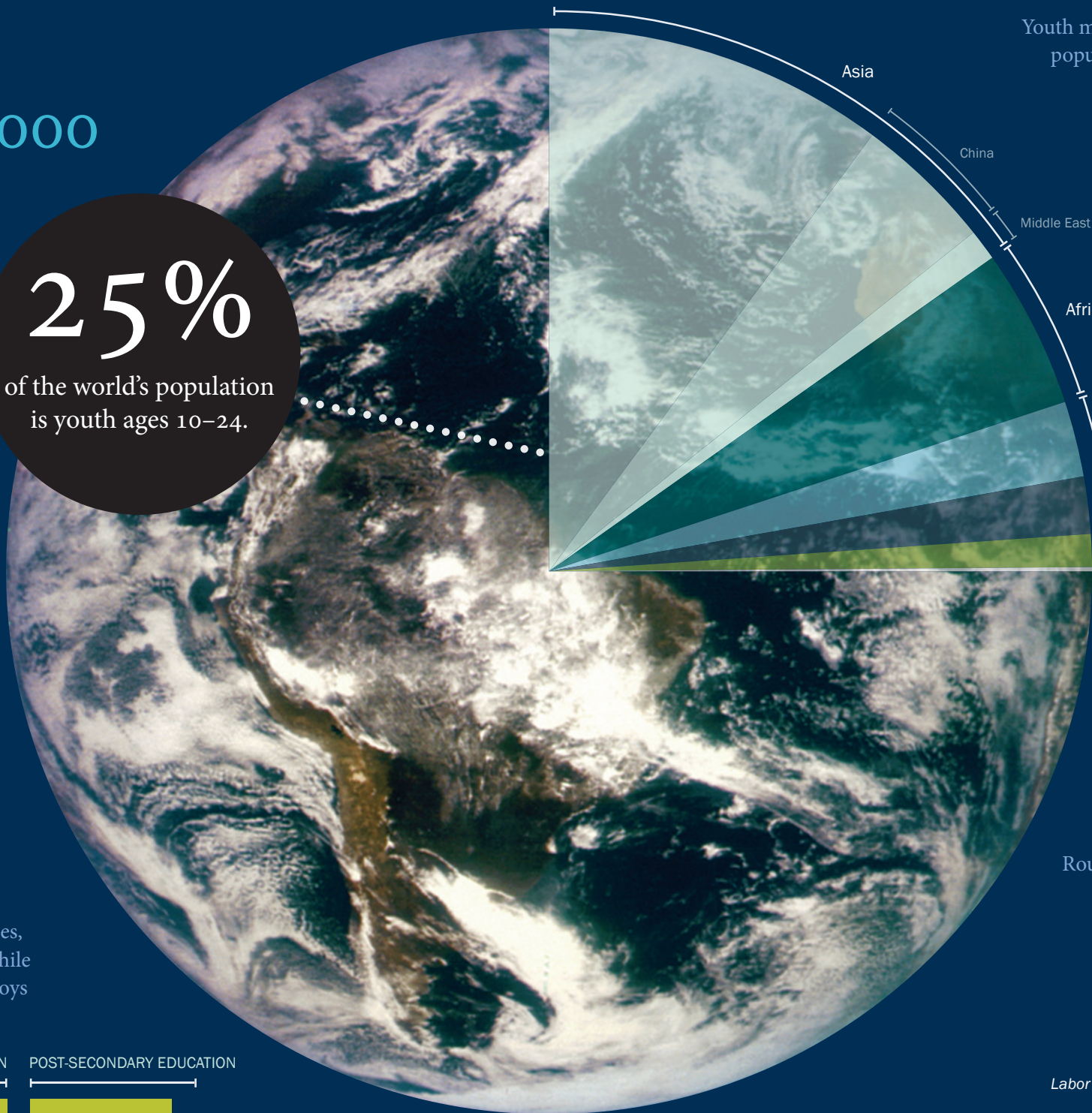
Worldwide, boys and girls are enrolled in school in roughly equal numbers:



But in the most developed countries, girls outnumber boys in school, while in the least developed countries, boys outnumber girls in school:

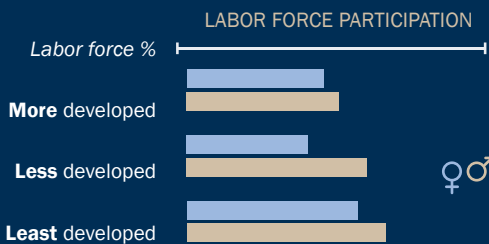


25% of the world's population is youth ages 10–24.



Numbers from the Population Reference Bureau's "The World's Youth: 2013 Data Sheet," BBC World Service, and the Global Roundtable Working Group on Youth

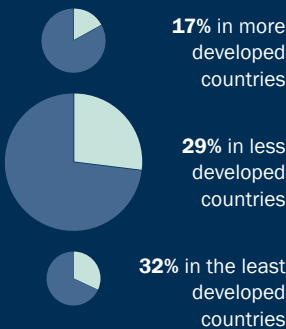
Young men are likelier to participate in the labor force than young women, especially in developing countries:



There are around **300,000** child soldiers in the world.

Worldwide, between **700,000** and **2,000,000** women and girls are victims of **sex trafficking**.

Youth make up a greater proportion of the population in less developed countries:



Latin America and the Caribbean

Europe

North America

Australia and Oceania

15- to 24-year-olds are **18%** of the world's **population**, but account for **41%** of the **unemployed**.

Roughly a sixth of 15- to 24-year-olds face unemployment:



When it's no more bullying, no more discrimination toward LGBT, and when we get the same rights as a human.

Emil Rizky Febriani, Indonesia



The golden rule for us to have a peaceful world is to treat someone the way you wish to be treated.

Shyline Kamupinda, Zimbabwe



Peace is not only the absence of wars or conflict but the feeling of happiness, stable and prosperities.

Linda Leang, Cambodia

Photos: Fuad Hindieh



Lighting the way to inclusion

In an Indonesian city, the sight of a flame burning for tolerance brought together people divided by religion. Now, the Peace Torch is making its way around the country as a symbol of the strength of diversity.

From 1965 to 1998 in Indonesia, the 33-year dictatorship of Suharto suppressed all forms of opposition and manipulated differences between ethnic and religious groups, ensuring that dissent would not result in a unified opposition. During its takeover in 1965, the regime used extrajudicial disappearances and killings, targeting anyone remotely progressive, leftist, or Chinese. Estimates of those killed during this period range from 500,000 to 1 million people.

A student movement in 1998 helped bring that dictatorship to an end, and many people were hopeful that the violence would end with it. Unfortunately, that hope was short-lived. The reform movement soon degenerated into chaos and, once again, there was senseless violence, including the targeting of ethnic Chinese.

At the same time, a transformation was taking place in the villages. Youth—who often dropped out of elementary school—were in an identity crisis. Their villages were not entirely rural anymore, but neither were they urban. There was an understanding of the city, but not access to the benefits from its bright lights. The old ways were rapidly eroding, even collapsing, in the face of globalization, commercialization, and Westernization. Some of these youth seemed remarkably vulnerable to hating “the other,” however defined, and easily provoked to violence and radicalization. Resentments grew, and acts of violence continued.

By 2011, intolerance toward Christians was on the rise in many parts of Indonesia, where Muslims make up the majority. Churches were closed and even burned in some places. Muslim sects like the Ahmadiyah, Shia, and others have also been sub-

“The Peace Torch is a tool ... people are moved to share with their family, relatives, and communities that we live in diversity and we should guard that as a mutual belief.”

—ZARNIEL WOLEKA

jected to persecution and violence.

In contrast to much of the country, Protestants and Catholics are the majority in Kupang, West Timor. As anger over these incidents rose, local youth started talking about taking revenge on the Muslim minority. Rumors and misinformation spread, threatening to spark violence.

It wouldn't have been the first time. Violence had erupted toward Muslims in this very area in the late 1990's, during the student-led reform movement.

The area is home to Zarniel Woleka, a man who gives the impression that he is always joking, with a light-hearted way of expressing himself, and because of the fact he says “I love you” so often, it is almost a tagline. But there is no doubting his serious commitment to championing diversity and inclusion, which he works on “from West Timor, for Indonesia.”

It was against the backdrop of rising inter-religious tensions that Zarniel attended an AFSC-organized youth conference on diversity and inclusion in 2011 in Yogyakarta. Zarniel remembers the tension during this time as “a landmine, which at any time could explode and destroy many people.”

The youth attending the conference wanted to act, to reverse the worrying rise in violence and intolerance.

They came up with an idea to create a Peace Torch that would travel across the archipelago as a symbol for peace, diversity, and inclusion, drawing on Indonesia's rich cultural heritage of diversity and mutual cooperation for support.



Top: Zarniel Woleka facilitates active nonviolence training for youth and LGBT activists in Kupang, West Timor. Photo: KOMPAK
Above: In Aceh, a Muslim woman fixes the makeup of a Chinese dancer. Photo: Niken Widayarsi

Above: In Aceh, a Muslim woman fixes the makeup of a Chinese dancer. *Photo: Niken Widayarsi*

Zarniel brought the idea back to Kupang, where he was the secretary of the annual Easter parade, and with local partners, made the Peace Torch a reality. They enlisted a group of youth from different faith backgrounds to carry the Peace Torch at the front of the Easter parade.

On the day of the parade, as they marched through the city, the Peace Torch touched an emotional chord with the tens of thousands of spectators lining the streets. Residents of the Muslim neighborhood were crying and shouting their support. Scores of religious and community leaders participated. The mayor of Kupang City and the governor of the province were there to light the Peace Torch and read out loud

the Peace Pledge written by local diversity activists, which would become a tradition at each successive Peace Torch celebration.

Since that day, the Peace Torch has been paraded and celebrated in several contexts. As Zarniel explains, “The Peace Torch is a tool for campaigning, so that people are moved to share with their family, relatives, and communities that we live in diversity and we should guard that as a mutual belief. Through the Peace Torch, I am sure that there are many hearts that are filled with love...”

Birth of a national movement

After the parade in Kupang, Zarniel and the youth who had carried the Peace Torch were so excited by the experience that they

formed an interfaith community called KOMPAK, the Kupang Peacemakers Community, to continue campaigning for diversity and inclusion.

For Zarniel, KOMPAK “is the proof that we can live the diversity that we have.” He works for this to become “the spirit for all people who live in this home we call Indonesia.”

In the spirit of nonviolence based on compassion and conscience, KOMPAK developed an active nonviolence curriculum, which they have used to train more than 1,000 youth who have also become KOMPAK members.

KOMPAK has gone on to organize frequent interfaith exchanges at the grassroots level, including a Christmas celebration at a Muslim orphanage and communal fast-breaking during the Muslim fasting month.

KOMPAK members were active in advocating for peaceful mayoral and gubernatorial electoral campaigns, which historically have had a high potential for violence.

At the request of the Protestant Evan-

gelical Church of Timor, KOMPAK’s active nonviolence has been adopted by churches throughout the province. In addition, the country’s Ministry of Social Affairs invited Zarniel to share KOMPAK’s experience and success with organizing youth in different forums with youth from across the Indonesian archipelago. More recently, Zarniel has started to spread active nonviolence beyond West Timor, conducting trainings for other AFSC partners in Aceh and planning for one in Yogyakarta.

Standing against intolerance

In 2014, the Peace Torch will come to Jakarta, Indonesia’s capital and largest city. When it arrives, Nia Sjarifudin will be among those celebrating. As the coordinator of the Unity Diversity Alliance, a national organization concerned with protecting Indonesia’s diversity from intolerance, she is also among the organizers of the event.

“Concern over the rapid growth of intolerance ... makes the timing very good [for the Peace Torch to be celebrated in Ja-

karta],” says Nia, “because right now Indonesia is facing threats of forced uniformity, which is at odds with the reality of Indonesia’s diversity.”

Those threats include limitations on the right to worship by religious minorities or anyone deemed “heretical” by mainstream religious leaders. In the absence of government action, religious vigilantes are attempting to “purify” Islam through threats and violence, spreading fear and intimidation and resulting in loss of life.

Though such intolerance has recently increased and intensified, there is new energy and determination in Indonesia to draw on a rich legacy of tolerance and peace, thanks to Zarniel, Nia, and hundreds of others. ■

—JIWAY TUNG

Jiway is AFSC’s country representative in Indonesia, where he has lived since 1992. In the 1990s, he experienced the birth of the student movement, but after seeing violence and intolerance increase, he started to engage more deeply at the community level. He joined AFSC nearly four years ago.



A representative of Indonesia’s Ministry for Social Affairs lights the Peace Torch in Aceh. Photo: Fadji

Listen up!

Who sets the direction for social change? For young people working to solve problems in their neighborhood, state, or the world at large, speaking out about their lived experiences, sharing their solutions, and being truly heard are critical parts of making lasting peace and justice.

From left: Romeeka Williams and Sarah Morris of the Youth Art and Self-Empowerment Project screen their film at Haverford College.



As of Oct. 28, 2013, 40 young people under 18 are locked up in Philadelphia’s adult jails, awaiting court decisions on whether to keep their cases in adult court or try them as juveniles. Each one has been accused of attempting or committing a crime that, under Pennsylvania’s Act 33, prosecutors can contend is an adult crime that should be tried in an adult court.

There’s a sense of urgency built into the juvenile system that recognizes that young people are in a critical period of development; the adult system moves at a slower pace. Defendants are supposed to be brought to trial within 365 days, though in reality, people often wait much longer for their day in court.

Youth accused as adults are caught in an Act 33 loophole—there’s no limit to

the time they might wait for the system to decide where their case will be heard, and that time doesn’t count toward the 365-day, pre-trial maximum in adult jail. Some spend years waiting. They enter jail barely teenagers, and leave nearly adults—returning home to try to pick up with their lives, or heading upstate to serve a sentence in a state prison.

A bright light in the darkness of having critical years of your life caught between systems is the weekly art, poetry, and music workshops that the Youth Art and Self-Empowerment Project (YASP) runs in Philadelphia jails. Participants released from jail have gone on to work for YASP, supporting youth in adult jails and advocating for an end to Act 33. They’re part of the national movement to end the school-to-prison pipeline and reform the way the U.S. ap-

proaches criminal justice.

Sarah Morris facilitated YASP workshops as a fellow with AFSC’s National Criminal Justice program in 2005–06 and was among the group that subsequently transitioned YASP into an entirely youth-led organization. She talks about why YASP works the way it does:

Quoted: Sarah Morris

There’s not a lot you can control when you’re locked up.

You have people basically telling you when to eat, when you can watch TV, when you can use the phone, when you can do everything, and what you think and write is one of the few things you can control. It’s as if it’s really set up to break people down.

I’ve seen writing act as a really important tool to maintain some sense of yourself

and what you stand for and what you believe in. It can be a tool to fight back against a system that is constantly telling you that you don't matter, that you're not fully human, that you're a number.

Krip is a really talented poet. He went through the workshop, and now he's upstate at Pine Grove, serving a six-year sentence. Here is something he sent me:

My poetry is not merely just a hobby. It's what keeps me sane. With no other outlet to express what I hate, love, and pity, I turn to the lines on the white backdrop and empty my mind by filling the paper. In prison it may seem you have no distractions, but my mind never stops anticipating. I think about more than I knew was possible. Everything makes more sense when I write, so I write. My fuel

comes from what I've been through—abuse, neglect, hatred, fear, and what I've lost. It's unexplainable in my mind yet it makes sense in ink. ...

...

Lasting change happens when the people who are most affected by the problem are at the forefront of the fight. Young people are most impacted by the law and by violence—they have the best understanding of what it's going to take to stop violence in Philly.

I think that young people who have been incarcerated in adult facilities ... have the deepest understanding of how that impacts people and what needs to be changed, and, I think, can provide a vision of what we should be doing differently.

I also think, in general, young people tend to have a little bit of a broader politi-

cal imagination, and don't as easily fall into the trap of just accepting things as they are. A lot of the young people in our workshops have a strong desire not to see their kids, or their young siblings, go through the things that they've gone through. So I think there's a strong sense of urgency about why we need things to work differently.

YASP is focused on making long-term change, and in the short-term, thinking about how to empower people who are most directly affected and support people on a daily basis. It's important that young people are the staff of YASP because there's a lot of power that comes with doing the everyday work of the organization. You feel invested in the organization.

Find YASP online: www.yasproject.com



Left: YASP's Sarah Morris, Joshua Glenn, and Alisha Alexander march from Philadelphia to Harrisburg, advocating for "a people's budget, not a prison budget." Center: Storm Coleman testifies in front of West Virginia's Select Committee on Children and Families. Right: Jamie Carroll, Zachary Banks, Joshua Glenn, and Sarah Morris speak to law students at Temple University.



Speaking truth to power

To people who criticize welfare and disability recipients in West Virginia, 16-year-old Storm Coleman suggests a visualization exercise: "Picture yourself in my mom's shoes."

"Imagine that you're overweight, or you're in pain all day, you can't walk around, and you have three kids to provide for, and no job will hire you either because you're disabled or 'cause you're overqualified—'cause my mom is really smart."

Delivering this message face-to-face, he's seen people soften. "Some of them act surprised because it's coming from a 15 or

16-year-old, because they wouldn't expect it," he says.

Storm is part of the afterschool program that AFSC runs in his region, Believing All is Possible (BAPS), which connected him with the Children of the Future Campaign. "We have meetings to talk about problems that need fixing, and about child poverty, drug abuse, and crime," he explains. "Last time we went to the Capitol to talk about them."

In front of members of the Senate and House of Delegates in Charleston, he shared his life story—going hungry as a child, skirting the juvenile justice system,

living with his loving family, and finding a strong voice to speak up. A video of his moving testimony at the state capitol is online at afsc.org/storms-story.

"The most important thing that young people need to succeed in life is their education first. But that's not the only thing," he said. "There has to be afterschool programs like BAPS; there has to be a whole bunch of people looking out for you—you need people bugging you about doing better in school; you need a juvenile justice system that helps teens who are stuck in that type of life get back on their feet." ■

—NEAH MONTEIRO

Sustenance of a student movement

Young people looking for social change have, throughout AFSC's history, turned to the Service Committee for support. One of the first examples of AFSC's defense of student rights was in 1960. In response to constitutionally mandated desegregation, authorities in Prince Edward County, Va., shut down the public school system. AFSC's Emergency Placement Project organized host communities willing to welcome the county's high school students into their homes and schools, allowing these students to continue their education. Much of the organization and work was accomplished with the active participation of the affected students.

A voice for youth

As students' needs changed, AFSC responded with new ways of meeting those needs. Young people needed a means of expression and

a forum where they could be heard and their opinions valued. At a 1967 national round-up meeting of all staff in the organization's High School Program, Chair Beth Scheffer stated, "Public education has not fulfilled the expectations of many young people. ... The high school student today has no role; he is on the outside clamoring to have a voice."

At that same meeting, AFSC's Executive Secretary Colin Bell stated, "We must now expand every effort to relate ourselves to youth, or be lost. The best of youth today knows more of love than most adults; we have something to learn from them. Love does not make all things easy; it makes us choose that which is difficult."

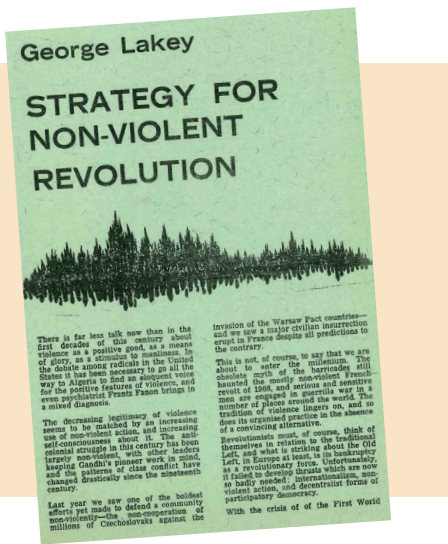
The High School Papers

In 1971, the Syracuse, N.Y., office developed a project involving high school students working on materials of interest to their peers. Initially their concept was to create a handbook on student rights, but it ended up as a kit called "The High School Papers," filled with articles and information on student rights, alternatives to sexual abstinence, the potential dangers of drug usage, organizing for change, draft counseling, and methods of nonviolent protest.

Examples include: "Who Rules Your School," "How to Take the Worry Out of Being Close," "How to Start A High School Underground Newspaper," and George Lakey's article



Like a subversive textbook, The High School Papers covered everything from student rights to safe sex to organizing for change.



AFSC brought the ideas of Quaker activist George Lakey to a high school audience.

on “Strategy for Non-Violent Revolution.” Throughout the 1970s, AFSC’s other high school rights activities included the Student Rights and Responsibilities Program in Dayton, Ohio, and the Boston Public Education Program, which addressed unconstitutional practices in the city’s public schools. School integration work was developed in San Francisco, Chicago, and Pasadena. In Seattle and Portland, the work focused on Native American youth.

Countering militarism

In the 1980s, AFSC’s U.S. programs continued to educate students about their

rights while strengthening community understanding and ability to address issues such as desegregation, discipline, violence, and drugs.

In 1987, AFSC developed the Youth and Militarism program, which combined AFSC’s focus on public education with the concern over the increasing presence of military recruitment personnel and programs in many public schools across the nation. The program worked with students, informing them of their rights, providing education on the full obligation of military enlistment, and explaining viable non-military alternatives for students after graduation. ■

—DONALD DAVIS

Support AFSC’s next generation of change makers

Throughout our history, AFSC has been a catalyst for change, providing a platform for individual change makers—people who have the courage to speak up for a better world and are willing to stand tall and bear witness for peace and justice. Please help support and inspire the next generation of peacemakers by making a gift today at afsc.org/changemakers

Some of today’s change makers...



Yeni Sufaeni
INDONESIA

“My dream, and obviously the dream of our community, is that there will no longer be any conflict, be it over different faiths, ethnicities, or race.”



Hector Salamanca
DES MOINES, IOWA

“No human being is illegal.”



Carlos “Elmo” Gomez
LOS ANGELES

“To be realistic, we have to think about the impossible. When I work with people, I say, ‘Let’s try to create what we want to see.’ We need to create it visibly.”



Snapshot

A look at AFSC around the world

Women in Musongati, a rural area in Burundi’s Rutana province, gather weekly to take stock of their community savings. Throughout the country, such “savings circles” bring together neighbors who pool their money, grant loans for small business endeavors, and support each other in times of need. Photo: AFSC/Tony Heriza



Left to right, top to bottom:

1. Boycott! Economic activism exhibit, Washington, D.C.
2. Father’s day rally, Newark, N.J.
3. Peace village, Makamba province, Burundi
4. Visiting elders, Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territory
5. March on Washington anniversary, Washington, D.C.
6. Building a new park in La Paz, Guatemala City, Guatemala
7. Responding to prisoners’ letters, Ann Arbor, Mich.
8. Workers’ rights workshop, Miami, Fla.
9. Barber shop, Makamba province, Burundi
10. “Secure your own community” training, Molalla, Ore.
11. Volunteers power Prison Watch, Newark, N.J.
12. Interns at Xavier University, Dayton, Ohio

Photos: Tory Smith, Lindsey Warne, Neah Monteiro, Skip Schiel, Bryan Vana, Javier Reyes, Jon Krieg, Bryan Vana, Neah Monteiro, Douglas Yarrow, AFSC, Jon Krieg



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Organizers of Yogyakarta, Indonesia's annual cultural parade incorporated LGBT activists in early planning stages this year. Among the 200 participating groups were young boys performing "kuda lumping"—flat-horse dancing, an East Java tradition.

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Who we are

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice, as a practical expression of faith in action. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems.

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