Human rights education: A framework for building community

Dan Prinzing and Phillip A. Price
Idaho Human Rights Education Centre(USA)

Abstract

'Promoting Tolerance and Ethnic Reconciliation in the Balkans through Civic Education' was designed and delivered as a two-year U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor funded project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo from 2008-10. The goals of the project were to increase tolerance and inter-ethnic amity among young people in the region and impact the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for effective, competent, and responsible participation in democratic self-governance. As Boyte and Farr (Atherton, 2000) state, 'The young should be thought of as citizens-in-the-making who have serious work to do.' To evaluate the impact of the project on its participants, the Idaho Human Rights Education Centre (Boise, Idaho) conducted a qualitative study. Data collection included the triangulation of observation, document and student product review, and focus group/individual interviews. The emphasis on qualitative research 'allows us to stay close to the empirical world [and to] ensure a close fit between the data and what people actually say and do' (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998, p. 9). The findings are presented as narratives, each telling the story through the eyes and words of the students, teachers and in-country coordinators participating in the project. The approach attempts to 'understand the experience as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it' (Sherman & Webb, 1988).

Keywords: human rights education, civic education, Balkans, civic dispositions

> We became very close to each other.There was a day that we cried. We were talking about our cousins and our friends who are orphans. When our teacher told us about this project we didn't know what we were going to do; we just came here. But now, we are not doing this just for us, because it is our right or something, we really want to help those children because we know that they need our help and it's very, very good to know that we can do something (Kosovo, Lipjan student interview, 2010).

Background

Promoting Tolerance and Ethnic Reconciliation in the Balkans through Civic Education was designed and delivered as a two-year U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour funded project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo from 2008-10. The goals of the project were to increase tolerance and inter-ethnic amity among young people in the region and impact the knowledge, skills and dispositions required

for effective, competent, and responsible participation in democratic self-governance. As Boyteand Farr (Atherton, 2000) state, "The young should be thought of as citizens-in-the-making who have serious work to do."

The overall project design included initial teacher training and implementation pilot in each country, a training of trainers, full implementation site visits, in-country regional and national student showcases, and culminating camp in Macedonia that brought together 40 students and accompanying teachers/trainers from each country.In total, over 30 classes reaching approximately 1,050 students in Bosnia & Herzegovina, 30 classrooms with approximately 990 students in Kosovo, and 40 classrooms reaching 900 students in Serbia were involved in the project.

To evaluate the impact of the project on its participants, the Idaho Human Rights Education Centre (Boise, Idaho) conducted a qualitative study. Qualitative methodology adheres to a phenomenological perspective; the approach "views human behaviour, what people say and do, as a product of how they define their world" (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998, p. 10). The research process is both inductive and flexible. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 1) conclude, 'Words, especially when organized into incidents or stories, have a concrete, vivid, meaningful flavour that often prove far more convincing to the reader than pages of summarized numbers.'

While the primary research question focused on the project's adherence to the standards for effective civic and human rights education, the study also examined the broader depth in civic learning and included the three components of a student's civic competency: civic knowledge, cognitive and participatory civic skills and civic dispositions. Civic education scholar Margaret Bransoncontends, "Democracy needs *affective*, as well as *effective* citizens. Habits of the heart may be the most important outcome of good civic education" (Branson, 2008, p. 15).

Utilized as the curricular base of the project in each of the three participating countries, *Project Citizen* is an education program developed by the Centre for Civic Education (Woodland Hills, California) to "promote competent and responsible participation in local and state government [as well as] develop support for democratic values and principles, tolerance, and feelings of political efficacy."

Through a problem-solving methodology and the analysis of public policy, students identify public policy problems in the community, gather information utilizing a variety of sources, and develop a class portfolio. The portfolio identifies the problem, examines alternative policy solutions to address the problem, presents the class policy to address the problem, and outlines an action plan for influencing the appropriate policymakers to implement the suggested policy. The process is student-driven, encourages cooperative learning, and integrates theory with practicein a problem-solving real life context.

Absent in the original version of *Project Citizen*, UNESCO advocates that:

> The norm for modern civic education programmes (is) to have a strong humanrights values base and address issues related to diversity and the rights ofminorities within society. All forms of citizenship education aim at shaping respectfor others by fostering a spirit of tolerance and peace.

Teacher training and classroom implementation throughout the project integrated a human rights framework from which community issues were identified and selected by the students for research and presentation. The use and addition of a human rights framework with *Project Citizen* was three-fold:

1. *Project Citizen* was already being used in over 70 countries around the globe;
2. A 2007 pilot project integrating human rights education with *Project Citizen* had demonstrated the effective pairing of democratic / civic education with human rights education to foster a classroom environment in which the 'other' was respected and valued in society, not discriminated against and disenfranchised; and,
3. The pairing provided a mechanism for both learning *about* human rights and learning *for* human rights - components deemed essential for any human rights education program.

While there was a general consensus and commitment among the project developers to foster civic dispositions, the idea of introducing 'civic morality' became contentious. Questions revolved around who decides the "morals" that should be taught. This line of inquiry provided the reasoning for utilizing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the primary vehicle to teach participants about human rights and the dispositions that promote and sustain a democratic form of government.

Integrating human rights

In his seminal work *Universal Human Rights: In Theory and Practice*, Jack Donnelly, Andrew Mellon professor at the University of Denver, argues'the Universal Declaration model is rooted in an attractive moral vision of human beings as equal and autonomous agents living in states that treat each citizen with equal concern and respect' (Donnelly, 2003, p 38). Basically, the UDHR is the most commonly agreed upon set of principles for respecting the dignity and rights of each and every human being.

> Human rights are not a subject that can be studied at a distance. Students should not just learn about the Universal Declaration, about racial injustice, or about homelessness without also being challenged to think about what it means for them personally. As human rights educators, we must ask our students and ourselves, "How does this all relate to the way we live our lives?" (Shiman, 1999, p. 2)

Noted democratic scholar John Patrick concluded that "The idea of human rights is best

taught within a conceptual context that enable the learner to understand how it is connected to other core concepts in the theory and practice of representative democracy, such as democratic elections, constitutional government and the rule of law, citizenship, and civil society." Patrick also went on to say that when one examines the political history of modern times, "The best guarantor of human rights is a healthy representative democracy" (Patrick, 2006, p. 3).

Fundamentally, in order to protect and ensure human rights, governments must produce individuals who have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to ensure continued democratic stability for all its citizens. This attitude toward education heeds Walt Whitman'swarning when he stated in 'Democratic Vistas',

> Of all the dangers to a nation…there can be no greater one than having certain portions of the people set off from the rest by a line drawn – they not privileged as others, but degraded, humiliated, made no account of (Whitman, 1982, p. 949).

While civic knowledge and general information regarding human rights can be effectively tested through quantitative means, assessing the acquisition of civic dispositions, as well as shifts in attitudes toward human rights, are much harder to determine due to the subjective nature of the data. As stated by Branson (2008, p. 15), "We can 'count' the number of facts a student knows and we can measure some civic skills. But testing the understanding and commitment to democratic values, as well as the willingness to act upon those values, eludes us." Branson's conclusion reinforced the researchers' selection and use of a qualitative research design.

Data collection

Data collection included the triangulation of observation, document and student product review, and focus group / individual interviews. The emphasis qualitative researchers put on the meaningfulness of their research "allows us to stay close to the empirical world [and to] ensure a close fit between the data and what people actually say and do"(Taylor and Bogdan, 1998, p. 9). The findings are presented as narratives, each telling the story through the eyes and words of the students, teachers and in-country coordinators participating in the project. The approach attempts to "understand the experience as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it" (Sherman & Webb, 1988).

> Love is all we need, and Serbs and Kosovars and Bosnia - we all want it.
> We want the world based on justice, courage and love between women and men.
> We want the 1990s never to hurt us again.
> (Bosnia student poetry, 2010)

To obtain the data, the researchers chose an in-depth qualitative approach for both individual and focus group interviews. "The in-depth interview is modelled after a conversation

between equals rather than a formal question and answer exchange. Far from being an impersonal data collector, the interviewer, and not the interview schedule or protocol, is the research tool"(Taylor and Bogdan, 1998, p. 88).The flexibility in gathering information allowed the interviewer to record perspectives and experiences in the participants' own words. While still utilizing a rough interview guide, the interviewer was able to follow the data to uncover areas of interest rather than be restricted by a rigid questionnaire.

Since fostering civic dispositions was a key goal in the project, it was necessary to find a way to discern if character traits were being impacted. Hence, the participants' own voices became the measure for the acquisition of dispositions. Since there is no paper-and-pencil test that can accurately portray a commitment to democratic principles and willingness to act for the betterment of one's community, the in-depth interviewing method was employed to allow participants to tell their stories, and in the process elaborate on their experiences and lessons learned throughout the program.

The schools in which research was conducted were selected by the project steering committee and in-country partners. The window of opportunity to speak with participants was limited; thus, in-depth interviewing was an efficient method for gathering information. Due to the nature of the project, long-term participant observation was not a viable option. During the course of the study, the researcher conducted interviews in various settings in five Balkan countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Macedonia). Each site provided access to an expanded pool of project participants, including students, teachers, school administrators, government officials, NGO representatives, and the project developers.

Participants were selected through both purposive and theoretical sampling. In-country partners were tasked with choosing the teachers and school administrators to participate in the initial trainings, as well as the training of trainers and the culminating camp. In-country partners also selected the students who would represent the program through the presentation of the *Project Citizen* portfolios at the culminating camp. This purposive sampling allowed the researcher to interview those the partner countries felt were representative of the program as a whole.

While initial selection of the participants was determined by the Balkan partners, individuals or focus groups selected for in-depth interviews were at the discretion of the researcher. This freedom allowed for theoretical sampling.

> Selecting groups or individuals to study on the basis of their relevance to your researchquestions... theoreticalsampling is concerned with constructing a sample...which is meaningful theoretically, because it builds in certain characteristics or criteria which help to develop and test your theory and explanations (Silverman, 2000, p. 105).

With access to a wide cast of informants regarding the impact of the human rights model of

Project Citizen, the validity of the research was enhanced. As stated by Creswell and Miller, validity can be defined as "how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them...[Additionally] validity refers not to the data but the inferences drawn from them." Using this assumption, data was collected from a diverse sample in order to "search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" i.e. triangulation (Creswell and Miller, 2000, p. 126).

Data coding

Recommended by Miles and Huberman, data was analyzed throughout the research process. "It helps the field-worker cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new data" (1994, p. 50). The 'cycling' allowed for new interpretations of the data and was instrumental in the development of interview questions and interviewee selection as data collection progressed.

The researcher manually coded all interviews according to the study's research question. To assess the impact of the project's curricular base, each remark was coded as it pertained to or deviated from the goals for effective civic education as stated by the National Conference on State Legislatures (NCSL). Did the program help students:

1. become informed and thoughtful, have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of democracy, have an understanding and awareness of public and community issues, and have the ability to obtain information, think critically, and enter into dialogue among others with different perspectives;
2. participate in their communities through membership in or contributions to organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs;
3. act politically by having the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes, such as group problem solving, public speaking, petitioning and protesting, and voting; and
4. have moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance?

Each remark was also classified as to its adherence to the United Nations Framework for Human Rights Education.In the publication 'Teaching Human Rights: Practical activities for primary and secondary schools' (2004), the United Nations presents a framework for a comprehensive human rights education program. This framework provides five distinct categories in which interviewee responses were placed.

1. Goals: Did the program increase student knowledge of human rights concepts, including specific rights, citizenship, and social responsibility, through participation in the active-learning approach?

2. Key Concepts: Did students examine concepts key to understanding and respecting human rights, including: self, community, individual rights, personal responsibility, freedom, equality, justice, rule of law, authority, government, and international law?
3. Practices: Did the program provide students with the opportunity to engage in practices such as cooperation and sharing through small group work, self-expression and listening, civic participation, understanding others point of view, conflict resolution, citing evidence in support of ideas, doing research and gathering information, and sharing information?
4. Types of Human Rights Problems Addressed: Did program participants examine problems within their communities ranging from bullying in schools to sanitation issues, and propose solutions that do not conflict with local, national, and international law?
5. Human Rights Standards Explored: Did the outcomes of the proposed program include increased student knowledge and skill in applying human rights standards, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and those developed by the local and national government, to their everyday lives?

Additionally, adhering to the recommendations of Patrick and Branson that a comprehensive civic education requires the building of civic dispositions, and operating under the Centre for Civic Education's (CCE) belief that "a free society must rely on the knowledge, skills, and virtue of its citizens and those they elect to public office," interview responses were coded to four of the thirteen civic dispositions outlined in the *National Standards for Civics and Government* (CCE, 1994). The dispositions are:

- civility – treating other people with respect regardless of whether or not one likes them or agrees with their viewpoints, being willing to listen to other points of view, not being insulting when arguing with others
- open mindedness – willingness to consider other points of view
- civic mindedness – concern for the well-being of one's community
- compassion – concern for the well-being of others, especially for the less fortunate

The four dispositions were selected due to their alignment to the project goals. However, it became apparent in the coding the number of the full list of the thirteen dispositions that were touched upon in the interview responses. In addition to the identified four dispositions, the list includes: respect for the rights of other individuals, respect for the law, honesty, critical mindedness, negotiation/compromise, persistence, patriotism, courage, and tolerance of ambiguity.

The findings

Following the initial teacher training in each country and the pilot of the project's

implementation protocol, individual teacher and focus group interviews were conducted with a cadre of educators selected from each of the participating countries to become program trainers. In total, the interviews included six teachers from Serbia, six from Kosovo and eight from Bosnia. The focus of the teacher interviews was to capture the initial impression on the integration of a human rights framework in education for democracy through the *Project Citizen* process.

> *Project Citizen*, in general, is an excellent project, and I really think highly of it. But itis also really important that this project is being implemented in local communities. So children are focused on their local immediate environment. And they, of course, areteaching the rights of the child in second grade so they are already familiar with it. But by teaching human rights, you're not only telling children what their rights are as human rights. But they are teaching them how to notice, how to identify if these rights are being implemented in their own community, and, on the other hand, if they are violated. Children then know how to recognize what actually happens, not only that they are aware of humanrights, but what is happening in the community. And the project also offers a wide range of activities where they can, let's say try themselves out and learn how to do all these things (Serbia teacherfocus group interview, 2009).

> Human rights are really connected with life in Kosovo. It is a bit difficult. A violationof human rights is directly connected to the situation now in Kosovo. So it's funny, you know, a bit ridiculous and awkward, telling children about human rights and about howthey should be respected, and they look around, you know, they see it's not like that. Sothat said, gradually I really think that the situation is improving...we really hope in the near future, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we'll be living down the issues (Kosovo teacher individual interview, 2009).

The teachers felt that the program would improve their students' knowledge of human rights and provide them with a vehicle to move instruction beyond a theoretical understanding of rights to a practical process for addressing human rights violations. Additionally, the teachers voiced that the program would empower their students to respect and defend themselves, highlighting the importance of including instruction that emphasizes the responsibility accompanying every right.

Eleven group interviews were conducted with students engaged in the project (four in Bosnia and Herzegovina, three in Serbia and four in Kosovo). The interviews were conducted on location in the participating schools; the schools were selected by the in-country project coordinators in each respective country. Selection was based on student progress in the development of the *Project Citizen* process and culminating portfolio, as well as logistical concerns due to travel constraints. The following were drawn as representative responses.

The students in Ludavac, Bosnia, had selected the access to safe food as their community

issue, citing Article 25 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food..."

> If we want this problem to be solved in the future this is something that requires not only activecitizens but also the actions of all levels of authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are asmall group; we are not able to do much, maybe, but we hope to focus the attention of the community to the importance of this problem and to instigate some activities in solving this problem.

> So we are suggesting a small campaign of raising awareness of all members of our society, including food producers, and different presentations and awareness raising sessions with theparents, with the teachers, with the students, and also with members of the community; thena cooperation with the association of consumers, and a different radio show and different thingson the internet; adoptions of new and changes in already existing laws; then an introduction ofconstant food quality control in school; an addition of hygiene products to the soup kitchensin our country; then mobile laboratories in customs imported; and to apply to the minister of agriculture for funds for the implementation of funds for the project that we proposed for educatingthe agricultural food producers (Bosnia, Ludavac student group #2 interview, 2010).

In addition to articulating a commitment to civic-mindedness, this particular student group proceeded to explain in great detail the structure of the Bosnian government and the role that each department would play in the actualization of their selected project.

Students in Kikinda, Serbia, researched the environmental consequence of illegal dumps surrounding their community. While not directly impacting any of the students, in the course of the interview they begin to discuss the plight of the Roma communitythat lives next to the dump grounds.

> They are human beings, and they are also entitled to the same rights as us, to breathe clean air,fresh air. Who knows? Maybe we'll get an illegal dump just below this window, and then it willreally be our problem.

> But we also live in our municipality, and the city itself is a huge community; that's one community.
> And we need to take care of our community, to protect it. We really wanted to call people'sattention to the fact that we can influence things like this.   We don't need huge projects or hugemoney.   So be the change you want to see in the world.

> The Serbian Constitution Article 74 stipulates the following: we all have the right to live in a clean environmentand in the Republic of Serbia, basically, it's their obligation to enable everybody [to] exercise this right. Agenda 21 is the action plan

for development for the 21st Century – it definesthe role of the local communities pertaining to sustainable development at the local level. Each localcommunity or local authority should also initiate a dialogue with the citizens, companies, and local organizations to join forces in defining the best strategy for realization of this. That means that the authorities need to cooperate and consult the citizens and learn from them, and vice versa.

A clean environment is guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Serbia, Kikinda student group interview, 2010).

Civility, civic-mindedness, compassion – the students spoke both freely and confidently about the needs of others in their community. They also articulated the role of local and national authorities to uphold the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, clearly distinguishing between the promises that had been made in their constitutions, the aspirations of the UDHR, and what promises were not being kept.

In many cases, student responses could have been coded to more than just one goal or standard for effective human rights and civic education. Consequently, there were both overlapping themes and civic dispositions. The following interview was conducted with the student group in Lipjan, Kosovo (2010); the problem selected was the rights of orphans.

In many of the classes more than half of the students are orphan children – without parents.   They were either killed in the war or they died naturally. So we wanted to help them, to create public policy with a law or administrative issues. We took the information about the kids.   How many in Lipjan are orphaned? Are they just with one parent or without any of the parents? We took many reports from the television and newspaper. We took many, many interviews. We went to schools, we went to many institutes talking to the people, interviewing them. They were telling us what they think about the problem. We went to the president of our community and he said that he liked our job and that really soon he was going to help us – so that the students have a nicer life, an easier life, without having to pay for buses or for books and for other things that they need in school, or for medications and so on.

The state has an obligation to its children…There is a quote from Mother Teresa: 'Don't wait for leaders to become your own person.' So everyone can stand up and make a change. We can do it. We went three times to the president of Lipjan. We think that everybody can make a change with public policy.We are not just fighting for our rights in the community; we are not making any exception for Albanians, for Serbian, or for Romas.   It's for everybody.

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to determine if integrating a human rights framework into *Project Citizen* added value to an already-proven program. More specifically, does including human rights education in the *Project Citizen* process adhere to standards for effective civic and human rights education, foster civic dispositions, and/or increase awareness *of* and respect *for* human rights in areas that are considered divided societies or former conflict zones?

The findings suggests a definite value added with the integration of a human rights framework into the *Project Citizen* curriculum. Three distinct benefits came from the curricular adaptation: 1) a clear sense of personal and social responsibility for protecting and promoting rights; 2) increased awareness *of* and respect *for* human rights in areas that are considered divided societies or former conflict zones; and 3) the acquisition of civic dispositions.

Benefit one

One concern voiced by some participating teacherswas that the model did not focus enough on the inherent responsibilities of democratic participation. Teachers felt that human rights were emphasized but not the personal responsibility required for the realization of said rights.   However, student responses to interview questions, as well as the art, poetry, and final evaluation assignments, suggest this concern was unfounded.

Without fail, students interviewed stated that they, the individual citizens, were responsible for the protection and promotion of rights. This sentiment was reaffirmed in the responses gathered through exercises during the culminating camp that pointed to a deep sense of personal responsibility for the amelioration of community problems. Moreover, in addition to the positive statements made by participants, each student demonstrated, through concrete actions, his/her responsibility for the betterment of the community and respective political structures.

Benefit two

The data collected suggests that the addition of a human rights framework into *Project Citizen* appears to increase awareness *of* and respect *for* human rights in areas that are considered divided societies or former conflict zones. In regard to awareness *of* human rights*,* during all student interviews participants correctly referenced the specific articles of the UDHR that were violated. Students also correctly identified the impetus behind the drafting of the UDHR and the fundamental reason why individuals possess human rights - "because we are human."

Additionally, many of the student groups branched out beyond the UDHR to include the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as problem-specific treaties such as the Kyoto Protocols. This suggests that student research is only limited to their imagination and effort.

Students who wanted more information about human rights, and how to utilize these concepts in their arguments, were able to locate appropriate examples of human rights treaties, declarations and protocols.

Regarding respect *for* human rights, the public policy aspect and active learning methodology of *Project Citizen* encouraged participants to take action in the resolution of their selected community problems. In all interviews and participant projects, students outlined direct actions that they had already taken or are planning to undertake to solve their selected problems. To quote one Serbian student (Kikinda, 2010):

> Well, to be honest, last year when these rights were presented to us in our classes, it didn't mean much to me. But once we started diving deeper into this process and comprehending these rights, we understood that they need to be respected for the benefit of the entire community and that really matters. And these are not only papers. This is something that will help us, assist us in our future life, to improve the quality level.

This quote is just one of many promising remarks, but it touches upon an important theme. When combining active-learning, project-based assignments with human rights education, students view human rights documents as practical means to better their societies. When students actively participate and work for the realization of rights, those rights become "more than just pieces of paper."

Benefit three

Instilling civic dispositions was a primary goal of this project due to the volatile nature of the region in which the program took place. Educating a generation of students who respect the 'other' and are willing to work for the betterment of their communities is paramount. In his 1988 work, *The Civic Imperative,* Richard Pratt summarizes the importance of civic dispositions:

> Civic virtue is not a matter of mere behaviour; it is a matter of forming a civic disposition, a willingness to act in behalf of the public good while being attentive to and considerate of the feelings, needs, and attitudes of others. It implies an obligation or duty to be fair to others, to show kindness and tact, and to render agreeable service to the community (p17).

Basically stated, it is one thing to know that there is a problem in one's community. It is quite another to have the character and moral fortitude necessary to act for the greater good. However, as important as these character traits are, the subjective nature of civic dispositions renders them difficult to evaluate. Yet, if the student voices are any indicator of the acquisition of civic dispositions, then one of the primary goals of this project was met. Students spoke to, and demonstrated, civility, civic-mindedness, open-mindedness and

compassion. They did this in the selection of problems that were violations of human rights norms – which in many cases did not affect them directly. They did this in the gathering of information when they stepped outside of their comfort zones to respectfully obtain the opinions of others who may or may not agree with them. They did this in the tangible actions they carried out to improve their communities. They did this at the culminating camp when they interacted constructively with students and teachers from the other participating countries.

The findings suggest that the addition of human rights education into *Project Citizen* meets the requirements for an effective education in human rights and civics. Participants' responses spoke to the supporting nature of human rights and democracy and to the character traits that the program engenders. It speaks to compassion, it speaks to empowerment, it speaks to a commitment to the lives of others, it speaks to the gravity of the problems students chose, and it speaks to a willingness to responsibly act in one's community for the protection and promotion of rights.

> We want a world where people have a right to fulfill their hopes and desires,
> to be proud and walk straight, to be happy and to work.
> We want a world where children have a home and a mom and dad,
> go to school, play and have no fear of war.
> We want an economic system that's better than Canadian –
> where nobody's hungry and everyone has a job.
> We want a political system where we're free to say what kind of world we want to
> live in
> and are not afraid of doing so.
> We want a cultural climate of tolerance and non-violence,
> where every human being has his own place.
> We want a world based on the values of freedom, justice, human dignity –
> where each person is more precious than any wealth.
> We want a world led by those who have the vision of a better tomorrow,
> a world where people respect each other
> and where the sun shines every morning for everyone.
> (Serbia student poetry, 2010)

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