

HUMANITY IN ACTION

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Making a difference

➤ HIA Senior Fellows in Action



HUMANITY IN ACTION

introduction



As an international educational initiative, HIA engages university students and young professionals in supporting vulnerable minorities and thereby strengthening democratic societies. In its first set of annual summer fellowship programs, starting in 1999, HIA involved Fellows from Denmark, The Netherlands and the United States. 29 Since then HIA has expanded through programs in France, Germany, Poland and the United States. HIA has also developed numerous internships and supported the creation of Senior Fellow associations, not just in the six countries where HIA has summer fellowship programs, but also in Brussels, London and Sarajevo, where many Senior Fellows study and work. Today, it is clear that one critical measure of HIA's success – and, according to the HIA Board of Directors, the most important – is the professional and personal growth of its Senior Fellows, both as individuals and as they work together on civic engagement.

HIA Senior Fellows have created this booklet to represent their own vision of the values and mission of the organization. The publication describe the many ways in which HIA Senior Fellows, building upon their experiences during their summer fellowship program, are trying to make a difference in the world.

Working with the two HIA Centers in New York and Paris, a committee of Senior Fellows selected a set of profiles – differing in tone and style – which represent the varied personalities, fields of interest and actions at work within HIA. With approximately 800 Senior Fellows around the world today, such a selection can at best only provide an idea, a taste of who and where the Senior Fellows are, as well as the projects and activities they undertake.

contents

The grouping of profiles in three different categories sheds light on three of the most representative ways in which HIA works. The first reveals that the participants in HIA programs are very diverse: ethnically, geographically, socially, culturally and religiously. The Senior Fellows represent myriad life stories and intellectual trajectories. As shown in the second section, this diversity deeply enriches the summer fellowship program and provides much of their dynamic. Different personalities and talents provide very different perspectives on human and minority rights, the desire to learn, confront contrasting viewpoints and understand diverging opinions. Finding inspiration in such discussions is truly one of the signatures of HIA programs. Finally, HIA believes that in taking responsibility for the societies and world we live in, there are many meaningful paths of action and measures of success. The third section therefore aims at showing different means of social and political leadership that some HIA Senior Fellows have chosen.

HIA is committed to *éducation permanente* – in regard to civic engagement, outreach and action. The entire HIA organization is sustained and enriched by the continuing accomplishments, respect, trust and loyalty that animate the Senior Fellows. HIA is presently developing resources to provide them with constructive and innovative support as they collaborate on new action projects – within and across disciplines and within and beyond country borders. We hope our readers will find, like us, that the message of HIA Senior Fellows to the world is one of modernity, intelligence, and hope.

Judy Goldstein

Founder and Executive Director

March 25th, 2009.

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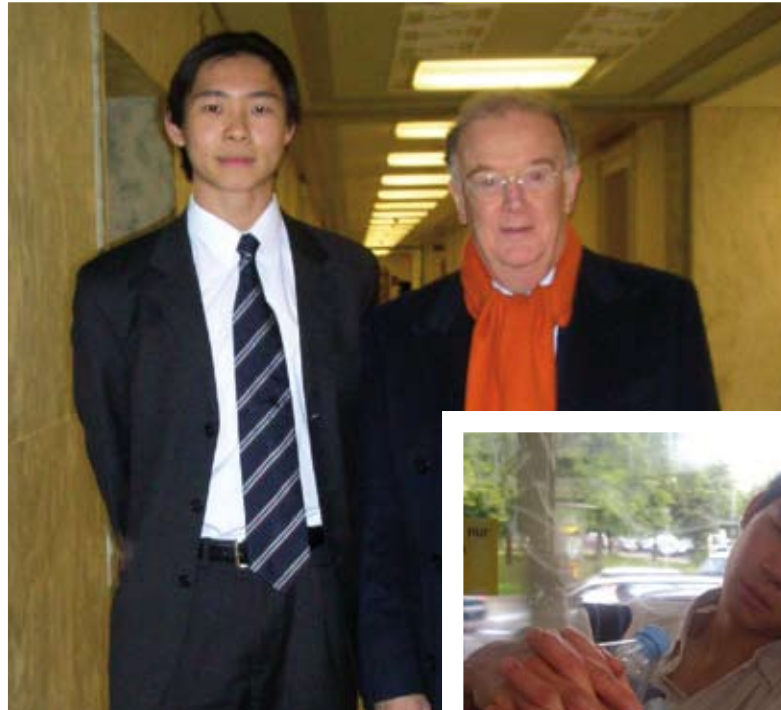
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Diversity & Participation



1. Pau Y & Gerrit Reininghaus during the summer program 2. Dreaming
3. With the former president of Portugal

> Pau-Y Chow An outsider who looks within

As a dual Chinese and Portuguese citizen, Pau-Y Chow was educated at German schools in Portugal and in German universities. He is thus uniquely able to give “inside” and “outside” perspectives on German society, views that enriched the 2006 HIA Berlin Program in which he participated as a German Fellow. Pau-Y is a dreamer: he refuses to stop believing in perfecting the world, despite the disappointing things he has seen.

As an engineering graduate, he wants to put technology to work in an NGO setting. During his numerous internships, including with Rolls Royce engineering, he felt that people

Pau-Y seeks to offer a platform for young Chinese-Portuguese to meet others and share their experience.

who could understand both of these worlds were lacking. He sees himself as just such a person, and seeks to combine development work with innovative technologies in order to better address human rights problems. Pau-Y sees this work as a rewarding career option, and one that draws directly on his HIA experiences.

His involvement in HIA's core program and Lantos internship program in the US Congress were completely new experiences

for him, revealing “another reality”. Specifically, HIA opened his eyes to the importance and power of organized minorities. Not only did his career plans change as a result, but the support of people he met through the program enabled him to implement his most recent extra-professional activity.

Pau-Y founded a subchapter of the “Chinese League in Portugal”, responsible for second and third generation Chinese-Portuguese youth. Working with the network of Chinese businessmen in Portugal who created the Chinese League to support Chinese culture and integration, Pau-Y seeks to offer a platform for young Chinese-Portuguese to meet others and share their experience. In his own youth he faced the difficulty of being part of that minority in Portugal, and he wants to help others in his situation feel less isolated. “Without HIA, this would never have happened,” he says, “and the support was incredibly valuable.”

Currently, the League reaches out to approximately 12,000 to 18,000 Chinese in Portugal. They offer summer camps for children, platforms for exchanging ideas and, in the near future, a career network where older Chinese can support younger ones in their career plans. Pau-Y's testimony goes to show that HIA can have a formidable impact even on societies outside countries where HIA is formally present. ■

Born in Bourg St Maurice, France, 1982
MA public policy, Political Sciences Institute, Grenoble, 2006
PhD student, Political Sciences Institute, Grenoble



> Lisa Montmayeur In search of lost memory

After participating in the French HIA program in 2006, Lisa Montmayeur was inspired to do something concrete. During a university exchange program in Istanbul, she got to know more about the history of her father's family. Her great grand-parents, Orthodox Greeks, had been displaced to Greece from what is now Turkey after the division of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the Greco-Turkish War. In 1923, the peace agreement between the two countries led to an important exchange of population based on religion. Three generations later, Lisa speaks Turkish, while her boyfriend speaks Greek. "We decided to research the exchange, try to meet witnesses,

Very few people who lived during the exchange are still alive, and those who remain are not always eager to talk.

and see what relations are like between those populations today," explains Lisa. In the field, however, they found that very few people who lived during the exchange are still alive, and those who remain are not always eager to talk. "There is a big problem of memory around those events, it's like a taboo," Lisa reflects. "The displacement was traumatizing for most people, who had difficulty starting over and integrating in communities where they sometimes didn't even know the language."

Lisa and her boyfriend focused their study on two towns: Nea Karvali in Greece, and Güzelyurt in Turkey. "Through my relatives, I had heard that people in Nea Karvali organize a 'friendship festival' where they invite Turks who used to live in the town. They also have dance groups and pilgrimage trips to Turkey," Lisa says. She also discovered that these initiatives were quite exceptional. There was no such interest in Güzelyurt, where the work on collective memory was at its beginning. This is when Lisa's wish to do something concrete met with her research interests. She decided to help the Turkish town re-research its history and better its relationship with Nea Karvali.

She and her boyfriend organized a debate in Güzelyurt, and started working on a museum similar to the one in Nea Karvali. One of the goals is to contribute to the economic development of Güzelyurt through tourism. In the longer term, Lisa also hopes to help build sustainable relations between the two towns in order to foster cultural exchanges. Having recently passed the exam to become a teacher in France, Lisa is now beginning a PhD on decentralized cooperation between Greek and Turkish cities. She will be returning to Turkey in the coming months to start her research, hoping to further develop the projects she started a year ago. From what began as an initial interest in her own family's history, Lisa is now involved with entire communities. ■

1. Güzelyurt in Cappadocia (Turkey today)
2. Lisa 3. The friendship festival in Nea Karvali (Greece today)



1. Owusu with Siddik Bakir, another HIA Senior Fellow 2. The first HIA UK newsletter 3. The Hands Up for Darfur fashion show in Oxford

OWUSU AKOTO
HIA 2003, Copenhagen

Born in London, United Kingdom, 1980
BA in International Relations, University of Pennsylvania
Registered PRINCE 2 Practitioner
Change Management Consultant, London, UK

> Owusu Akoto The global palette of identity

He is a citizen of the world: born in the UK, raised in Ghana and educated in the US, Owusu Akoto has spent his life on three different continents. Each culture presented him with vastly different lenses with which to view the world. But it wasn't until his enrolment in the 2003 Humanity in Action Program in Denmark that all these experiences were tied together. The program showed Akoto how similar the structure of racism and discrimination is all over the world. "It is the same template everywhere. People marry socio-economic characteristics that cut across lines of colour with perceived racial traits." In Denmark during the program, he had studied the identity crises of second-generation immigrants vis-à-vis their parents' expectations. Pictures taken that summer were then included in a photo exhibition at UPenn entitled "Diary of a FOB"

In Ghana, an Ashanti. In England, a Ghanaian. In America, an African.

(Fresh off the Boat, a reference to newcomers to the United States). In photographs that capture parades and performances in Ghana, Philadelphia and Denmark, Akoto explored the identity of the 'cultural outsider', a position that he knows all too well. "I've been a minority my whole life," explains Akoto. "In Ghana I am an Ashanti, the biggest minority group. In London, I was less defined by race or ethnicity and in the US I felt much more defined by the colour of my skin. And in each place I was described differently.

In Ghana, an Ashanti. In England, a Ghanaian. In America, an African."

After exciting internships at Interpol in Lyon and with the Sarajevo War Crimes Chamber, Akoto now works at the London office of Chaucer Consulting, an international business consultancy specialized in change management. An unexpected career move? Akoto explains: "At the War Crimes Chamber I saw many brilliant lawyers at work, but I noticed that there was a fundamental shortage of people with specialized management training. In order to get institutions such as international tribunals, aid organizations or the UN to run better, they need more managerial skill. I want to be an architect of change."

In London, Akoto is also the founding Chair of the HIA UK Group, comprised of Senior Fellows studying or working in Britain. Together they organized a successful outreach dinner under the patronage of the German ambassador, began a speakers' series entitled the 'Power of One' and created an internship program at the House of Lords. Akoto was also the featured image maker this summer at the Hands Up for Darfur Fashion Event at Oxford University, where famous couturiers shared the runway with young African designers. The event raised over 100,000 dollars. In the near future Akoto is planning to pursue a master in Public Management and who knows what comes after. "I could envision myself working at the World Bank", he claims. And since few things seem impossible for this high potential, everybody is warned: whatever you do, keep Owusu in the loop. ■



1. A family in Umutara, Rwanda 2. In Kigali crowd
3. David & Francesca the Vespa

Born in Orange, USA, 1983
BA International Relations, Wheaton College
Policy Coordinator, American Enterprise Institute,
Washington, D.C.

> David Peyton From road construction to public policy

If, during high school he spent summers working road construction on the streets of Minneapolis, his hometown, that seems like a long time ago to David Peyton. He now spends most of his days near Capitol Hill in Washington D.C., working at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI).

As a policy coordinator/project manager, he studies and writes on a range of foreign policy topics, drawing on his degree in International Relations from Wheaton College. Although AEI does not always coincide with his own political preferences – Peyton was a fervent Obama-supporter – he describes his work in the more conservative surroundings of the institute as a valuable learning experience. “Ultimately, our personal politics should transcend the left-right dichotomy,” says Peyton. David graduated from high school with the goal of joining the U.S. Navy, but a foreign exchange year in France altered these plans. Instead, he enrolled at Wheaton College, where he became close friends with two other HIA

fellows, there was a surprising unanimity of mission present in the group. “There is a common language spoken around the HIA table,” he reflects. “Even though we come from different perspectives, in the end we want the same thing – to identify human rights problems and then to tackle them.”

After the program, Peyton decided it was his turn to tackle a big problem. As president of the Student Global Aids Campaign at Wheaton College, he worked on HIV/AIDS advocacy campaigns in the Chicago area. He then traveled to Rwanda to work with a microfinance institution that was extending credit to HIV positive clients. During his seven-month stay, he also had the opportunity to observe UN organizations and other foreign assistance programs up close. He realized that in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, Rwanda was working through issues of justice, reconciliation, and forgiveness similar to those that Europe faced after World War II. His project also convinced him of the importance of economic development as a “first line of defense.”

“I’ve become more of a realist when it comes to the UN and humanitarian organizations,” he says about his experience in Rwanda. “It is a step forward that the international community recognizes that major mistakes were made. We’ve got a long way to go.” And where will David Peyton go next? He hasn’t sketched that out yet. Maybe the UN, an NGO, or even American politics. “So much is happening in DC”, he claims enthusiastically. ■

“Our personal politics should transcend the left-right dichotomy.”

fellows. David decided to apply and ended up participating in the German HIA Program. At first, he was uncertain how other HIA fellows would receive his Christian background and his work with church groups in Chicago. He was pleased to discover that despite HIA fellows’ different nationalities and life experien-

Born in Wuppertal, Germany, 1979
Diploma in Mathematics, Master of Public Affairs
Associate at KDB, a German consultancy focused
on quantitative risk management, Dubai

> Gerrit Reininghaus Subcultures in the city

From an early age, Gerrit Reininghaus lived in a political environment. Both of his parents were politically active, and he became a party member of the Social Democrats at the age of sixteen. When Gerrit moved to Berlin for a degree in Mathematics, he began to use his political experience towards changing the public perception of subcultures in the city.

Gerrit believes that in order for cities to develop, they require the activity and expression of their various (sub)cultures, and should therefore treat them equally. "Subcultures are often socially excluded, whereas a city like Berlin profits from their presence economically," claims Gerrit. "I believe in making people aware of their own political environment to empower them while also enhancing

Loveparade. Initially, both events took place on the same day, seeking to demonstrate that music is a means of expression. But as the Loveparade grew more successful and the organizers less political, the city government withdrew its support for both events and, since 2001, has tried to ban the Fuckparade. Until now, court rulings have always been in favour of the parade, whereas the Loveparade lost its official status as a demonstration. One of the reasons, according to Gerrit, is that while the nature of the parade has changed over the years, its statement has not. "Nowadays all kinds of people and music take part in the parade, most of whom are very much aware of the political goals and ambitions of the demonstration," says Gerrit. "Every year there are between 2000 and 6000 people. Most importantly, Berlin has become more accepting of subcultures; they are now an integral part of the city."

Gerrit does not hold a specific ideology when it comes to diversity or human rights. He is convinced that the qualities you have as a person should be enough to contribute to society. "Diversity is important as a chance to create a comprehensive and sustainable society. Only while looking at differences do you get the whole picture." To Gerrit, HIA provides the right combination of feeling accepted/understood while being confronted with critical discussions that challenge you. "People within HIA have similar ideas even if they are from different fields. HIA thus represents a very dynamic and strong network of people." ■

"The qualities you have as a person should be enough to contribute to society."

society's understanding of the subculture." To him, music movements in particular are wrongly assumed to be about making noise and agitating. Such movements need to explain and express themselves, and the Fuckparade provides just such an opportunity. Berlin's Fuckparade is one of the most successful venues for different subcultures, advocating diversity and tolerance against exclusion and intolerance. Founded in 1989 before the wall came down, it was a reaction against the commercialisation of the



1. *Marino 4*, 2006, courtesy of Tina Cassati 2. Dubai skyline by night
3. International Chamber of Commerce and Emirates NBD headquarters, Dubai



1. Sheri with school children in South Bronx 2. Conference at the University of Pennsylvania

Born in Washington, DC, USA, 1983
Masters in Special Education
Law student at Emory University, Atlanta.

> Sheri Halpern Organ donation on the agenda

When Sheri Halpern joined HIA in 2005, she was already engaged in studies of organ donation and bioethics, but she had not expected that she would kick off a campus debate on the subject only a year later.

As a student at the University of Pennsylvania, Sheri developed a growing interest in the unequal distribution of organs and lack of educational outreach for this issue in the Philadelphia area: "On the one hand, in New Jersey, we have pharmaceutical companies with huge assets engaged in clinical experiments and on the other hand, in West Philadelphia, we have huge groups of marginalized people with limited access to the relatively few available organs... this brought a discussion of human rights to the forefront of the issues facing my local community."

"I really wanted to raise awareness and get people involved in an informed discussion on the subject."

Sheri gained interest in the global perspectives of bioethics and turned her attention to HIA and its work in Europe: "I became interested in how the Holocaust still shapes current German debates on bioethical dilemmas... in light of the history of the Nuremberg trials, Germany has engaged in a very sensitive discussion about how to preserve human rights at the end of an individual's life when faced with medical progress, when it comes to organ donation and in general." Excited to be placed by HIA

in Berlin for her fellowship program in 2005, Sheri got the chance to meet with leading scholars and NGO-representatives, and gained an international outlook on the complex intersections of history, bioethics and public health policy.

After returning to the USA, Sheri wished to address organ donation in a concrete way: "There are many misconceptions regarding organ donation... people seem to be less familiar with the issue than they are with the more controversial bioethical issues of stem cell research and abortion. I really wanted to raise awareness and get people involved in an informed discussion on the subject." Under the title: "I want your organs", she organized a talk on organ donation with leading university scholars, which was open to campus students, staff and members of the West Philadelphia community at large.

The event received a great response. Over 300 people turned up, including a number who were unaffiliated with Penn: "Ordinary people who came to the event felt welcome and seemed glad to engage in the issue... many students were inspired to volunteer through the Penn Bioethics Society and a lot of awareness was created through the event." Upon her graduation the following May, Sheri joined Teach For America as a 2006 Corps Member. After two years of teaching in a South Bronx public school and gaining a masters degree in special education, she will continue her commitment to law and public health through her studies at Emory University in Atlanta. ■



1. David Hein 2. Cover of his book *A war to call my own*
3. Landscape in Bosnia

Born in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, 1977
Masters in International and European law,
University of Groningen, the Netherlands
LL.M, Geneva Academy of international
humanitarian law and human rights.

Criminal defence lawyer, Korvinus Abeln, Amsterdam.

> David Hein A war to call his own

David's father spent World War II on his own – a Jewish toddler hidden by a Dutch family and severely wounded by shrapnel. Post-traumatic stress disorder can take years to catch up with someone; in his father's case, it took forty-four. Watching this, the 12-year-old David wanted to know how someone could live through a war, go on with their life, and then suddenly stop one day and break down: "So I wanted to live through a war too," he said, "I wanted a war of my own."

David's 10-year-long HIA career started with the first Dutch program in 1999 and has most recently taken him to advise the new Bosnian Senior Fellow Network. In between, in 2004, he was asked to join HIA Board

**"HIA is not a static programme.
It is about young people
engaged in moral leadership."**

Chair Michael Johnson, former chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia, and help set up the War Crimes Project in Sarajevo.

A few weeks in, David realized that he was going through a life-changing experience. He reflected three years later that "the idea of getting closer to my Dad by getting closer to war was complete bullshit. I realized you should never want to go through a war. Some experiences are better left not lived."

Instead, David did what his father had been

doing since 1989: he wrote. It all began with a simple group e-mail. He recounted the stories of war that always came up with his Bosnian friends and heard the echoes of his own father's past: how families learned to survive; how little the international community cared. This e-mail diary started with 50 friends and grew to some 300 readers – and eventually a publisher.

A War to Call my Own is a series of parallel flashbacks, alternating between David's youth and his encounters in Bosnia. The book will hopefully be translated into English and French. It received good reviews in leading Dutch media, though David is most proud of the review he read on the private blog of a young Bosnian refugee living in the Netherlands.

When asked what still plagues him after HIA and his time in Sarajevo, David responds:

"When my Dad thinks about World War II now, he doesn't see it through his eyes as a child. He no longer sees it as 'The War', but as a war from the previous century. When I speak each year to the HIA Fellows, I realize that World War II is history to them." This has led David to ask the question about how the Holocaust, and resistance to it, can still be the basis for contemporary conversations on human rights and minority issues. He sees at least part of the answer in HIA. "HIA is not a static programme. It is about young people engaged in moral leadership, and in that way it always has the power to change." ■

Discussion & Inspiration



1. Merel 2. «Night of the future», a debate and dance party 3. At a women's conference

Born in Amsterdam, NL, 1980
MA in Religious Studies, Islam major
Social affairs consultant, Amsterdam

> Merel Baracs Reality in the workplace

Looking back at herself in 2002, Merel sees a student of Islam and Hebrew from the University of Amsterdam who was just full of naïve ideals. For one thing, she thought that this group of HIA fellows who were all committed to making the world a better place would agree with each other. She was not expecting that these likeminded youth – the Turkish guy and the Armenian girl – would hold such diverse world views and that each of them, in some way, would be right. HIA made her more ambitious, more international, and more nuanced in the way that she approached the ideals that still motivate her.

She was not expecting that these likeminded youth would hold such diverse world views and that each of them, in some way, would be right.

Talking about her various jobs over the past five years, she keeps coming back to the second-generation immigrants, whose experiences and frustrations are increasingly seen as the 'barometer' for the success or failure of integration. She stopped working for a government funded 'Muslim' NGO because it was impossible for her talented second-generation colleagues to progress further within the organization than the older, more established members. Though amateurs at running an organization and maintaining dialogue with the government, these colleagues had worked hard at gaining credibility in their community and saw these representative positions as an honor. She witnessed them waste their time

and talent before eventually giving it all up for the commercial world.

Now, however, Merel is working at the oldest Dutch consultancy, where her two Moroccan-born directors have focused their work on advising government on social issues and community integration. She has also been working with local governments in Amsterdam on anti-radicalization policies that help kids to develop critical thinking skills in their religious education classes. In what can be a puritanically secular country, they are exploring to what extent the government and mosques can work together.

Merel still regularly comes into contact with HIA, partly because "the Senior Fellows keep surprising you - you have never met everyone," and partly because she did meet one special someone back in 2002, her boyfriend Thomas. Beyond her action plan, "Night of the Future," a debate-cum-dance-party on human rights and terrorism, she continues to volunteer with HIA Netherlands and also organized the 2006 European Senior Fellow Reunion.

Just recently, Merel joined the Dutch Senior Fellow mentoring project with the Weekend-School. For four months, she tried to help a 12-year-old boy from Macedonia improve his test scores so that he could get a placement in a better school. It did not work out for him, but Merel hopes that their work together inspired him, at least a bit, to believe that he can be himself and do anything in the Netherlands if he works hard enough. That is, if the Netherlands works hard too. ■

Born in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 1972
MA History, University of Amsterdam
Director, Humanity in Action the Netherlands.

> Anna Timmerman Opening up the world

In the organization she has the nickname the 'dinosaur' and she wears this title with pride. Anna Timmerman, Director of HIA in the Netherlands, has been involved with HIA since her participation in the first Dutch program in 1999. Originally educated as a historian specializing in the Middle East, she worked in Egypt, Yemen, Jordan and Syria as a tour leader before she joined the HIA staff. She speaks Arabic and thought for a while she might stay in the region. Instead she joined HIA in 2001, first as intern, then as Program Coordinator, and since 2006 as Director. She was hooked by HIA's work: "The idea that in order to bring change to the world, you need to take care of that yourself was really an eye-opener to me."

Timmerman thinks that it is precisely this part of HIA, as well as the broad network of Senior Fellows, that is so appealing to young people: "If you want to change something, you have to get off the couch and do something about it." Had she ever pictured herself working in the field of human rights? "To be honest, I never

"To bring change to the world, you need to take care of that yourself."

gave my career much thought during my studies, although I was certainly very interested in issues that concerned minorities. When HIA offered me the opportunity to organize the 2002 program and try to improve it, I got very enthusiastic. Here I can combine many of my passions and interests. I have been

interested in the history of the Holocaust since my earliest childhood and to make this history relevant to future generations is a real challenge." Timmerman tried to improve the program every year and added topics such as the history of slavery or LGBT-rights, with a special interest in the construction of identity and what this means for someone who is part of a minority.

In the last few years her focus has shifted somewhat from the summer program to Senior Fellow activities. In March 2008, she developed the Relevance of the Holocaust Program, an international study trip exploring the ties between past and present that took a group of 30 Senior Fellows to Auschwitz. Coming up next is a program in Bosnia, and last October an "Engagement and Leadership" seminar was organized for Senior Fellows in Amsterdam.

Where does she find the will and drive every day? "The speakers always impress me. Every time I hear their story, even if I have heard it many times before, I can become impressed again. But it is also because of the Senior Fellows", she claims. "The feeling that HIA was able to change someone's view, that I have opened up somebody's world.

To see somebody who might not be a shiny star when he/she grew up, who did not have all the benefits that come with a certain upbringing, who did not believe he/she could change something – to see someone like that change into a strong leader, that is one of the most rewarding, inspiring and motivating aspects of HIA." ■



1. Anna and the HIA fellows with Frieda Menko, Holocaust survivor 2. With David Hein during summer program
3. Anna's book on eyewitnesses to the Holocaust, Machteloos, Atheneum-Polak & Van Gennep, Amsterdam, 2007



1. At the White House 2. Obama mural
3. Jesper & his wife Anna Dolinski, also an HIA Senior Fellow

Born in Næstved, Denmark, 1975.
MA Public Administration, MA Philosophy, Roskilde University
Foreign Policy Advisor to Congressman Robert Wexler,
US House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

> Jesper Pedersen HIA on Capitol Hill

Jesper first heard of HIA when he met the former HIA Denmark Director Lotte Lund at a political conference. During his last years of studies at Roskilde University in Denmark, Jesper was puzzled by the broad shift to the right in Danish politics, a shift fuelled largely by anti-immigration sentiment. He realized how the challenges of integration and the inclusion of minorities into the Danish welfare state had become increasingly more urgent and he felt he needed an international perspective on the issue. In 2002 he joined the summer program: "As I entered the HIA program I was deeply impressed by the skills and international horizon of the Fellows. Everyone brought complex viewpoints and opinions to the table. That really energized me and left me with a feeling that I wanted to engage more deeply with those issues abroad."

**"I was deeply impressed
by the skills and international
horizon of the Fellows."**

Jesper was selected to the Lantos Internship Program in the US Congress during the spring of 2003, where he observed first-hand the deliberations about whether to authorize the use of military force in Iraq: "Among the Lantos Fellows we had heated discussions. I think I learned a lot about the importance to stand up for your arguments and intuitions in times of crisis".

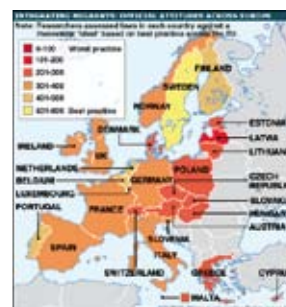
As Jesper returned to Denmark in 2003 he became engaged in the planning of the Danish summer program and took over the res-

ponsibility as director to carry out the summer program of 2004: "Facilitating discussions between engaged international Fellows was certainly challenging, and I had to learn how to bite my lip and not inject my personal views into the discussions in order for the fellows to reach conclusions by themselves".

Jesper eventually returned to Washington, DC, for more personal reasons: in July 2004, he was married to Anna Dolinsky, an HIA fellow from the US he had met during the 2002 HIA summer program. Through the HIA network and connections from the Lantos Fellowship, Jesper started working in the US Congress and he is now involved in the planning of the Lantos Internship Program: "HIA and its network has meant everything for my career here in Washington. As we see a growing number of Senior Fellows getting employment here, I really hope to help foster an energized network that can facilitate the new Fellows' entrance to Capitol Hill and the important work that needs to be done here". One recent result of these efforts was the March 2008 annual HIA Senior Fellow meeting in Washington, DC, organized by Anna, Jesper and other DC-based fellows.

Working on Capitol Hill, Jesper sees the impact and recognition of HIA: "In DC we have hundreds of NGOs struggling to set an agenda, and therefore I am impressed when I see how HIA has managed to play a role in the discussion of minority rights in Congressional caucuses and Member offices and within the European diplomatic corps in Washington, DC". ■

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, 1983
Bachelors of Science in Foreign Service,
Regional & Comparative Studies, Europe,
Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service
Policy Analyst, Migration Policy Group, Brussels



> Thomas Huddleston Accountability for migration and integration policies

When Thomas Huddleston, an American graduate of European Studies at Georgetown University, joined HIA in 2005, he was already engaged with an essential question in Europe's identity crisis: "How will Europe become comfortable with itself as a diverse society?" Today, Thomas can be found interpreting statistics on Europe's number one hot topic, Immigration, as a Policy Analyst in the Migration Policy Group in Brussels. There he also recently co-edited the *Migrant Integration Policy Index*, which evaluates the

**"I work with policies
in 27 member states
and cannot do that without
contacts in each one."**

policies of EU member states. "I was eager to get into the European debate on diversity and immigration and the HIA program in Berlin was the great opportunity I was looking for." Following the program, Thomas worked his way through various internships and he credits HIA for helping him through this time. Thomas' big breakthrough came when he did

an HIA internship in Brussels in 2007 with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, leading to his job at the Migration Policy Group. When asked what HIA means to him professionally, he stresses the strength of the 'network effect': "I work with policies in 27 member states and cannot do that without contacts in each one; what I have seen in these past three years is an HIA network that is growing immensely". For Thomas, HIA is first and foremost about translating your personal energy into action: "Don't do something for yourself alone".

Thomas uses his place in the hub of Brussels to give HIA a presence in the city where Europe's civil society comes together: "I wish to contribute to the discussion about how a growing representation of Senior Fellows in Brussels can help facilitate a broader HIA network and new connections." Recently Thomas organized a panel for the HIA Summer program on the EU's impact on fighting anti-discrimination in Europe, bringing in high-profile speakers from the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, Open Society, Human Rights Watch and the Danish Center for Human Rights. ■

1. Thomas at the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Berlin
2. Bringing stakeholders into the Eu debate, Tallin, Estonia
3. Comparing countries, raising standards www.integrationindex.eu



1. Robert

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, 1985
Bachelor of Arts, History, Cornell University
Project Associate, Corporate and International Political Consulting
Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, Washington, DC

> Robert Vainshtein Investing in democracy

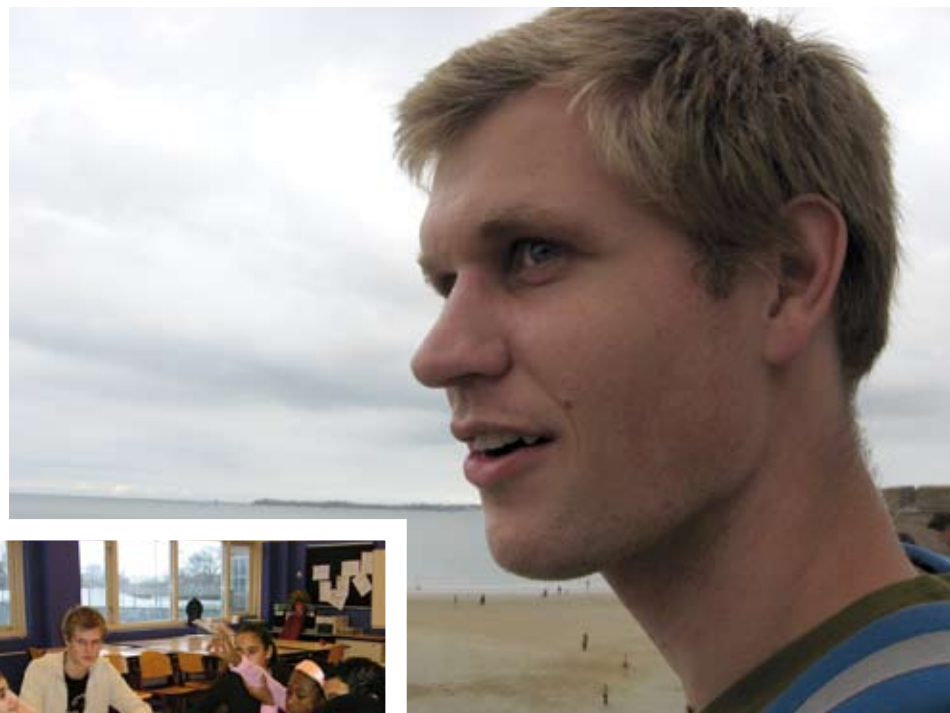
The first thing you learn while interviewing Robert is that he grew up in a rather wealthy, Jewish, and extremely liberal Boston suburb, as a product of the progressive public school system. That may begin to explain the rest of what brought him to HIA: his family's experiences of the Holocaust and immigration, his college research advocating no-fly zones in Darfur, his year in Cape Town discussing peacekeeping lessons from Srebrenica – all this is standard operating procedure for alumni of a high school where all 2,000 students dedicated a day to discussing racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism. Before HIA, Robert's plans were all laid out to do an internship on peacekeeping and later head for an international law degree. – until, that is, he met Michael Johnson, former HIA Board Chair and Chief of Prosecutions for the ICTY. The HIA Poland program already had Robert doubting the efficiency of using the law to promote social change. He was surprised how slow the Polish legal

prosecuted them. And it made a difference. But it took a decade for these tribunals to have any impact. Now how many of you want to go into business? There were only a scattering of hands. 'You may not be looking there for your career, but you might have the most influence in a way – not in impacting abuses as they're occurring, but in developing a country and impacting the potential for these abuses to occur in the first place.'"

The idea that international investment could be a vehicle for spurring democratic growth had been stewing throughout the program, but Johnson's words made it come together. Maybe now it would depend on businesses operating in Poland to adhere to anti-discrimination law, for example: "More cash flow, more access to markets, more access to democracy and protection – it's a developing concept and I'm still trying to find the words." He finished his DC trade association internship and switched to a political consultancy with a specialization in international polling. There, he helped develop a strategy to allot parliamentary seats to ethnic minorities for one of their main clients, the President of Georgia. And ideas for the future keep coming. Maybe he could get his company to develop polling techniques for hard-to-reach vulnerable groups. Maybe he'd change to risk analysis and work in emerging markets. Maybe he'd do that in Mozambique and learn Portuguese. Robert is a human rights entrepreneur in the making; developing the concepts and finding the words to bring business closer to his HIA ethos... and his hometown roots. ■

International investment could be a vehicle for democratic growth.

process was in adapting to issues of diversity and discrimination and how difficult it was to enforce the protection provided on paper. He was asking himself these questions when Johnson addressed the fellows on how to make human rights a lifelong goal: 'How many of you want to do international law?' Almost three-quarters of the audience's hands shot up. He said, 'I've seen these offenders. I've



1. At the 2006 opening session in Denmark 2. Pat Cox Fellows at the EU Parliament
3. At the *Weekendschool*

Born in Amsterdam, 1981
MSc diploma in Sociology, University of Amsterdam
Public policy consultant at Significant, Amsterdam.

> Ruben Lindenberg Mentoring for equal chances

While working on his B.A. in Cultural Anthropology Ruben mostly focused on work in the field. When he heard about HIA from a friend, Ruben had just graduated and had decided he wanted to be less an observer than an initiator. He was immediately attracted by the HIA summer program, because of the intellectual challenge, but above all for the focus on action. The intensity of the discussions and the personal involvement of participants and lecturers with the subjects brought him closer to the various topics. After the summer program Ruben applied for the Pat Cox internship at the European Parliament. "I understood that networks in places like Brussels are equally important to reach

"Senior Fellows can combine their qualities to create projects that carry on the HIA spirit."

results. This is one of the main reasons I joined the Dutch Senior Fellow Board in 2008. I think it is important that Senior Fellows combine their qualities to create projects that carry on the HIA spirit." During the HIA summer programme, Ruben had written about the problems that children from disadvantaged backgrounds face in the Dutch school system. In the Netherlands, at the age of 11 children take a test that provides the basis for eligibility for different levels of secondary

education. Lacking social support, a stimulating study environment and guidance in their choices for the future, a large proportion of disadvantaged children fail to reveal their abilities in these tests. In cooperation with an organisation called *IMC de Weekendschool* Ruben developed a mentoring programme to assist children who are preparing for the test by creating a stable learning environment for them. All mentors in the program are HIA Senior Fellows. They meet with the children once a week to help with preparation, talk about their progress and stimulate them to study. The mentors also try to involve the parents in order to produce sustainable changes. The program is in its trial year, and Ruben is always evaluating the gaps that need to be bridged and obstacles that need to be overcome. It is all about creating opportunities for the children to communicate freely about their ambitions and finding the path to achieve them. And the structure works to mutual benefit, as the Senior fellows bring quality assistance to the children while the program reinforces the Senior Fellow network. Facilitating the mentoring programme is a way for Ruben to promote diversity in his society. "My view on sustainable diversity is to have a society where all people enjoy the same opportunities. It is through contributing to equal chances in the school system that I seek to put my ideals into action. To me, that is what HIA is all about." ■



1. Cleaning memorial stepping stones in Berlin
2. Informations containers "Against the Right" 3. Anna-Delia

Born in Munich, 1982
International Public Law and European law,
Free University, Berlin
Preparing for the Bar exam in September 2009.

> Anna-Delia Papenberg Civil resistance

Anna-Delia Papenberg participated in the HIA Berlin program in 2007 and still lives in Berlin, finishing her legal studies. She is an activist by nature, though she doesn't like the label.

During her studies, she gained numerous experiences in law firms dealing with both victims of right wing extremism and those seeking asylum in Germany. She also worked for the Center of Constitutional Rights, the Republican Lawyers Association (the only German Human Rights Lawyers Association) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH, based in Paris) during the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute (ASP). A highlight of her time at the Center of Constitutional Rights was working with detainees of Guantanamo to obtain asylum

HIA showed Anna-Delia that she was not alone in fighting for human and minority rights.

in European states, since many fear human rights violations in their home countries. HIA proved very valuable in Anna's endeavors. She learned a great deal about comparative perceptions of race in Germany and the United States, and the fundamental differences between those perceptions. HIA also provided her with a supportive network, making her more confident in her goals and strategies by showing her that she is not

alone in fighting for human and minority rights. She believes that immigration, asylum, and the growing difference between rich and poor will be the biggest challenges for the future of our societies.

Her latest project is called *Mitte gegen Rechts*, a civil society initiative against a clothing store that sells the Thor Steinar brand (Mitte is a Berlin neighborhood, and the initiative is meant as opposition to right-wing extremism). This brand plays with right wing labels and pictures which allow the wearer to openly affiliate with the Right Wing while appearing "fashionable". The aim of *Mitte gegen Rechts* is to raise awareness of the brand and the subtle symbols and codes it uses to market extremism. So far, organizers have successfully mobilized neighbors in civil resistance towards the store, using huge black containers to distribute information, selling clothes and accessories with counter logos in neighboring design stores, publicly blogging and protesting, and even engaging the landlord in discussion. The whole neighborhood has gained national media coverage, as design stores, cinemas, restaurants, average citizens, and even the mayor work towards one shared goal: stopping Neo-Nazis from appealing to nonpolitical consumers by rejecting them from their district. Anna-Delia is living proof of what one person who is highly active for human and minority rights can achieve. ■

Resources & Action

Born in Elsinore, Denmark, 1982.
Bachelor of political science, University of Copenhagen
2nd year student at the Royal Danish School of Architecture,
Copenhagen, department of architecture and urban planning



1. Justin Claudius at the concert 2. Laura
3. The concert in Copenhagen, 2007.

> Laura Kieler A song for Copenhagen

HIA had a big personal impact on Laura Kieler: she quit studying human rights. Let me rephrase that: she realized that a rights-based approach can be applied to any passion - and hers is urban planning. "Part of me sees myself in developing countries, working to find long-term solutions for urban planning, involving the people in the process - a kind of democracy from below. However part of me sees myself in Copenhagen, working to expand our creative understanding of what it means to be local, raising awareness of how all the people living here are important for the identity of this city." For now, Laura is in

not multi-cultural." Laura brought together 20 musicians living in Copenhagen - refugees, international students and Danish-born ethnic minorities, with roots in very different countries and very different musical traditions: Bulgaria, Blues, Spain, Ska, Ecuador, Electronica. They discussed their different viewpoints on culture in the capital and their reasons for coming here to play music. Six of them turned these thoughts to songs dedicated to the city and the rest set these to music. Thirty volunteers donated their time over 6 months, a concert house in central Copenhagen, *Huset i Magstræde*, donated its rehearsal space, several Danish film companies lent them their film gear and most importantly, HIA Denmark provided financial support. Lots of people at the project's 350-person main concert in autumn 2007 gave Laura great feedback. For Laura, the project's greatest outcomes were the friendships. The musicians who met there still help each other out with records, concerts, jobs and referrals. Even if they couldn't speak to each other in the same language, music was the universal language that let them understand each other, work together and joke together. You can listen to the first recordings of "A Song for Copenhagen" on myspace.com. Laura hopes you can see their documentary at the end of the year on national T.V. and at local film festivals across Denmark. ■

**"All the people living here
are important for
the identity of this city."**

Copenhagen - expanding minds. She wanted her action plan, "A Song for Copenhagen" / "En sang for København" to show that many people see Copenhagen as a creative city that thrives on the diversity of its cultures, ethnicities, professions, religions, political opinions and so on. She sees the project as a positive, constructive counter-statement to the sort of knee-jerk reactions that currently dominate the country's culture debates, namely that "Denmark is multi-ethnic, but it's



1. Elena 2. Advertizing volunteering opportunities in Kosovo
3. Pictures from Kosovo

Born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1981

MA Sociology

Campaigner at Amnesty International
International Secretariat, Balkans Team, London, UK

> Elena Wasylew Kosovo revisited

“ I had the choice to either participate in an Erasmus scheme and have fun, or volunteer in Kosovo and learn something. Everything that makes me what I am today, I learned in Kosovo.” After her summer with Humanity in Action in Poland, Elena decided to use her action plan to revisit another inspiring learning experience, this time with Balkan Sunflowers, a peace-building organization in Kosovo. She wanted to encourage other students from Central and Eastern Europe to undertake these opportunities, so they would see the value in volunteering. “In Eastern Europe you really have to search to access information about the opportunities for volunteering out there. Plus we tend not to see the value and possibilities for change through volunteering, which for many people is seen as ‘working for free.’ I wanted to encourage students to get out of

“I wanted to encourage students to get out of Eastern Europe and to go anywhere from the Balkans to Kathmandu.”

Eastern Europe and to go anywhere from the Balkans to Kathmandu, where you can learn a lot and you can live a lot.” She describes the people at Balkan Sunflowers as a group of “US hippies, idealists, and professionals”, who are well respected for working with local multi-ethnic communities and mediating with international organizations. They had few

volunteers before the European Voluntary Action Service stepped in. Balkan Sunflowers still lacked many of the basic information materials and tools.

With “Future Capital” funds from the European Voluntary Action Service, Elena decided to do something for her colleagues at Balkan Sunflowers and her curious Polish classmates. “Kosovo, The Cooperation Wheel” was a booklet filled with statements from former Kosovo volunteers on the impact that volunteering had had on them and the local communities. Elena helped a Polish fellow who participated in HIA's US program get funds for a Balkan research trip and also to meet up with her NGO friends, organize community workshops and take photographs. He added his thoughts and photos to the booklet and to a photo-exhibition at Warsaw University. The launch party brought together 300 students and representatives of regional NGOs working in the Balkans. Elena even got Polish soldiers to transport the booklet to Kosovo for free. She and Balkan Sunflowers used the extra funds to distribute the booklet to youth organizations across Eastern Europe and to other future volunteers, sponsors, and partners. Elena currently works for Amnesty International in London as a Campaigner for the Balkans, engaged in everything from human rights violations to war crime impunity, minority rights and missing persons. She is also helping to build the Senior Fellow Network in Poland. ■

Born in Plainfield, NJ, USA, 1984
Bachelor of Arts, Sociology and Africana Studies,
University of Pennsylvania, 2006
Manager, Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians,
Philadelphia, PA

> Fatimah Muhammad Cross-ethnic collaboration

Fatimah's multi-cultural experience began her first day of high school.

She attended one of the largest public schools in New Jersey, which, although it attracted a diverse student body, had a tradition of ethnic disassociation, including separate cafeterias for African American and white students. Students did not share with each other their histories or cultures. Seeing this as a missed opportunity, Fatimah dedicated her life's work to increasing exposure between diverse ethnic, racial, and religious groups. At the University of Pennsylvania, she focused on sociology and Africana Studies. She feels "incredibly lucky" to have attended a prestigious Ivy League institution: "There were a lot of things I didn't think were possible coming from a single parent family." Fatimah went on to push – and overcome – these limits. As a rising junior, she spent a summer in Copenhagen with the Humanity in Action program. It was the first time she had

After her graduation, Fatimah spent a year with the Service Employees International Union, which gave her the community organizing experience she desired. She then moved on to the non-profit organization Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians, which assists immigrant communities in Philadelphia by helping locate employment opportunities, providing free legal support, and working on economic development issues.

At the Center, Fatimah manages programs on cross-ethnic collaboration, and specifically a project designed to support small businesses in Philadelphia's commercial districts. The project helps connect entrepreneurs with resources, offers classes for non-native born entrepreneurs to better their understanding of English, and assists business owners in sundry other ways.

According to Fatimah, she did not choose this job – the job chose her. When the Center saw the different kinds of experiences she had, particularly traveling abroad and working with multi-cultural issues, they brought her on board immediately and formulated her job description afterwards. Fatimah jumped at the chance to work with marginalized communities in Philadelphia, a city she has close connections with because of her undergraduate experience. She finds fulfillment in increasing exposure between populations, something that was lacking in her high school experience, in great part because "the immigrant experience is so inspiring." Inspiring, too, is Fatimah's tireless dedication. ■

Fatimah dedicated her life's work to increasing exposure between diverse ethnic, racial, and religious groups.

traveled abroad, apart from a trip to Canada. "It was hugely significant. HIA broadened my ideas about what was possible in the work world after college." Fatimah kept in close touch with the HIA network and interned with the American program in 2006, eager to "relate HIA's work to what we're doing in the United States."



1. Fatimah in the Pennsylvania neighborhood where she works 2. Interview

Born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, 1981
Bachelor of Arts with Honors,
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities ;
International Affairs and Spanish-Portuguese Studies
Research Director, *24 Hours for Darfur*



> Matthew Bowlby A call to awareness

Matthew Bowlby has always known that he wanted to make a difference in the world, and with HIA he has found an engaging platform to continually renew this inspiration and find support for his devotion.

Through Minnesota University he studied abroad in Germany, Brazil and Nicaragua. Additionally, Matt decided to learn Arabic and in 2005 he moved to Syria. "At that time I was starting to look for directions and ways to bridge my interest in human rights with a possible future carrier. Through a post online I found out that HiA was a program I really wanted to be a part of." He joined the Amsterdam program in 2006 and for the first time experienced the challenges of European

friends where literally pulled out of bed in the middle of the night and arrested. They were jailed for months where I could not do anything." After Matthew's friends were set free, he decided to go to Sudan to engage in the refugee crisis with Darfur. In 2007 he joined the UN as a field operator placed in both Khartoum and Darfur documenting the needs of the refugees: "The experiences taught me a lot about the importance of refugee work but also about the huge challenges of reconciliation".

While working in Sudan, Matthew in January 2008 got a video documentarist involved to assist in making a movie on the Iraqi refugees in Syria, who face both poverty and discrimination. The movie has already been confirmed at a symposium in Dubai, and is expected to screen at a number of film festivals. Later in 2008 he joined the HIA Relevance of the Holocaust program in Poland, which was an important experience: "HIA manages to engage and inspire this call to awareness."

Recently Matthew decided to pursue a Master degree in International Relations from University of Amsterdam, a favorite place as a lot of his Fellow connections of HIA are located in the Netherlands. He will continue his engagement in the Darfur crisis through the non-profit 24 hours for Darfur and plans to do a survey among Darfuri refugees in the camps of eastern Chad later in the year. ■

"The experiences taught me a lot about the importance of refugee work but also about the huge challenges of reconciliation."

diversity closely: "The Fellows in the program were unbelievably engaged, fun and exciting. It was two months of day-by-day intellectual challenges."

Returning to Syria Matthew got involved in human rights work engaging youth in freedom of speech issues and democratic discussion groups. The work however showed immediate consequences: "My

1. Matthew in Syria 2. Moving target!
3. In a refugee camp in Chad, courtesy of Christopher Farber.

Born in Connecticut, USA, 1981

Candidate for an MA in Security Studies, Georgetown University
Blogger, journalist, and consultant, Washington, DC

> Mark Goldberg Keeping Track of the UN

If one person in the world is making use of modern communication technologies to practise his freedom of speech, it is Mark Goldberg.

Mark writes for *UN Dispatch*, a blog intended to provide reflections, perspectives, and commentaries on the United Nations and to perform fact-checking on media coverage of the institution. “Many people confuse the UN with the member-states. They will cry out, ‘why is the UN not taking action in Darfur,’ without realizing that the UN has no political power of its own. At *UN Dispatch* we try to explain the complexities of peace-keeping missions, national security policy, and the things that are at stake if we blindly plunge into a conflict.” His participation in the 2001 Dutch program, while he was a student at Tufts University, was transformative. “It opened up my world”, he says, “Being raised in small-town Connecticut,

new and challenging ideas to large audiences to change political discourse led to a Master’s degree in International Security Studies.

Afterwards, he worked for *The American Prospect*, a magazine dedicated to liberalism and democracy that was founded to support the left in national debates. Mark wrote several critical opinion articles on US policy, for example on its failings with regard to Darfur, its campaign against the International Criminal Court, and on John Bolton, former US Ambassador to the UN.

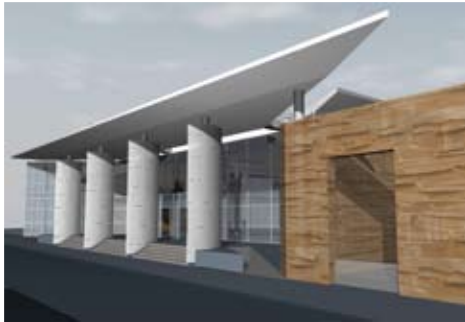
Mark became the “writer in residence” and, soon thereafter, a full-time employee of the UN Foundation, founded with Ted Turner’s historic 1 billion dollar gift for UN institutions and activities. This past August, the Foundation sponsored Mark’s trip to Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Mexico with former president Bill Clinton. Consorting with influential figures like Clinton is now familiar to Mark, who holds weekly interviews with heads of UN organisations and then streams them on various blogs, including bloggingheads.tv. Most recently, he also maintains the blog *On Day 1*, where people can post ideas for President Obama to improve America’s leadership in the world and propose suggestions to eradicate diseases and find solutions for the energy/climate crisis. As with all of Mark’s projects, his blog is a welcome island of hope and clarity, in a political world that is too often polarizing and opaque. ■



1&3. At a Clinic in Ethiopia, with a delegation from the Clinton foundation
2. The *UN Dispatch* homepage

“We try to explain the complexities of peace-keeping missions.”

I had never been exposed before to people and speakers of this calibre. People from different countries and completely different backgrounds all read, thought and committed themselves to the same sort of justice.” Profoundly influenced by this new experience, Mark sought a fellowship with the New America Foundation, a non-profit public policy institute. His experience in seeking to bring



1. Plans for the Kigali Public Library 2. Zachary at Oxford University

Born in Houston, Texas, USA, 1979
JD candidate, Yale Law School
DPhil candidate, International Relations, Oxford University
From August 2009, law clerk on the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

> Zachary D. Kaufman A public library for Rwanda

Although HIA was at an early stage in its development at the time when Zach began to concentrate on human rights issues, the organization provided him with an opportunity to gain a deeper background and experience in the field. Zach now feels that has a long-term personal and professional commitment to human rights. During his extensive studies, he focused on human rights, international relations and US foreign policy. These paths first led to his research in transitional justice, particularly the

“The Kigali Public Library will safeguard the freedom of ideas, and help battle illiteracy.”

1994 Rwandan genocide and the country's post-conflict developments. Secondly, Zach served in the US Department of Justice, in the division that provides criminal judicial assistance to foreign countries. Through the department's involvement with Rwanda, Zach became more familiar with the needs and priorities of that country. Zach thinks it is valuable to address problems from multiple angles, including academia, non-profits, government and the private sector. A holistic approach might not create solutions, but it provides a solid background to try. He emphasizes that being hopeful is part of what inspires and motivates his work. When you work on human rights, Zachary reflects, you

confront competing priorities, given the many challenges in this world, from natural to man-made calamities. When you do not yet have experience in undertaking social projects, it can feel like climbing a mountain to achieve your goal. However, many people are willing to help along the way, if only you ask. With hard work, good ideas, and a little luck, you may surprise yourself with what you can accomplish. While working for the US Department of Justice in Rwanda, Zachary learned that the Rotary Club of Kigali-Virunga had a special project: to build the Kigali Public Library, Rwanda's first public library. Without any clear idea of how to go about providing assistance, Zach assumed the responsibility for fundraising in the US in order to complete the project. The Kigali Public Library, he says, will provide general education, safeguard the freedom of ideas in a post-genocide environment, and help battle illiteracy. In a country like Rwanda, he believes, it is important to have open access to information in order to combat myths and misconceptions that partly caused the genocide. Besides the many reconciliation projects the Rwandan government has organized, the Kigali Public Library will try to make a fundamental change in the country. Zachary admits that the process has been very challenging and the prospects are still unclear as to how successful the project will be. Nonetheless, the fundraising has almost been completed and the building itself is almost finished. ■



1. Inbox 2. Hiske 3. Another Critical Mass exhibition

Born in Zeist, the Netherlands, 1980
M.A. in Conflict Studies and Human Rights, Utrecht University
Director of Critical Mass, Utrecht, the Netherlands

> Hiske Arts Thinking about conflict

Talking to Hiske you understand why the organisation she co-founded is called Critical Mass. Throughout her educational career and participation in HIA she has come to realize how important it is to focus on one's own social environment. Hiske and her co-founders started with the idea that young people, especially those with a low level of education, do not always have easy access to information and can be heavily influenced by the media: "The limited accessibility makes the children more dependent on the information they do receive." More importantly, the children need to become aware of their own social dynamics and identities and the way they contribute to conflicts themself-



"As long as it is approached with curiosity towards the other, diversity will be an asset, rather than an obstacle."

ves. In addition to the distant conflicts, such as in Rwanda, Critical Mass focuses on those that are close to the children in their neighbourhoods and schools. When the children become aware of how conflicts evolve, they develop a critical approach and are able to handle conflicts in a constructive manner. "You can see how the children become inspired," Hiske says. "They feel the need to be more present in their own society." Critical Mass was started after the murder of film director Theo van Gogh in 2004. Four HIA Senior Fellows, Antoine Buyse, Enno Koops,

Floris van Eijk and Hiske Arts, realized that instead of only focusing on conflicts abroad, it was important to reflect on the presence of violent conflicts in The Netherlands itself. Initially called Generating Tolerance and Insights, their organization was officially registered as Critical Mass in 2005. The four HIA Senior Fellows are still all involved in the organization, but Critical Mass has now extended beyond the HIA network, with over 40 volunteers who are internally trained to help and teach the children about social processes. Their main project, Inbox, has already been exhibited for two years throughout large cities in The Netherlands. The interactive exhibition focuses on confronting youngsters with issues of identity, violence and group formation in society. As a complement to the exhibition, Critical Mass has also developed a Toolbox for children to create their own exhibitions by conducting surveys, taking pictures and organizing events in their neighbourhoods. The volunteers provide support with the hope that children will become more expressive and aware of their environment. "Diversity is a fact of life," Hiske states. "Critical Mass focuses on the positive effects, but also on the problems that may accompany diversity, such as stereotyping, exclusion and social identification. We realize that different groups may clash and that diversity could lead to strong, at times negative emotions. But as long as it is approached with curiosity towards 'the other' – also towards the person who fears or rejects diversity – diversity will be an asset, rather than an obstacle." ■

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