

CURRENTS

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM
RED CROSS NORDIC UNITED WORLD COLLEGE

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CURRENTS FROM OUR CAMPUS

CURRENTS is a quarterly newsletter from the Red Cross Nordic United World College. It will give friends of the College updates with stories of what goes on at the College, and between us and the wider community.

This first December issue will be followed by editions in March, June, and September.

CURRENTS will be available from the 'Latest News' section of the College's website:
www.rcnuwc.no

If you would like to receive CURRENTS by email, please contact us at:

currents@rcnuwc.no



THE NORDIC PILLAR STRENGTHENED

It is with gratitude that we received a message from Sweden about their continued support for the College as a joint Nordic project. Sweden will continue their financial

support through Foreign Aid. In this process the Swedish and Norwegian Foreign Ministries have co-operated to clarify some formal questions about the College as a receiver of Foreign Aid. The question was raised in the first place as the RCNUWC is not listed on the OECD list of Official Development Assistance.

Since the start of the College in 1995, there has been a significant intake of students from poor countries. In our present

contingent there are 34 students from the "Least Developed" or "Other Low Income Countries". The Swedish contribution is now formally tied to funding the study of the majority of these students.

UWC is a meeting place for young persons who come from both wealthier and sparsely resourced nations. The mutual benefit of each to the other in the formative experiences at RCNUWC is equal. With the Nordic, the Humanitarian and the Environmental as our three pillars, the College has diverse aims to work towards. Tying the Swedish contribution directly to development strengthens Nordic co-operation as a tool for a more equitable distribution of wealth.



MAGNE BJERGENE HONORED

Magne Bjergene, who was instrumental in setting up the College and building it up as Director of Development, has been awarded the Fjaler Culture and Business Prize 2008 for his extraordinary contributions in promoting openness, creativity and inclusiveness.

The jury emphasized the establishment of RCNUWC, Haugland Rehabilitation Centre and the Nordic Artist Centre as significant achievements. The College proudly congratulates Magne.



FATIMA PLAYED FOR THE MINISTER



On the 29th November, Minister of Government Administration and reform, Heidi Grande Røys came to Dale. She visited the local computer Company Elis, who are established in some of the old factory halls of Dale Shoe Factory. The College were invited to take part in the occasion, being represented by student Board Members Rabia Shahid (Pakistan) and Lisa Bjerke (Sweden), together with Rektor John Lawrenson.

Fatima Martinez Franco (Paraguay) played for the minister and addressed the audience in Norwegian, expressing her delight in recognizing so many friends from the "Thursday Gammaldans" in Fjaler.

In his address, John expressed his thanks to Minister Grande Røys, for her contribution to the successful process towards Sweden and Nordic co-operation.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE CEREMONY

This year's Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari. Ahtisaari founded the Crisis Management Initiative, which is a not for profit group, in 2000. On arrival in Oslo he stated that the prize can help his and similar groups to continue to work for peace. These are words that the Red Cross United World College can readily applaud. Since the start of the College a group of five students and a teacher have been invited to the annual award ceremony in the Oslo City Hall. This year, Saara Martinmäki represented Mr Ahtissari's own country Finland. She was accompanied by fellow students Bendik Elstad (Norway), Doriyush Ubadi (Tajikistan), Kebebus Tekle (Ethiopia) and Laura Parker (Canada).

PEACE AND EDUCATION CENTRE - GAMBELLA, ETHIOPIA

As this Newsletter is being prepared, students and teachers are getting ready for their well deserved December holidays. Many are going home, others are travelling. Jens Møller (Greenland), Ezeqiel Martinez (Argentina) and Ingunn Kristjansdottir (Iceland) will not go for a homely, restful Christmas, but

commit their time to take part in building a Peace and Education Centre in Gambella, Ethiopia. They are travelling with teachers Peter Wilson and Dona Pursall, who will do the same voluntary work. The contact has come about through the Ethiopian National Committee and Gary Campbell, who came to Addis Ababa 15

years ago. The region has been marred by Inter-ethnic conflicts, which culminated in violent disputes over land in 2006. Our group will take part in fundamental ground work, building water tanks and latrines. There are various levels of self funding for the project, with labor at disposal for a good cause.

RELIGION: A GLOBAL, AND LOCAL CONCERN

In all societies, religion is a force with the potential to unite or to separate. Our Silent House, generously donated by the Andresen family, has become a focal place for the spiritual dimension in the lives of our students, somewhere to share inner experiences.

The two-day "Global Concerns" in October was arranged to raise issues related to religion in societies. There were guest speakers and outside participants from Norway (Dale, Bergen, Oslo), Poland and Switzerland. The Vicar from Dale, Knut Arne Kummeneje, was included among our guests and led a workshop considering such questions as: Are we born to believe?; Are

we born to help? During the second day he joined in with group discussions led by the students themselves based on a case study on a potential suicide bomber. In Knut Arne's own words, "the drive out to Flekke was a short journey out to the big world". He found the visit invigorating and was most impressed by the students' ability to lead discussions and their

willingness to become engaged in discussion.

Feedback from our students clearly shows that they enjoyed going to sessions led by their peers and that they appreciated the wide range of visitors. As a part of acquiring good listening skills, many commented positively on the value of being made to change position in the middle of a debate.



PA FLUKT (ON THE RUN)

What is it like to be afraid? To wonder where your next mouthful of food is coming from? To feel

limits? In September 120 RCNUWC students experienced at first-hand their responses to these questions when they took

part in a 24-hour refugee role play, På Flukt, run by the Norwegian Red Cross. Organised into Somali families, the “refugees” were expertly taken through a series of stages designed to give them a taste of what asylum seekers experience: flight, humiliation, interrogation, fear, insecurity, deprivation, and more.

Although the students knew it was a simulation, and that this role play couldn't possibly approach the harsh conditions of the real thing, they nonetheless gained a greater understanding of a reality which affects so many people in our world.

like your life is out of your control? To be in a position where you have to put your faith in people you don't know and don't trust? What is it like to be on the run, hunted down by strangers screaming at you from passing cars in the middle of the night? To be exhausted, scared, hungry, and at the end of your endurance and to have to push yourself way beyond your normal

