

Picture this... Nufar Yosef

Picture yourself as a 16-year old young woman, living in a country that thinks it is very modernised, placing itself at the top with all those fashionably computerised countries across the sea. Yet being so small and surrounded by enemies.

Picture yourself living in a country where at the age of 18 your childhood is cut short whether you are ready for it or not, and you are recruited to serve your country.

Picture yourself facing a reality of terrorist bomb threats, changing governments and a big problem of unachieved peace.

For a 16-year old growing up in Israel, a little Jewish country in the Middle East, this is my reality.

Like many other Israeli youth, when I graduate from high school in two years, I'll be recruited to the Israeli army. I'm proud of my country and I'll be proud to serve it, but I don't believe in war, I believe in peace.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been going on for as long as these two sides set foot on this land. This conflict is not about racism or religion, it is about land. And to whom exactly does this land belong?

Personally, I believe that too much blood has been shed from both sides, and that it is time to stop, to step back and to share this 'holy land,' though many will disagree with me.

'Share a land,' achieve peace. It's not as easy as picking up a pen and signing a document. Peace is deeper than paper, peace is about people, about friendship, and peace, true peace, takes time.

Like myself, many young peo-

ple in Israel and around the globe believe in peace, a thing that is good because we are the politicians and decision-makers of tomorrow.

Today, out of the earth's six billion inhabitants, almost 50 percent are youth, many of who believe in peace.

Just think where the world could be today if those 'peace believing' young people were involved and given a voice in the decision-making process that affect all of us.

Different organisations around the world, for many years now, have been working on giving the youth the voice that could make a difference.

This past summer I had attended the United Youth Conference that was held in Sedona, Arizona, USA, by the One Day Foundation as Israel's youth representative. The mission of the conference was to come up with an action plan for building a permanent international body that would represent the youth and their ideas.

When I arrived at the conference, I was very pleased to see so many young people from around the world who believe in peace and who are committed to their ideals, their goals, and their visions.

After a week of very hard, frustrating work we came up with some incredible results. We divided our project into two large parts.

The first part is the Global Youth Assembly (GYA), an international youth body that has youth representatives from every country around the world with the main purpose of giving youth from all countries a venue where their

voices and ideas can be heard.

The second part is the Global Youth Action Network (GYAN), an international network run by the youth that includes all the youth organisations possible, linking them together and acting as a huge informational database for youth everywhere.


Since we met in July 1999, things have developed from ideas on paper to actual things in reality.

In order to minimise the duplication of effort, we have joined together with different organisations that are also working towards giving the youth a voice.

In the last couple of months, the development of the Global Youth Action Network took place. Information about different organisations is being compiled and the website is being built.

Since the conference, we, the participants, have been keeping close contact and have each taken on a smaller project inside the whole.

You might be asking yourself right now, 'why does this group of young people think they can really do it?'

The answer to that question is because we are a group of very committed young men and women who believe with all our hearts that this vision can come true and that youth everywhere should and can be given a voice. 

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