

# **CHASING THE DREAM** YOUTH FACES OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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For Immediate Release

## **CHASING THE DREAM YOUTH FACES OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS A GROUP PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION AT THE UNITED NATIONS AUGUST 12 - OCTOBER 30, 2005 Opening Reception and Preview - August 12, 2005**

(NEW YORK, July 27, 2005) – Just as Live8 brought world attention to the poverty and despair in Africa, the new exhibition **CHASING THE DREAM: YOUTH FACES OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**, goes on display **August 12** at the United Nations to bring world attention to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their critical focus on the problems of young people. The 140-print group photographic exhibition brings us face to face with eight young people from all corners of the globe. Their stories and images provide insight into the realities young people face as they chase their dreams for a better life. **CHASING THE DREAM** illustrates how providing education, job opportunities, training, quality health care and access to clean water can shape lives, open opportunities and reinforce dreams. The exhibition is free and open to the public from 9:15 a.m. until 4:45 p.m., seven days a week through October 30, 2005, and is located at the United Nations, First Avenue at East 46<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY. Admittance is through the visitor's entrance; photo ID is required for entry. For additional information on the **CHASING THE DREAM** exhibition and the Millennium Development Goals, visit [www.ChasingDream.org](http://www.ChasingDream.org) (launching August 12, 2005).

**THE CHASING THE DREAM** exhibition is a United Nations Interagency initiative in conjunction with DESA, ECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN Millennium Campaign, World Bank and YEN, with funding from the Government of Finland and is curated and produced by PixelPress. **CHASING THE DREAM** explores the dreams shared by millions of young people worldwide, as well as the very real obstacles that they face as they try to achieve their dreams, or even to survive.

**CHASING THE DREAM** includes spectacular photographs and writings by young people from Brazil, Cambodia, India, Jamaica, Uganda, Morocco, the Kyangwali refugee settlement in North Uganda and the Ukraine. Photographs were taken by young people living in these areas -- given disposable cameras and assignments to document their hopes and fears, likes and dislikes. In addition to these stunning images, evocative photo essays profiling eight young people in these eight locations were made by acclaimed photographer Diego Goldberg of Argentina, the head of this year's World Press Photo jury. The youth's life stories are told by Argentinean journalist Roberto Guareschi, former editor-in-chief of *Clarín*, who communicates their day-to-day life and dreams into words. UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in each country were partners in the project. An interactive video installation by Turkish-born choreographer Beliz Demircioglu brings the Millennium Goals into focus when visitors reach out and touch a life-size hand that brings images on the video display into focus while the touch is maintained.

'A UNITED NATIONS INTERAGENCY INITIATIVE'

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Combined, the images, text and touch video display demonstrate that in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, it is the responsibility of each person and each government to get involved -- stand up and be counted, form alliances, increase aid, offer debt relief, increase trade opportunities, keep governmental promises, take action, pressure politicians, get involved and monitor the progress. Today's youth cannot be discounted -- they are the future of tomorrow and need to be involved today, invested in and learned from.

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**CHASING THE DREAM** explores the desires of young people to have a better life, whatever the odds. It also examines how each of the eight Millennium Development Goals can be accomplished to allow these highly motivated young people not only to survive, but also to eventually flourish. "The Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if questions of population and reproductive health are not squarely addressed. And that means stronger efforts to promote women's rights, and greater investment in education and health, including reproductive health and family planning," said Kofi A. Annan, United Nations Secretary General.

"This exhibition has been produced to call to attention the Millennium Development Goals to the Heads of State that will be at the United Nations in September to review the progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals," noted Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UNFPA, United Nations Populations Fund. Ms. Obaid also commented that "the point of this exhibition, we hope, is to also remind ourselves that there are millions of young people who desperately need to be given a chance. As for their dreams, they are quite capable of chasing them by themselves."

What are the Millennium Development Goals? Five years ago, all of the member states of the United Nations agreed in the UN Millennium Declaration to help the world's poorest nations make significant and measurable progress towards a better life for their people by the year 2015. By the time the deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is reached, today's ten-year-olds will be 20 and on the threshold of adulthood; today's 20 year olds will become the new world leaders. To illustrate the Millennium Development Goals, **CHASING THE DREAM** follows eight young people and their lives:

- **MDG 1 - Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger - Silvia**, a 15 year-old who lives in a slum in **Kampala, Uganda**, with her partner Charles, whom Silvia accepted living with because her parents had died and she was hungry, needed clothes and a place to live. Stories and photographs of Silvia's experience with early marriage help illustrate MDG 1. One of Silvia's counterparts, Lutwama, age 22 in Kamwokya, Uganda noted "That's the inside of my house, but even if its bad, I love it." This project was carried out in partnership with the non-governmental organization (NGO) Kamwokya Christian Caring Community/Treasure Life Center.
- **MDG 2 - Achieve Universal Primary Education - 12 year old Kaima of Rajasthan, India**, is the first in her family to learn to read and write and take some control over life. Her story documents the need for education with the help of NGO Doosra Dashak and supported by UNESCO. Another teen in India noted his struggle to make a better country "One day there will come a time when I won't dislike anything about my village or my country. I will have to sacrifice a lot to achieve this benchmark," said Majid, age 18 of Badi Dhani, near Jodhpur, India.
- **MDG 3 - Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women - Anna**, a survivor of sexual slavery in **Odessa, Ukraine**, escapes and tries to make a better life for herself. When talking about her "inferno years," Anna said, "I felt I was nobody - nothing." This project was executed by the NGO "Vera, Nadazhda, Lyubov" (Faith, Hope, Love) and supported by UNFPA.
- **MDG 4 - Reduce Child Mortality - Sinat**, a mother of an ill toddler in **Phnom Penh, Cambodia**, struggles to find better health care. Carried out by the Khymer Youth Association and supported by UNFPA and UNICEF. Another resident of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Heng, age 21, said, "I hope all parents will provide warmth to their son/daughter. Don't forget to tell them "I LOVE YOU, MY SON/DAUGHTER. It is a warm word."

- **MDG 5 - Improve Maternal Health - Margaret**, a 16 year-old at the **Kyangwali Refugee Settlement in Northern Uganda**, is eight months pregnant and scared about having a baby - childbirth is the chief cause of death for young women Margaret's age in developing countries. "My dream is to have two meals a day," said Margaret. Illustrated at the Kyangwali Refugee Settlement in **Northern Uganda** in collaboration with UNHCR.
- **MDG 6 - Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases - Jason** is living with HIV in **Kingston, Jamaica** - a town with the highest HIV/AIDS occurrences in the country. His story documents the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases through the support of the NGO Jamaica Aids Support and the UNFPA.
- **MDG 7 - Ensure Environmental Sustainability - Mohammed** lives in **El Borj, Morocco**, where there isn't any electricity, running water or drinking water. "If our village had water, life would be more comfortable," said Mohammed. His life exemplifies the importance of ensuring environmental sustainability and the need for fresh, clean water. Supported by the NGO Association Adrar.
- **MDG 8 - Achieve A Global Partnership for Development** - 19 year old **Urdeia** of **São Paulo, Brazil**, would like to have her own restaurant one day and provide jobs to others. She also dreams of college -- "My dream is to be able to go to college in a place where I can feel that I am equal to all other persons," professed Urdeia. Urdeia took part in the "Citizen Cook" project in conjunction with the NGO Instituto Lina Galvini, the Youth Employment Network and supported by ILO and the World Bank.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, was founded in 1969 and is the world's largest international and multilateral source of assistance to developing countries for reproductive health and population programs. UNFPA works with governments and non-governmental organizations in more than 140 countries, at their request, and with the support of the international community. UNFPA publishes annually a *State of World Population* report focusing on questions of current interest and concern for the future, with special interest on gender issues and human rights. The report is available online, in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish, at [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org).

Founded in 1999, PixelPress functions at the intersection of new media and visual journalism in pursuit of social justice. It attempts to explore the world in innovative, sometimes experimental ways, to create new media models to advance issues of human rights, and to break through the cocoon of sensationalist media that anaesthetizes society from pain and complexity. Primarily using the Web, but also employing new paper-based techniques for printing exhibitions and digital books, Pixel Press attempts to reach people with dynamic combinations of thoughtful images and words.

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