



## What We've Been Up To

### Programs

#### World Affairs Challenge Fast Approaching

It's almost here! This academic competition on international affairs for middle and high school students incorporates public speaking, dramatic presentation, and group problem solving. This year's annual theme is The Global Marketplace, so teams are studying and analyzing the various dynamics and increasing interdependence of our global economy. Specific topics that teams are tackling include corruption, deforestation, human trafficking, the impact of Wal-mart on countries such as Germany/India, and trade implications due to nuclear proliferation. We are expecting 50+ teams, 400 participants, and 350+ adult spectators. The all-day event will take place on Saturday, March 24 at San Francisco State University. We hope to see you there!

#### Professional Development Program



Edutopia, a national education magazine, featured an article on the Teachers Program. It profiled our mission and included interviews with Savvy Scholars and students. Student Paul Jackson commented that the curriculum "forces us to think how other parts of the world are connected to our lives... Now, I know that what I do can have an effect on somebody I'll never meet." Go to [www.worldsavvy.org](http://www.worldsavvy.org) to read the full article under "our latest news."

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## Community Profile

*Read about the teachers, students, volunteers and donors who are involved in World Savvy's global education programs. We are grateful for their commitment to education and youth development.*

### Bangladesh

by Dana Curran, World Savvy ED

I recently returned from a month long trip to India and Bangladesh. I originally conceived of the trip as a way to reconnect with Madiha, the co founder of World Savvy who returned to live and work in Dhaka last May. Later, my



Co-founders Dana & Madiha

motivation expanded to include a long overdue exploration of a continent known to me only from books, articles and, well, Madiha. Instead of a list of must-see sites, I had one broad, simple goal as I set out on the journey: experience as many new and different perspectives from my own as possible. In this highly abbreviated log of my travel experience, I wanted to describe one of the fresh perspectives I experienced on this trip.

When you first touch down in Dhaka, and begin the trip into the city from the airport, you are immediately struck by the sheer number of people.

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### World Affairs Challenge

Saturday, March 24  
9am-4pm  
San Francisco State  
University  
**Event is FREE!**



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## contact information

### Contact us:

World Savvy  
999 Sutter Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
San Francisco, CA 94109  
415-292-7421

### To Find Out More:

[www.worldsavvy.org](http://www.worldsavvy.org)

### To Unsubscribe:

[news@worldsavvy.org](mailto:news@worldsavvy.org)

## our mission

*To educate and engage young people in community and world affairs.*

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### Media & Arts Program: Inner-City Home Mural

Those who attended the Global Youth Media & Arts Festival at Zeum may have admired Precita Eyes's portable mural project that visualizes issues surrounding immigration, assimilation, and identity.



Represented in the mural are symbols of healing, free speech, peace, creation, and Native American and urban youth culture. In cooperation with the Salesforce Foundation and Healing Arts, the mural was produced to fit on the wall adjacent to our office on Sutter and Hyde. It adds vibrancy to the neighborhood and offers a distinctive opportunity for the youth who produced it to have their work on public display.

### Organization

#### World Savvy Turns 5!

We are proud to announce that 2007 is World Savvy's 5-year anniversary! To celebrate we will be re-launching our website and newsletter with a new design and format that will be more navigable and interactive. Expect to see these changes in a few months. In the meantime, please email us at [info@worldsavvy.org](mailto:info@worldsavvy.org) with comments on what you do or don't like about our existing website and newsletter.



We've joined the savviest networking utility of our time to expand our web of supporters. While you're engaging in this addictive pastime instead of diligently working, use the MySpace search engine to find World Savvy, add us as a friend, and stay posted on current events.



**Give Something Back Business Products**, based on an owner, employees, and customer poll, selected us to receive a donation. Thank you for the support!

### We Need Your Support



Each month **MailboxTees** chooses a social justice event to commemorate, a worthy organization (including World Savvy of course), and a terrific

artist with a tie to the cause. They create a great new t-shirt, mail it to your house and send a big fat donation to a different organization each month. You can subscribe for the whole year, part of the year, or just a month (pre-orders for upcoming months welcome.) *August is World Savvy's month* - To order yours, go to [http://www.mailboxtees.com/for\\_a\\_cause.php](http://www.mailboxtees.com/for_a_cause.php)!

#### Become a Savvy Sustainer today!

**Who:** A special group of donors who are committed to global education for youth

**What:** A pledge to donate at a self-designated amount throughout the year

**When:** Your credit card is automatically charged monthly through our secure server

**Why:** It's a quick, easy and rewarding way to give AND provides ongoing, dependable support.

**How:** Go to <http://worldsavvy.org/involved/donate.html> and follow the directions on the screen or call Sarah Haldan at [sarah@worldsavvy.org](mailto:sarah@worldsavvy.org) or 415-292-7421.

### News and Events

#### World Affairs Challenge

**When:** Saturday, March 24, 9am-4pm

**Where:** San Francisco State University

**What:** Youth present and compete based on their knowledge of *The Global Marketplace*.

**Contact:** Bryn Murray at [bryn@worldsavvy.org](mailto:bryn@worldsavvy.org) or 415-292-7421 with questions.



#### Teacher Workshop 4: Global Food Resources and Sustainability

**When:** April 28, 2007, 11am - 3:00pm

**Where:** Oakland Public Library, Cesar Chavez Branch.

**What:** Come hear experts speak about hunger and global food resources and receive free teaching resources.

**Contact:** Kelly Korenak at [kelly@worldsavvy.org](mailto:kelly@worldsavvy.org) or 415-292-7421 to sign up.

### Tell Us What You Think

**Your votes for the theme of the 2007 Global Youth Media and Arts Program...**

28% Natural Elements: Global Environment Issues

22% Money, Money, Money: Internat'l Wealth & Poverty

20% Youth Activism Worldwide

13% Global Trade and Exchange

8% Turkey & the European Union

2% CIA factbook; Grifty Arts; Millennium Develop't Goals

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Things around you are perpetually in motion—people, rickshaws, animals, cars—and there are millions of them. 11 million people in Dhaka, to be exact (more than an estimated 150 million people live in Bangladesh, which is half the population of the U.S. in a country the size of Georgia). The other thing you notice is the traffic. Traffic in Dhaka is



organized chaos. Families of five somehow fit onto a single moped, helmets are rarely if ever seen, and seatbelts—if they are available—feel like a foolish gesture. I stopped looking for crosswalks and learned that red lights were really more like loose suggestions than laws to abide by. When I asked someone whether automobile insurance exists in Bangladesh, I got a bewildered smile in response. I am not suggesting that all of the above things are safe or ideal; but in this city of approximately 11 million, somehow the chaos works more often than not. Without the expected safeguards of traffic lights, crosswalks, and lanes, I thought carefully about each step I took and felt responsible for

my own welfare. For Bangladeshis' part, people seem to count on themselves to navigate the whirling sea of traffic and perhaps other aspects of urban life as well, however difficult they may be.

Politics are another example. It is a new democracy (independence in 1971) and is quite poor, with at least 45% of the population living below the poverty line. The unstable political situation truly affects every citizen, from entrepreneur to day laborer; when hartals (strikes) shut down ports, roads, schools and businesses, the economy is in a stranglehold. When I visited, elections were scheduled for mid-January. These elections did not happen because of a host of political problems in Bangladesh that would require much more space and time to elaborate on. To generalize, however, there was a pervasive feeling among the people that we spoke with that neither of the two main political parties represented (or cared about) the greater good. Yet, despite this sense that the public has very little faith in either party to affect change, 75% of the voting age population turned out for the last elections in 2001.



This is compared to only 64% percent of American citizens who voted in the 2004 presidential election. The comparison in voting statistics is even starker when you compare literacy rates in these two countries. In the US, 99% of the population reads while in Bangladesh slightly more than 43% of the population is literate. Over the course of the



trip, I learned about the accommodations made for the large illiterate population, including the use of symbols representing various candidates so voters can discern who's who at the polls without reading their names. Yet even with these barriers to voter education and skepticism regarding the government, Bangladeshis employ a sense of self-reliance and seem to feel responsible for using the voice they have been given, despite the barriers.

From where I sit, these facts are very revealing. Nearly all Americans can read, and yet more than one-third of us do not exercise our right to select the leader of a democracy which offers *substantial* economic and social protections, relatively speaking. This is compared to Bangladesh, where fewer than half of the citizens can read, but three quarters exercise their right to voice an opinion about a democracy that offers very *few* economic and social protections, relatively speaking.

I couldn't help but leave Bangladesh with a perspective on how much we have access to in the U.S.—material and non material—that we take for granted, and expect that someone, somewhere, is responsible for providing to us, regardless of how engaged we are as citizens. 36% of us do not vote in elections, even though polls are never far from where we live and great pains are taken to ensure equal access. Perhaps this is because we are disheartened by government generally, or perhaps it's because we don't believe one vote has any impact. While this is understandable in some ways, by the time I left Bangladesh, this had never seemed like more of a luxury.



I had time to consider how I have the luxury of complaining. And it is a luxury that we enjoy freely, because we know that somewhere, someone can be held responsible for everything we experience daily—from the temperature of our coffee to the quality of our children's education. And more often than not, we aren't always considering how as individuals, we bear some responsibility too. This can pervade all things, from educating ourselves, to reading the paper, to voting, to so many other aspects of everyday life.

Our month-long trip took us from Delhi to Mumbai, Goa, and on to Bangladesh for two full weeks. During that time we were fortunate to experience a range of new and remarkable things, including the highlight of meeting Dr. Mohammed Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank and recent recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. We traveled to

Chittagong to tag along with Madiha's mother, Yasmeen Murshed, an advisor for the Caretaker Government, on state business. We got an exclusive inside tour of the Parliament building, designed by Louis Kahn, not otherwise open to the public. We went to a lecture on Christmas Day with a keynote by Amarthya Sen, the renowned Nobel Laureate economist and development scholar, who was joined by Dr. Yunus and George Soros. Most notably, however, we were received with more grace and hospitality by Madiha, her extended family, and the people of Bangladesh than I've ever experienced. The perspectives we were exposed to-- on politics, culture, social issues --- were incredibly insightful, and they came from people everywhere, within government and without.

Now, home again with so much to digest about the journey, this new view on our own responsibility and agency still stands out clearly in my mind. In addition to learning how to bob and weave through some of the more intimidating traffic I've seen, I gained a fresh perspective and a heightened awareness of how litigious our U.S. culture and society has become. We are, despite what you read in the paper or see in the news, a relatively *careful* culture. We have elaborate protections for even small things in our daily lives—from helmet laws to laws barring trans fats. As a result, we have an expectation that someone is or should be responsible for most things we encounter in our day to day lives---from how much we weigh, how healthy we are, traffic flow, public safety and efficiency in transportation, to the safety and cleanliness of water and food (never mind the availability of it). It occurs to me that often as a result, we think less critically about the things we



do, and some of the pressure to feel responsible for our individual actions is relieved. If you feel protected at all times, you rely on your own faculties less than you otherwise would to make decisions. Sometimes the decisions are critical in immediate, tangible ways, like traffic safety. Sometimes they are critical in less immediate ways, like casting one vote in a national election.

The best thing about traveling to this part of the world is the perspective you gain as a visitor. It forces you to consider the way you see the world, and the assumptions you make about your own role in society. I'm hopeful that the perspective I gained in my

short time there forces me to consider the steps I take, literally and figuratively, and how I am individually responsible for taking advantage of the freedoms I have access to, every day. I imagine I will still complain that my morning bus is running late, or that crime in my neighborhood is on the rise. But perhaps now I'll get up earlier to catch that bus, and work harder to be a part of a solution that makes the neighborhood safer.

## Test Your Global Awareness! Take the quiz online at [www.worldsavvy.org](http://www.worldsavvy.org).

1. What country may face genocide as an effect of overflow of rebel alliances in Darfur?  
a. Chad    b. Democratic Republic of the Congo  
c. Rwanda    d. Uganda
2. Which two countries joined the European Union on January 1, 2007?  
a. Norway & Iceland    b. Croatia & Macedonia  
c. Bulgaria & Romania    d. Turkey & Albania
3. What country is expected to overtake China to become the world's most populous country within the next 25 years?  
a. South Africa    b. India    c. The United States    d. Russia
4. Which country supplies the most petroleum products to the U.S.?  
a. Iran    b. Iraq    c. Canada    d. Saudi Arabia
5. What is the title for a West African oral historian?  
a. Guru    b. Ananse    c. Susso    d. Griot

### Answers from the last quiz...

1. Q: The Line of Control is the current, unofficial boundary between which two countries?  
**a. Pakistan, India** Correct: 50%    Incorrect: 50%
2. Q: Which controversial figure, previously involved in the Iran Contra scandal, is the President-Elect of Nicaragua?  
**b. Daniel Ortega** Correct: 58%    Incorrect: 42%
3. Q: Which two countries are legitimate participants in the diamond trade?  
**c. Angola and Sierra Leone** Correct: 31%    Incorrect: 69%
4. Q: In which country is the world's tallest waterfall?  
**c. Venezuela** Correct: 28%    Incorrect: 72%
5. Q: Which country divided into two parts in the "Velvet Divorce" of 1993?  
**b. Czechoslovakia** Correct: 58%    Incorrect: 42%

**Thank you for supporting World Savvy and global education!**

