

**Highlights:**

- *Report on N.E. Regional Conference*
- *Initiation of Sylvie Bastien-Doss, Diane Carroll-Phillips, Melissa Margles*
- IWEN
- DKG@UN

## President's note: The Power of Possibilities



The courage to lead is always made easier because there are dynamic members who share in all aspects of our growth and subsequent successes.

Gamma Quebec members energize me with their efforts and belief in each other that, together, we can continue to move forward.

Together we can build a "lattice of support" (Louann Shrader, N.E. Regional workshop), through real communication, mentoring, leadership and growth. We will thrive if we believe in the power of being open to possibility.

I encourage all our members to welcome our new initiates and discover their passions and their fears while discerning their potential to make our group soar to new heights.

We recognize the contributions of our seasoned professionals who have worked hard for DKG Gamma Quebec to receive its first World Fellowship recipient, Siti Hazariah Binte Abu Bakar, from McGill University.

I look forward to enjoying the planning and implementation of some of our shared ideas from our 2014-2015 survey.

Our Executive Committee members will continue to work as a cohesive group, notwithstanding our diverse backgrounds.

In this biennium, we will stay focused on moving into uncharted territories as we begin to plan expanding our membership, improving our use of our website, and developing our social media skills.

Continuing to work in tandem with the Montreal Council of Women, and developing a new relationship with McGill University, and other liaisons, we will aim at meeting our aforementioned expectations.

Under the leadership of our past president, Yocheved Sonenberg, 2013-2015, the ground work was set for us to flourish. Let's give our best to enjoy riding that wave by embracing the past, enriching the present and, therefore, ensuring our future!

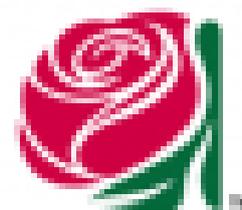
Beverly Townsend  
President, Province Quebec

**Embrace the Past; Enrich the Present; Ensure the Future**



DKG International

**85 years and beyond:  
Advancing Key Women  
Educators for Life**



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## THE GAMMA GAMUT

### Slate of New Officers 2015-2017

President, Beverly Townsend	Co– Recording Secretary, Catherine Bannan Sidorenko
Past President, Yocheved Sonnenberg	Treasurer (appointed) Estie Kleinfeld
First Vice-President, Barb Angus	Parliamentarian Emeritus, Mildred Burns
Second Vice-President, Estie Kleinfeld	Corresponding Secretary, Rose Szasz
Recording Secretary, Binnie Druker	Executive Secretary, Magda Grzechowiak

### Chapter Executive Officers 2014-2016

President, Alpha, Althea Caesar	President, Beta, Erika Sebaldt	President, Gamma, Valerie Delacretaz
Vice-President, Alpha, Beryl Ball	Vice-President, Beta, Judy Szamosi	Vice-President, and Treasurer, Gamma, Yocheved Sonenberg
Treasurer, Alpha, Rena Entus	Treasurer, Beta, Erika Sebaldt	Secretary, Gamma, Robyn Bunch
Secretary, Alpha, Magda Gzrechowiak	Secretary, Beta, Mindy Spiegel	

## Friendly Reminders

### Meeting Dates for DKG General Meetings 2015-2016

*General Meetings at 5:30 p.m. at the E.M.S.B. 6000 Fielding corner of Cote St. Luc*

<b>Monday, November 23, 2015</b>	<b><i>Panel Discussion: Supporting Early Career Teachers</i></b>
<b>Thursday, December 10, 2015</b>	<b><i>Shara Rosen: Senegal for Women and Girls</i></b>
<b>No meeting in January</b>	
<b>Monday, February 15, 2016</b>	<b><i>Tabitha (Indy) Bedoukian: Zentangles Workshop</i></b>
<b>Thursday, March 17, 2016</b>	<b><i>Linda Bond: Research on Reading and Spelling Development</i></b>
<b>Monday, April 11, 2016</b>	<b><i>Evadne Anderson: Buddhism Meets the Goal of Global Awareness</i></b>
<b>Saturday, May 3, 2016</b>	<b><i>Annual General Meeting and Convention (venue to be announced)</i></b>

## Report on Baltimore N.E. Regional Conference – July 6 – 11, 2015

On July 6, Rena Entus and I finally arrived in Baltimore after the most unbelievable travel delays en-route. We arrived late, but were warmly greeted by the group of presidents and past-presidents of each N.E. Regional province and state. Rena, wearing the dual hats of Executive Secretary and Membership Chair, and I, as the new President, looked forward to a demanding, but fun week!

The conference began on a very high note and continued being exhilarating throughout the week.

Anne Marie joined us on Tuesday for 3½ days, and spent time with the other editors and webmasters from the region. She attended Louann Shrader's "Building a Lattice of Support", also known as the "Lattice of Sustainability", break-out session and got a 'taste' of Baltimore's famous crab cakes.

Each leadership session challenged us to go the extra mile to learn how to discover all our "possibilities", starting with "attitude building". We were introduced to Rosamund and Benjamin Zander's, "The Art of Possibility". The video presentation demonstrated exceptional leadership skills: simple steps to recognize what needs to be done to engage a participant, and to enable the belief that excellence is possible. (This tied in nicely with Sean McComb's message, that if a student is challenged to excel, the student will rise to the occasion and achieve excellence.)

We were encouraged to "prune" our Province's by-laws and to keep them updated and current to our present reality.

Reckoning with the vision of DKG's

founding members, we now understand how they may have viewed the power of believing in possibilities. This led us to 'cheer' "Hats off to the founders!" This was used to give us a sense of direction as our week long activities were outlined.

Although our total membership has decreased to 76, 630 as of July 5, 2015, we celebrate that DKG continues as a worldwide force contributing to our educational communities for over eighty-five years. As we celebrate, our major challenge of addressing change is to aim at increasing our membership in as many creative ways as we can.

Here are a few of the mantras that were presented:

- If you make a mistake as you plough your way through exploring solutions, you should meet the errors made by throwing your hands in the air and exclaim, "How fascinating!"
- People don't drive you crazy if you do not give them the key!
- Initiate and mentor into excellence (Carol Herzog, Indiana)

As we exchanged ideas, I dealt with my feeling on 'Effective Leadership' and what it meant to me:

**H** - humanity; **A** - affective; **R** - reflection; **M** - mentoring; **O** - organization; **N** - negotiating; **Y** - YOU, you the other person = **HARMONY**.

We were asked to begin the process of trying to get the most from our changing world by, most importantly, not taking ourselves too seriously, and by trying new approaches. For example, try: GoTo meeting, Webinars and/or Skype.

Explore with recommended readings, such as, Jon Gordon's "The Seed – Finding Purpose & Happiness in Life & Work"; "The Energy Bus"; "Training Camp" – being the best that you can be; "Soup – Building Winning Teams"; "The Carpenter – Successful Strategies"; and "The Positive Dog". Gordon's books all offer interesting perspectives on leadership, but also great support ideas for positive living.

A great benefit to our development as leaders was the exploration of our personal Maxims from Mike Figliuolo's "One Piece of Paper". [Maxims Chart \(2\).pdf](#)

Each participant was allowed to develop her 'Leadership Voice' by looking at her life's purpose, her core values and beliefs; describing her perfect world; identifying what members can expect from her, and what she can expect from the members, by being aware of their leadership skills.

Knowing our demographics was emphasized: looking at the possibilities for expansion; the quality of our EEC; having a strong parliamentarian; ensuring state involvement at the national level; taking advantage of the special programs within the national organization and that of using social media to enhance our "Journey for Life" as we use the new vibrant hard copy with the same name.

Keeping us connected is DKG's new social media live feed on the website. It is one of a wide range of guidelines that we were allowed to learn about as we shared our needs and expertise (or lack thereof) with our other participants.

The umbrellas, 'Advancing Change',

## THE GAMMA GAMUT

N.E. Regional Report Continued from Page 3.

‘Advancing Education’, ‘Advancing Possibilities’, ‘Advancing Members’, ‘Advancing Children’ leading to ‘Advancing DKG’, covered the major aspects of the activities for the week of excellent major speakers supported by a wide range of breakout sessions.

We had lunch with past international presidents. We received the baton, a rose, from the previous president. Rena was a formidable stand-in for Yocheved. There were special workshops for EEC and membership reps, for executive secretaries, state editors, treasurers and webmasters. There was an info fair enabling members to make connections and a market place to explore. Yet, we were given time for dancing (‘Sir Rod’ provided musical entertainment), we made new friends, greeted old friends, and had time for lots of fun!

The only disappointment was not being able to get into breakout sessions of our choice because some rooms were too small.

Under the leadership of our International President, Dr. Lyn Babb Schmid, Ed.D., we were challenged to “adapt and remain relevant to our members”. Our Northeast Regional Director, Dr. Kay Clawson, enticed us to “Feel the Change in the Air”. And our, then, Interim, Executive Director, Sandra Smith Bull, kept us actively interested and challenged for the week.

An outstanding presentation on what excites him and motivates him to excel, was made by Sean McComb, the recipient of the 2014 International Teacher of the Year Award. His love of his family, his students and his job reverberated throughout his speech.

The Canadian Forum chair, Dr. Donna-Faye Madhosingh of B.C., urged us to ‘Expand Members’ Outlook’ by brainstorming ‘the various concerns of our provinces in a group format’. It allowed us to highlight ‘challenges and successes of individual members, chapters and provinces.’

The progress of our Canadian project, ‘Mentoring in Nepal’, was shared. (See pages 9-10.)

I was honored to have been asked to deliver the inspiration for our forum. This in itself spoke to the power of ‘possibilities’ based on giving one’s best.

On the Friday evening, Rena and I had the pleasure of dining with Marilyn Wiggins, the in-coming President of the Baltimore Chapter, and her dear friend, Dr. Kay Byers, who were both ‘voices’ of the Rose, who provided musical tributes and entertainment for the conference. The new friendships made are special and, hopefully, will lead to a more dynamic biennium.

Enjoy [Zander on Leadership](#).

-Beverly Townsend, President, Gamma Quebec

*Note: By no means does this summary exhaust the activities presented or those in which we participated!*

**It wasn’t all work in Baltimore! The organizers made sure we had time to have fun, fun fun!**



A ‘Flash-Mob’ got every one on their feet, dancing to *Sir Rod’s* music



*Sir Rod*, a Rod Stewart impersonator, kept the evening lively!



Baltimore’s beautiful waterfront serving the best blue crab cakes

## 2015 N.E. REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN BALTIMORE MARYLAND



Pictured left, Donna-Faye Madhosingh of B.C., Canadian Rep., chaired the Canadian Forum.

Bev Townsend (right), gave a report on Quebec, as well as delivering an inspirational and personal message.

Sandra Smith Bull greeted Canadians on behalf of DKG International. Sandra is the new Executive Director as of Sept. 1, 2015.

Presidents of each province in the N.E. Region gave their reports.



Sandra Smith Bull, Executive Director



Joan Wolfe, Cdn Area Rep. nominee



Sheila Mackay, Alberta



Joan Somerville, New Brunswick



Kathryn Derby, Ontario



Nancy Jonah, New Brunswick

Sean Mc Comb, pictured right, is an English teacher at Patapsco High School & Center for the Arts in Baltimore County, and Coordinator of the school's Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. He also teaches at Towson University as an adjunct professor in education and writing. Sean was awarded the 2014 International Teacher of the Year.



Left to right: Joan Somerville, Donna-Faye Madhosingh, Debbie Rodaway, Aggie Moynihan, and Isabel Wildfong-Martin

## THE GAMMA GAMUT

### Inspirational Message at Canadian Forum in Baltimore 2015

Good morning my Canadian sisters! Thank you for asking me to do this inspiration.

First, let me share the name of a book that has grounded me for the past 8 years. It is, "Saying 'YES' to Life, Even the Hard Parts ", by Ezra Bayda and Josh Bartok.

Let us go back a few decades to the beginning of a story that I would like to share. It goes like this:

Once upon a time there was a little girl who lived in Kingston, Jamaica. She grew up believing that we should always do the best that we can.

Beginning in elementary school, she took ballet lessons because she loved to dance. In high school, she became aware of children who were wheelchair bound who could not enjoy dancing as much as she did. So, she decided to spend time with them encouraging them to do the best that they could with what they had, by swinging their wheel chairs to and fro to music. This enabled then to exercise with freedom

while enjoying the music. This was a new and vibrant experience which they thoroughly enjoyed.

As she moved through her teenage and young adult years she widened her view on life with the notion that, "the best is yet to come".

Her two 'guiding lights' saw her through times of fear of the unknown when she moved to a new country, with a different culture and when making new friends. It focused her as she graduated from university, got married and started a family.

She discovered that her ability to persevere, have a positive mind set while being non-judgmental and having a good sense of humor, were invaluable. But, saying "YES" to life was priceless and the only way to face the fear of the unknown.

This saw her husband, her children and herself climb Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa and tenth highest in the world, in the most extreme temperatures, -40 degrees Cel-

sus, as they ascended the crater on January 5, 1986 .

She stayed the course by joining DKG after sharing this experience with its Gamma Quebec members.

She has held fast to these beliefs, and today she stands before you as the DKG Gamma Quebec president beginning her biennium without fear and with pride.

Let's do the best we can in this Canadian Forum to move forward together, to give our all while believing that " the best is yet to come ". With the Shift #1 'Hope' that Sean McComb identified yesterday morning in his very moving presentation, together we can say:

*'Yes' to Life, Even the Hard Parts.*

Thank you for walking with me on this journey of reflection and reaffirmation.

**-Beverly Townsend, President,  
Gamma Quebec**

**Embrace the Past. Enrich the Present.  
Ensure the future.**

## Scholarship and World Fellowship Report

Applications forms for the Evelyn Eaton Award and the Early Educator Award have been posted in the schools of Montreal English School Board. French-as-a-Second Language teachers may submit a project for funding under the \$500.00 Evelyn Eaton Award. Early Career teachers may apply for a \$300.00 grant to help them build a bank of personal instructional resources to address a curriculum goal. The deadline for both grants is November 2nd, 2015. The winners will be presented with their cheques at a regular school staff meeting.

McGill University has posted the application form for the World Fellowship Grants on its website. I, as Chair of our

Scholarship Committee, have already had some thirty inquiries about the grant, so we expect to receive a bumper crop of applications on or before the December 5<sup>th</sup> deadline. The Scholarship Committee will meet before Christmas to read through the applications and select seven to forward to the International Scholarship Committee for the final selection. The winners will receive a grant of \$4,000.00. Anyone wishing to help review the applications at our local level will be warmly welcomed by the Scholarship Committee. It's a tough job – all the candidates are worthy of a grant – but a rewarding one.

This year our Dr. Sarah Paltiel Award was earned by Marita Romberg, a B.Ed. Elementary program student in McGill's Department of Integrated Studies in Education. Our Dr. Mildred Burns Award for Leadership in Education went to Colleen Corkum who has completed her Master's at McGill in Educational Leadership. Throughout her studies she worked as a full time school administrator. Her research was in the area of mentoring and supporting new school administrators and developing teacher leaders.

**-Barb Angus, Chair, Scholarship  
and World Fellowship Committees**

# SEPTEMBER 17, 2015 HOMECOMING



Judy Szamosi, Chair of the Hospitality Committee, oversaw the initiation of our new members from left: Melissa Marglese, Sylvie Bastien-Doss, and Diane Carroll-Phillips



Initiates Dianea (above) and Sylvie, (pictured right) show their lit candles symbolizing enlightening the world through education.



Above, left of Sylvie: Linda Phelan, Mindy Spiegel and Rena Entus take part in the initiation ceremony.



Bev conducts the first official meeting of her 2015-17 biennium at Homecoming



Judy looks on as Sylvie signs the initiation book and Melissa and Diane ward off an unwanted rain shower.



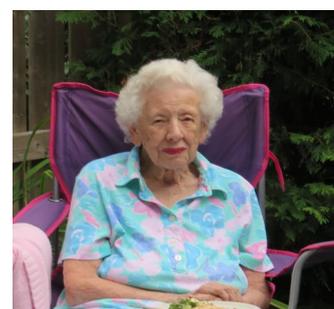
Left to right: Bev Townsend with Beryl Ball and Linda Blackwell-Phalen



Everyone enjoys the delicious food prepared by our food committee! Thanks to all who contributed!



Maria Tucci, our Yearbook Editor, left, and Phyllis Bennet, President of Gamma Chapter, right, enjoy the beautiful weather and good food



Pictured left: Valerie Delacretaz, our most generous Hostess, takes a well-deserved break. Twenty-two members attended the event. Everyone pitched in to help clear up, making this a most enjoyable day for all!

Pictured right: Dr. Mildred Burns, Parliamentarian Emeritus, with Cathy Bannan Sidorenko, Chair, Educational Excellence Committee



## THE GAMMA GAMUT

### Report on October 20 Meeting by Bev Townsend

On Tuesday evening, the Gamma Quebec members who were present enjoyed meeting our three invited dinner guests, our guest speaker, Susan Pinker, and Susan's Mom.

Several of you once again welcomed Diane, Sylvie and Tara, our new members who were present, and whom you may have been meeting for the first time.

We celebrated the recent birthdays of Georgie Crawford, Marianne Davis and Barb Angus with a beautiful cake made by Mindy Spiegel. We sorely missed Mildred Burns' presence, but celebrated her *in absentia*, as she would have been included in this group.

Most important is the need to give a special **THANK YOU!** to Binnie's 'Hospitality Team' of Maria Tucci, Mindy Spiegel, Frema Engel, Althea Caesar, Judy Kornick and the many other 'hands' who stepped up and gave the team their assistance.

The EMSB renovations will continue to demand that we make unexpected changes, as those present saw its effect on our meeting. It was especially appreciated when you all agreed to a surprise post dinner 'stroll' to enable that preparations be made for the presentation.

To those who were unable to be there, Barb Angus's thank you to the speaker said it all - DKG Province Quebec demonstrates the classic 'Village Effect'. We were especially pleased to witness Susan Pinker's delight with her beautiful gift from the treasure trove of Rose Szasz, a whimsical Pan playing his flute. We were pleased Rose could be there too!

"Thanks", to those who transported the members whose presence we needed to ensure.

I am sending warm wishes to those who were unable to be with us, with the hope that we will be together for the **November 23rd panel discussion on supporting early career teachers.**

Bev

**Embrace the Past; Enrich the Present; Ensure the Future.**



Barbara Victor with her guest, Habza Shedlack, a former EMSB administrator.



Mindy presents the birthday cake she made for Marianne, Georgie, Barb and Mildred



Our Guest Speaker, Susan Pinker, spoke on « The Village Effect »

## IWEN - Canadian Nepal Mentoring Project (2014-2016)



I had the pleasure of attending the AGM for the *Intercultural Women's Education Network (IWEN)* on September 22, 2015 in Kelowna. There I met the president Kevin Edgcombe, Karen Hughes the finance and administration officer, and Nura Basnet who works with sponsored students in Nepal. The program we are assisting is the empowerment of women through education and livelihood opportunities known as '*Empowerment through Education*' (ETE). There are many areas that IWEN contributes to but their main focus is on Empowerment Through Education (ETE). IWEN believes in a holistic approach towards educating Nepalese marginalized females. With this in mind, IWEN works closely with the mothers of our sponsored girls. The mothers in turn have become a true driving force behind IWEN's education till grade 12. Presently IWEN facilitates 19 mother's groups with a total of 650 women. Of those 650, 350 have managed to start small livelihood projects which feed their families and ensure their daughters' on-going education.

IWEN has partnered with women in the community to sew scarves

that IWEN buys at fair trade prices and then sells to fund its programs. Some of you may have purchased a scarf at the NW Conference in Regina this past summer. They are beautiful.

The Bicycle Allocation Program, I think, is a great idea. This reduces the students' workload so that these girls could go to school on time and have surplus time for their studies. If the student drops out of the program she must return the bicycle. In the school that was built by IWEN, solar panels were installed to provide electricity.

It was delightful to see the slide presentation by Nura Basnet, the director from Nepal. The students' joy at being able to go to school was evident. Education is saving these girls from slave labour and worse. (Please see Sabita's story page 10). Her sisters were bonded meaning they were given to Land Lords because parents could not pay their debts. They are used for slave labour.)

All in all I felt privileged to attend the IWEN AGM, to meet the supporters and be enlightened by the dedication and enthusiasm of the participants. They were all so inviting and appreciative of our Canadian DKG support. We have donated over \$7130 so far to *Empowerment Through Education* in Nepal!

**For more information on IWEN go to [www.IWENCanada.com](http://www.IWENCanada.com).**

**Email address:**  
**[info@IWENCanada.com](mailto:info@IWENCanada.com)**  
**Phone: 250-215-1045**



**With scarves are Heather Oishi and Karen Hughes**



**IWEN AGM – Donna-Faye Madhosingh, Nura Basnet and Kevin Selling**

## THE GAMMA GAMUT

# Empowerment through Education

Last year IWEN supported the education and personal care of 211 deprived female students. These female students are from different village clusters of Dang Deukhuri. The ETE has been IWEN's key program since 2007.

### Achievements:

- ⇒ 3 students were awarded their School Leaving Certificate
- ⇒ Enrolled 126 students in private English medium school for better education thereby increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem
- ⇒ Enrolled Sunita Kumal in Nursing College
- ⇒ Enrolled 3 orphan children in English school
- ⇒ Decreased early marriage within IWEN's working areas
- ⇒ Reduced child labour within IWEN's working areas

### Challenges

- ⇒ Out of 125 students, 20 are struggling to keep up their grades because of their weak base in English
- ⇒ Low percentage of passing students in grade 10

### Sabita Kumal's Story

*Sabita Kumal is my name. I am in grade 5. I am the luckiest one in the family because I can go to school regularly. My sisters were bonded so they could not go to school. They were trapped in a home that was not good.*

*I wanted to go to the English medium school and through the support of IWEN, now I am sitting in an English medium school. I did very well in my last final exam. I am very proud of my 97.44 percentage. I got a bicycle last year. It has helped to save me because I was able to get around faster. My family is very happy for the support. My mother is an active member of Gadwa Mothers' Group.*



# DKG@UN

*THE NEWSLETTER  
OF THE REPRESENT-  
ATIVES OF THE DEL-  
TA KAPPA GAMMA  
SOCIETY INTERNA-  
TIONAL TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC INFOR-  
MATION (DPI) AND  
THE ECONOMIC  
AND SOCIAL COUN-  
CIL (ECOSOC)*

Number 33

July 2015



## Partnerships for Success: NGOs, Youth and the United Nations

By Ann Grosjean

The United Nations has made recruiting and engaging younger members a goal. Increasing the age definition of youth to thirty-two years, they employed a Youth Envoy at the UN to work with youth around the world and they encourage each NGO to include two youths among their representatives. At a recent UN Briefing, Dr. Bill Hunter (a CTAUN member) from

Lehigh University moderated a panel of NGO youth representatives to discuss youth partnerships with NGOs and the UN.

Most of the young panelists had participated in Model UN at their schools. Finding their passion through volunteering service in fields of interest to them and identifying NGOs in these areas, they eventually worked their way to being Youth Representatives. Amanda Nesheiwat, representing Foundation for Post Conflict Development, spoke of the UN pass which she said is “a key to the global world” opening the door to attend weekly briefings about topics being discussed at the UN. She was invited to attend Malala Day, to provide input to the State Department about climate change and to participate in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change as a youth delegate and State Department liaison.

Viktorilia Brezheniuk is a Masters student at Lehigh and a youth rep for the World Federation of Ukrainian Women’s Organizations, representing 27 women’s organizations in 17 countries on four continents. “Youth,” she says, “is not an excuse for inaction, irresponsibility or unawareness. We join an NGO to bring energy, expertise and skills.” She demonstrated the global power of social media with the video she created just days before the briefing with clips of youth who spoke from around the world.

A sophomore at Seton Hall, Gabriela Taveras serves as her school’s youth rep for the School of Diplomacy and the UN Association of the Dominican Republic. She emphasized the im-

portance of study abroad programs enabling one to put theory into action. Seton Hall provides this travel experience as well as a summer program at the UN.

Joy Ukaigwe, the daughter of Nigerian immigrants, is a Master’s student at Columbia University and represents the Environmental Development Action (ENDA) in the third World based in Dakar. As an epidemiology student and also interested in mental health, she brings the importance of data to facilitate the discussion between research and policy development important for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted this September at the General Assembly.

The “millennial” generation, born after 1984, looks at the world differently; connected globally, they maintain that if it happens anywhere it happens everywhere so you can’t turn a blind eye.

You can find UN Youth on Twitter at **DPINGOyouthreps** and on Facebook at **United Nations Youth** and you can e-mail them at **youth@un.org**. View the briefing in full including the video, *What does youth empowerment mean to you and how can youth contribute to the SDGs?*

<http://webtv.un.org/search/partnerships-for-success-ngos-youth-and-the-un-dpi-ngo-briefing/4082419379001?term=Youth&languages=&sort=date>

## Have You Heard Us?

By Lochie Musso

Celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the theme of this briefing was, *“Children’s Voices in Creating a World*

## THE GAMMA GAMUT

*Fit for All.*” Using the latest technology, the United Nations reached out to people of all nations and ages to seek input on the Post 2015 objectives, “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs). By the end of 2014, over 723,000 children age 15 and under from 194 countries had responded to the *My World Survey* conducted by the UN “for a Better World”. The top six priorities chosen by this age group were: a good education, \*better job opportunities, better health care, \*protection against crime and violence, access to clean water and sanitation, \*equality between men and women. They even placed the starred priorities here higher than any other age group.

The Trusteeship Council room was filled with children from elementary to high school and beyond. One assembly of middle school students uniformly dressed in black and white opened the briefing in song. Another group performed a Haitian story-telling and an elementary chorus closed the meeting.

During the Q and A session Global Expert Advisor on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Ravi Karkara, fielded such questions from the children as “Why do adults tend to ignore or pass on what kids say?” Jennifer Tang, Child Participation Action Researcher at the City University of NY advised adults to “change how we listen to children,” and Dr. Roseanne L. Flores of Hunter College held that “adults have an obligation to children to listen.” Youth advocate and Co-founder of A World at School as well as the youth representative on the High-Level steering committee for the UN Secretary General’s Global Education First Initiative, Chernor Bah told of his early life in Sierra Leone where young boys were conscripted to war but never a part of the peace process.

Jocelyn Formosa, spokesperson for Canadian Indigenous children shared a story of how the children in her territory dreamed of a new school then pursued that vision until it was built! She said, “One mosquito can make a difference but a room full of them is a problem to deal with!”

### Who’s Who at the UN

By Lochie Musso

The United Nations employs hundreds around the globe with many stationed at the headquarters in New York. Your DKG reps at the UN thought you might be interested in meeting some of these people who work “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war . . . to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights . . . to promote social progress and better standards of life. . .” (From the Preamble to the 1945 Charter of the United Nations) With this in mind and from time to time, we would like to introduce you to some of the UN personnel we have been privileged to get to know. Our first interviewee is a man many of you who attended the NYC DKG International Convention in 2012 or a CTAUN Conference may recognize.



**Ramu Damodaran** is an engaging gentleman with a charismatic smile whose speech writing and presentations make him a much sought after spokesman. He is currently Deputy Director for Partnerships and Public Engagement in the Outreach Division of

the Department of Public Information at the United Nations. This involves reaching out to and partnering with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, and the general public. He also oversees publication of the *UN Chronicle* magazine and the *Yearbook of the United Nations* as well as UN Academic Impact. One fine day in June, he graciously spent his lunch hour with this first time interviewer.

Question: How did you get to this position at the UN?

RD: As the son of a diplomat in India I traveled all over Europe and Asia moving from one post to another. Everywhere we went I had to learn enough of the local language to get by. I think the excitement of travel and meeting new people inspired me to follow the diplomatic path. But when I came to work at the UN in New York, I said, “They speak English here! This is easy!” and I decided to stay!

I had two “lucky” life experiences which guided me. The first is when, at thirteen, I was chosen to be one of the youth DJs for a national radio program devoted to young people in India. Twelve years later this led me to a TV news writer and anchor job. Secondly, my Master’s in Foreign Service positioned me perfectly for government work.

Q: Academic Impact is a large part of your responsibilities as Deputy Director. How did this program come about?

RD: In 1996, I was working at the *Chronicle*, which was mostly keeping records of events and meetings at that time. I refocused the paper to include more current events and I asked open-ended questions such as “What should the UN do about poverty . . . health . . . education . . .?” It was about this time that I became motivated with the idea of how academia could contribute to the mandates of

the UN. And I was invited to speak at a CTAUN conference and I learned of that group's Best Practices Program. This reinforced my ideas that educational research could and should contribute to the underlying constant sector problems of the UN, essentially the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals). In 2007, I was attending a UN reception where I was introduced to Ban Ki-moon and I was able to casually share these ideas with him. He was very interested. In 2008 the announcement was made and in 2010, United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) was inaugurated.

Q: Where do you see the UNAI heading in the Future?

RD: We have over 1000 institutions from around the world involved now. There are the very real problems of finances and human resources to maintain a large program.

Q: I read on the AI website about university Hubs. What are they about?

RD: Hubs are groups of universities or institutions reaching out to each other collaborating on specific programs and projects. I see the UN as working on two tracks. One, are the headlines of the moment, mostly peace, security, conflict resolution and crisis, man-made or natural crisis situations. Two, are the underlying constant sector problems of the MDGs, poverty, hunger, education, etc. This is where we need vigorous connections to academia. Their excellent research and investigation can contribute to finding answers to these issues.

Q: I have heard you speak on several occasions and I am so impressed with how you incorporate what is happening at the event with your agenda and use no notes! How do you do this?

RD: (Smiling almost chuckling) Well, thank you. I think my years in radio helped. There you learn to formulate your sentences on the fly! I try to live in the moment and listen carefully.

Q: You are so easy going, what makes you angry?

RD: (A pause) People - and countries - who continue to take a stand and don't budge, seeming impervious to sound logic contrary to their position.

Q: And what makes you happy?

RD: My job and the people I work with. There is never a sense of certainty, something new every day.

Q: Tell me something people might not know about you.

RD: Well, at the end of a long day, I enjoy sitting with an Agatha Christie or Ellery Queen mystery. I collect mystery magazines.

Q: What can a group like DKG do to contribute to the global picture, besides money? What advice would you give DKG members?

RD: What DKG is doing with the Schools for Africa is very commendable and their presence at the UN is an important contribution, too. Think and act locally. Do good things in your neighborhood. Identify local needs and act. Then think and act globally. For example, in India, yoga was a local program helping people. The people took it to the government and it spread across the country and then it became global when the UN declared 21 June 2015 the first International Day of Yoga! So, start local with the bigger picture in mind.

For more on Ramu Damodaran go to [www.wise-qatar.org/ramu-damodaran](http://www.wise-qatar.org/ramu-damodaran)

For more on UNAI go to [www.academicimpact.un.org](http://www.academicimpact.un.org)

### YOUR UN REPRESENTATIVES

The members of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International listed below are your official representatives at the United Nations Department of Public Information and the Economic and Social Council. Most of them also work with CTAUN. You can email us for further information.

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(Note: Damodaran picture with permission from UN website, student picture by Jason Musso)

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**The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International**

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