

The Humanitarian

A publication by humanitarian clubs at U.F.

Hello, from Humanitarian Interaction on Campus (HIC)!

Welcome to the first issue of *The Humanitarian*, a publication by humanitarian student organizations at the University of Florida! We have decided to work together to reach more of the student body and the greater Gainesville community, because we know that there are many compassionate people in our town who are willing to help our projects, but they can only do so once they know what is needed! Thus, *The Humanitarian* was born.

Amidst the hateful local and national sentiments that have been publicized recently, we wish to provide a beam of hope. In these times of international conflict - political, economic, and cultural - there IS something being done to help. There is hope.

The students in our campus organizations are doing our best to make a difference in the lives of many around the globe - in Nicaragua, Colombia, Bolivia, Guatemala, Afghanistan, the Palestinian territory, Uganda and more. We fight poverty, disease, corruption and injustice by going on service trips, building houses and schools, donating medical supplies, empowering women and children, and spreading awareness about global development issues.

As you can see, our reach is vast but our aim is singular: we want to do our part to end suffering around the world. Please do your part by helping us.

This first issue will cover the amazing projects that our groups did over the summer. You will learn that we accomplished much, but still have far to go. So please ACT NOW! Because together we can do more.

Amanda Monaco
HIC Coordinator

To find out more about who we are, upcoming events, how to contact us, and how to get involved, please visit www.humanitarianuf.yolasite.com.

“So What Did You Do This Summer?”

This question, posed so nonchalantly by friends and family, can be overwhelming if you have just come back from one of the amazing summer service trips organized by University of Florida's humanitarian clubs. You instantly have a desire to inundate the questioner with moving accounts of the people and places you experienced, but you simultaneously dread that your descriptions will be inadequate, that you cannot make this person feel as deeply touched as you were. Many UF students participated in service trips around the globe over the summer - find one, and ask them to tell you about their trip!



The Recurso group building a school in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua

Recurso's Service Trip to Nicaragua

A reflection by Amanda Ayers

Impoverished. Underdeveloped. Less developed. Third World. These were all vaguely-defined words that I often heard in my classes to describe most of the countries in Central and South America. Having participated in multiple classroom debates about that ambiguous “international development”, I thought I had braced myself for what I was going to face as I packed my bags for a three-week service trip to Nicaragua this summer. Unfortunately, no amount of textbook-reading, news-watching, radio-listening or classroom-debating would have prepared me - or anyone else, I believe - for the poverty I witnessed during those three weeks. Words and images can only do so much; it's when you look into the eyes of a fourteen-year old single mother who survives on less than a dollar a day that you truly understand what it means to be “impoverished.”

I spent the first three weeks of May 2010 on the Recurso International Development Service Trip. Recurso is a group on campus that is dedicated to raising awareness about poverty issues throughout the world, and the trip to Nicaragua is a hands-on experience with international development. I, along with twenty-three other UF students, trekked through the grime of Managua, the mountains of Terrabona and the cocaine-covered beaches of Puerto Cabezas for one of the most rewarding and humbling experiences I will ever encounter in my life.

Our first full day was spent in La Chureca in Managua. La Chureca is literally a city within a dump. The area had been a neighborhood until the government...
(story continued on next page)

UF Students Changing Lives: Summer 2010 Service Trips

(continued, "Recurso's Service Trip")

decided to turn it into a landfill, with the people still in it. Everyday, thousands of pounds of trash come into the neighborhood, and the only way for these 1,000 people to subsist is to rummage through the garbage to find plastic or rubber to sell for a profit. Homes are made of whatever can be found in the trash – tarps, plastic bags, cardboard boxes or scrap pieces of metal. Children play in ponds full of toxic waste. Dogs die from heat exhaustion and starvation in the middle of the streets. The number of raped women is rising, as is the rate of HIV/AIDS. And yet, as we worked at a local clinic giving lice treatments and dental care, these people were kind, laughing, joyful and so incredibly thankful for something as small as a fluoride tray. Within a few months, though, the dump – and their homes – will all be gone as the government has sold the landfill to a Spanish company to manage. We know this, they know this and yet, their smiles and the sounds of their children's laughter (or cries) as we put bubble-gum flavored fluoride trays into their mouths will forever remain in my mind.

The town of Puerto Cabezas lies on the east coast of Nicaragua, often called the "Miskito Coast," named for the local tribe that inhabits the area. Hurricane Felix demolished most of the Miskito Coast in 2007. For ten days, we worked from 8 am until 6 pm building a school so that these children can finally return to school. We mixed cement by hand, suffered strange sunburns and braved homemade "ladders" to build the walls of the school. I'd look up from laying bricks on a layer of cement to see two six-year old girls struggling to place the next brick onto the wall of their future school. These children – out of school for three years – wanted their education to begin again, and would do anything, including break-backing physical work, to see that they could attend as soon as possible.

The three weeks in Nicaragua flew by quicker than I imagined; memories of shacks, fluoride trays, unpaved roads, smiling mothers, laughing children and the taste of gallo pinto are all I have to cling onto in order to remember. Despite the immense poverty that I encountered, I never met a local who outwardly showed unhappiness or sadness. Even though I couldn't communicate very well with any local Nicaraguans (my Spanish doesn't really extend beyond "hola"), actions spoke louder than words; a smile, a laugh or a hug can say "thank you" in thousands of different languages.

From my experience with Recurso, I can only offer you this bit of advice: Go help. In whatever way you can, help someone. If you have two arms, two legs and any compassion at all for the human race, then there should be nothing stopping you from donating a little bit of your time and effort to make someone else's life, and ultimately, the world, better. I promise you, it could be the best decision you make in your life.

To find out more about Recurso, visit recursouf.wordpress.com.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ **HELP Recurso!** ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We were able to complete all of the school building EXCEPT for the roof because we did not have enough funds. Without a roof, the children in this neighborhood of Puerto Cabezas will continue to not able to go to school because their last school was destroyed by Hurricane Felix in 2007. The materials and paid labor needed to finish the roof will cost \$2000. Please contact Recurso at recursouf@gmail.com if you would like to donate!

"For me, an area of moral clarity is: you're in front of someone who's suffering and you have the tools at your disposal to alleviate that suffering or even eradicate it, and you act."
-Paul Farmer



Heal the World's Guatemala service trip. Go Gators!

Heal The World's Service Trip to Guatemala

A reflection by Delisha White

I was granted the opportunity to travel to La Antigua, Guatemala with an amazing group of people and volunteer at various healthcare clinics. This trip allowed me to see that there are many communities around the world that could benefit from a small fraction of the resources that are available in the United States. Traveling to La Antigua was definitely an exciting moment in my life. In just one week I was able to help patients with HIV/AIDS, climb to the top of a historic volcano that erupted just two weeks prior to the trip, and experience the raw culture that is still alive in Guatemala.

I volunteered at the "Hospicio de San Jose" which doubled as an orphanage for children and adults with HIV/AIDS who were abandoned by their families and a hospice facility for individuals in their last days with the disease. The children lived on one end of the Hospicio and the terminally ill patients were at the other end. The patients that were hazardous to others were kept in two small rooms labeled "DO NOT ENTER" and authorities were required to wear a facemask and gloves before entering. I spent most of my days at the Hospicio playing with the kids, who were aware of their illness and would tell you they were called "untouchables". They called the nurses mom and protected each other as a family, however, they adjusted well to new people and were happy to have visitors.

I met a very special little girl named Hyde who lived at the end of the facility with the terminally ill patients. She was only two years old with HIV and a severe injury that caused her to lose sight in her left eye. I helped the nurses dress her and would play with her for hours. We walked through the Hospicio and I admired her charisma as she entertained anyone that came in contact with her. One day, I was able to feed a patient named Jorge who was dying from AIDS. As I fed him Ensure through a syringe, I was saddened by his condition. Jorge spent his days moaning in pain because he was paralyzed and covered in sores from the disease. He was able to open his eyes, but he was blind. Jorge was one of few patients that were brought to the Hospicio by their families because of their condition, but his family kept in contact by sending pictures and flowers.

On the last day of our trip we decided to buy piñatas for the children. I will never forget the look on their faces when they saw the piñatas and how they rushed to devour as much candy as the nurses would allow.

These are the memories that I will cherish forever thanks to amazing organization. No words can truly express how grateful I am to be a member of Heal the World. The opportunities available through this organization have allowed me to never stop giving, whether its through local community acts, or mission trips abroad.

To find out more about Heal the World, visit grove.ufl.edu/~heal.

Upcoming Events

September 10-October 10

Friday, September 10th:

6pm – 9pm: A Gathering for Peace, Understanding and Hope at Trinity United Methodist Church, 4000 NW 53rd Avenue, Gainesville, FL
 7pm – 10pm: “A Hard Day’s Night” Benefit for Alachua Habitat for Humanity - Sweetwater Branch Inn, Gainesville, FL

Saturday, September 11th:

5pm – 9pm: Candlelight Vigil for Peace & Unity - Bo Diddley Community Plaza (Downtown)

Thursday, September 16th:

7pm – 9pm: Human Rights Awareness on Campus’ screening of “Black Gold”, a documentary about injustice in the global coffee market

Friday, September 17th:

Open house at Hoda Islamic Center. For more info call Ismail Ibn Ali at 305-322-6673 .

Saturday, September 18th:

9pm – 10pm: Heal the World’s Benefit Concert at 1982. Proceeds will go to Nothing but Nets to help prevent the spread of malaria.

Sunday, September 19th:

12pm – 3pm: Heal the World’s car wash at the Burger King near the Oaks Mall

Tuesday, September 21st

7pm – 7:30pm: Invisible Children’s ‘Face to Face Tour’, location TBD. Come meet the individuals who are fighting to stop the use of child soldiers in Uganda

Saturday, October 2nd:

8am – 12am: Universities Allied for Essential Medicine’s ‘Drugs for Neglected and Tropical Diseases 5K’ at Flavel Field

Tuesday, October 5th:

7pm - 9pm: Recurso’s screening of “Black Gold”, a documentary about injustice in the global coffee market.

Wednesday, October 6th:

6pm - 9pm: Recurso’s ‘Fair Trade Fair’. Come learn how fair trade helps poor communities get more profit for their product. Local fair trade goods will be for sale.

Club Meeting Times:

Recurso:

Every other Tuesday starting Aug. 31st at 6:30pm in Matherly 103

Campus CodePINK for Peace:

Third Wednesday of every month at 6:30pm. Locations will vary, but most likely will end up in the Reitz Union. Our first meeting will be Sept. 15th at 6:30pm in Reitz Union Room 287.

Invisible Children:

Every Thursday 7pm McCarty A G186.

Amnesty International:

Monday at 7:20 pm, starting Sept. 13 and continuing every other week, location announced through Facebook at ‘UF Amnesty’

Heal the World:

October 7th at 7pm, location TBA via Facebook

Students for Justice in Palestine:

Wednesdays, 6:00 in Pugh Hall

ONE:

Biweekly Thursdays at 6pm in 110 Frasier-Rogers Hall, starting Sept. 9th.

International Justice Mission:

Wednesdays at 6pm, starting Sept 17th. Locations TBA via Facebook

Human Rights Awareness on Campus:

Every other Thursday at 7:20pm, starting Sept. 16th. Location TBA via website www.ufhumanrights.org .

For more information on each club’s mission, visit www.humanitarianuf.yolasite.com



GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Humanitarian Issues Around the World

The Predicament in Pakistan: Two Perspectives on the Devastating Floods

Floods: greatest humanitarian crisis in recent history

Mohsen Ali

If you take a map of Florida and paint it blue you will get roughly the size of the area affected by floods in Pakistan. It's one-fifth of the country's size.

Numbers and statistics make it easy to tell a story but steal away the human face of the tragedy. In the case of the floods in Pakistan, even these numbers are unable to capture the extent of crisis; they change each day. Floods that were triggered one month ago by the heavy rains are still ravaging many parts of Pakistan. The most recent estimate was that about 20 million had been affected, but just yesterday new parts of the Sindh province came under water and as a result at least 350,000 people are on move (BBC, 1). Today, 19 out of 23 of its districts are underwater (BBC-1).

Many of the affected have lost everything and were only able to save what they can carry, and in most cases what they carried was their children. Thousands of them are taking shelter in relief camps but a large number of them are living on the road sides and canal embankments. With the UN estimating about 1.8 million houses as damaged or destroyed, it will be long time before many of them will be able to go back. Among these displaced peoples, it is estimated that 100,000 women will give birth to newborns and 500,000 are expected to give birth in the coming six months (3). Water and food is in shortage and so are medical supplies, and the UN fears a rise in the death toll due to water born diseases and lack of medical help, especially affecting the children.

Due to floods, 8.9 million acres of agricultural land have been lost and the current estimate of agricultural loss stands above \$1 billion. Flood waters have destroyed most farmland, causing the fear that it may be a full year before anything can be cultivated (4) and that the next crop harvest will not be until May 2012. Pakistan's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which even supports many of its industries by providing them with the necessary raw material.

The UN has called it "greatest humanitarian crisis in recent history"; the question is- will there be a Greatest Humanitarian Help to counter this crisis? Right now UN has only received 67% of its requested funds, \$249 m out of \$460 m (BBC-1).

(BBC, 1) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11201618>
(UN-2) <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35634&Cr=pakistan&Cr1>
(3) <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=m69446>
(4) http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2010-09-05-pakistan-floods-crops_N.htm?csp=34news
<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/08/14/pakistan.floods/index.html#fbid=FS2usQQSSY&wom=false>
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/7935485/Pakistan-floods-disaster-is-the-worst-in-the-UNs-history.html>

Here is the Good News: We can help!

The events in Pakistan have been vastly under-publicized and the Pakistanis are in dire need of more aid. Because of transportation costs and other considerations, the best way to help the situation in Pakistan is by donating money to organizations that are efficient and already well-established in the area, such as UNICEF and The IRC. To find out more about these organizations and donate, visit their websites at:

The International Rescue Committee
<http://www.theirc.org/fusa.org/campaigns/>

UNICEF
<http://www.unicef.org/>



A Pakistani mother carries her children through floodwater in Muzaffargarh, Pakistan. Photograph: K.M.Chaudary/AP (Photo from guardian.co.uk)



A survivor begins rebuilding his mud house in Nowshera, Pakistan. Photograph: Mohammad Sajjad/AP (Photo from guardian.co.uk)

Too Much Remains To Be Done Mohammed Atiq, born in Karachi, Pakistan

In July of 2010, following heavy monsoon rains, floods began in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Balochistan and Sind regions of Pakistan. Some analysts estimate over two thousand people have died and over a million homes have been destroyed since the flooding began. More than 21 million people are injured or homeless as a result of the flooding. Experts are convinced that this flooding is a result of Global Warming.

In Pakhtunkhwa Province many villages were submerged in flood water and the people there were not warned that they should move before this happened. There is no government system to give accurate warning information to the public. Too many deaths were caused because of this. Many people lost their children, parents, Aunts and Uncles, siblings, Grandparents, and friends. Displaced people who survived, face life without rescue efforts and relief services: no medical, no clean water, no food, nothing. The same thing happened in the provinces of Punjab, Balochistan, and Sind. People are still dying in these places.

Most of the peoples' cattle died, their crops were destroyed along with their houses and belongings. Long term, the top soil from the land has been washed away or polluted and seed for next year's harvest destroyed. Food in large granaries was ruined so there is nothing for their future livelihood. Without next year's crops, the entire country will suffer greatly.

In most makeshift camps there continues to be a huge problem with getting clean water, food, clothing, shelter, and medical care. People are sleeping in the open. On September 6th a food donation was provided in Sind province but the food was contaminated and 54 people became very sick. Many local and international organizations are working on relief efforts in Pakistan and the international community has offered money but it is not enough. Too much remains to be done for the suffering flood victims in Pakistan.

*"To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition;
To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.
This is to have succeeded."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson*