



WUSC Connections January 2011

Happy New Year!



The month of January can mean a time for fresh starts and new beginnings, but it is also a time to reflect on what we have accomplished the previous year. This issue of Connections, WUSC's new e-magazine, is a mix of the old and new.

This past year, we have launched new initiatives and campaigns while continuing to strengthen and expand on many of our projects and programs. WUSC is very proud of all we have achieved in 2010, but we could not have done it without the support of our partners, local committees, donors and people like you, who are passionate about the work we do. Let's make 2011 a year to remember!

64th Annual Assembly: Weekend in Review



WUSC would like to thank everyone who came out to the 64th [Annual Assembly](#) back in November 2010. Didn't make it out to the assembly? Don't worry, we got you covered with a complete list of all our award winners and [live stream videos](#) of six of our sessions (our first year doing this) including the special keynote address by [Dr. Neil Turok](#).

Livestream videos:

[The potential and pitfalls of the MDGs](#)

[Le tour de monde equitable](#)

[Keynote Address](#)

[Farming as a Business](#)

[Engaging Men for Gender Equality](#)

[SRP Training](#)



Assembly Award Winners

Local Committee winner:



Formed in 2003 with just six members, the **Nipissing University** WUSC Local Committee has now grown to 20 student and faculty members, with no signs of slowing down. The LC recently welcomed its third sponsored student through the Student Refugee Program, and they are working with the student union to increase financial support so they can welcome a student every year. Other notable achievements throughout the past year include two Shine a Light Flashlight mobs, a weekend-long educate-a-thon for HIV and AIDS and the university's sixth annual International Food Fest, which raised thousands of dollars for the SRP.

WUSC Alumni Award winner:

Michael Gregson and Matthew Steele are prime examples of the great things people can accomplish in a short period of time. Through their employment at Abbott Laboratories Canada, Michael and Matthew went on Leave for Change placements to Malawi in 2006 and 2007. Since then, they have continued to invest their time and energy into raising funds and awareness for various causes in the country. Just last year, they completed a three-year project to build a hospital outpatient clinic in the Nkhamenya region. This clinic is expected to provide services for over 30, 000 people in the country.



Lewis Perinbam Award Winner:

For decades, **Dr. Jack Littlepage** has worked tirelessly to establish sustainable marine agriculture or magriculture industries in Brazil, countries in Africa and the Carribean. While on a mission to Brazil in 1990, Dr. Littlepage realized his knowledge and expertise in marine biology could help could assist Brazilians in community development, food security and poverty reduction. Since then, he has created and overseen many national and international programs related to the advancement of eco-friendly international development such as the Shellfish Technology Transfer Program in Brazil, the Brazilian Magriculture Linkage Program and the Southern Oceans Education and Development Program in Mozambique. Although he is now officially retired, he remains as dedicated as ever to improving lives and developing South-to-South relations.

George Atkins Farm Radio International Award Winner:

Grace Amito is the host of The Farmers and Animal World program on Mega FM in Northern Uganda. Grace, along with her fellow broadcasters at Mega





FM, used the radio to facilitate peace talks which helped end the war in northern Uganda. She was also part of the Mega FM African Farm Radio Research Initiative team which produced very popular participatory radio campaigns on honey production and cultivating fruit trees that support its production.

Local Committees' People's Choice Awards Winners

WUSC also held the first ever Local Committees' People's Choice Awards at the assembly! The awards ceremony was a way to recognize and thank committees across Canada for all their hard work and commitment to WUSC.

And the winners are ...

Bishop's University for Outstanding contribution to the Student Refugee Program:

Organized successful fundraisers (raffles, used book sales, garage sales, donations from University staff and professors, etc).

They participated in Social Justice Week to raise awareness about refugee issues where a professor from Sudan spoke about conflicts in his home country

They signed and sent postcards to the government to put an end to the travel loans for sponsored students They held many events with their sponsored students including a welcome BBQ, apple-picking, a trip to a sugar shack, pot-luck dinners, accompanying students to immigration, medical assurance, social assurance, dental care and citizenship parties for students who have received their Canadian citizenship

University of Guelph for Event of the Year :

Organized a successful Shine a Light series, which raised over \$950 and informed over 600 people

Coordinated with GSEC to promote Shine A Light and Fair Trade through the Shine a Light campaign

Bishop's University for the Most Effective Fundraiser :

Annual Booksale over 3 days, with donations from the community totaled over \$4300 in profits



Annual garage sale brought in \$12000 last year.

Extensive media advertisement and promotion and strong coordination of volunteers.

University of British Columbia for Strongest Community Engagement:

Founding member of UBC Global Lounge (space to facilitate interdisciplinary connections among students, faculty, staff and alumni)

Partnered with the Africa Awareness Initiative to host a conference week that engaged over 500 people on topics surrounding African research, development and humanitarianism

Collaborated with other student clubs and the Liu Migration Network to engage graduate students

Engaged partners such as the Inland Refugee Society and Settlement Orientation Services

Nipissing University for Best Media Engagement:

9 media exposures – including TV, local papers and the Nipissing website

Story of sponsored students and events submitted by WUSC in the local paper

Story of sponsored student who successfully graduated to become a nurse in the community

Used media to raise awareness for their successful International Food Fest and the Student Refugee Program

Memorial University of Newfoundland for Committee on the Rise :

New committee as of January 2010

Participated in a volunteer overseas fair and received over 50 signatures of individuals interested individuals

Obtained an office on campus

Ahmed Khan, a member of the administration council and a Local Committee member, participated in the 2010 Halifax regional meeting

Raised \$150 in a Shine A Light bake sale

You think your committee deserves an award? Get in contact with the campus staff at campus@wusc.ca or stay tuned for calls for nominations for the 2010-2011 year. We will start accepting nominations in April 2010!

Bike for AIDS launched in Burkina Faso!



In November, Uniterra's [Bike for AIDS](#) was launched in [Burkina Faso](#) to help people afflicted with HIV and AIDS in rural communities.

In Burkina Faso's rural areas, bicycles are the primary mode of transportation. Bicycles and bicycle ambulances (bikes outfitted with stretchers) will allow those living with HIV with the transportation needed to visit their home or the hospital.

Thanks to the financial support of the Canadian Medical Foundation, 15 bikes were distributed to two Uniterra partner organizations : Responsabilitg-Espoir Vie (Rev+) and Solidarite et Entraide Mutuelle au Sahel (SEMUS).

At Rev+, volunteers who are trained in psychosocial support will use the bikes. SEMUS will train beneficiaries to provide psychosocial support in order to educate the community about HIV and AIDS and to fight against stigmatization.

The Bike for AIDS program is already well-established in Malawi. WUSC field staff and Uniterra volunteers work alongside community organizations to train volunteers in HIV and AIDS education, community outreach, care and support for those infected with HIV and their families. The bikes also allow volunteers to visit these people in their homes.

More help is needed to provide more bikes and bicycle ambulances to Malawi. [Click here](#) now to make a donation to Bike for AIDS and to help in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Under the Dawa Dawa Tree

By Penny Bennett

Former Leave for Change volunteer Penny Bennett presents a short story she wrote while on a placement in Ghana

During the year I worked in Ghana, I used to get upset by the boys beating their donkeys so I made it a point to speak to each and every one of them as they passed by the dawa dawa tree on the way to their village.

Following is a conversation that I had with my Ghanaian neighbour while sitting under the dawa dawa tree:

Me: Mr. B, why do the boys beat the donkeys? Mr. B: Because they think that the donkeys won't move unless they beat them.

Me: That's crazy! It doesn't make the donkeys go any faster because they're too tired. Why would you beat an animal that performs a valuable service since the donkey is used to fetch water?



Mr. B: You are right and this is an issue that we should discuss. But for now, Miss Penny, would you like to have one of these beancakes? They are very good and I promise you that once you have one you will not pass a night without one. I took a nibble but found it hard to finish.

Me: Mr. B, I'm not too hungry so would you mind if I gave my beancake to the next donkey passing by? Mr. B, laughing uproariously, belts out: Donkeys don't EAT beancakes!

Pretty soon along comes one tired little donkey, hauling his mighty drum of water. I walk over, stand in front of him and hold out my hand with the beancake sitting in the middle of it.



At first the the weary donkey doesn't stir, not one muscle. It might even take him a little bit of time to realize that he has stopped since he is so used to putting one foot in front of the other all day long without complaint. I stand at his head and since I am much taller I can only see long, black eye lashes somewhere below me. But then I see a nostril quiver and very slowly he lifts his head. Have you ever had the chance to look into a donkey's eyes, I mean REALLY look? They are the saddest eyes I have ever seen, a world of loneliness, reflected in two large pools of brown liquid, sure to melt the hardest heart. But, unfortunately, not in Ghana.



Well, that donkey sniffed the air and WHOOSH, that beancake disappeared like magic into his mouth and down into his tummy. I was reminded of the central vacuum system in my house in Nova Scotia.

I then bent down and whispered into his ear: Hey Hoover, how'd ya like some water? I then ran over to get Mr. B's washing bowl, customary in Ghana.

When I reached over to get it, Mr. B said: Donkeys don't like THIS water. Needless to say Hoover polished off the water in no time flat and continued his journey at a much brisker pace.

I think Mr. B got the message and I hope that it proved something to the boys manning the donkey cart.

Giving Back

Back in August 2009, Mothusi Chester Seragi, along with 54 other Batswana students arrived in Canada to attend post-secondary school in Canada through WUSC's [International Student Management](#) (ISM). Mothusi is currently studying Chemical Engineering at the University of Ottawa, and he is certainly thriving in his new educational environment.

Recently, UofO honoured Mothusi with the Dean's Honour Award for best students in Chemical Engineering, which he credits to hard work and the support he receives from peers here in Canada.



“It’s obviously a great feeling to be honored by a prestigious academic institution like the University of Ottawa, but again there is more to life than just winning an award obviously. It is therefore very key to keep your head up and have direction so that you can make something for yourself in life, something much more visible!”

His ultimate wish is to eventually return to Botswana where he can help make positive changes in the country.

“The primary goal is to get educated, go back home and give something back to the country that made us what we are, the communities that gave us the morals of life. We owe that much to them, and by going back to work there, to have an input in the anticipated development of our country, I think that somehow that shows some level of gratitude.”

For over 30 years, ISM has been managing scholarship programs for thousands of students in developing countries. More than 1000 students from Botswana have attended over 25 universities and colleges across Canada. To date, almost 92% of graduates return to contribute to their country’s development.

Strengthening the SRP



WUSC was recently awarded a \$44000 contract with Ontario Trillium Foundation to develop video content for online training purposes. These tools will help facilitate learning and sharing of best practices of Ontario [Local Committees](#) (LCs) who participate in the [Student Refugee Program](#).

LCs will actively participate in developing the concept, in the planning and production of the seven videos which will focus on engaging the community, supporting newcomers, raising public awareness, newcomers obtaining employment, and training youth volunteers .

A multi-media intern will be hired to coordinate this project and ultimately produce the videos, which will be integrated in a longer-term comprehensive online training platform.



LCs interested in becoming involved in this project should contact the Campus team at campus@wusc.ca.

An SRP Success Story!



As a result of war, Madut Majok was forced to flee his home country of Sudan and a refugee camp in Ethiopia. He finally settled in a Kenyan refugee camp where he stayed for nearly a decade.

His future was uncertain, but hope came in the form of WUSC's [Student Refugee Program](#) where Madut was sponsored by Dalhousie University's [Local Committee](#). In 2010 Madut celebrated 10 years living in Canada, building a life full of success and promise!

[Click here](#) to read about Madut's journey from camp to campus (Article and video by [Citizenship and Immigration Canada](#)).