

Hero Award Nominee for Up and Coming PeaceMaker: Ba Futuru

Issue Area: Conflict Resolution

VIDEO: <https://vimeo.com/266318140>

Gender-based violence is a widespread public health problem impacting more than 1 billion women worldwide. In East Timor, a small post-conflict country in southeast Asia, 59% of women ages 15-49 report experiencing domestic violence and sexual assault. Despite passing a law in 2010 criminalising domestic violence, it is still the country's number one public health issue.

In 2017, Ba Futuru/For the Future, a non-profit organization that uses innovative approaches to protect children, reduce violence, and empower women in East Timor, launched Domin Nakloke (Unlocking Love) an entertainment-education film series exploring issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, and gender equality to help change attitudes and behavior in a country where 62.9 percent of the population are 21 years and younger.

The film was broadcast on national television and is being used by educators in East Timor, and more than 16% of the population of East Timor have already viewed the program online.. While 40% thought it acceptable to force their partner to have sex before watching the film, after viewing the film, this fell to 9%, and 100% of those who viewed the film report having changed their behavior due to the film. The film is also now being used by educators outside of East Timor -- in Uganda, Bali and beyond. The second episode of Domin Nakoke is in production and will educate Timorese and others about teenage pregnancy, as pregnancy complications are the leading cause of death globally among females aged 15-19.

Hero Award Nominee for Up and Coming PeaceMaker: We Dine Together

Issue Area: Global Health and Wellness

Video: <https://vimeo.com/266319058>

28 percent of students ages 12–18 in the USA report that they are being bullied at school, and 160,000 kids skip school each day for fear of being bullied. Denis Estimon, a Haitian immigrant who came to the United States at age 6, remembers feeling isolated for many years -- especially at lunch. With the help of his English teacher, he created a program in his own school with the mission of reaching out to students who are eating lunch alone, and to break social barriers by getting students from different backgrounds to share a daily meal together. He called his program -- We Dine Together.

We Dine Together has since expanded into a fast growing student-led movement of over 77 groups across the U.S.A. And the focus of the program has expanded, as well. Denis saw that for the millions who reported feeling isolated, there was a dramatically increased risk of depression and suicide.

So We Dine Together recently partnered with Be Strong and created an app that provides resources, support and intervention for those who are affected by bullying, depression, or suicidal thoughts. Their new model, which is being implemented this year, provides a comprehensive approach to addressing student isolation by providing students with opportunities to take part in interactive activities, group discussions, and shared campaigns designed to build stronger, more inclusive school cultures.

Hero Award Nominee for Best Youth Act: RETHAKA
Issue Area: Education and Community Development
Video: <https://vimeo.com/266319556>

For many young people living in the rural areas of Southern Africa, the final school bell marks the beginning of a long journey home and a rush to complete their homework before dark -- because their villages do not have electricity.

Rethaka was founded by Thato Kgathayne to address this issue. She wanted to create school bags for students which contained a solar-powered lantern -- a light source that could charge during the day, allowing students to continue their studies into the evening. In order to make her project sustainable, she decided that each school bag should be made by local employees from repurposed melted plastic trash, which could be collected both by the students who are the beneficiaries of the school bags, and by the local community. There are more than 54,000 tons of trash lining the streets every day in Southern Africa -- the 15th highest litter rate in the world. So by crafting the school bags out of recycled plastic, Thato wanted to help address this litter problem, as well.

To get the company off the ground, Thato raised half-a-million rand in a start-up competition, enabling her to secure factory space and assemble a small team of women to start manufacturing the Repurpose Schoolbags. To date, Rethaka has manufactured more than 15,000 Repurpose Schoolbags, which have been distributed in five provinces within South Africa, Namibia, Niger, Uganda, Mozambique and Nigeria -- employing a total of 30 women and recycling over 1.2 tonnes of plastic waste have been recycled in Southern Africa.

Hero Award Nominee for Best Youth Act: Techo
Issue Area: Eliminating Extreme Poverty

Video: <https://vimeo.com/266318862>

Around the world, more than 700 million people live in extreme poverty on less than \$2 per day. Across Latin America, 105 million people live in slums that lack adequate shelter or access to basic services, such as clean water, electricity or education. TECHO is a youth led non-profit organization founded in slums of Santiago, Chili in 1997. They now work across Latin America & the Caribbean to address poverty at its root cause.

First, they engage volunteers to construct emergency shelters and to promote housing as a basic human right. Second, they engage the community in improvement projects to fix dilapidated and unsafe schools and playgrounds so all children have access to education. And third, they address community health issues by bringing clean water and electricity into the poorest neighborhoods.

Since 1997, TECHO has expanded to 19 countries across Latin America, and organized more than 1 Million volunteers to create 6,000 permanent homes and 115,000 transitional houses. Techo has worked in 634 slums and engaged 26,000 children in educational programs, and 17,000 adults in basic skills training. In 1997 a group of young people in Santiago had a dream of overcoming poverty. Today, they are doing it.

Hero Award Nominee for Best University Act: Asian University for Women

Issue Area: Women and Children

Video: <https://vimeo.com/266321452>

Of the 796 million people worldwide who are illiterate, two-thirds are women. Young women from rural areas are twice as likely not to receive a formal education, causing long-term implications for their families, food security, income, and overall well being.

The Pathways for Promise program at the Asian University for Women is focused exclusively on recruiting talented young women from garment factories, refugee camps, madrasas, and conflict areas in the Middle East and Asia, who possess academic potential and demonstrate courage and strong leadership qualities.

98% of the Asian University for Women's students are on full or near-full scholarships funded by private donors from all around the world. Most are the first in their family to enter university. A UW students represent 15 diverse countries, 35 ethnicities, 5 religions, and speak 25 languages. Half of the faculty are women.

To date, A UW has graduated 543 women and continues to increase their enrollment each year by 25%. The long term goal of A UW is to create a rising network of women leaders, entrepreneurs and change-makers from across Asia and the Middle East to help tackle their own countries' social, economic, and political issues while collaborating across cultural, ethnic, and religious lines. So far, 85% of their alumni have returned home to their home countries, to help build and support their own communities.

Hero Award Nominee for Best University Act: Student Action for Refugees

Issue Area: Racism and Hate

VIDEO: <https://vimeo.com/266318696>

The number of refugees in the world has reached the highest level ever recorded. Every minute, 20 people are leaving everything behind to escape war, persecution or terror. Of the 22.5 million refugees worldwide, less than 1% are resettled each year.

STAR, Student Action for Refugees, was founded in 1994 by students at Nottingham University, with support from the British Refugee Council and UNHCR, to welcome refugees to the United Kingdom. Over 4,000 refugees are reached by programming each year, and an additional 30,000 people attend educational events.

STAR campaigns have helped end the practice of holding children in immigration detention centres, given 20,000 Syrian refugees the 'refugee status' which allowed them to attend university, and assisted in providing scholarships at 58 British universities.

By encouraging students, refugees and supporters to take positive actions by volunteering, campaigning to change policies, and educating people about asylum in the UK, STAR has grown to 27,261 students at 53 universities and colleges in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and is now a key part of the refugee movement in the UK. In the future STAR plans to expand programming to more universities, and to collaborate with international agencies to expand STAR-like movements in other countries and throughout the world.

Hero Award Nominee for Best Non-Profit Act: Rotary International

Issue Area: Global Health and Wellness

VIDEO: <https://vimeo.com/266319260>

Polio is a highly contagious, paralyzing and potentially fatal disease, and as long as the disease remains, all unimmunized children are at risk of contracting the disease. Though there is no cure, there is an effective vaccine to prevent polio. In 1988 there were an estimated 350,000 cases of polio worldwide. Today the disease is close to being eradicated thanks to the work of Rotary and its partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative: the World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Rotary is a global network of 1.2 million people who connect to find solutions to challenges in their own communities and improve lives throughout the world. Rotary members are professionals with diverse backgrounds who volunteer their time and expertise to promote peace, alleviate poverty, provide clean water and sanitation, support education, and grow local economies.

Protecting children from polio has been Rotary's top priority since 1985 – and since then, Rotary has helped to immunize more than 2.5 billion children worldwide, using its members' skills and passion to build awareness, fundraise, and encourage government support. More than one million Rotary members have volunteered their time and resources to help end polio. Due to the efforts of Rotary and its partners, there has been a 99.9% reduction in polio cases with only 22 reported cases in 2017, in just 2 countries. Polio immunizations have saved an estimated 16 million people from paralysis, and experts estimate a savings of \$40-\$50 billion dollars in global health costs within the next 20 years. Polio eradication would be one of history's greatest public health achievements, as only the second human disease to be eliminated from the world. Rotary is very close to making this a reality.

Hero Award Nominee for Best Social Enterprise Act: IKEA Foundation

Issue Area: Human Rights for All

Video: <https://vimeo.com/266347960>

There are close to 22.5 million refugees worldwide, 40% live in refugee camps and are often denied access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, and employment. Over the past 6 years, the war in Syria has forced more than 5 million people to flee their homes, triggering the largest humanitarian crisis of our time. Over 1 million Syrian refugees are now living in Jordan, and for those in the Azraq Refugee camp, the first two and a half years were spent with little to no electricity or lighting, hugely impacting safety and education in the camp, restricting the ability to preserve food or cool shelters in the extreme desert heat, and allowing little connection to the outside world.

Funded by the IKEA Foundation through their Brighter Lives for Refugee campaign, the Azraq two-megawatt solar farm is the first solar plant built in a refugee camp setting. It has brought affordable and sustainable power to the 20,000 refugees who live there, recreating a sense of home by allowing the connection of basic appliances such as heaters, fridges, and lights. Street lights have been installed improving safety, children can now study after dark, and phones can now be charged and TVs turned on, allowing people to connect again to the outside world.

The plant has immediately saved UNHCR \$1.5 million per year, and contributes to Jordan's national energy strategy to achieve a green economy by 2020, as the solar energy reduces the camp's CO2 emissions by 2,370 tons each year. It also provided employment to more than 50 refugees who were trained and employed to help build and maintain the solar farm. Through the campaign, the IKEA Foundation is helping bring light and renewable energy to refugee camps across Asia, Africa and the Middle East. In total, over 383,000 refugees now live in greater safety at night, and the campaign has supported the enrollment of over 100,000 refugee children and trained over 1,000 teachers.

The IKEA Foundation remains committed to supporting vulnerable families and funds programs that help lift them out of poverty and fight the impacts of a changing climate. It also provides grants for medical care on the front lines of conflict areas including Yemen, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Hero Award Nominee for Best Social Enterprise Act: Little Sun

Issue Area: Education and Community Development

Video: <https://vimeo.com/266354018>

Today there are 1.1 billion people worldwide living without access to electricity. In countries like Burkina Faso, Zambia, Uganda and Burundi, over 80% of the population lives without access to electricity.

The shortened availability of light means that vital activities cannot be done without burning candles, fires or kerosene lamps. This means students cannot study, work stops at sunset, and delivering medical care becomes more difficult.

Using kerosene for lighting is bad for the environment. Kerosene lamps release nearly 200 million tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere every year, and they are also the cause of burns and fires which result in over 4 million deaths every year.

Little Sun was founded in 2012 by an artist and an engineer on a mission to bring light to the world, selling portable solar devices at radically reduced, locally affordable prices to those who need them most. Founded with a commitment to sustainable development, Little Sun enlists the partnership of their network of over 600 young African entrepreneurs to create local jobs and generate local profits through the sale of their solar devices.

So far they have sold over 660,000 lamps worldwide, saving over \$35 million in kerosene costs for off-the-grid households. The use of their lamps has prevented over 130,000 tonnes of CO₂ from being released into the atmosphere.

In the future Little Sun will continue to focus on improving access to education by providing a source of light to students doing homework in the evenings, and a source of energy to charge their mobile phones. They are also expanding to provide better lighting in refugee camps, to help protect the personal safety of women and girls after dark.

Hero Award Nominee for Best Community Act: Climate Smart Villages

Issue Area: Environment

VIDEO: <https://vimeo.com/266333432>

Over the next 70 years, climate change could reduce food crop yields by as much as 16 percent worldwide. Currently, many communities in West Africa are suffering from chronic poverty, food insecurity and environmental degradation as the region grows more vulnerable to climate change. Assuming even moderate temperature rises, crop yields could decrease by 10–20 percent in Africa by 2050.

Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CAAFS) launched in 2011 with 15 climate-smart villages in high-risk areas in West Africa, East Africa and South Asia. The program invites local farmers, researchers, non-governmental organizations, and community members from the most vulnerable populations to participate, with the primary goal of helping farmers become more successful and ensuring food security for their community. Through climate-smart technologies, information services, agroforestry, resource management, rainwater harvesting, soil management, energy-efficient machinery and technology, climate-smart villages are revolutionizing the way climate change, agriculture and resources are viewed, and sharing this important data with others around the world.

CAAFS is a collaborative effort, and it has now partnered with six universities to create over 35 climate-smart villages in east and west africa, latin america, southern and southeast Asia. The goal is to help improve climate resilience in farming communities in 21 countries, increase rice yield in 13 countries in sub-saharan africa, and bring better nutrition to 21 million people living in low income countries. In the future, CCAFS will continue to connect communities, increase farm visits, and test and validate the best techniques to adapt in new locations worldwide.

Hero Award Nominee for Best Community Act: Peace is a Lifestyle

Issue Area: Disarmament

VIDEO: <https://vimeo.com/266359948>

An estimated 200,000 homicides occur among people age 10-29 each year worldwide, making it the fourth leading cause of death for this age group. South Jamaica Queens, New York has struggled with crime, gun and gang violence for decades. In 2002, after the tragic murders of two children, Erica Ford started LIFE Camp Inc. to provide at-risk inner-city youth with the tools they need to stay in school and out of the criminal justice system. The program provides job training, resume development, education, local employment opportunities, and visits to crime scenes and hospital bedsides in an attempt to stop the cycle of violence.

LIFE Camp Inc has been instrumental in the Cure Violence Health initiative that treats violence as a public health issue. Working with New York's Mayor De Blasio's office, and more than 50 community partners that each help select members of their community to anticipate violence and intervene before it erupts, train first response teams in de-escalation tactics, and engage community members to change behavior and norms through anger management and mediation classes. These efforts have led to a 31-50% decrease in gun injury cases across the New York Area, and this model using these organizations as an intermediary between their communities and the police, has led to a citizens having a 22% increase in confidence in their local police.

LIFE Camp has also created several partner programs including Urban Yogis, which brings yoga and mindful meditation to New York Public Schools, the I Love My LIFE tour which highlights young entrepreneurs and visits schools and prisons to promote anti-violence and self-love, and is currently working with the Chopra Foundation to develop holistic responses to provide young people with the tools and resources that promote critical thinking, self-empowerment and personal accountability.

Hero Award Nominee for Best Non-Profit Act: Mercy Corps

Issue Area: ?

Video: <https://vimeo.com/266319934>

Weather-related natural disasters — hurricanes, floods, and drought — have more than tripled since the 1960s, and now cause 90% of all global disasters. Mercy Corps, a humanitarian aid organization founded in 1979, has responded to almost every natural disaster world wide over the past 20 years, working with more than 220 million people in 122 countries, and delivering essential supplies to these stricken communities.

Mercy Corps responds immediately to emergencies, and then stays on to help build food security, resilience and new economic opportunities as communities rebuild. Access to water, the resource most essential for life, is a Mercy Corps priority.

Mercy Corps' large-scale water infrastructure projects in Jordan and the Democratic Republic of Congo are forging new delivery routes, reducing waste, and bringing clean water directly to 1.25 million people who are affected by conflict in those areas. In the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake, they helped provide more than 5 million liters of clean water to families in need. During the drought in the Horn of Africa, they helped provide over 2 million liters of clean water. In 2017, after the worst drought in 60 years in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia; Mercy Corps provided emergency water to over 635,000 farmers, and to refugees living in displacement camps, and worked with farmers in all three countries to find ways to better capture, store and manage water and to become more resistant to future cycles of drought and famine.

Mercy Corps is dedicated to alleviating the suffering of the millions of people who will be impacted by extreme weather in the years ahead, drawing on their extensive experience over the past 39 years, in 122 countries around the world.