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ISSUE

AYP

# Newsletter

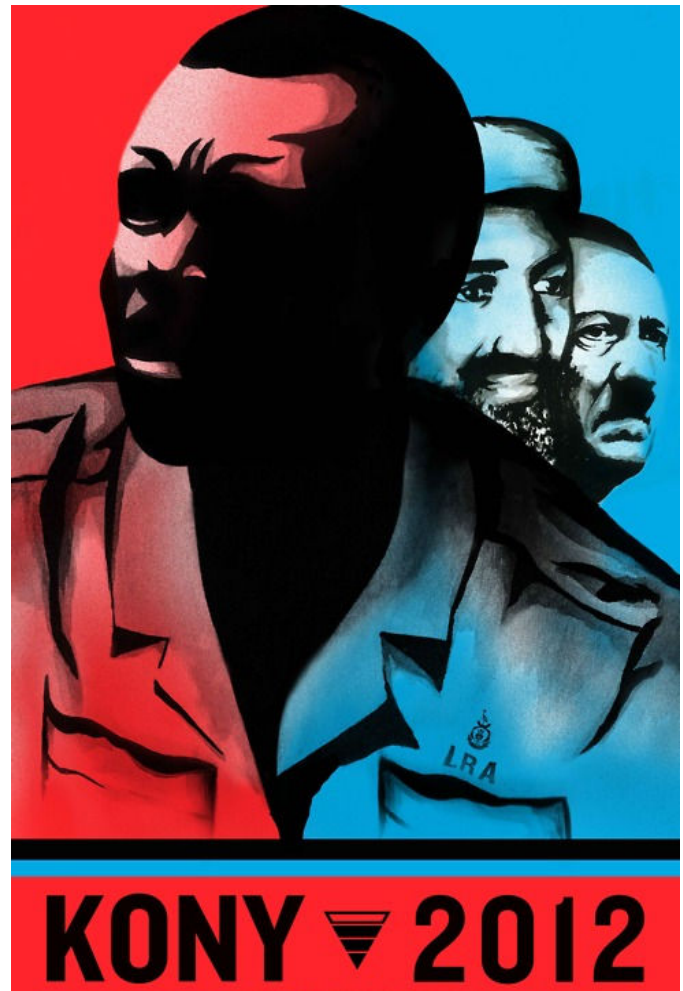
ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF THE AFRICAN YOUTHS

*In less than one month, the Kony2012 video focusing on the Lord's Resistance Army's Joseph Kony has been viewed more than 100million times and has received harsh criticism and praise in many quarters. Some AYP members share their thoughts on the video and the campaign.*

## Kony2012: Reaction from AYP Members

The question is; after 23 years, why have they decided to screen the film now? While I appreciate the effort Invisible children is doing to help the disadvantaged, the film lacks coverage of the current issues like people in camps - the internally displaced persons and refugees among others. At present, focus should be on reconstruction of the dilapidated North and resettlement of the region (which the inhabitants are interested in now). This is lacking in the film and it solely focuses on capturing the rebel and making them famous. The film should have also called upon development agencies to support reconstruction efforts in the region

– Robert Nkwangu, Uganda



## About AYP

The African Youth Panel (AYP) is a non-profit and non-governmental platform of participation and exchange among youths in Africa, promoting the culture of development and implementing local, national and regional initiatives. The African Youth Panel (AYP) was initiated under support of the Danish NGO Forum in spring of 2008 to enable African youths give inputs into the Danish Africa Commission processes. The project for the establishment of the Panel was funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Our mission is to unleash the potentials of African youth through policy influence, advocacy and implementation of projects for the benefit of African youth.



# Interview with AYP Member Jess Auerbach



## Q. Can you please introduce yourself?

My name is Jess Auerbach. I'm from South Africa and lived there until pursuing postgraduate study in the United Kingdom and USA. I plan to return as soon as possible.

## Q. You have done a lot of work around refugees and migration, in your opinion, how can young people who have gone through forced migration and lived as refugees be integrated back to the society?

There are many causes for forced migration, and how refugees are integrated or reintegrated depends both on what their experiences have been and whether they are going back to their country of origin or somewhere new. How long they have been away, what languages they and the relevant community speak, their age at leaving and so on are all very important factors. Because of all this, I think it's hard to give an answer that speaks to all refugees everywhere, and therefore the most important thing to do in helping refugees resettle is to speak with them, to hear their stories and to adapt accordingly.

## Q. What has been the impact of forced migration and wars on children and young people in Africa?

For many young people conflict has deprived them of 'childhood' as it is understood in the west, as a time of

innocence and play. At the same time, the reality in most of the rest of the world is that children are capable of taking on significant responsibilities, and usually do so with incredible skill. Conflicts in Africa have meant that children have had to learn to take care of themselves and others in ways that have often deprived them of education and other opportunities - this is something that has been very difficult. Added to that is the loss of relatives, mentors and friends that has come about from war, and the impact of such losses can be enormous. Yet it has also taught young people real skills, and the challenge facing societies across Africa is how to harness these skills now.

## Q. What can the International community, non-profit organisations and Governments do to prevent the outbreak of war?

That's a big question and I will only give a short answer - there is a lot more that can and should be said. Firstly, the international community should pay attention to how trade decisions, investment and international policies are made in their respective countries, and lobby governments to act ethically, not allow the trade in arms and create equitable access to international markets. This is much more difficult than watching films like Kony2012. Kony2012 brings me to the next part of my argument, because the controversies around the film really showed how important it is for non-profits to do really good research before they decide to take on issues that other people and organizations have been working on for years. The idea that outsiders can magically 'fix' Africa is one that is really tiring to encounter, but it is also relentless and persistent. Africa is not 'broken' - rather it is part of a complex global system of agreement, disagreement and trade, and non-profits need to acknowledge the complexity of each project they work on if they are to have any success. Finally, governments - well, it depends which government and where of course, but I do think that paying real



## Kony 2012: Reaction from AYP Members

Good cause, excellent campaign, bad content!

– *Rotimi Olawale, Nigeria*

A cheap, sensationist, misinformed, uneducated and sadly a widely supported campaign that was perceived would help to catch Kony, but it won't take long to go down the drain.

– *Robert Kasenene, Tanzania*

Misrepresentation of the facts was unforgiveable. However as far as making Joseph Kony infamous, that was achieved.

– *Grace Mukwaya, Uganda*

attention to the population is key - the world is changing fast and many are no longer willing to accept the status quo; this is a real challenge for many states, but it is an exciting time too, where dialogue between government and citizenry is possible in new ways.

### Q. Are there any positive sides to forced migration?

Absolutely! Forced migration is usually traumatic, but if individuals are given the right kinds of support and educational opportunities, it can also be a forum for becoming cosmopolitan, learning about the world and sharing experiences between people of diverse backgrounds and nationalities. Many people acquire valuable linguistic, technical and sometimes professional skills, and these can be used both to help the country or countries in which they spend time and their country of origin. Sometimes we don't choose what happens in our lives, but travel always widens one's knowledge of the world. This can be extremely useful and those who possess such knowledge and experience should be admired for what they have gained, as well as supported in terms of their losses during conflict. When there are many people compelled to act, the regional and international community are also forced to pay attention, and in solving long-term political crises this can sometimes be helpful.

### Q. What next after your Doctoral degree, would you be back in Africa?

Yes, I would like to come back as soon as I can. My hope is to teach at a university either in South Africa or Mozambique, but I am open to other options. At the moment I am beginning to dialogue with Brazil, which has a tremendous interest in Africa, particularly students from the former Portuguese colonies, and I hope to participate in many kinds of dialogue with them. I am excited at the idea of working with students from Africa again - it is wonderful to spend some time here in the US, but it is not my home, I want to come back.

### Q. Where do you see the African Youth Panel over the next 5 years?

In 5 years time I hope the AYP will have a sustainable funding structure, a clear vision and implementation plan of what projects it will support and how, and a forum for dialogue that is accessible, inclusive and multi-lingual.

Personally I have mixed feelings about the video. In the first place it talks about Uganda being located in Central Africa which isn't true; it's located in East Africa. Secondly it doesn't mention about the peace the people in Northern Uganda have been enjoying for more than 4 years. Everyone for sure wants Kony to face the law because of the atrocities he caused in northern Uganda and beyond. I have been there several times and worked with kids that came from there.

– *Hannington Segirinya, Uganda*

The video Kony 2012 has brought to the table a further awareness that international crimes should not go unpunished and the use of social media in the pursuit of justice. With at least 86,552,094 YouTube views (as of 02/04/2012) and a couple of millions of individuals pledging support, the video has placed Kony and the LRA and the atrocities suffered by the people of northern Uganda on the world agenda albeit too late given the fact that the LRA has not physically been present in northern Uganda for the last six years at least. The Internally Displaced Peoples' camps have been disbanded and the people have returned to their homes.. The views and perspectives of the victims are acutely silent in this video and this is one of the set-backs of this video. Hopefully Kony 2012: Part II will be able to address the various nuances to the conflict.

– *Monica Aciru, Uganda*

## Marwa Jabou becomes a diplomat



Marwa Jabou, the AYP member from Tunisia and North African representative on the Steering Committee recently passed the diplomatic examination into the Tunisia Diplomatic Corps. Marwa who sat for the exams with more than 5700 candidates was only one of 18 persons who excelled at the end of the exam. Marwa who speaks 6 international languages will leverage on her international exposure including work with the African Youth panel in her new career.

## UN holds Global Youth Forum on Inclusive Governance

UNHABITAT and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) recently organised a meeting on inclusive Governance and a 'Building for Change' stakeholders meeting. The meeting which was held in Nairobi, Kenya gave room for youth leaders from across the world to discuss the Youth21 report and provide input into the emerging UN strategy on deepening engagement with young people. AYP Member from Cameroun and Central African Steering Committee Member, Christian Kam, was one of the youth leaders in Nairobi who discussed, deliberated and adopted the Nairobi declaration which specifically provides guideline on selection of the UN Secretary General's Special Adviser on Youth, modalities for establishing the UN permanent Forum on Youth and composition of a UN Youth Platform Assembly. To read the Nairobi declaration, please see: [http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/11030\\_1\\_594389.pdf](http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/11030_1_594389.pdf)

## Commonwealth Youth Online Course in Development

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) and Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) have linked to pilot an online course in Youth Development with a focus on embracing Commonwealth values. The course will be an interactive learning experience for young people to use effective and web-friendly technologies that will enable them acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that strengthen Commonwealth values in individuals, families, communities and nations.

This is a brand new product that will expose participants to values and principles that underpin the work of the Commonwealth in guiding youth development through an interactive and engaging website. It will bring the flexibility of distance learning, an experience of online learning empowerment and engage in web 2.0 social networking.

CV eLearning will capture about one hundred young participants from four regions of the Commonwealth who will participate in a 10-week live pilot of the Embracing Commonwealth Values (CV) e-learning course set for 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012. This course will transform the paper-based Diploma for Youth Development into an engaging and fun virtual learning experience that can happen anytime and anywhere.

The online course is available at [www.colelearning.net/cyp](http://www.colelearning.net/cyp) and applications close on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, 2012. COL has also set up an online e-portfolio site for all participants to post their thoughts on issues like human rights, equality, empowerment, equity, democracy, development, diversity, dialogue and co-operation and peace. At the end of the course, each participant will receive a Certificate of Completion, be able to join the CYP's Human Rights and Democracy Youth network and will have the opportunity to participate in other CYP human rights training programmes if interested.



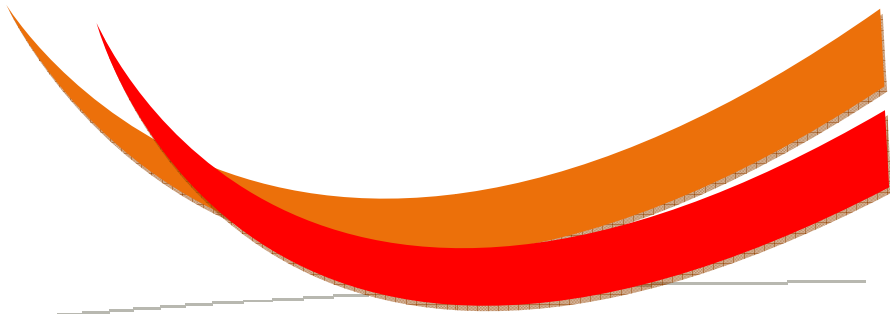
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## Compiled and Edited by

Diana Bulanda and Rotimi Olawale [www.africanyouthpanel.org](http://www.africanyouthpanel.org)

## Design support by

Damilola Ade, Sprout Consult. [info@sproutconsult.com](mailto:info@sproutconsult.com)



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We call upon all interested individuals / groups to support the work of the AYP either morally, technically or financially.

For comments and feedback on this newsletter, please email Rotimi Olawale on [rotexonline@gmail.com](mailto:rotexonline@gmail.com) and Diana Bulanda on [dianabulanda@yahoo.com](mailto:dianabulanda@yahoo.com)