

ICAR News

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GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Mediators Beyond Borders Blaze a Trail in Copenhagen

By Diane Perlman Ph.D., ICAR Visiting Scholar, dperlman@gmu.edu

In December 2009, the city of Copenhagen hosted COP 15, the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with nothing less than the viability of the biosphere and the future of civilization at stake.

A record 45,000 people registered for the official UN meeting at the Bella Center. Delegates, negotiators, NGOs, press, and over 1000 youth participated in more than 2000 events over two weeks. Downtown, 10,000 people per day attended the Klima Forum, People's Climate Summit, civil society's counterpart to the UN conference. The city buzzed with demonstrations, rallies, exhibits, and concerts. On December 12th, 100,000 people marched in a rally to the Bella Center.

A palpable sense of urgency and desperation mounted as the conference wore on and its flaws and conflicts became apparent, driven by the power dynamics of the UN process. The resulting frustration was expressed in many ways - artistically, dramatically, creatively, and spontaneously.

The collective outcry for consciousness, justice, and action stood in stark contrast to the official dis-



Copenhagen's disappointed mermaid. Photo: Diane Perlman.

course of developed nation elites parsing over how many degrees, and how many CO2 parts per million, in how many years, might be politically feasible within the constraints of vested interests. One commentator helplessly exclaimed that he could not believe that the state of international politics was such that a few US Senators could determine the fate of Africa.

In the face of such a humanitarian crisis, what role might conflict analysis experts play in averting catastrophe? Last

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Commentary

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ICAR Partners With Peace Corps For First Master's International Conflict Resolution Program

By Mike Giusti, ICAR M.S. Student and Graduate Student Services Assistant, mgiusti1@gmu.edu

This past December, ICAR officially announced its partnership with the Peace Corps to begin offering a Peace Corps Master's International (PCMI) program in conflict analysis and resolution. The Peace Corps' Master's International program is comprised of a consortium of 61 universities. The first conflict resolution-related program of its kind, students will be able to earn a Master's degree while simultaneously serving their two-year commitment to the Peace Corps.

Applicants to the program will apply through the standard admissions processes for the M.S. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution and Peace Corps service, and must be accepted into both programs in order to participate in the PCMI degree program. ICAR students participating in the program will spend two semesters and a summer on campus prior to commencing their 27-month Peace Corps fieldwork, and will return to campus for a final semester to complete their academic coursework.

The program is intended to provide Peace Corps volunteers with the skills necessary to operate effectively in post-conflict areas by augmenting their experience with conflict resolution training prior to their departure. In the academic year before their service, students will learn strategies for dealing with conflict surrounding matters of cultural sensitivity, discrimination, and minority issues and development, among others. As a result, each volunteer will be empowered with a knowledge base that will allow them to more effectively meet the challenges of navigating community issues of communication, public participation, and just governance that will inevitably arise during their field service. Moreover, the coursework in conflict analysis and resolution will augment each participant's ability to coordinate various and varied projects in a relatively harmonious environment.



Mason, ICAR, and Peace Corps representatives celebrate the Master's International partnership. Michelle Marks, Mason Associate Provost for Graduate Education; Krista Rigalo, Program and Training Specialist for the Peace Corps; Peter Stearns, Mason Provost; Eric Goldman, Director of the Peace Corps' Master's International program; and Andrea Bartoli, ICAR Director. Photo by Lori A. Wilson, George Mason University.

With this partnership, the hope is to take students with academic backgrounds and interests in an array of conflict resolution issues and provide them with the analytical and practical skills that will allow them to improve their ability to act rationally in potentially chaotic situations. In particular, focus will be placed on the ability to recognize and articulate the core issues of a conflict situation, developing an understanding of structural and societal violence, creating an acknowledgment of marginalized populations, and enhancing self-reflective performance in the field. ■

ICAR's First Spring Master's Cohort Welcomed

By Danielle Light, ICAR M.S. Student and Events Coordinator, dlight1@gmu.edu

This January, ICAR held its first ever Spring orientation session to welcome its inaugural Spring Master's cohort. Twenty-four Master's and eight Certificate students attended the half-day event, which introduced them to Mason's university services and the nuts and bolts of their respective academic programs. A student panel was on hand to answer questions and share their experience of student life at ICAR. The small cohort size enabled the incoming students to engage the administrative staff, and each other more directly, with expanded opportunity for introductions and networking.

In an effort to maintain cohort size and competitive admissions standards, the Fall admission numbers will be adjusted accordingly. ICAR's Ph.D. admissions cycle remains Fall only. With the addition of the Spring Master's admissions cycle, ICAR hopes to accommodate the needs of students from a variety of academic cycles and programming, including increased accessibility for international students. ICAR continues to be an exciting place with which to be involved as it evolves. The incoming students will undoubtedly be assets to the ICAR program bringing with them the enthusiasm and unique perspectives of their varied backgrounds. ■

network

Inaugural Citizen Diplomacy Class: A Student's Reflections on the Syrian Experience

By Seth Cohen, ICAR Ph.D. Student , scohen6@gmu.edu

When I began to question why I was going to Syria—and what my path is as a scholar/practitioner—I picked up Lederach's, *The Moral Imagination*, and was reminded of the web of relationships that we must cast with our fellow human beings if we want to build bridges between real or perceived enemies. Twenty of us were headed to Damascus with our own ideas about the "other" and perhaps our own expectations about how things might unfold. We read about Syria's political regime and we knew that former President Bush connected Syria to his "axis of evil," but very few of us knew any Syrians or had experienced "being" in Syria. As citizen diplomats, we had a unique opportunity to interact with Syrian students, professionals, government officials, religious leaders, and regular citizens—constructing a different reality from what we had heard or read in the United States.

Our experiential course was a result of citizen diplomacy in action, the product of a partnership between Dr. Marc Gopin and Syrian Hind Kabawat, which continues to transcend societal divisions and barriers because it is built on a common belief and joint effort to achieve positive change, one step at a time. At the Syrian International Academy we challenged stereotypes, learned about each other and our nations, and co-created new pathways for constructive engagement. The class really took shape when we broke out of the larger confines of the classroom into small, intimate mixed-group discussions about how we, as Syrian and American university students, understand conflict resolution and what it means to be a citizen diplomat. We understood "citizen diplomacy" as part of an age-old universal art of forming relationships across cultural, religious, and national boundaries. Under the guidance of Dr. Gopin, and his innovative book,



An artisan at work in Damascus. Photo: O. Alkhiami.



Citizen Diplomacy students with Dr. Marc Gopin and Hind Kabawat in Damascus. Photo: O. Alkhiami.

To Make the Earth Whole, we also discovered how useful the concept is as a formalized practice of peace building whereby individual actors go beyond mere contact with one another to form social networks that may lead to tipping points of transformative change (see Social Network Theory).

Throughout the week, our encounters provided us with Syrian perspectives on such issues as the Arab-Israeli conflict, the difficult challenges of Iraqi refugees, and how U.S. sanctions are hindering development in Syria. As international students, working in formal and informal Track II settings, we were moving beyond unhelpful political polarizations between the U.S. and Syria, all the while aware of how we might influence change at both the grassroots and Track I levels. Despite all of our positive interaction, there was an underlying unease and palpable tension that arose from an understanding that we were not totally free to speak our minds on every topic. However, in acknowledging that tension, we also realized that it was even more acute for our Syrian brothers and sisters.

One of the most profound experiences for our group was our meeting with the Grand Mufti, Sheik Hassoun, Syria's highest appointed Muslim leader. The Grand Mufti modeled what it means to be a leader who does not tolerate violence and instead lives by principles of compassion and love. His desire to protect the children of this world was evident, and in a moment of deep appreciation between the Mufti and Dr. Gopin, the group was moved to tears.

initiatives

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ICAR Serves on MLK Day

A "Day On" at Ron Brown Middle School

By Kristin Moriarty, ICAR M.S. Student and Undergraduate Program Assistant, kmoriart@gmu.edu

EVENTS



Kareem Terrell and his daughter at the ICAR Serves MLK Day project. Photo: L. E. Shaw.

On January 18th, Martin Luther King Day, the ICAR community joined City Year in honoring Dr. King's legacy by making the day "a day ON, not a day off." City Year, an organization of full time service leaders, hosted a high-impact service project at Ron

Brown Middle School in Washington D.C. City Year, along with their City Young Heroes, dedicates themselves to year round service and service projects. Martin Luther King Day is their alumni event in which they invite City Year alumni and other community members and friends to join them in their mission of serving the community.

There was a great response and turnout from the ICAR community, as students and alumni, along with faculty and staff, from both the undergraduate and graduate programs, came together to represent ICAR and George Mason University in a day of service.

The day began with an opening ceremony where ICAR volunteers joined City year in their

motivational warm up activities to prepare for a full day of service. Hundreds of community volunteers were warmly welcomed by City Year and City Year alumni. The service project was a beautification of Ron Brown Middle School in Washington D.C. After the opening ceremony, volunteers were divided into groups to join team leaders in working on many different parts of the middle school.

Ron Brown Middle School was teeming with energy as volunteers from around the D.C. metropolitan area worked on various beautification and small construction projects throughout the day. Volunteers worked on projects such as landscaping, organizing the library, and painting inspirational quotes and murals throughout the school. By the end of the day, many of the school's walls were lined with bright paintings of rockets, the school's mascot. Many of the classrooms were also filled with inspirational quotes and murals to brighten the learning environment. City Year corps members worked hard to ensure that all the volunteers were able to participate and contribute to the projects.

City Year's Martin Luther King Day service project, was incorporated as part of the larger vision of ICAR Serves, which is being spear-headed by the Undergraduate program. The events of the day provided an opportunity for ICAR to get involved and contribute to the D.C. community, as well as a chance to strengthen associations within the ICAR community as students, faculty, staff, alumni, and family members worked side by side. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of the day. ■



Dr. Susan Allen Nan with son, Oliver. Photo: L.E. Shaw.

Upcoming ICAR Community Events

Wednesday, February 10, 2010

ICAR - SPP Resume Clinic

3:30 pm - 4:30 pm, Original Building, TBA

Thursday, February 11, 2010

ISA Town Hall Meeting

7:30 pm - 9:30 pm, Truland Building, 555

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

ICAR - SPP Career Fair

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm, Original Building, TBA

Friday, March 26, 2010

Grad Student Etiquette Dinner

5:45 pm - 9:00 pm, Original Building, 329

Thursday, April 29, 2010

ISA Town Hall Meeting

7:30 pm - 9:30 pm, Truland Building, 555

<http://icar.gmu.edu/events.htm>

Adopting a Conflict Resolution Approach to Reconstruction in Haiti

By Mike Giusti, ICAR M.S. Student and Graduate Student Services Assistant, mgiusti@gmu.edu



Mike Giusti. Photo: Creative Services, GMU.

Having heard the news stories, watched videos and pictures, and followed Twitter posts from Dr. Bartoli, in the aftermath of Haiti's devastating earthquake, it is evident to me that conflict resolution theory needs to be integrated with reconstruction practices to prevent a protracted social conflict, a man-made disaster, emerging as an outcome of natural disaster. Basic Human Needs

theory should be carefully examined as the pieces are picked up and Haiti attempts to rebuild.

For Burton, human needs are a collection of human development essentials that are sought simultaneously. These human essentials include the need for structure, predictability, stability, and freedom from fear and anxiety, as well as the need for a fair allocation of resources. In addition to these most basic needs there are the issues of identity, culture, freedom, participation, and a sense of belongingness. However, given the immediacy of required assistance, a majority of these essentials may be left unmet.

Considering Burton's notion that unmet needs directly and deeply affect all other life issues, a prolonged situation of unmet needs in Haiti could lay the groundwork for protracted or intractable social conflict.

As the rubble is removed and aid floods in, and in the midst of the drive to establish a sense of security and stability in an otherwise chaotic situation, there is likely to be an intense conflict over natural resources. To combat this potential situation, it is vital to direct energy toward maintaining security and public safety and reestablishing a sense of governance and participation. This will require a highly organized interagency effort that is flexible enough to allow for participation from nongovernmental agencies, volunteer organizations, and individuals in need of direction. Aid money will need to be closely managed so as not to invite excess expenditures or misallocated funds.

Recognizing that this situation is complex and calls for a nuanced approach to reconstruction does not negate the fact that there is no room for error. The U.S., Haiti, and the broader international community cannot afford to oversee the emergence of another protracted social conflict at the expense of basic security. Burton's idea of human needs should serve as a guide to the reconstruction process. ■

Recent ICAR Articles, Op-Eds, Letters to the Editor

Conflict Resolution, One Book at a Time

By Roi Ben-Yehuda, ICAR Ph.D. Student
Common Ground News Service, 1/14/10

Lisbon - the First Step in Solving Europe's Identity Crisis

By Abou El Mahassine Fassi-Firi, ICAR M.S. Student
Common Ground News Service, 1/05/10

Peace Movement has Become Powerless, Says MK Yuli Tamir

By Roi Ben-Yehuda, ICAR Ph.D. Student
Harretz, 12/27/09

America's Role in Afghanistan - A Quiet One

By Michael Shank, ICAR Ph.D. Candidate
San Francisco Chronicle, 12/17/09

A Grassroots Visit Belies Washington's View of Afghanistan

By Michael Shank, ICAR Ph.D. Candidate
San Jose Mercury News, 12/12/09

Marginalizing Muslims in Switzerland

By Carrie Chomuik, ICAR M.S. Student
The Washington Post, 12/12/09

Sacrificing for the Planet

By Susan Allen Nan, ICAR Assistant Professor
The Washington Post, 12/10/09

Rawlings, Kufour Deserves The Hague

By Clement Aapengnuo, ICAR Ph.D. Student
Ghana Web 12/06/09

Unofficial International Conflict Resolution: Is There a Track 1 1/2? Are There Best Practices?

By Susan Allen Nan, ICAR Assistant Professor, Daniel Druckman, ICAR Affiliate and Professor of Public & International Affairs, and Jana El Horr, ICAR Ph.D. Student
Conflict Resolution Quarterly, Fall 2009

Letter From Kabul

By Michael Shank, Ph.D. Candidate
The Nation, 12/04/09

Afghans Want U.S. to Stay but do Things Differently

By Michael Shank, Ph.D. Candidate
Roll Call, 12/03/09

Yves-Renée Jennings, ICAR Ph.D. Candidate

By Molly Tepper, ICAR Ph.D. Student and John Burton Librarian, mtepper@gmu.edu

ICAR Spotlight

A keen sense of seeking to overcome injustices combined with developing opportunities for peace-building has been a foundation for Yves-Renee Jenning's work. After retiring from many years at the World Bank, Yves-Renee joined ICAR's Ph.D. program to explore the conflict dynamics of gender relations in post conflict countries. Previously focused on West African countries, she now sees important openings for practitioners in Haiti to rebuild, overcoming structural violence, creating dialogues, and develop civic responsibly.

Currently ABD, Yves-Renée is teaching and writing with Prof. Sandra Cheldelin. She has always been dedicated to building the ICAR community, as director of the GMU Dispute Resolution Project, chair of the Latin America working group and as an ICAR Student Association (formerly GSCS) board representative. She is active in the Gender working group and as a Drucie-Cumbie Fellow, she has been developing a grants portal for ICAR. Working in Haiti will not be a new initiative for

Yves-Renée, as her own non-profit organization "Partners for Sustainable Peace" has been working on conflict resolution, peace-building and social transformation in a project training the Dominican Republic and Haitian police officers at the border.

Yves-Renée is from Miragoane in the south-western part of

Haiti. She is married to William Jennings, who she met at church. Yves-Renée also has an adult son who lives here in Virginia. She loves to read, watch old movies, and host and Fellowship with others. Always passionate and determined in her work, she will no doubt continue to be a leader, overcoming adversity and building peace. ■



Yves-Renée Jennings. Photo: ICAR.

ICAR M.S. Student and Staff Member, Laurence Gehy

By Molly Tepper, ICAR Ph.D. Student and John Burton Librarian, mtepper@gmu.edu

Calmly and effectively organizing behind the scenes, when she is not in class, ICAR Master's student, Laurence Gehy, can often be found handling event coordination details and managing various other ICAR projects. Laurence hails from Port-au-Prince, and while the current situation in Haiti has understandably dampened her ever-present

cheerfulness, Laurence continues to actively support the ICAR community, holding her dual position as assistant to ICAR Director, Andrea Bartoli and to ICAR's financial manager Jeremy Peizer.

Leadership, program management, and policy design has clearly been an integral part of Laurence's skills and studies. During her internship with the State Department's Western

Hemisphere Affairs division, she drafted in-house policy papers on asylum issues. As staff for Engaging Governments on Genocide Prevention (EGGP) she helped coordinate two annual conferences and has been an active participant in the Latin America and Gender working groups. With a special focus on religious sources of forgiveness and reconciliation, her course work included identity and religion and conflict. Laurence will graduate from the Master's program this semester. Recently, she was nominated, by ICAR, for the Presidential Management Fellowship and is currently undergoing the multi-leveled requisite tests in this prestigious competition with the goal of eventually working as a U.S. Foreign Service Officer.

Aside from her work and studies, Laurence is an avid reader and an accomplished writer. In 2001, she published "Etat d' Ame" a book of poetry written in English and French, and in 2003 she published a French novel, *Amelia*. Both books are published in Haiti.

Laurence wishes to express her heart-felt thanks and appreciation for all the help and generosity by the ICAR community during these difficult times. ■



Laurence Gehy. Photo: Creative Services, GMU.

As the tragic situation unfolded, in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, the ICAR community reached out to support its members who were directly affected by the disaster. ICAR News is pleased to highlight these students and their significant contributions to the ICAR community. We wish their families well and want to express our appreciation for all of the efforts in support of Haitian survivors and their families. For information on how to help see: icar.gmu.edu/crisis_haiti.html. The spotlight section is designed to highlight accomplishment within the ICAR community. Suggestions for future spotlights are welcome and can be forwarded to the Editor at icarnews@gmu.edu. ■

Copenhagen Climate Conference

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Diane Perlman and daughter at COP 15. Dr. Perlman is a Visiting Scholar at ICAR. Photo: Diane Perlman.

year, Tina Monberg, a Danish member of Mediators Beyond Borders (MBB) posed this question to Kenneth Cloke, the president of MBB, who applied to the UN for accreditation, becoming the only dispute resolution organization approved for Non-Governmental Observer status at COP 15.

Over the decades, I have noticed that very often those who possess the most relevant bodies of knowledge and essential skills are generally absent where needed most. There are always doctors, lawyers, religious and business leaders, environmentalists, politicians, and a variety of activists weighing in. But where are the conflict resolution practitioners? Monberg and Cloke's vision is a first step in bringing the field to the table.

MBB's goals for COP15 were to learn as much as possible about environmental conflicts, to raise awareness and look for avenues for intervention, to make connections, and to advocate for the inclusion of language recommending mediation as an option to facilitate problem-solving and conflict transformation.

Various levels, layers, and types of conflicts relating to global warming are associated with different causes, consequences, and solutions. In this case, a top down approach is critical, as "primary conflicts" or "megaconflicts" generate preventable contention. By intervening at fulcrum levels, we

can perhaps prevent, slow, or reduce the otherwise inevitable cascade of conflict.

Examples of conflict-generating contentions are those brewing between developed and developing countries, Democrats and Republicans, and central governments and local authorities. Additionally, corporations, oil companies, factory farms, and the coal industry are in conflict with communities, small farmers, and public health concerns. The desire for cheap energy, fossil fuels, and profits (ignoring hidden costs), and an attachment to our way of life, block the political will needed to transform systems and infrastructure.

Forces of habit, old ways of thinking, ignorance, fear of loss, sacrifice and inconvenience, denial, disinformation, and cynicism fuel a hostile resistance to advocates and those most vulnerable and eager for change. Also interfering with recognition of the problem, and the political will to address it, is the astonishing question over whether climate change is even happening. This "controversy" has captured public attention, serving as a dangerous distraction, and a tragic waste of time.

In addition to the chaotic weather patterns caused by global warming, rising temperatures fuel human chaos and the escalation of conflict, as clashes arise between neighboring villages over farming practices, contamination, water use, scarce resources, and the great misfortune of being downstream or downwind. Looming on the horizon is the potential conflict generated by hundreds of millions of environmental refugees.

A top down approach to conflict cascades must begin with the UN and its flawed system. MBB's, Kenneth Cloke, has outlined the following line of reasoning for addressing the problem:

- We currently face problems that cannot be solved locally, by a consortium of nation states, by any international organization, including

the UN, or through force or litigation.

- Conflicts exist between nations, political groups, and organizations, regarding the problem's existence, definition, and solutions. These conflicts interfere with timely solutions.

- Current mechanisms are incapable of solving these conflicts expediently or effectively, and failure to solve them will be catastrophic. The answer lies in communication and international collaboration.

- All sources of conflict need to be addressed, as well as resistance to systemic change at all levels. For this to happen, we need to increase our skills in cross-cultural communications, prejudice reduction and bias awareness, informal problem solving, group facilitation, public dialogue, collaborative negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution systems design.

During COP15, approximately 25 MBB members met each day to strategize and debrief. We also conducted a seminar with 60 international mediators from 20 countries, and studied a range of emerging climate conflicts. Through our pioneering efforts at the Bella Center, we evolved as a team and generated significant interest in conflict mediation. We made over a thousand contacts, including: Archbishop Desmond Tutu; Ivo DeBoer, chief COP negotiator; Noble Peace Prize Winner Wangari Mathai; and many others.

In the aftermath of Copenhagen, MBB is on a steep learning curve, analyzing diplomatic processes, preparing for COP 16 in Mexico, exploring partnerships (including ICAR), and preparing a guide on environmental conflict and mediation strategies. I



Mediators Beyond Borders team members meet at the Bella Center. Photo: Diane Perlman.

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Copenhagen Climate Conference

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am personally proposing a parallel to the IPCC—the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that shared the Noble Peace Prize with Al Gore, an IPMCC—an Interdisciplinary Panel on Mediating Environmental Conflicts.

In the absence of effective strategies to address the interlocking layers of conflict in Copenhagen, conflict escalated, as the powerful promoted artificial solutions, and concerned bystanders feared for humanity's fate. As Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme noted, "This whole meeting is about facilitating away from conflict. Climate change is exacerbating and enhancing flash-points of conflict."

It is crucial, as a field, to recognize our profound and specific responsibility. It is up to us to rise to this challenge. If we do not, conflicts will unnecessarily escalate, and seal the fate of civilization. The stakes are as high as they can be. There is a void to be filled. We are needed. The time is now, and thanks to the efforts of MBB, the door is open.

For more information on Mediators Beyond Borders, visit their website at: www.mediatorsbeyondborders.org, or contact Dr. Perlman directly. ■

Citizen Diplomacy Class

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As a spiritual yet non-religious American—raised by a Christian mother and a Jewish father—I was grateful to learn from a wise Muslim leader about our common values and the good we can do to create better relationships in both Syria and the United States, regardless of our backgrounds or belief systems.

Our temporary high from the exchange with the Grand Mufti was soon tempered by the news that some of the Mufti's comments, regarding his unwillingness to advocate violence towards Jews or Christians, even if commanded by the Prophet Mohammad, were broadcast by the media and interpreted as anti-Islam by some radical Muslims who then spread their criticisms of the Mufti virally on European jihadist blogs. Ironically, the Grand Mufti's words were also picked up by Israeli Army Radio, and resulted in a positive article featured in Haaretz's online publication.

Over the next week, we wrestled with the lessons of do no harm (or the more realistic version that Gopin proposes of doing less harm than the good that is generated), and the potential pitfalls of engaging the media in peace building. Yet, once the media was involved, we had the choice to either answer or sit back. Some of us chose to respond in newspapers and on television, under the artful guidance of Hind Kabawat and Dr. Gopin. It is difficult to measure the full impact of our meeting with the Grand Mufti at this point, but we have an opportunity to learn from it and consider how to move forward in this work together. Challenges are good, and in the end we parted ways, humbled by the depth of the relationships we created in a mere 8 days, and the potential that lies ahead. ■



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