

International Education Summit October 2004
Comments by OneWorldNow! Students in Response to:
Why is International Education important?

What are your experiences?

What is your vision of what's possible and what you would like to see happen in our schools, communities?

Dariene: Student at Cleveland H.S., Seattle

Country of Origin: Philippines

"I think of myself as a global citizen. We need to understand one another, not judge by race or color."

Her vision:

"I would like to have more languages offered at school: French, Spanish and Arabic. Before going to Morocco, I knew I wanted to go places, now I know for SURE! That [going to Morocco] has affected learning about people here because I see things differently. I feel a responsibility beyond self. I am more conscious of actions toward other people. For example, I knew about Islam but started learning about it from another perspective, from the outlook of others. Now, I'm more sensitive and notice comments of others a lot more."

Becky: Student at Garfield H.S., Seattle

Countries of Origin: Southern Europe.

"We have a family that is close-knit with relatives in Greece, Turkey, South Africa, and Cuba. We keep in contact with one another, mostly by email, not much by text messaging. Keeping in contact with them is part of my life - I want others to have that! I want to travel and see OneWorldNow! as an opportunity to do that."

Her vision:

"We need more languages in school and begin with languages earlier than Middle School and 7th grade. Right now, languages are

a requirement for 2 years (and 3 years for college). We need to start sooner for collaborations. We need to raise awareness early enough so that international education is important to students and students will start caring and worrying about having international education. And so students will start caring about what's happening in the world. We learn languages better earlier, so why do we start languages so late? When you understand someone's language, you understand them better. Some words are only in one language and you need to know that language - you can't understand otherwise. In other cultures, communication is different. In Chinese, the inflection carries meaning. We don't have opportunities in school to use technology. We don't do email at school and access to our [home} email is blocked. We can do email in private [outside of school] but not in public at school. At home with family, access is not always there. When we know email access is not always there for [for friends and families around the world], we are more patient in waiting for replies; our peers in the U.S. are not patient in waiting."

Nabili: Student at Ingraham H.S., Seattle

Country of Origin: Oromo, East Africa

"International education had never been important until I joined OneWorldNow! I use email to keep in touch with family and friends. Oromo people are the 3rd largest group in Africa with 30,000,000 [people] yet are unfamiliar to many [here]. There's so much more to know than the "covers" [of people and cultures], so much more underneath. I am learning more about how the world works; it's not just 'mother nature' [the land and continents], it's the people."

Her vision:

"The minds of youth [through OneWorldNow!) are expanding differently; youth are different now than a couple of years ago. A couple of year's ago, number of Jordan shoes we had was

important - that's minor now. What's more important and valuable than having the shoes and \$\$, is travel. I'm now passionate about going to Egypt, I have pushed the priorities from 'Jordans' to 'the World!' [OneWorldNow!] is opportunity for our own leadership. Highlights are speakers every Friday and face-to-face with the speakers. Now, I have peers in OneWorldNow! here and global peers. The 1st generation teaches the family that doesn't understand. I can use the OneWorldNow! computer to send email to Morocco in Arabic. I have a penpal in the UK. You can use IM to chat with others. Through the YMCA, you get to meet face-to-face. Before OneWorldNow!, I was like a little kid growing up and knowing what you want to do, like wanting to be a dentist. Now, I am learning Arabic and waiting for a life-changing experience. I know it's there. When McDermott came and presented a map of the Middle East, we got a step-by-step explanation of the conflicts there; that made it [Middle East] clearer, made sense. I realize there is so much more to learn There is more to being an American citizen than just staying here; we have a responsibility to go out and help."

Suzanne: China (Garfield H.S.)

"Until OneWorldNow! I really didn't care about the world too much, but my Mom said it was important. With OneWorldNow!, it's apparent that so much is happening that really affects us. It's a sign of ignorance to not learn anything and to speak without all the facts. Because of being abroad with family in China, I keep up with the news of Hong Kong where my Aunt is living. The more you learn, the more you start to care. You aren't so close-minded. You learn more if you are open to the world, open to learn about it."

Her vision:

"China and the US were familiar to me. Now, I know there's so much out there, but I don't know it all yet. Now, you start to

learn and know there's a lot more to learn. Now, I can't just settle for being in the same place or settle for doing just what's expected. There's so much more to learn between now and someday being settled in one place. Someday that is what I might do, but now, I need that chance to get all the stories [from many places and people]. Not knowing a language is a huge vulnerability. For example, in China, I know how to communicate, but in Morocco, I didn't have skill with language. Now, I realize for myself that education in school isn't always real; part of education is "getting out there" in the world."

Kathleen: Student at Roosevelt H.S.

Country of Origin: Viet Nam

"International education is important because when a person learns more, you won't judge. When you know each other, you can be friends; then you won't be scared and won't resist being friends with others."

Her vision:

"More international, cultural classes in school with learning from teachers from other countries, not just the textbooks. Then we will know the cultures. It could be done by teacher exchanges, for example, a teacher from China coming to teach Chinese.

(The consensus of the OneWorldNow! student group is that most teachers don't have an expectation of relating school to anything international. They would like to see more international opportunities for learning languages, having exchanges and connecting with youth around the world in their schools.)