By Paul Reilly

A HEART-WRENCHING portrayal of the lives of carriers in Qatar’s souqs, Al-Muftah, was winner of the THIMUN Qatar Northwestern Film Festival’s award for Best Picture, taking home a check for 10,000 Riyals (3,000 USD).

The five-minute film features Mahmoud Gharem, Gholam Ahmed, and Mohamad Abdolrahim, who play three Iranian men who arrive in Qatar as teenagers in the 60s. They first find work as hotel porters and Kandaris (water carriers). Forty years later, they continue to carry a heavy load at work as well as in their everyday lives as expat laborers.

The film, which also won the People’s Choice Award by YouTube viewers and the festival audience, was nominated for Best Cinematography, Best Sound, Best Story, Best National Picture, and Best Picture.

“A walk past the Hammali in Souq Waqif every day and barely see them, but through the film I was able to help their voices reach people, particularly in Qatar,” said Al-Muftah, a student in her last week at Qatar Academy, who was also recently accepted into Northwestern University in Qatar. “I have been able to feel the impact of human rights on us all. I hope that my film can make audiences smile or cry, might stimulate some thoughts about safety issues — which women in India actually feel over, and has shown how the lack of security of Women in India is coming to. Real connections don’t derive from text messages and are often harder to carry a heavy load at work as well as in their everyday lives as expat laborers.

The Olive Branch
MODEL UNITED NATIONS NEWSLETTER

And the Winner is...

By Lisa Martin

THE announcement of student leadership positions at THIMUN Online has become one of my favorite days of the year. And last night was the most anticipated reveal of the 2014-15 leadership team.

Our Secretary General, Rohan Sinha, hails from Taiwan, and he is our first male SG. He will be supported by his Deputy Secretary General Andrea He (Asia), Elizabeth Kitange (Africa), Ashish Tharoor (Middle East), Henry Zink (Europe) and Alex Nguyen (Americas). Additionally, O-MUN’s speciality programs, also headed up by DSG’s include Dylan Sexton (Global Debates), Wesley Chen (Special Conferences), Hana Seita (Moderator Training), Timothy Shu (ICJ) and Gem Gokmen (Public Affairs). This last DSG position was developed through discussions with current leadership team members, who saw a need to focus on educational outreach. Gem will also continue as our all-important Technology Officer.

Our Global Leadership Team consists of individuals from almost every continent who work together to provide the logistical support for debates and programs. Kari P-Grau (USA) will take on the new position-Educational Development Officer position, Abhishek Saxena (UAE) in the Social Media Officer position. Bassim Elelham (UAE) will work in Press and Publications, a busy and in-demand debate’s program. Kari P-Grau (USA) will continue in the Community line debate’s program.

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Meet the New THIMUN O-MUN Student Leadership Team!

By Lisa Martin

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Luke Davis

Luke Davis has supported the development of the THIMUN Qatar Northwestern film festival since its inception. Besides his amazing work in developing the film studies program at Doha College, Luke has been a constant source of support for the film festival. He has served on the pre-screening committee for the past four years watching endless hours of submissions. He is always ready to offer a helping hand and good advice. We wish you all the best as you head back to the United Kingdom.

Mandy Hollingshead & Robert Krebs

Mandy Hollingshead & Robert Krebs

Sara is one of the co-founders of the Qatar MUN and Film Leadership Conference held each fall in Qatar. On top of her many other duties at Georgetown University, Sara also helps organize two School of Foreign Service in Qatar - Georgetown University MUN conferences; one in Qatar and one in India. Many of THIMUN Qatar delegates go to university and Georgetown and Sara is always there to help with the transition in university life.

Ruth Tremlett

Ruth Tremlett has served as the director of Model United Nations at Gulf English School for the past three years. Despite a very busy work schedule, Ruth always finds time to support her student’s activities in MUN. If there is an MUN event happening in Doha, Ruth and her students will be there. She has taken a small MUN program at Gulf English School and made it one of the best in the country. Her students have played key roles in THIMUN Qatar executive teams and always come well prepared. We wish you all the best.

Lindsey Peak and Rebecca Cain

Lindsey (Qatar Academy) and Rebecca (Park House) have been an integral part of the THIMUN Qatar Press team for the past three years. The two of them started the THIMUN Qatar press team three years with along with THIMUN Hague Press coordinator Andrew Newman. Since that time, they have worked tirelessly to create a sense of pride and professionalism to the press core. They have introduced numerous innovations to the program including live streaming of events and making online publications accessible. Their commitment to student learning goes well beyond the THIMUN Qatar conference week with weekly meetings, running press teams at other student conferences (Qatar Leadership Conference and DCMUN), and providing workshops to students. All the best in your transition to Serbia (Lindsey) and future studies (Rebecca).

Aaron Alcodray

Aaron Alcodray (Qatar Academy) has volunteered as a Qatar Academy MUN club director for the past several years. He has supervised numerous international MUN trips and always willing to step in and help out wherever he is needed. Aaron’s positive outlook on life and deep commitment to student development has endeared him to many QAMUN club members. A constant traveller, a person with passion about making positive change combined with his global perspective, Aaron personifies the best of MUN Directors. All the best in your new assignment in Peru.

Kevin Felix Chan and Ryan Villanueva, Best Delegate Co-Founders

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The Olive Branch is the official student publication of the THIMUN Qatar and the film leadership conference. We are a group of volunteers dedicated to sharing stories of your experiences at THIMUN and THIMUN Qatar. We wish you all the best as you face down the next chapter of your life.

Abhay Valiyaveettil

Abhay Valiyaveettil
**A Tribute to Cameron Janzen**

By Alain Meidinger

IN THE COURSE of the first decade of the new millennium, the THIMUN Foundation succeeded in spreading its programme across almost every continent largely in part because of its affiliated conferences. In the same spirit, in 2005, the THIMUN Foundation launched a second large conference in Singapore, the THIMUN Leadership Conference, which brought together national and international Model UN leaders. Thanks to Cameron, our Regional Officer, these three consecutive events are now organized in Doha on an annual basis: a THIMUN Qatar Conference, the THIMUN Film Festival, and the THIMUN Leadership Conference.

In addition to the development of the Model UN programme in the Middle East, Cameron succeeded in creating a broad network encompassing the entire region. His efforts brought in educators and schools from Europe, North America and the Far East, which made possible the sharing of knowledge and exchange ideas with each other. Cameron spent a great deal of time and energy travelling from the Middle East to Doha for this purpose. His work included organizing conferences, giving advice to Model UN teachers, connecting the organization Best Delegate with Middle East schools, and editing The Olive Branch newsletter. Furthermore, he also organized the THIMUN Foundation as a platform to launch Lisa Martin’s Online Model United Nations program worldwide, connecting even more students and educators to the world of debate and diplomacy.

Geographically, Cameron’s influence reached even farther than the Middle East region. He travelled across South East Asia and in North Africa. With his help, the THIMUN Foundation managed to modernize its website and standardize the educational documents used not only by the three THIMUN Conferences, but also by almost fifty conferences that were affiliated worldwide.

Cameron’s achievements and professionalism are only exceeded by his genuine kindness and generosity in helping others. Ever since our first meeting at the THIMUN Hague conference, he has been an oasis for those who look for answers and guidance.

On a personal level, the Board will also remember other aspects of Cameron’s commitment. Firstly, we will always cherish the Skype meetings connecting Doha with The Hague, during which we could have a look at Cameron’s home office and sometimes catch a glimpse of his boys passing by and saying hello. Secondly, we will always remember having the opportunity to see Cameron in action during the THIMUN Qatar events—the Leadership Conferences, the Film Festivals—knowing and taking care of everyone with modesty and discretion. In Doha, we could see how much other people liked Cameron and respected him for his professionalism.

The THIMUN Foundation would like to deeply thank Cameron Janzen for his hard work, his dedication, and the timeless hours and efforts he gave to the THIMUN Foundation through THIMUN Qatar, an indispensable educational programme worldwide. Thanks to him, the Foundation has become a better-known NGO that still seeks to spread the Model UN programme in other parts of the world such as in Latin America.

Finally, this tribute to Cameron would not be fully complete without a special thank you to Cameron’s wife, Darla. Cameron could not have done what he accomplished for the THIMUN Foundation without the support and the love of his wife, who spent so much time without Cameron in Doha while he was travelling the world. Thank you, dear Darla!

The THIMUN Foundation wishes Cameron and his family all the best in their new challenges in their new home of Venezuela.

Alain Meidinger is the co-chair of the THIMUN Foundation. This article was written on behalf of the entire Board and Office of the THIMUN Foundation.

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**An Oasis for Model UN in the Middle East**

By Ryan Villanueva and Kevin Felix Chan

A VISIONARY turns dreams into reality, seeing what’s possible before others know what to look for. When others are lost in the desert, a visionary shows them a common vision and gives them a common voice, guiding them and moving them toward their promised destination. When others are parched with thirst, only able to see mirages, a visionary quenches that thirst and creates an oasis.

Cameron Janzen is a Model UN visionary. Cameron turned the dream of empowering, unifying, and student-centered Model UN programs into reality. Cameron saw what was possible for Qatar MUN before the rest of us had ever heard of THIMUN Qatar. When students and teachers were looking for guidance on how to bring Model UN to their schools, Cameron started the Qatar Leadership Conference and the Olive Branch. When Model UN was a mirage around the world, Cameron succeeded in creating a broad network encompassing the entire region. His efforts brought in educators and schools from Europe, North America and the Far East, which made possible the sharing of knowledge and exchange ideas with each other. Cameron spent a great deal of time and energy travelling from the Middle East to Doha for this purpose. His work included organizing conferences, giving advice to Model UN teachers, connecting the organization Best Delegate with Middle East schools, and editing The Olive Branch newsletter. Furthermore, he also organized the THIMUN Foundation as a platform to launch Lisa Martin’s Online Model United Nations program worldwide, connecting even more students and educators to the world of debate and diplomacy.

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Cameron, thank you for everything. It has been our pleasure to work with you. We wish you the best of luck in your next position and your future endeavors. And although you’ve said that you’re retiring from Model UN, we know from our experience that Model UN is for life -- so we look forward to seeing you at your next Model UN conference!
A Look Back: Remembering Cameron Janzen’s Contributions to Model United Nations

WITH THE end of the academic year comes a milestone of sorts. Cameron Janzen, one of the region’s most important thought leaders in the field of Model United Nations, is moving on to new challenges in South America. His impact on the region, and his support to many schools and programs in the Middle East, have not gone unnoticed. The following individuals have shared their thoughts on Cameron’s important contributions in the development of the THIMUN Qatar program and the impact this has had beyond the Doha-based office.

“Mr. Cameron Janzen came to Qatar Academy in 2003, at a time when the school had only a fledgling MUN club that had never traveled abroad. Mr. Janzen energized the dozen students, and suddenly, interest in MUN increased around the school. Within his first year, Mr. Janzen began a training conference for Qatar Academy, introduced a student-led executive team, and registered QA for its first international MUN conference in Dublin. QAMUN was the first co-curricular activity of its kind to open to students. In the midst of all of this, Mr. Janzen professional reputation, among teachers and students alike, was held in high regard.

In 2005, Mr. Janzen pursued his vision for a national MUN conference. QMUN brought together the MUN programs at American School of Doha, Doha College, and Qatar Academy, and in the process, introduced MUN to numerous other schools in the country. Between 2005 and 2010, QMUN quickly expanded from 500 students in 2005 to around 1000 students. Mr. Janzen envisioned greater potential in both Qatar and the students as he began to lay the foundation for the THIMUN Qatar office. This brought MUN in Qatar to the forefront of all other programs in the Middle East. Under his leadership, the THIMUN Qatar office expanded rapidly, introducing the Film Festival, and later the Qatar Leadership Conference. The latter brings in over thirty speakers each year. Mr. Janzen’s contributions were clearly not only to Qatar Academy, but to the many schools around Qatar, and students across the world.”

—Dr. Eric Sands, Director, Qatar Academy, and Mr. Jesse Atkins, THIMUN Coordinator, Qatar

“Cam Janzen is one of the most dedicated and caring teachers I’ve ever met. I’ve worked with numerous high school programs across Qatar - his are the most well-organized, thoughtful and student centered events I have had the pleasure of being involved in. I’ve worked with Cam for several years on the THIMUN Qatar Northwestern Film Festival and the Qatar Leadership Conference. I’ve always been impressed by how big he dreams. I find hosting hundreds of students daunting, but Cam takes it all in stride and expertly organizes fabulous conferences. Along the way, he is also an encourager. He is collaborative and inclusive of fellow faculty at Qatar Academy and other schools. He often lets others take the spotlight, letting the students and fellow colleagues shine, while he is behind the scenes. The way in which he works with students is incredibly admirable. I know many students at Northwestern who still refer to him fondly - Mr. Janzen certainly had a huge impression on their lives. He will be sorely missed.”

—Emily Ruth Wilson, Manger for Community Relations, Northwestern University

“Cameron is a builder, a builder of programs that impact young people around the world. From Qatar Academy and Doha, to the Middle East and the world, the programs he has supported have translated into real and lasting impact on young people’s lives. At heart, Cameron is an educator with a deep sense of the importance of engagement and leadership opportunities. He was the first individual over 30 to see the potential of the online MUN concept, and worked continuously over two years to support and position the program to where it is today. Students in over 40 countries have been the direct recipient of his vision for MUN. His work towards a more inclusive vision for MUN will have lasting impact on the growth of the program for many years to come.”

—Wessam Kanes, THIMUN Qatar Secretary General, 2014

As a student and the THIMUN Qatar 2014 Secretary General, I can firsthand say that Mr. Janzen has been both an important mentor and friend that has aided in my development as a leader. His help and guidance were never solely reserved to those who were involved in leadership but rather always open to everyone who sought them. The support he gave all of us and the empowering opportunities he worked hard to provide us with were invaluable to our growth as individuals and citizens of this world. His contributions to the community and the entire region prove that he will leave behind a legacy of evolving generations of youth that are conscious of the world around them, the issues that shape it, and the methods by which to go about solving them.

“On behalf of all of those generations of MUNers, I’d like to thank him for believing in us and wish him the best in all his future endeavors.”

—Lisa Martin, Founder/Director, THIMUN Online Model United Nations

“While MUN is Cameron’s passion, his vision is for more than students practising policy and sparring with like-minded peers. His vision has always been to put students into ‘real world’ situations where they can experience first-hand at grass-roots level, the ramifications of global policies. To this end, he and a community member from war-torn eastern Sri Lanka have woven a lasting link between Qatar Academy’s MUN community and Eravur, a major Muslim village in a predominantly Hindu area. Peace-making through education was the corner-stone focus, so once an NGO was established, sponsorship of students to attend school, funding for a dedicated school building and student and teacher exchanges have developed in a sustainable way. Without the strong vision and principled adherence to process by both Cameron and his Eravur-born counterpart, Ansar, such a model would not have developed. Together they have modelled to the whole THIMUN community the necessary partnership protocols for such a respectful, sustainable action program. In so doing, Cameron has left a legacy not only of THIMUN and its far reaching influence, but also a model for all MUN groups to take the necessary actions in fulfilling the rhetoric of conferences. QA Action has made a difference to not only a war-torn community in Sri Lanka, but also to the students of Qatar Academy in both Primary and Senior school in terms of their world view. And that is a life-long difference for generations to come.”

—Kay Mitchell
Senior School Academic Support, Qatar Academy

Cameron, this is in honor just for you
And for all that you do
MUN will stay with me forever
Everlasting memories I will treasure
Recognition of what you have achieved over the years
Only you could have such an impact on your students and peers
Now the end is near, I wish you and your family every success and happiness

—Ann Rogers, Former THIMUN Qatar Conference Manager
By Nismah Jahanzeb Siddique and Shayna Dhanoo

THE POWER of a well-directed lens, pointed in the right direction at the right time, has long been acknowledged. Sometimes just one picture is all it takes to bring about change in hundreds of lives.

How about dozens of them put on a reel? Camera is perhaps the best weapon to fight social injustices, human rights violations and similar menaces. Nothing beats the power of lens particularly when it comes to attracting mass attention towards a neglected segment of the social fabric.

So, if you have a camera in hand, you just need to know where and when to use it. The rest is all instinct. You can make a difference. Two young girls, the students of Media Studies at Doha College, have recently done just that.

Putting their newly-learned skills to work, Nismah Jahanzeb Siddique and Shayna Dhanoo, the two student filmmakers, recently got international recognition by winning a runner-up prize for Best Picture at THIMUN Qatar Northwestern University Film Festival 2014, with their documentary Madrassa-e-Umeed (a school of hope).

Inspired by the “Education for all” programme of a non-profit organisation, Pakistan Welfare Forum (PWF), Madrassa-e-Umeed shows one of the many ways real difference can be made. It was a brilliant effort to keep the film alive and interesting from start to end, particularly when it did not include interviews or sound bites.

“We wanted to take interviews as they help the audience to relate to the characters but then those people did not want to be singled out, specified or identified, so we said okay fine we would go without it,” said Nismah.

The movie starts by explaining how one in five children does not have access to education. The camera pans to children in their small three-room school behind Pakistan Education Centre receiving free education. "Her cinematography was brilliant and the story was very good,” Nismah added.

Camera is perhaps the best weapon to fight social injustices, human rights violations and similar menaces. Nothing beats the power of lens particularly when it comes to attracting mass attention towards a neglected segment of the social fabric.

Some students talked to them in Urdu, but this could not be shown on screen since parents could take offense. The filmmakers also faced a barrier in language, as most of the children spoke their native Balochi language.

"But then they would come to us and show how they were learning A, B, C and doing drawings and colouring and that is how we interacted with them,” the two girls added.

"We were really proud because when they called our names, we were not expecting to win,” said Shayna.

The student filmmakers were content with the results, stating that the girl who won first prize truly deserved it. “Her cinematography was brilliant and the story was very good,” Nismah added.

Fans of documentary films, both Nismah and Shayna said they would definitely grab any opportunity to make films whenever they find an equally compelling subject. However, they were planning to pursue two different career paths.

Nismah is planning to do fashion designing and her friend Shayna is more interested in environmental sciences and geography. Even so, Nismah believes “this for me was a good experience. If another opportunity comes, we will take it. We cannot let it pass. It was so much fun. If something comes that is equally good as this, I would definitely go for it.”

Shayna agreed with her. “Yes, it can continue as a hobby. It is really good, but I love environmental sciences as well.”

### In the hub of variety, we create unity…

**2014**

Registration begins on the 26th of May and ends on the 18th of September

Join the only THIMUN affiliated conference in Bahrain, an island where rich culture meets modern style.

Yusuf Jailani (Secretary General)
yousufjelani@gmail.com

Faris Al Ghaareeb (President of the General Assembly)
fares.alghareeb@outlook.com

Feras Al Saffar (Deputy President of the General Assembly)
feraswsaffar@gmail.com
The Secretary General for Arabic Online, Alia El Kattan, looks forward to a promising year serving as an O-MUN staffer and expanding O-MUN’s program offerings to delegates.

By Alia El Kattan

My O-MUN journey all started with a Facebook post. I saw Ms. Martin congratulating Assistant Director Ibrahim El Kazzaz for his (former) EAO position at Online Model United Nations. Reading the post, I concentrated on one word: online. Naturally, technology is a huge part of my life, and I spend a significant portion of my time working on the computer. Therefore, the fact that I could regularly (monthly or weekly) participate in Model United Nations online, rather than just attend an average of two conferences per year, seemed quite brilliant. Quickly, I got interested in O-MUN, and realized I wanted to become a more active member of the O-MUN community. That was when I applied for my first position in the THIMUN O-MUN Executive Leadership team, and I was assigned the position of the Executive Administrative Officer of Egypt.

Being a part of the leadership team introduced me to an awesome community which I am now honoured to be a part of. The O-MUN community, starting with O-MUN founder and director Ms. Lisa Martin, as well as every member who has contributed to the online debates, has continued to inspire me. I have been impressed by the great friendships that we have made through O-MUN, by the team’s perseverance and honesty, and by the youth who were willing to give up their time and effort to help others and spread O-MUN all around the world. I decided that I want to be one of these people. I want to give up my time and effort to make O-MUN influential for other delegates as it has been for me. Personally, I do not consider O-MUN just any educational program; it represents a message and a purpose. It brings together youth from all around the world to express their opinions, and to gain experiences they might not have the opportunity to gain otherwise. This is where O-MUN Arabic comes in. Unless you are an English-speaking student, it is difficult to experience Model UN without O-MUN. When Ms. Martin introduced the idea of O-MUN Arabic, I loved the fact that we could get even more people to participate in MUN. These students could now experience the intense debates, make the precious friendships, all in their mother language — in my mother language. I was truly flattered when I was offered the O-MUN Arabic Secretary General position, and words could not explain how grateful I was. Not only would I hold a high position in Online Model United Nations along with many great people, but I could be working to help the youth, to allow them to gain useful experiences, and to strengthen the use of my mother language, Arabic. I am honoured to work alongside Salam (AD), and Khalifa (DSG), and hope that working with these two will help the newly founded program could quickly expand and evolve.

A year from now, I am positive that O-MUN will expand even more, with an abundant amount of delegates joining the programs. I hope to continue seeing the quality of debates improving, whether it is regular O-MUN debates, National Programs, or the Arabic and French programs. Finally, I’d like to thank every single delegate and teacher who has helped me throughout my own MUN journey until this point. I’d like to give special thanks to Hayah International Academy’s awesome Model UN director Mr. Karim El Dib), and every person who has been a part of O-MUN and helped the program develop. I wish you all many fruitful debates in the near future!
From the Techie’s Desk...

By Abhay Valiyaveettil

HI THERE! I’m sure all of you are super busy with exams, conferences, events and what-not, but hey summer isn’t too far away! I’m really excited about all the tech stuff that I’ll be working on in the coming few months. Now that most of the conferences and events are coming to a pause, it’s time for me to do some research and come up with some new tech solutions for next year’s programs. In this edition of “From the Techie’s Desk”, I’d like to share some reflections from the recently held THIMUN Qatar Northwestern Film Festival 2014 as a preparation for the technical and production team that I worked with. I also have updates from the running of the new electronic resolution system (ERS).

The Film Festival is an annual session organized by THIMUN Qatar and Northwestern University in Qatar, which took place this year was the fourth session. There were several entries of films from all over the globe and eventually, about 20 films were shortlisted for the various awards and the directors were flown in to Qatar to attend and participate in the film festival. The main event of the festival is the gala dinner that happens on the final day during which the films are screened and the awards are announced. Now there’s a lot of preparation that goes into this gala event as well. One of the most important part of this night is to provide the nominations and show the clippings of the films in the right sequence. It may seem a straightforward task but actually rendering each clip and getting the sequence and schedule to match is pretty challenging. Nevertheless, I was fortunate to work with a great team of student officers and together we managed to put up a good show. The students used Final Cut Pro for the most part to edit and render the films and also used a combination of rolling slides and sound clips as an .mov file for the nominations. During the film festival weekend, there was also a trailer challenge that took place at Northwestern University’s editing lab. The students were paired and were tasked with coming up with a 60-second trailer for a short film. Again, the students were really excited and seemed proficient with their skills using Final Cut Pro X and Adobe Premiere.

Last month, Doha College organized the One-Day Training Conference (ODTC) at their premises. It was a successful conference with many local schools participating, and warming up for the main conference in November. This was also a great opportunity to launch the new system that I had been working on. The approval panel opened up by about 11 am and the first resolution was uploaded on to the system, glad to announce that the system worked really well for the duration of the conference and more than 20 resolutions were approved/passed-failed during this conference. The feedback received has been really valuable and I hope to continue working on it and improve it for future conferences.

That’s it from me for now; I hope you all have a great month ahead. Once again, if you have any tech related questions or would like to know more about ERS or MUNIS, feel free to email me at av@valiyaveettil.org.

The THIMUN Online team announced its leadership positions for the next year.

Assistant Director: Saim Keinan, Tel Aviv University

Deputy Secretary General of the Middle East: Ashish Tharoor, Dubai International Academy

Executive Administrative Officer UAE: Karan Wadhwani, Delhi Private School, Dubai

Executive Administrative Officer Bahrain: Alia Al-Ammari, Ibn Khulood National School

Executive Administrative Officer Kuwait: Sarah Tahir, American International School of Kuwait

Head of Administration: Maryam Al-Ammari, Ibn Khulood National School, Bahrain

Secretary General for OMUN Arabic: Abla El-Katari, Hayah International Academy, Cairo

Deputy Secretary General for OMUN Arabic: Khalifa Al Khalifa, Ibn Khulood National School, Bahrain

Deputy Secretary General for Moderator Training: Hana Setta, American Community School, Amman

Press and Publications Officer: Bassim Eledath, the Millenium School, Dubai

Social Media Officer: Ananya Saxena, Emirates International School Meadows, Dubai

Film Festival, cont.

THIMUN Leadership, cont.

SANDALWOOD Heights Student Filmmaker Nominated for International Film Award

SIDDARTH Anikumar Rajashree, a grade 12 student at Sandalwood Heights Secondary School, was recently nominated for the Best Editing Award at the THIMUN Qatar Northwestern Film Festival. Anikumar Rajashree is nominated for his film High School Hip Hop and explores the influence that hip hop culture has on teenagers and how they emulate the hip hop culture in their everyday lives.

“I didn’t want to give a particularly biased take on the issue of whether hip hop, rap, break dancing and beatboxing have a positive or negative influence on teens,” says Anikumar Rajashree. “I wanted to leave that up to the audience. I wanted to ask the question of why they are influenced by the culture in such a big way.”

“I was really excited to go back to Qatar,” says Anikumar Rajashree. “THIMUN was the one of the main things that got me into filmmaking in the first place. It showed me that I could make a career out of doing something that I love. I’m excited to see my old friends, and to represent my school and Canada.”

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Points For

Girls are better off in single-sex institutions

Girls in particular benefit from a single-sex education; research shows they participate more in class, develop much higher self-esteem, score higher in aptitude tests, are more likely to choose 'male' disciplines such as science in college, and are more successful in their careers. In the USA Who's Who, graduates of women's colleges outnumbered other women; and there are only approximately 50 women's colleges left in the States today. Elizabeth Tidball, who conducted the Who's Who research, later concluded that women's colleges produced more than their fair share who went on to medical school or received doctorates in the natural or life sciences, typically male fields.

Boys and girls develop at different times and speeds; therefore, they should be taught separately.

Co-educational schools attempt to establish uniformity in the teaching of two groups, boys and girls, who typically learn and develop at different speeds and using different methods. They do not develop in the same way or at the same time; boys favour visual processing and do not have the hand-motor control that girls readily achieve in early grades. It is widely accepted that 'boys develop more slowly than girls... that's true at every level of analysis'. Furthermore, they develop physically at different speeds, girls often developing earlier which can lead to bullying from the opposite sex for those who either over-develop or under-develop. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that, at least in the United States, elementary school boys are 50% more likely to repeat a grade than girls and they drop out of high school a third more often. If they were taught separately and the curriculum and teaching was tailored to their needs, drop-out rates may not be so high nor as vastly disproportionate.

Points Against

The myth of better performance

The formative years of children are the best time to expose them to the company of the other gender, in order that they may learn each other's behaviour and be better prepared for adult life. Poor female performance in particular subjects is the result of cultural conditioning and expectations not mixed gender classrooms. Performance of girls on math and science scores in the United States has dramatically increased in the past few decades without any significant changes movement toward single gender classrooms. A 1998 survey from the American Association of University Women, a long-time advocate of single-sex education, admitted that girls from such schools did not show any academic improvement. As the report noted, 'boys and girls both thrive when the elements of good education are there, elements like smaller classes, focused academic curriculum and gender-fair instruction'. These can all be present in co-educational schools. Single sex education research typically makes the mistake of not controlling for other characteristics, namely socio-economic privileges of those at elite women's schools and colleges. Dr. Alan Smithers, a respected British schools expert, declared in a 2006 report that 'distraction by boys was a myth' and that 'half a century of research has not shown any dramatic or consistent advantages for single-sex education for boys or girls'.

Single-sex institutions are bad for the emotional health of males and females

Men always say that they do not understand women, perhaps because they were sent to single sex schools. Research has proved that boys who went to single sex schools as opposed to mixed schools are more likely to get divorced and suffer from depression in their 40. This is proof that we should school our children in mixed schools in order to give them the best bill of emotional health. Dr. Diana Leonard, who presented the findings, concluded that 'Boys learn better when they are with girls and they actually learn to get on better'. Furthermore, the separation of boys and girls only serves to embrace sexual objectification, for they exist for each other only as dates/marriage prospects rather than the classmates and working partners as they would be in a co-educational environment. Furthermore, even if girls naturally perform better in an environment without boys, they need to learn how to perform just as well with boys if females are to be part of an integrated economy. In short, children need to be exposed to the opposite sex in preparation for later life. You can read the entire debate and access more resources on the topic here.
Workshops for students and teachers designed to provide leadership skills and knowledge to run successful MUN and Film Studies Programs
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