

Wednesday, June 11

the big hope

daily newsletter of the World Youth Congress



IN MY LIFE... Colin Hill, the custodian of John Lennon's boyhood home Mendips on Menlove Avenue welcomes the many students who took in a Beatles tour on Monday PICTURE: THOMAS O'MALLEY

TIME TO SAY FAREWELLS

BY LILLIAN NALUMANSI

AS THE CONGRESS comes to a close the extraordinary amount of work put in by staff and delegates is now only becoming apparent.

But that's of no real value for those delegates who couldn't be with us this week.

Up to 100 sponsored delegates were denied visas by the British Embassy in their respective countries and so couldn't join us.

In an interview with Big Hope newsletter Bill Chambers, Project Director, said the delegates were denied visas although their airticket costs had already been paid for.

People from 55 nations on one campus

"One hundred delegates were denied visas despite every effort on our part to assist them in coming for the Big Hope.

"We were very disappointed because these 100 delegates who we thought would turn up, did not," he said

Although the delegates were denied visas, Liverpool Hope University had already paid nearly £700 in airticket costs to airlines which will costs are not refundable.

For a man who feels like he has been

has been on his feet for the two years it has taken to organize, in the final days he acknowledges his work has all been worthwhile. He really can start enjoying the fruits of his labour.

"In the first 18 months of organizing the Big Hope conference, I did it mostly alone. The first thing was to get the keynote speakers. That, (getting the keynote speakers), was very difficult," he smiles as he recounts the experience.

"Once I had zeroed in on prospective keynote speakers, I had to write them letters and nobody ever responded. I found out quickly that you needed to make personal contacts with these people otherwise from their side they treated these as cold letters worth ignoring because they did not know me," he says.

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YNWA... Dr Janet Speake, Associate Dean, Postgraduate Studies, Liverpool Hope captured these delegates at the famous Shankly Gates at Liverpool FC's Anfield Stadium

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As Project Director, he personally went to London and met several of the then identified keynote speakers. This indeed bore results.

"Eventually people started responding. The first positive response was from Cardinal Cormac Murphy (the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster Cathedral where the Big Hope was launched)," Bill recalls.

Without mentioning names, Bill also reveals some would-be keynote speakers were dropped because of their demands for money before they could accept to address the delegates.

"The most disappointing were sportsmen (mostly footballers and athletes) and musicians. Although these people claim to be Christians who are in the press all the time claiming to be supporters of different charities, they asked of us (Liverpool Hope University) thousands of pounds in payments before they could allow being

keynote speakers," he said with utter disbelief written on his face.

The money-hungry-public-personalities were dropped off the list in favour of the great personalities that have since addressed the delegates without financial benefit.

Another disappointing lot were the 150 foreign embassies in Britain who did not reply to the letters sent to them requesting them to identify potential young delegates in their home countries that would benefit from attending the Big Hope.

"I wrote letters to all the 170 foreign embassies in the United Kingdom and got no reply except from the Hungary and

Thailand missions," he revealed.

Financial contribution from different institutions including the British government's Department for International Development (DFID), the European Union, churches, trusts and charities enabled many delegates get sponsorship to the conference while those who paid incurred considerably subsidized costs.

After the conference, Bill is certain to remain a happy man and he is quick to enlighten me that the Big Hope idea was conceived by Professor Gerald Pillay, Liverpool Hope's Vice Chancellor and Rector.

"Words cannot describe how it feels to see so many people from so many countries, all carrying happy and cheerful faces," he concludes.



PRIDE... Professor Bill Chambers

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TRUMBS UP... These delegates were among the two coach loads that made a tour of Beatles-related landmarks in the city on Monday night. PICTURE: THOMAS O'MALLEY

DELEGATES FOCUS

EXPERIENCES OF A LIFETIME

JUST AS DIVERSE AS THE MANY nations represented at the Big Hope are, the delegates have different experiences to share on the week long conference that is ending tomorrow.

For James Robinson, a Liverpool Hope student and a full time delegate at the Big Hope, the conference has enabled him learn about other people and understand further young people. This will be useful in his Africa youth rehabilitation project, Mustle Africa.

"I am glad I came for the conference because it has availed me the opportunity to learn other people's methodologies on understanding young people and the hard to define balance between children's rights and privileges," he said in particular reference to the Human Rights of the Child discussion forum by UNICEF.

He however notes his disappointment in the low turn up of Liverpool Hope students (that excludes the Big Hope staff volunteers) as full time delegates saying they have missed "attending this unique array of international presenters."

For the Hope One World sponsored delegates from India based Notre Dame Teachers Training College in Bangalore, coming to the Big Hope has been a lifetime changing experience.

"The best thing is that we have 55 countries represented here and that to me is like a mini little world of people coming together. Hearing about other countries and

by LILLIAN NALUMANSI

their people in books and watching it on television is a totally different thing from the actual experience of being with people from some many countries in one place. It is really fascinating," Nancy says.

"The delegates are all full of life and there is a smile on everyone's face. A delegate will smile at you no matter whether you know them or not. It feels like a family and I have now joined the fan club of Liverpool," she sums up.

For Arul Varsala Arockiam, apart from being moved by the entire package of the Big Hope conference, she has been impressed by the cleanliness and greenery of Liverpool and York.

"These places are clean and the greenery is beautiful. I want my India to be like this someday. The smiles on people's faces have made me feel at home and truthfully words cannot express what I feel. The oneness among us all is great. We will miss this experience when we go back," she says.

For Sister Mary Shanti the Principal of Notre Dame, the warm welcome they (Hope One World Notre Dame delegates) received from the day they arrived right through to the end of the conference is a memorable experience.

"When we arrived at Manchester International Airport, TURN TO COLUMN 1, PAGE 4

Going home with hope



KINGSTONE ZLOWERE, from Malawi in South East Africa spoke about his experience after attending the Global Youth Congress workshop on Leading change and evolution.

"I feel very inspired with what the speakers had to say at the workshop. As a village director of the SOS child orphanage, I found the discussions very relevant to the experiences in my home country with practical ideas I can implement when I return."

Kingstone said: "More than half a million children are orphans due to the increased incidence of HIV/AIDS.

"Given the responsibility of a village director, I would like to ensure all children are provided with the necessary education, nutrition, health, psycho social support.

"First I am going to concentrate on creating a good team to attain all the necessary objectives," he added.

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we did not know what to expect. However on getting into the arrival lounge, there was a big Hope One World banner being held by warm and pleasant people waiting to receive us," she reminisces.

"That made us feel so welcome and that is how we have felt for all the time we have been here," she says.

Tunde Taofik Yusuf and Godwin Makabi from Nigeria though impressed with the conference keynote speakers and programs felt some areas were not organised enough.

"The conference has been loaded with too many programs. We have so many activities and little breaks. The organizers should have given the delegates breaks of say 30 minutes between activities," Yusuf says.

He notes that some of the excursions clashed with some of the excursion activities denying some delegates the opportunity to go visiting.

"The journey to Liverpool city was not well planned. I missed going to the Slavery Museum because the excursion clashed with my activity," he says.

Special edition online

A SOUVENIR special of the Big Hope Youth Congress will be available online from the website by the end of the week.

We had hoped to make one available for the departure of delegates but production problems and defeated us.

It will be available from Friday from www.hope.ac.uk/thebighope

DELEGATES FOCUS

EXPERIENCES OF A LIFETIME

H OPE STUDENT Rachael Madeley, is a 27-year-old single mum.

She said: "Watching the video of new born children being killed in the Amazon tribes at the Human Rights workshop tore me to pieces."

Faced with a similar experience seven years ago, Rachael was in a dilemma on whether to keep her children after she got pregnant with her boyfriend in college. The answer was yes, and ever since there was no looking back.

A proud mum to her two twins she says: "I wanted to keep my childr no matter



what

the circumstances.

"Children have a right to live and not many people realise it. Many young lives have gone and continue to go to abortion, girl infanticide and situations such as the Amazon tribes."

"I feel glad that all these issues have been pointed out at the congress, and gaining insights from the speakers at the workshops reinforces the fact that we can make a difference in our own way."

She admitted being a single parent herself, the situation is no different from anyone else in the world. "Recalling my experience while watching the video, I could understand the importance of human life better inspite of all the obstacles.

"The workshops have been more of a realisation and self discovery," she adds.

CHARLENE RODRIGUES

Farewell to new friends



WE'LL MEET AGAIN... Hundreds of delegates have left heartfelt messages on the Friendship Tree in the Derwent Building. We hope to see you again PICTURE: THOMAS O'MALLEY

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