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Journal of the Bahá'í Community of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Volume 18, No.9 – March/April, 2002 / 158BE

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Adopt a Minefield



A deminer defuses a landmine in Mozambique. © Adopt-A-Minefield

THE UNITED NATIONS has declared this decade as “The International Decade For The Culture Of Peace And Non-Violence For The Children Of The World.” For many years Stockport Bahá'ís have been very active in their support of the United Nations Association, Stockport Branch. In fact, three out of a four-member executive committee are Bahá'ís, and the same three serve on the four-member action team. In order to respond to this Decade of Peace, Stockport UNA has undertaken a number of projects. These include a “Hands On Unity” art workshop in a local school, proposed art exhibitions for adults and children, ongoing communication with the education department relating to “Citizenship” within the school syllabus and the undertaking of an “Adopt A Minefield” project. This has received the unanimous backing of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, and the patronage of the Mayor of Stockport. Good press coverage has been received for these activities. Following the events of September 11, 2001, Stockport UNA undertook to establish a permanent Peace Forum. After setting up two consultative meetings with representatives from a wide range of organisations within the area, we have now compiled a programme of meetings in which the exchange of information, thought, and not least, friendship, will help to promote a bridge-building process between various professional, cultural, ethnic and religious groups as well as interested individuals.

“Adopt A Minefield” is a UN project. Land mines are responsible for approximately 26,000 deaths a year, 10,000 of which are children. One death every twenty-two minutes is, I believe, the official statistic. Not only do land mines kill and maim, they produce economic devastation resulting from the fear of trying to use mined land for agricultural purposes. The UN has lists of mined areas throughout the world. Each area requires a particular sum of money to clear it. We are raising money to clear an area in Cambodia as a member of our committee has a relative working for the UN in Cambodia. Our Annual International Supper held at the Bahá'í Centre, Manchester on October 27, raised approximately £600. Bahá'ís prepared the food and organised some of the entertainment for this event, and will be doing the same again for a Persian Evening being held by Quakers in Stockport in order to raise funds for “Adopt A Minefield”. This is to be followed by a Curry Evening at a future date.

Apart from the target of clearing a minefield, we are promoting the project as a Community Project and are encouraging a wide range of organisations to take part. Stockport Police

were amongst the first to give support followed by a nine-year old girl from a local school who raised £170. Other fundraising events are in the pipeline. Sadly a collection at Manchester Airport had to be postponed due to the events in the USA on September 11, 2001. However, we hope this collection will now take place in February.

If anyone is looking for a Social and Economic Development Project you might like to consider "Adopt A Minefield". By clearing an area you not only save lives, you return the land to the community and re-establish the dignity of its people by enabling them to provide for themselves and their families once again.

For further information contact: Catherine Eckersley, via the Bahá'í National Office.



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