QUAKER LIFE IN COSTA RICA
PG. 4

THE RISE OF SAUDI FILM
PG. 5

THE PEOPLE VS. THE POLICE
PG. 7

TRANSFORMING INDIA
PG. 11
Dear Readers,

As college students, it is easy for us to get bogged down by work, making it hard to pay attention to the world around us. In a time in our own country where elections and social unrest dominate headlines, we do not pay enough attention to situations beyond the United States. This spotlight truly opened our eyes to a world that we were not aware of only weeks before.

During the process of producing this issue, our reporters looked into countries that we may know little about and dug for a story that grabs our attention. Furthermore, we reached out to citizens of those countries and worked through obstacles like language barriers and time differences to conduct interviews. To those who opened up their lives to complete strangers or those who revisited painful memories for the sake of the story, we thank you. This is the fruit of our labor for a six-week period, the third edition of the Global Spotlight for 2016. May the stories that you read open your eyes as much as it did ours.

Sincerely,
The Editors-In-Chief

GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT STAFF

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF
Brendon Embry
Bianca Hillier
Emily McIntyre
Dina Berliner

COPY EDITORS
Lucas Hakes-Rodriguez
Sydney Albert
Courtney Mihocik
Spencer Cappelli
David Michael

IIJ BLOG PRODUCERS
Olivia Miltner
Madeline Keener
Sam Campbell
Charlie Hatch
Alex Lumley

SUPERVISOR
Dr. Yusuf Kalyango
IIJ Director

WRITERS
Sydney Albert
Dina Berliner
Sam Campbell
Spencer Cappelli
Brendon Embry
Lucas Hakes-Rodriguez
Charlie Hatch
Bianca Hillier
Madeline Keener
Alex Lumley
Emily McIntyre
David Michael
Courtney Mihocik
Olivia Miltner
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1: Costa Rica
Page 4

2: Denmark
Page 4

3: Saudi Arabia
Page 5

4: U.A.E.
Page 5

5: Vietnam
Page 6

6: Uruguay
Page 6

7: Brazil
Page 7

8: South Africa
Page 8

9: Haiti
Page 9

10: Venezuela
Page 9

11: Kenya
Page 10

12: Botswana
Page 10

13: India
Page 11

14: Italy
Page 11
EDUCATION

QUAKER COMMUNITY CALLS COSTA RICA HOME

By Madeline Keener

Nestled into the Tilaran Mountain Range at 4,600 feet above sea level, Monteverde is a hub for ecotourism thanks to the conservation efforts inspired by a group of expatriates. In 1951, a group of Quakers and other pacifists were looking for a way out of the United States. The draft for the Korean War was threatening their policy of nonviolence. They began to look for a new home in Costa Rica, which had disbanded its military three years prior.

When the Quakers arrived, the lush, green valley in the mountains caught the eye of the scouts and Monteverde was born. The land was purchased from the Guacimal Land Company. Most of it was turned into farmland, but the new inhabitants didn’t just bring cows to the region; they also brought harmony.

“When the Quakers arrived, as one older Costa Rican told me, it brought peace to the mountain,” says Kay Chormnook, author of Walking with Wolf, a book about the life and times of one of the original Quakers move to Monteverde, Wolf Guindon. “The Quakers were non-drinkers, lived simply and very cooperatively with each other,” she explains.

“Rather than forming an isolated neighborhood with a distinct closed circle, [the Quakers] integrated with the culture of the locals,” says Marvin Acuña Ortega, a professor at National University of Costa Rica.

One of the largest impacts that the Quakers have had on the town of Monteverde has been their dedication to conserving the environment and the beauty of Costa Rica.

In 1972, the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve – land set aside by the Quakers when they first moved in – was founded. The immigrants understood that keeping the mountain top clean, uninhabited and preserved was just as important to them as farming.

Shortly after, thousands of people began flocking to Monteverde to drink in the sights, sounds and splendor. Today, ecotourism attracts over 200,000 travelers each year. “I think [the Reserve] is a model in conservation of nature,” says Francisco Burgos, the Director of the Center for Community Initiatives at the Monteverde Institute, Burgos—a Quaker for 14 years—joined the Monteverde Quaker community after moving to the town five years ago.

While walking the trails of the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, visitors can learn a thing or two. Despite the possible threats from poachers or those looking to illegally chop down trees for lumber, these rangers do not carry guns within the park. Guindon was one of the original rangers and set the nonviolent standard for the park.

While on a trip in Monteverde, Professor Mary Little of the Center for Sustainable Development Studies had the opportunity to speak with one of these rangers. According to Little, “He said that Quakers see it as their responsibility to continually improve the community, the lives of those around them and the planet we live on.”

“LESSON-LESS” CHILDHOOD MAY LEAD TO DANISH HAPPINESS

By Bianca Hillier

In March of 2016, the United Nations named Denmark the “Happiest Country in the World” for the fourth time in five years. People attribute this to their Big Government and social-welfare states, but can government systems be the sole factor in determining people’s happiness? At the end of the day, the government is not the one raising the children, teaching them manners or how to play. It’s the parents and early-childhood educators who do so.

Danes “teach children with respect first and foremost,” Iben Sandahl, Danish-raised mother and author of The Danish Way of Parenting said. “We don’t want blind obedience, but rather we listen when our children have something to say or question something.”

22-year-old Dāne Tine Meidahl Münsberg said self-confidence and trust were important in her upbringing.

“My parents taught me to be self-confident and believe in myself by always letting me know that they believed in me and telling me that if I did my best, then it was good enough,” Münsberg said. “They also always trusted me.”

These values are also largely emphasized in the Danish daycare system.

In Denmark, daycare is not just somewhere kids go while parents work, but rather it is a fundamental part of their upbringing. According to the Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality (MCEGE), 97 percent of kids go to daycare—even the children of the Royal Family.

“The Danish approach to child rearing highly values play, creativity and a child perspective,” Ida Elbaek, member of the Department of Education and Daycare at the MCEGE, said in an email. “Days are usually organized thematically, thus leaving time for following the children’s interests and mood of the day.”

Aside from playing, empathy is the second most significant lesson taught in daycare. As early as pre-school, national programs facilitate understanding and discussing empathy.

“Children are shown cards with faces on them and get children to talk about what emotion the faces may be exhibiting and why they might feel that way,” Sandahl said. “This helps build up a vocabulary for young children around emotions and talking about feeling for others.”

Despite the different settings of homes and daycares, the Scandinavian phenomenon “hygge” is a common thread between the two.

“Hygge is a part of our identity—it’s about leaving stress, problems, judging and complaining at the door for a period of time so that you can enjoy real quality connected moments,” Sandahl said.

“You can’t describe hygge—it’s a sensation that we all get when we are around certain people, in certain circumstances,” Andersson says. “We were just the first to have a word for it.”

Exact origins of Denmark’s coveted “happiest” title may never be clear; it’s attribution, though, is not what matters. The significance placed on these aspects of Danish culture—and the country’s dedication to them—is what makes Denmark the title’s top contender for generations to come.
UNCOVERING THE U.A.E.’S SWEET TOOTH

By Alex Lumley

The people of the United Arab Emirates are growing sweet teeth at alarming rates, as the chocolate market within the country is expanding at a level that might make even Willy Wonka crave something sour for a change.

TechSciResearch published a report in August of 2014 classifying chocolate products into three different categories: countlines, molded bars, and boxed chocolates. Countlines (chocolate bars containing wafers or caramel) held UAE market dominance in 2014. A second follow-up report generated in February of 2016 by the same research company projected the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of the UAE’s chocolate market between 2016 and 2021 would be eight percent.

The report attributes several factors for the recent increase in all things chocolate. Chief among them a rising number of young people in the country, a growing per capita income, and an improved national standard of living that has served to make chocolate less of a luxury good and more of a commodity available to all.

The major chocolate companies engaged in a battle for market dominance in the UAE include Mars GCC, Ferrero SpA, and Nestlé Middle East. TechSci’s research does not list Hershey as a player within the UAE market, thus Hershey could be one of the only American players that hasn’t yet penetrated the UAE market.

Sarvy Geranpayeh wrote a report for the Gulf News last September that outlined the problem of obesity within the United Arab Emirates. Geranpayeh based the story off of a survey by Zurich International Life, which found that close to 50 percent of UAE residents were considered “overweight.”

While some might think that chocolate and other luxury items could be contributing to this perceived weight issue in both countries, TechSci seem to disagree with such a hypothesis. Demand for dark chocolates in the nation is on the rise for not only the richness in antioxidants. The research conducted by TechSci asserts that the antioxidants found in dark chocolate help to prevent cardiac diseases that could be onset by problems related to weight.

Although dark chocolates are supposed to be helpful towards those with cardiac related health issues, TechSci’s reports still count those same issues as a challenge the growing market will face in the UAE. The research report lists other problems the UAE market continues to face as ever-changing raw material prices as well as a dependency on markets to supply materials that aren’t always reliable.

Despite these challenges, it would seem that the market for chocolate in the UAE is showing no signs of slowing down. What remains to be seen is whether or not the market in the UAE can become as dominant and prominent as it is in the United States, and what other markets for goods previously considered “luxury items” may develop in the country as its population becomes younger, wealthier and more globalized.

Chocolate products are gaining popularity within the United Arab Emirates. (Via CoCreatr on Flickr)
GROWING PAINS IN VIETNAM

By Lucas Hakes-Rodriguez

The relationship between China and Vietnam is difficult. In 2014, tensions between the two countries over a Chinese national oil company moving a platform into the South China Sea resulted in protests and riots in Vietnam. This ongoing conflict has recently grown inflamed as China flexes superiority in the South China Sea. Yet Vietnam is also developing because of China, as much as it would like to think it’s doing so in spite of it.

China consistently provides official development assistance to Vietnam, be it in the form of building factories, setting up company branches, or mining natural resources.

Still, many laypersons in Vietnam take issue with the Chinese government’s behavior. Phuong Do, a student in Ho Chi Minh City, weighed in.

“One of the most strictly illegal actions that China has carried out in Vietnam may be the violation of Vietnam’s sovereignty over Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelago,” she said.

“I do hate what China has done to Vietnam,” wrote Maily Dao, a software engineer from Hanoi, on the answer crowdsourcing website Quora. “To be exact, I hate the actions of the Chinese government. However, as a person, I don’t hate the Chinese people, [because] most of them seem [sic] to be oblivious to what their government has done to neighboring countries.”

The Chinese government’s actions wouldn’t be so difficult to abhor if relations with China weren’t so beneficial to Vietnam’s development. Vietnam News reported that Chinese investment has increased dramatically, from $312 million in 2012 to $7.9 billion in 2014.

The rush to modernize Vietnam through foreign investment isn’t just a violation of sovereignty, argues Lee, who requested to have his surname and occupation withheld. The Taiwanese company Formosa Plastics caused an uproar in April 2016 when it illegally released toxic waste into the ocean in central Vietnam.

Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of Vietnam, called Formosa’s 2016 toxic waste dump “the most serious environmental incident Vietnam has faced.” The result of the Taiwanese company’s gross negligence was widespread protest of foreign investment.

While the government of Vietnam has some say over what happens on land, its presence on sea has been riddled with issues. From May to August of 2014, Vietnam had a rift with the state-owned China National Offshore Oil Corporation, which built oil platforms in Vietnam’s Exclusive Economic Zone. Lee claimed the situation caused his country much “stress,” and the talks with China in the aftermath were “meaningless,” as they did not convince China to do much of anything.

Vietnam, though it’s growing, still has barriers to break if it hopes to attain economic stability, independence, and congeniality comparable to real players in the global market. As China continues to place pressure, the Vietnamese people’s sense of entrapment will only rise. As the government continues to allow Chinese money to influence its decisions, it will continue to lose its grasp on an increasingly impatient population and a worldwide economic system that’s indifferent to leaving it behind.

WOMEN’S HEALTH

ABORTION IN URUGUAY AND LAW 18.987

By Courtney Mihocik

There are many ways to voluntarily end a pregnancy. Women who seek out services for unsafe, clandestine abortions, however, normally do so because ending a pregnancy is illegal where they live.

This is the problem that confronts Uruguayan women looking to end an unwanted pregnancy. According to the World Health Organization, between 1990 and 2000, the maternal mortality ratio in Uruguay hovered in the 30s, only dropping slightly from 37 in 1990 to 36 in 1995 and then 31 in 2000.

Mujer Y Salud en Uruguay, or “Women and Health in Uruguay” in English, released a video, “Abortion in Uruguay: Feminist chronology of a fight.” In this video, the group reported that amidst the economic crisis of 2001, four women died in clandestine abortions and two were prosecuted for abortion in Montevideo and Pando. The video also reported there were 33,000 clandestine abortions in 2000.

Law 18.987, approved Sept. 15, 2012, decriminalized abortion. It also marked the dawn of a new era in reproductive rights and women’s health in Uruguay, one of two Latin American countries with legalized abortion.

According to MYSU researcher Santiago Puyol, the law, otherwise known as interrupción voluntaria del embarazo, or Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy, allows termination of pregnancy with no particular reason in the first 12 weeks and the first 14 weeks in cases of sexual assault resulting in a pregnancy.

Puyol works in the organization’s National Observatory on Gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health, one of the organization’s main areas of focus. Since the law’s approval, this department monitors women’s health services -- abortions, prenatal care and reproductive and sexual health -- that were installed due to the law’s approval. MYSU defended the law against anti-abortion conservatives and gynecologists who oppose the law through conscientious objection.

Conscientious objection is an ethical law for professionals who practice medicine, according to midwife obstetrician and executive director of Iniciativas Sanitarias (health initiatives) in Montevideo, Ana Gladys Labandera.

Labandera explained that it is preferred that professionals who use conscientious objection do not work in sexual reproduction health or interruption of pregnancy services. Otherwise, women may not receive the correct consultation and information needed to make decision.

Less than a year after the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy law, politicians and pro-life conservatives began a campaign to gather enough signatures for a referendum of the law, Puyol said. With other pro-women’s health organizations, MYSU used campaigns like “Yo no voto. Y vos?,” “I won’t vote [for the referendum]. And you?” to defend the law.

While many applauded the country for having voluntary interruption of pregnancies legalized, there is still room for improvement within the law, Puyol said.

“Certainly, there are possibilities of improvement within the law,” Puyol said. “Even though the political climate isn’t as favorable for progressive changes as it was during the previous presidential term and legislative period.”
The UPP, or Pacifying Police Unit, is a division of Rio de Janeiro’s police operating in the city’s most treacherous neighborhoods. It has two primary objectives: first, it must wrest control of the favelas from known gangs and drug traffickers; second, it must integrate the neighborhoods back into society.

“Some time ago it looked like everything was getting better because the UPP seemed to be working well,” said John Teles, a 26-year native of Santa Teresa. His opinion changed due to the lingering criminal presence. “The truth is, [the gangs] never left the favelas and the UPP never worked how they should,” he said. “I go there once in every two weeks, and there is always one of them, the outlaw guys or the police.”

Instability worsened after the UPP began operations. “When I lived there, we felt like something was about to happen,” Teles said. Even now, “sometimes crossfires just happen out of the blue.”

These crossfires result in casualties on both sides. But they leave in their wake a slew of innocent ones that were never involved.

The presence of both powers presents frightening volatility. “People are afraid to suffer some kind of violence in their day-to-day activities,” said Thaís Oliveira, a native of Ilha do Governador.

Oliveira explained that there is a public rejection of the police, created from “barbarities committed by some police officers, including torture and executions of [the] innocent.”

The police construe innocent casualties to be suspicious characters, said Dayana Seiblitz, a former resident of Copacabana. The police “just pick up some persons and they just threaten them to get information,” said Seiblitz. “They are replacing the bad people in the favelas.”

Amnesty International outlined definitive proof of the targeting of black men by police in Rio. 99.5 percent of those killed by police were men, and 79 percent were black.

According to the 2010 census, Over 50 percent of Brazil’s population is of African descent, which is perhaps the cause for its seemingly undeserved reputation as being one of the most color-blind societies.

Despite bias from law enforcement, however, perceived social discrimination is very low. “I mean, this is part of [American] vocabulary now: ‘Oh, this black guy…this white guy,’ you guys say it a lot,” Seiblitz said. “But here, we don’t.”

The lack of verbal distinction between races is a symbolic equality that makes the actions of the police appear even stranger, especially compared to an American public who sees verbal aggression towards blacks every day.

Seiblitz, who now lives in the south zone of Brazil, is quick to clarify the difference in perspective, given her wealthy upbringing. She admitted, “The police works for people like me…not the poorest people.”

The UPP, developed in 2008, was meant as a permanent solution to decades of unsuccessful police raids. Despite some positive local news coverage claiming its effectiveness, public perception of the UPP is souring.

Since its installment eight years ago,
After hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the South African national soccer team, otherwise known as Bafana Bafana, has quietly become a byproduct on the international scene.

The latest FIFA world rankings have the country placed 64th overall, and more alarmingly, 14th in Africa. With the continent only receiving five places to compete in the upcoming 2018 World Cup in Russia, the latest rankings are a justifiable concern.

But Shawn Bishop said there’s no reason to panic. “We’ve seen the future,” he said. “It just needed a bit of patience.”

A heavy weight in South African youth soccer development, Bishop serves as assistant coach for Bafana Bafana’s under-17 national team and is the head of the youth academy of Mamelodi Sundowns — one of the country’s biggest club teams. “From what I’m seeing on the ground level and grassroots level, there is a massive boom of talent in this county,” he said.

The movement started as the international spotlight faded. As the World Cup concluded, more investment in youth player development was injected. Six years on, the youth development has transformed into a new generation of talent beginning to feature in international competition. The problem, though, is success is judged at the senior level, where South Africa still remains 64th in the world.

“In terms of competitiveness, we are in between,” said Phumzile Andries, a journalist for Soccer Laduma, the country’s largest soccer publication. “We don’t know whether we’re going forwards or backwards.”

Selecting youth talent is a complicated process, too. The majority of talent comes from the townships, the predominantly black cities that were previously segregated under Apartheid. There, Bishop and other Premier Soccer League, or PSL, recruiters find communities rife with gifted players with stunning technically ability. “It’s easier in the townships,” said Godfrey Chauke, a doctor living outside Pretoria. “That’s where football comes from.”

Ndia Magadela also lives outside Pretoria, and said she’s interested in getting her two young sons into soccer. Living in a better community, however, has hurt chances of finding a youth club. Soccer remains the most popular sport in South Africa, but rugby remains a predominantly white sport.

In schools with higher white student enrollments, like the one Magadela’s children attend, the emphasis on soccer weakens. “For the past couple of months, I’ve been trying to get them into a development team,” Magadela said. “There’s not enough at lower levels for them to grow up to be professional soccer players.”

While there’s an initiative to keep young talent playing in the domestic PSL league, Bishop said PSL clubs acknowledge the importance of playing gaining experience abroad. “If we produce players in the national team that can play in Europe, then let’s go to Europe,” Bishop said. “We encourage the boys to go. For them, outside of the white lines of football, it just makes you a worldly person.”
CORRUPTION AND HUNGER INTERTWINED IN VENEZUELA

By Spencer Cappelli

As evening descends on downtown Caracas, supermarkets and restaurants haul out the day’s garbage. Before the sanitation workers can get there, however, others arrive: men, women and children. Driven by hunger, they rifle through scraps of food waste in the hope of salvaging a meal. Liliana Ortega, a lawyer and the president of a prominent human rights group based in Caracas, says she can see these people scavenging every day around 5 p.m. from her office in the capital city, four blocks from the presidential palace. “I have worked 27 years in the public sector and I’ve never seen a level of human suffering this critical for want of medical and food supplies,” Ortega said in an email.

Historically low crude oil prices and the resulting devaluation of the Venezuelan currency, the Bolivar, have buckled this formerly prosperous Latin American economy, the upshot of which has been a grave shortage of basic food and medical supplies for its ailing population. A study from Simon Bolivar University found that 87 percent of Venezuelans reported not having enough money to buy food, according to a New York Times report.

Nicomedes Febres, a Venezuelan physician, said the supply shortages can be attributed to the nebulous intersection of declining imports from inflation, falling oil prices and governmental corruption and recklessness. According to Febres, military personnel, currently tasked with the distribution of food, are selling imports for a huge profit on the black market.

“Many of these government workers concede a good part of (their imported food) to their friends, who turn around and sell it at ten times its value,” Febres said in an email.

Alicia Hernández, a Spanish journalist, said that in an attempt to curtail inflation, the government has resorted to tactics like price capping, food rationing and assigning buying-days, which limits when consumers can do their shopping. “I have worked 27 years in the public sector and I’ve never seen a level of human suffering this critical for want of medical and food supplies,” Ortega said in an email.

HUNGER FOR SELF-SUSTAINABILITY IN HAITI

By Emily McIntyre

When a 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti’s capital Port-au-Prince in 2010, the population was pushed deeper into its battle with poverty. Thousands of people died, families were separated and the country’s free market economy plunged. Nonprofit organizations, charities and relief efforts flooded into Haiti for support, and though six years have passed since the earthquake, the country is still picking up the pieces.

Before the Children’s Nutrition Program of Haiti (Kore Ti Mou), which means caring for, or supporting, children, was established in 1998, the acute malnutrition rate was an alarming 24 percent for the region of Léogâne, located in the Ouest Department of Haiti. Today, that rate has dropped to approximately less than 3 percent, according to Taryn Silver, the country program director of CNP.

Malnutrition also affects Haitian children to the point where oftentimes their hunger distracts them from learning at school. In Ouanaminthe, located in the Nord-Est Department of Haiti, is Institution Univers, one of the top schools in the country.

The Coalition of Children in Need Association founder Hugues Bastien started a farm to operate in tandem with the school’s lunch program. The local crops grown there include sweet potatoes, mangoes, coconuts, cashews and limes, and they are harvested to feed more than 2,300 students ranging from preschool to high school.

“They were seeing not only kids who were malnourished, but even just because they were so hungry, they couldn’t learn,” said COCINA communications director, Anna Lile.

“They were seeing not only kids who were malnourished, but even just because they were so hungry, they couldn’t learn.”

— COCINA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, ANNA LILE

Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle, agreed; she thinks that instead of the U.S. and other countries shipping metric tons of food as a form of aid, they should lend assistance in the hope of salvaging a meal. “They were so hungry, they couldn’t learn,” said COCINA communications director, Anna Lile.

“They were seeing not only kids who were malnourished, but even just because they were so hungry, they couldn’t learn.”

— COCINA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, ANNA LILE

“Many of these government workers concede a good part of (their imported food) to their friends, who turn around and sell it at ten times its value,” Febres said in an email.

Alicia Hernández, a Spanish journalist, said that in an attempt to curtail inflation, the government has resorted to tactics like price capping, food rationing and assigning buying-days, which limits when consumers can do their shopping. “I have worked 27 years in the public sector and I’ve never seen a level of human suffering this critical for want of medical and food supplies,” Ortega said in an email.

HUNGER FOR SELF-SUSTAINABILITY IN HAITI

By Emily McIntyre

When a 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti’s capital Port-au-Prince in 2010, the population was pushed deeper into its battle with poverty. Thousands of people died, families were separated and the country’s free market economy plunged. Nonprofit organizations, charities and relief efforts flooded into Haiti for support, and though six years have passed since the earthquake, the country is still picking up the pieces.

Before the Children’s Nutrition Program of Haiti (Kore Ti Mou), which means caring for, or supporting, children, was established in 1998, the acute malnutrition rate was an alarming 24 percent for the region of Léogâne, located in the Ouest Department of Haiti. Today, that rate has dropped to approximately less than 3 percent, according to Taryn Silver, the country program director of CNP.

Malnutrition also affects Haitian children to the point where oftentimes their hunger distracts them from learning at school. In Ouanaminthe, located in the Nord-Est Department of Haiti, is Institution Univers, one of the top schools in the country.

The Coalition of Children in Need Association founder Hugues Bastien started a farm to operate in tandem with the school’s lunch program. The local crops grown there include sweet potatoes, mangoes, coconuts, cashews and limes, and they are harvested to feed more than 2,300 students ranging from preschool to high school.

“They were seeing not only kids who were malnourished, but even just because they were so hungry, they couldn’t learn,” said COCINA communications director, Anna Lile.

“They were seeing not only kids who were malnourished, but even just because they were so hungry, they couldn’t learn.”

— COCINA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, ANNA LILE

Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle, agreed; she thinks that instead of the U.S. and other countries shipping metric tons of food as a form of aid, they should lend assistance in the hope of salvaging a meal. “They were so hungry, they couldn’t learn,” said COCINA communications director, Anna Lile.

“They were seeing not only kids who were malnourished, but even just because they were so hungry, they couldn’t learn.”

— COCINA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, ANNA LILE

“They were seeing not only kids who were malnourished, but even just because they were so hungry, they couldn’t learn.”

— COCINA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, ANNA LILE

“This has proved a steep price to pay for many members of the political opposition who have supported calls for a presidential referendum, which would attempt to revoke President Maduro.”

A survey from Caracas-based Datincorp said that 57 percent of all Venezuelans wanted to leave the country, the Miami Herald recently reported. 1-in-5 Latin Americans still live in poverty, despite regional economic growth in the first decade of the 21st century.

“How can they face the future with a country where the president has repeatedly said that the opposition, which includes normals people, are violent and must face consequences?” said Liliana Ortega, a lawyer and political activist for the opposition party group Voluntad Popular. A recent article of his in the Caracas Chronicles detailed plans to sell a family heirloom to fund his passage to Argentina. There, he hopes to make a new life for himself.

*Name has been changed at request of source to protect identity.
KENYANS GRAPPLE WITH POSSIBLE BAN ON SECONHAND CLOTHING INDUSTRY

By Dina Berliner

As a little girl growing up in Kenya, Carol Ciku can remember looking “like a scarecrow” with oversized clothing hanging from her limbs. To afford clothes, her parents bought items two sizes larger than what fit, knowing “eventually you grow into it,” she said. Nearly 30 years later that is no longer the problem for most Kenyans, as a majority of its citizens rely on second-hand clothing imported from abroad.

However, an abundance of mitumba—a Swahili word referring to second-hand clothing—has caused a rift between people and the government. That divide has been exacerbated by recent efforts to ban the mitumba industry altogether.

Second-hand clothing and thrift shops have gained popularity in Western culture in the past few years, but what is considered to be trendy in the United States is seen as a source of income for thousands of people across East Africa.

“Mitumba tends to be good quality,” said Ben Muya, a Nairobi-based high school teacher. “The quality (of new clothing) has gone down and that’s why many people prefer to getting rid of mitumba.”

Both Muya and Ciku said mitumba also tends to be cheaper to purchase.

“Mitumba has also created thousands of jobs,” said Sabine Huester, founder and general manager of Kiboko Leisure Wear, a Nairobi-based garment manufacturing company, in an email. About 35,000 people in Kenya work within the mitumba industry, Abel Kamau, liaison officer with the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, said in an email. Domestic textiles and exports of those items both directly and indirectly employ approximately 190,000 individuals, he said.

Charles Kahuruth, CEO and regional coordinator of the East African Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, a pro-business lobbying group said the ban is good. Other officials and manufacturers blame mitumba for the decline of Kenya’s textile industry.

During the 1990s, mitumba began to pick up steam as donated clothes flowed into the country. Organizations receive clothes for charity and distribute those domestically before sending any excess to Africa. Once it arrives, individuals purchase the clothes in bulk and resell it for profit, according to Slate.

The government has previously attempted to ban mitumba, according to The Daily Nation. The most recent effort was pushed back to 2018 after Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta met with leaders from neighboring countries.

But as time goes on, the amount of mitumba and its worth continue to grow. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the value of the industry has increased, now totaling the equivalent of about $98.6 million.

“There is a need for a win-win situation for both manufacturing and (mitumba) trade,” Kamau said.

Ciku said if mitumba is banned it would strain her financially.

“At the end of the day, I think the advantages of the mitumba industry are much higher than the other industries here,” Ciku said. “Everyone is involved … it would be a big thing to actually shut it down.”

A seller at the secondhand market in Nairobi. (Via Colin Crowley on Flickr)

BOTSWANA SEES HIGHER RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

By David Michael

A group in graduation gowns gathered outside parliament in Gaborone, Botswana early August. The young people were brought together by an organization known as UnemploymentMovement. They protested the continued unemployment of the youth by the government.

Movements such as these are becoming more frequent as the country’s unemployment rate continues to grow and the youth become more disgruntled.

The most recent unemployment rate in Botswana was 20 percent, as per the Botswana Aids Impact Survey in 2013. According to WorldBank.org, the unemployment rate for youth aged 15-24 is 33 percent.

“At our university, if 7,000 graduate, only about 2,000 get jobs,” said Gonnie Majwabe, a student at the University of Botswana.

A growing number of students are concerned about whether seeking an education is worthwhile. Botumeloa Mokoka, an intern at SADC Secretariat, is concerned over the recognition of her field.

“Just from the tiresome process of seeking an organization to work in,” she said. “It made me wonder about the relevance of my course in the current job market.”

Thusso Mphela, a professor at UB, is disheartened that students can’t get jobs in their “prime productive years.” He said it’s becoming less about academic excellence and more about the connections you make.

Youths and organizations have also targeted the spending on the country’s upcoming 50th year of independence festival, the Golden Jubilee. The government is spending close to $100 million on the celebrations.

“We have ministries pleading with the government for money,” said Segomotsomo Gomolemo Kgwatala, a student at UB. “We have so many things that I feel like if $100 million could be divided among those different ministries then things would be better.”

For unemployed graduates, the government developed a program called the Youth Empowerment Scheme, which gives money for salaries to businesses to hire graduates in intern-esque positions. The jobs only offer minimum wage.

After having spent time seeking an education, many are frustrated with this idea. Gofaone Bornwell Moditswe is a student at UB and does not see the program as doing enough.

“It’s a good movement to say we need to make more jobs, but the government system isn’t working,” Moditswe said.

Other groups believe the societal values of personal independence have turned to an overdependence on government.

“It is enough that we already depend so much on government,” said Gorata Ketsiko, an employee at the UB Career and Counseling Centre. “People should think of things that they can do to create the jobs themselves rather than point fingers at government.”

The government supports some start up businesses. The Ministry of Sports, Youth and Culture has funded growth-oriented citizen-owned youth enterprises and other start-up projects through the Youth Development Fund.

Those seeking to build their own businesses believe the problems are too much on the government. They encourage the young people to instead create their own industries.

“The country needs young people to rise and meet today’s challenges and provide solutions even for unemployment,” Mphela said.

is good. Other officials and manufacturers blame mitumba for the decline of Kenya’s textile industry.

During the 1990s, mitumba began to pick up steam as donated clothes flowed into the country. Organizations receive clothes for charity and distribute those domestically before sending any excess to Africa. Once it arrives, individuals purchase the clothes in bulk and resell it for profit, according to Slate.

The government has previously attempted to ban mitumba, according to The Daily Nation. The most recent effort was pushed back to 2018 after Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta met with leaders from neighboring countries.

But as time goes on, the amount of mitumba and its worth continue to grow. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the value of the industry has increased, now totaling the equivalent of about $98.6 million.

“There is a need for a win-win situation for both manufacturing and (mitumba) trade,” Kamau said.

Ciku said if mitumba is banned it would strain her financially.

“At the end of the day, I think the advantages of the mitumba industry are much higher than the other industries here,” Ciku said. “Everyone is involved … it would be a big thing to actually shut it down.”
CHANGING CULTURE AFFECTS CARE OF INDIA’S TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

By Olivia Miltner

When the nurse asked her patient what she wanted to do after the operation and what name she would claim, the patient responded, “I’ll go lingerie shopping,” and “Nyra.”

Later, when the patient awoke after her surgery, Nyra D’souza was herself.

“Burnout and fatigue are among the most serious health issues,” said Souvik Ghosh, an endocrinologist who performed gender affirmation surgery, D’souza’s surgeon Sanjay Pandey said. Pandey works at a Mumbai hospital, and he said people from across Asia are attracted to India’s holistic, transparent and relatively inexpensive health care.

However, trans people still often experience inadequate medical care, said Souvik Ghosh, who works at the HIV and AIDS non-profit Saathi, in an article published by the Hindu. “When they go to the hospital... trans people are told to leave or are treated like aliens,” Ghosh said. “Doctors will say they only serve women or men.”

After going through her transition, D’souza said other people looking to undergo gender affirmation surgery should plan ahead. She also said they should expect high medical expenses and the need for assistance after the surgery.

IMMIGRATION MAY REVITALIZE ITALY’S GHOST TOWNS

By Sydney Albert

Thousands of ghost towns dot the Italian landscape. As Italy struggles with a stalling economy, young Italians from the poorer central and southern regions of the country are leaving en masse in search of better opportunities and education.

Some of these towns have received a breath of life from refugees. The town of Riace had been suffering from emigration for decades. The population had dropped by more than 80 percent when Domenico Lucano, a schoolteacher, started a trip earlier this year, he took 12 Syrian refugees back to the Vatican. In addition, the Community of Sant’Egidio has offered resources and taught language skills to refugees in Italy as well as the rest of Europe.

According to the International Organization for Migration, more than 131,974 migrants have arrived in Italy since the start of 2016 alone. The Italian newspaper La Stampa has reported that 2,026 of the country’s 8,000 municipalities have hosted migrants as of June this year.

With many young Italians seeking opportunities abroad, Italian journalist Maurizio Ricci believes foreign labor and the integration of foreign families is crucial to maintaining the economy, in spite of an aging population. Though many of the ghost towns need improvement, it may be beneficial to renew old accommodations, rather than build completely new ones.