

2017 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

Living in harmony with nature

(Original)

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Nature is the world around us. Nature has selflessly given us everything it had and we humans have manipulated the environment for our greed.

I was born and brought up in a place called Kiriburu situated on a hill in the Saranda forests. 'Saranda' which means the land of 700 hills is considered to be the Asia's largest reserves of the tree known as Saal. Being the home to many rare flora and fauna, it boasts of natural beauty that hides beneath its surface and the precious mineral wealth.

Saranda is also the homeland to the 'Ho' tribe. The Ho tribe is solely connected and dependent on nature for their livelihood. They worship nature and consider it to be their only asset. They never raise their weapons to harm any animal or tree. When I grew up to be a teen, I was introduced to the tribal processions by my parents, where I swore to protect nature. A thread was tied on my wrist which would always remind me about my promise made to nature.

It was later when I realized how helpless we are to do anything about the mining companies who have been exploiting the place for its minerals for decades. Saranda was once a thick forest where even sunrays failed to penetrate the canopy of the forest to reach the forest floor. But with time, the forest started losing its greenery. Layers of mining dust covered leaves of the trees. The soil had turned black due to the ashes of forest fires. Large areas of the forest were cleared for setting up mines.

Distressed with the situations, I decided to choose mass communication for my higher studies as I thought; it would help me in improving the situation. I wrote to several newspapers and blogs about the condition of the forest. But all my efforts were in vain. When I returned back in summer after a year, I was shattered to see the situation as it was worsened. Fires taking up trees and masses of leaves could be seen from every part of the Saranda forest. The forest fire was rapidly consuming the habitats of the wildlife and the tribes. Newspapers and TV channels were flooded with news of the uncontrollable fire. Forest officials and the

owners of the mines were giving their part of excuse but none was doing any effort to control the fire. I was scared that Saranda would soon turn into a barren land! I broke down before my parents as I was unable to keep my promises that I made to the nature when I was a teen. Few days later, it was the beginning of rain when I held some hope. Continuous rainfall for a week succeeded in ending up the fire. I danced with joy in the rain. I realized how nature saved all its belongings without any discrimination. Nature showed me how selflessly she is taking care of her children. Whoever's fault it was, nature took all the responsibilities to bring harmony by restoring the communities in the forests. It was patience that I learned from nature as I saw the forests retaining its greenery.

Today different communities are fighting within the countries around the world. In Iraq and Syria, it is a clash among Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds, Turkmen, and others; in Nigeria, among Muslims, Christians, and assorted tribal groupings. In India, farmers are dying of debt and poverty; communities are killing each other to show superiority. People never learned from the lessons that nature taught us.

The thread still remains on my wrist that reminds me about the promise I made to nature .To spread the message that nature tries to convey, I have started a small tuition. I teach 50 little children about the things we learn from nature. I show them movies, magazines and photos which depicts methods to conserve the nature. I also run an online magazine where I post works of my little fellows and their ideas on it. I firmly believe that these children will take forward the message of selfless giving, peace and harmony among the communities, which will result in building a more green and peaceful world for the future generations.