

Report on Launch of “Exploring Genocide”

"Evil only prevails when the good do nothing to stop it" Fiachra Fallon Verbruggen reminded the audience gathered in Loreto College Crumlin for the launch of a new educational resource 'Exploring Genocide' and a stunning 32 foot mural on the theme of genocide

Fiachra and a number of his fellow students from Presentation College Bray last year joined a group of Transition Years from Loreto Crumlin in revisiting the thought provoking and dramatic artwork produced four years ago to mark the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide.

Each one of the 8 panels in the mural names one of the eight stages of genocide. Above these are hundreds of staring skulls surrounded by testimonials of people who have suffered at the hands of genocide. The names of countries or regions where genocide is known to have occurred and the acts of violence perpetrated tops this visually striking and utterly captivating work of art. The impact of the imagery on the audience is palpable and breathtaking.

Four years after the world said “it would never happen again”, the students, under the guidance of 80:20 and Concern, revisited the whole subject and asked the question: Darfur, is it genocide?

On the mural, they have added a subtle layer of letters spelling out DARFUR over the original painting so that you only notice it subconsciously at first but then it draws you in as the letters resurface and jump out at you.

“The reason we updated this mural was because it only contained events of genocide that had already happened” said Malachi Gillick. “We all felt that, seeing as Darfur is suffering right now, we had to make as huge a stir as we possibly could, to make people realise what is going on before it is too late”

Ruth Doherty from Irish Aid praised the students for their exceptional contribution to the project and predicted that many schools and others would use the very comprehensive resource they have produced in classrooms across the country.

Colm Regan expressed his impatience at those people who say that young people are increasingly selfish and never do anything for others. “Nothing could be further from the truth” he said “Young people in Ireland today are the most generous and committed you could ever hope to find”. Education is the key to changing the world and we can make a change, he says referring to some of the major changes that have occurred in the last few decades like the abolition of apartheid and the fall of the Berlin wall and communism.

Gerry Duffy, principal of Presentation Bray, spoke of how much the students had gained from the activity. “It is not so much the final product but the process that is really important. No school league tables will reflect the learning and growth that has taken place here.”

The students agree with him.

“I have learned so much about Darfur and genocide that I would like to make a difference in the future” Ciara Delaney.

“Working on the project was an interesting experience and doing it with a school we had never met before helped create a great team. I’m glad that now I have a better awareness of the subject and issues of genocide”. Eoin Dixon Murphy.

“I’ve learned that I can do a lot for a problem that is so far away”. Jessica Eccles.