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A day in the life of... Kelvin Lai Hao Cherng Organising Chairperson, Journey to Belong – An Awareness Program on Statelessness in partnership with UNHCR Malaysia & UCSI University.

"I hope to see that more young individuals are willing to join the endeavour. Education must be used as an engine to catalyse the process of bettering the society and the world. I also wish to see a world with a better understanding on statelessness by means of big data and technological tools and more stateless people included in the work of ending statelessness."

Read the full interview in this month's "A day in the life of..." at the bottom of this bulletin.

Focus on: ISI Statelessness Summer Course



During the first week of August, the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion hosted its annual Statelessness Summer Course at Tilburg University, the Netherlands. It was attended by over 40 people working on statelessness in 29 different countries. The course offers participants new knowledge, tools and skills to address statelessness. This year saw group work, a plurality of workshops (covering topics like discrimination, the SDGs and arbitrary deprivation of nationality) as well as inspiring expert Masterclasses by Kerry Neal (UNICEF), Melanie Khanna (UNHCR), Tendayi Bloom (Yale) and Gábor Gyulai (HHC). Details of the 2017 edition of the summer course will be posted at www.institutesi.org/courses later in the year.

"Amazing experience, and enriching opportunity to learn in-depth about statelessness." Melvin Suarez, State Counsel of the Philippine Justice Department.

"The course has helped me in understanding statelessness situations worldwide. Before the course, I had only been involved in the Kenyan context. The course helps in equipping me with adequate knowledge." Phelix Lore, Executive Director of Haki Centre, Kenya.

Focus on: The 2016 Olympics

For the first time in history a team of refugee athletes competed in the Olympics. Rio de Janeiro saw ten refugee athletes compete ["as a symbol of hope for refugees worldwide and \[to\] bring global attention to the magnitude of the refugee crisis"](#). While the rules of the International Olympics Committee (IOC) state that you cannot compete at the Olympics as an individual, the competitors of the nation-less refugee team were not the first to participate

without representing any particular State, as this article demonstrates in a [timeline](#). Further historical context is given by this article on the [2016 Olympics: CSUF Historian Sheds Light on New Refugee Team](#).

The inclusion of a nation-less teams raises questions about who may compete for a country and what the criteria are that lead to this eligibility. Anna Wollmann investigated these same (and more) questions in her dissertation on [Nationality Requirements in Olympic Sports](#). The 2016 Olympics also saw an ironic development in relation to the situation of Dominicans of Haitian descent when the first and only 2016 Olympic medal for the Dominican Republic was won by Luisito Pie, a Dominican of Haitian descent – a population which continues to battle for recognition as citizens. The irony of this is set out in this short [piece](#) by Samuel Maxime for The Haiti Sentinel.

For those who are interested in further investigating statelessness and the Olympics [the Olympic Studies Centre PhD Students Research Grant](#) may offer possibilities. Applications are welcome until 30 September 2016.

Human Rights Calendar

Between **12 - 30 September** 2016 [Committee on the Rights of the Child will hold its 73rd session](#). It will consider the State reports of six countries: Nauru, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Suriname.

The [Human Rights Council will have its 33rd regular session](#) from **13 until 30 September**. The session will include a panel discussion on Youth and Human Rights, with the opportunity for civil society to raise issues related to nationality and statelessness.

Submissions for the [Universal Periodic Review's 27th session](#) (November 2016) can be made until **22 September 2016**. The countries that will be under review at UPR 27 are: **Algeria, Bahrain, Brazil, Ecuador, Finland, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Tunisia and the UK**.

There are currently a number of consultation processes ongoing on human rights topics which are relevant to statelessness: a [questionnaire on good practices in eliminating discrimination against women](#) by the UN Working on Discrimination Against Women in Law and Practice (deadline 12 September); a call for inputs from OHCHR for a report on [Terrorism and Human Rights](#) (deadline 25 September); and another call for inputs from OHCHR for a report on the [Protection of the Rights of the Child in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (deadline 17 October).

What's new: Publications, tools and resources

[Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: Denationalization and Statelessness in the Dominican Republic](#): The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights launched a multimedia website in relation to their [report on the situation of human rights in the Dominican Republic](#) (DR). People born in the DR who descend from Haitian migrants suffer from denationalisation and statelessness. A process that began with the practice of registry officials in refusing to register the birth of children of Haitian migrants born in the DR and has since then expanded through a set of other practices, standards and judicial decisions. This Amnesty International report ["Where are we going to live? – Migration and statelessness in Haiti and the Dominican Republic"](#) may also prove interesting in relation to this.

[A 100-year \(hi\)Story of Statelessness](#): As a guest blogger for the Peace Palace Library blog collection, Laura van Waas, co-director of the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, wrote a short hundred-year (hi)story on statelessness. From 1924, when the League of Nations paved the way for the first international convention aimed to eradicate statelessness, until 2024, the year by which statelessness is aimed to be brought to an end.

[The Issue of Statelessness](#): TEDxWeldQuayWomen hosted Dr Hartini Zainudin, CEO of Yayasan Siti Sapura Husin, to present statelessness at their event. She used the talk to focus on the situation of stateless children.

[Birth Certificate: A Vital Document Many Liberians Have Never Heard Of](#): Nadene Ghouri, for the Guardian, wrote this piece about the registering of births and its relevance in the context of Liberia.

[Newsweek Spanish Edition: Apátridas en su País](#): The cover of the August edition of the Spanish Newsweek features stateless people in their own country. The story covers women from the Dominican Republic who fight to recover their nationality which was taken from them by that same country.

[State Discrimination against Kenyan Nubian is an Abuse of Rights](#): This article reports on the structural denial of national identity cards and passports for Kenyan Nubians based on their ethnicity. The story is told on the basis of the life-story of Adam Hussein Adam (for news on his passing see below "announcements and events").

[Governance and Social Development Resource Centre: Statelessness](#): The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) provides online knowledge on statelessness as part of the topic of citizenship as the relation between State and society.

[#IBelong Campaign Quarterly Update July 2016](#): UNHCR distributed its second #IBelong Campaign Update for 2016 at the end of July. The update reports on continuing work to address statelessness at national, regional and global levels, including news on the new Human Rights Council Resolution on “The right to nationality: Women’s equal nationality rights in law and practice” and the latest Annual Global NGO Statelessness Retreat.

[UNHCR Reporting: Global Performance Targets](#): This website provides information on UNHCR Global Performance Target indicators and an interactive map, including on the topic of statelessness.

[Can a Citizenship Law Address Palestinian Statelessness?](#): An interview with Dr. Mutaz Qafisheh about Palestinian citizenship and its foundations within international law.

[Displacement of the Rohingyas in Southeast Asia](#): A comparative report on the responses of a selection of Southeast Asian states (Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and Indonesia) to the displacement of the Rohingyas in the region. In a similar vein, Jera Beah H. Lego wrote this preliminary draft [The Southeast Asian "Boat People Crisis" of 2015: Human \(In\)Security, Precarity, and the Need for an Ethic of Cohabitation](#) in which she problematizes against policy pronouncements towards a people-centered ASEAN the situation of so-called ‘boat people’, primarily Rohingya from northern Rakhine State.

[GLAR Podcast: Arbitrary Deprivation of Nationality and Refugee Status](#): Global Law at Reading (GLAR) University episode 17 features Professor H  l  ne Lambert of the University of Westminster on the topics of arbitrary deprivation of nationality and the status of refugee.

[Statelessness as a Rising Human Rights Issue in Tajikistan](#): Masayo Ogawa’s blog on statelessness in Tajikistan. UNHCR’s Commentary on the Constitutional Law of the Republic of Tajikistan ["On Nationality of the Republic of Tajikistan"](#) relates to this.

[How Being Stateless Makes You Poor](#): An article by Jennifer Guay for Foreign Policy on statelessness and how a lack of citizenship poses an economic problem.

[Haiti: Internal Displacement, Forced Evictions, Statelessness - The Catalogue to Violations Continue](#): Amnesty International prepared this submission for the Universal Periodic Review of Haiti in November 2016. While it is noted that Haiti has taken steps to address concerns raised in the previous review, recommendations call for more action.

Announcements and events

[The loss of Adam Hussein Adam, courageous advocate for stateless persons](#): The Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative (CRAI) posted this article on its website, mourning the loss of Adam Hussein Adam who passed away Friday 5 August 2016. Mr. Adam was a long-time partner of the CRAI network and a courageous advocate against statelessness.

[Reminder: Statelessness Working Paper Series](#): The deadline for submissions to the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion’s Working Paper Series is coming up on **15 September 2016**. Anyone who still wants to submit a paper is invited to do so before that time. Please look at the website for further details.

[Vacancy: Study on statelessness and risks of statelessness in The Gambia](#): The Gambia Commission for Refugees and UNHCR Representation in Gambia is looking for an international expert in statelessness to carry out the background study on statelessness in Gambia in a 3-month study. **The deadline to apply is fast approaching: 2 September 2016.**

[UNHCR Vacancy: Statelessness Consultant](#): The office of the UNHCR is seeking a candidate for the position of statelessness consultant, located in Brussels. The consultant will monitor the statelessness determination and access to rights of stateless persons in Belgium. **Deadline for applications is 9 September 2016.**

[A4ID Knowledge Group: Statelessness, Sustainable Development and the Law](#): On Wednesday 7 September the A4ID Knowledge Group will explore statelessness in relation to Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions” and target 16.9 relating to “legal identity for all, including birth registration”. Speakers include Amal de Chickera, co-director of the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion. **Registration is free and is possible until 7 September 2016.**

[Inaugural Lecture Professor Elspeth Guild: Brexit and its Consequences for the UK and EU Citizenship or Monstrous Citizenship](#): On Tuesday 27 September 2016 Professor Elspeth Guild will give her inaugural lecture at the Queen Mary University of London. The lecture will discuss EU and UK citizenship from a legal perspective in light of the political consequences of British public vote to leave the EU. **Registering is free and open until 27 September 2016.**

Workshop: European Poetry and Statelessness (1900-2016): On 4 May 2017, Analyse et Traitement Informatique de la Langue Française (ATILF) in Nancy, France, will host a workshop to explore “the extent to which the paradigm of statelessness can be seen to illuminate evolving conceptions of poetry”. The workshop invites contributions in English or French of 20 minutes on any European language. For more information, please be referred to the website of the event (for English text the reader has to scroll down the page). The **deadline to send proposals is 18 November 2016**.

Call for submissions: Full Bleed: New art and design journal *Full Bleed* is looking for artwork and criticism that concerns migration, exile, and statelessness. Accepted art forms include (photographic) essays, polemics, *belle lettres*, design and many more. For more information, please check out the website. **The deadline for abstracts or project descriptions is 1 January 2017**.

What's new: Law and policy

Executive Council of the African Union welcomes draft Protocol on right to nationality: In its Decision on the Report of the Activities of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), the AU Executive Council welcomes the ACHPR's draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Specific Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa. The Executive Council furthermore requests the ACHPR to take the steps required to ensure the processing of the draft.

Ethiopian President Underlines Public Role in Attaining Registration Goals: Ethiopia has officially launched the permanent compulsory and universal registration and certification of vital life events, including birth, death and marriage.

Namibian government backs down on citizenship: The Namibian government will abide by the Supreme Court ruling and grant citizenship to a boy who was born in Namibia to Dutch parents. Earlier refusal to grant the child a Namibian birth certificate was based on the parents' residence in the country on a work permit. Namibia has also proposed a bill to amend the Constitution as to define “ordinary residence” as “permanent residence” in relation to acquisition of citizenship at birth ([report](#)). The Namibian president later [rejected](#) the bill, saying that the proposed amendment is not needed and that “lawmakers and the executive should not be seen as sidestepping courts' decisions.”

Popular on Twitter this month

UNHCR Burkina Faso @UNHCR_BF Aug 26 #UNHCR just met with @KabaThieba PM of #Burkina to pursue the fight against #statelessness. <http://bit.ly/2bSW6Vk>

Bronwen Manby @BronwenManby Aug 19 #Stateless refugee “Quechua babies” born outside of hospitals in EU camps

Khubyb @drkhubyb Aug 14 Rohingya are denied their identity, are stateless, stripped of citizenship and facing genocide. #WorldRohingyaDay

Amal de Chickera @Amal_deC 5 aug. Rest in peace Adam Hussein Adam. A giant in the #statelessness field. Father of Kenyan Nubian nationality movement. You will be missed.

Haki Centre @HakiCentre 2 aug. Birth registration and birth certificate are two different things #learnaboutstatelessness @UNICEF @UNHCR_Kenya

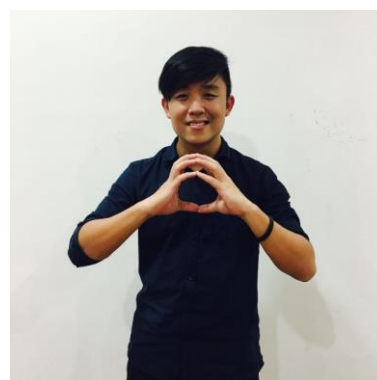
A day in the life of...

Kelvin Lai Hao Cherng

Vice President of Holistic Youth Engagement, UCSI Scholars' Circle (U-Schos), UCSI University Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Organizing Chairperson, Journey to Belong – An Awareness Program on Statelessness in partnership with UNHCR Malaysia, UCSI University.

How did you get involved in working on statelessness?

Like most other people of my age privileged enough to have a smartphone and Internet connection, I woke up in the morning on December 19, 2015 and the first thing I did was scroll through my Facebook news feed. I came across this particular



advertisement featuring UNHCR's 'I Am Here, I Belong' event on statelessness held at Publika, Kuala Lumpur, which was a 40-minute drive from my place. Having taken interest in issues regarding human rights since I joined the UCSI Scholars' Circle (U-Schos) in May 2014, I eventually made the decision to go for the event.

The organization that I am affiliated with has never been a human rights organization, nor is it a humanitarian organization. It is simply a student organization established five years ago, and is made up of scholarship recipients in my university, UCSI, based in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur. Its focus was very much on leadership, personal and professional development. In late May 2015, six months before I turned up for the UNHCR's I am here, I Belong Event in Publika, I was appointed the Vice President of U-Schos and one of my portfolios was the Scholar Enrichment Program (SEP). I began leading my team in designing an operational blueprint that underlies what we try to achieve – connecting young individuals to issues and challenges in the society we live in, and at the same time developing their competencies and soft skills, through project-based learning platforms provided by us via collaboration with social and environmental organizations. I initially wanted to attend 'I am Here, I Belong' event because I wanted to explore collaboration opportunities with the organizer, UNHCR. Personally, after familiarizing myself with the issue of statelessness, albeit on the surface by that time, I wanted to explore the possibilities that youths and university students like us can reach out to the stateless community. Following our initial dialogue at the event, we attended a few rounds of discussion, strategy development and planning session on how the youth can contribute towards the efforts of eradicating childhood statelessness with UNHCR Malaysia under the umbrella of the Global #IBelong Campaign since the beginning of 2016. This had led into the birth of two projects on statelessness: a social media platform known as 'Journey to Belong: Once Stateless in Malaysia' and a teacher's toolkit to educate children on statelessness, both of which I shall be detailing later.

I am still a student in UCSI University in my final year of pursuing a degree in Chemical Engineering. When I am not studying, I spend my time with my friends at U-Schos in brainstorming and designing what's best for youth. My portfolio as the VP is 'Holistic Youth Engagement', meaning I am responsible in carrying out and consistently improving the Scholar Enrichment Program (SEP), a developmental program that engages scholarship recipients of UCSI in project-based learning opportunities to be part of social change-making agenda.

What type of statelessness activities is your organization involved in?

Early this year we started a [social media platform](#) on Facebook known as 'Journey to Belong: Once Stateless in Malaysia'. A local NGO, Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (DHRRA) and UNHCR facilitated dialogue sessions between the project team from the university and formerly stateless youth that have acquired a nationality through DHRRA's legal aid services across West Malaysia. Their lives were once full of uncertainty, but they knew some things for sure — they wanted to be visible and belong. The Journey to Belong: Once Stateless in Malaysia campaign page features the testimonies and voices of formerly stateless people to understand how having a nationality can make a difference in their journey to belong. Through this campaign, we aim to reach out to a variety of audiences especially the younger generations to raise debates on belonging, identity, and inclusion in Malaysia.

We also started working on the **Teacher's Toolkit** on Teaching Children on Statelessness, which was formerly developed and launched by UNHCR during the 'I am Here, I Belong' event in December 2015. We got engaged in the process of redesigning and improving the toolkit along with developing an online interactive webinar for public access which targets elementary school students. The toolkit aims to use education as a tool to engage younger generations in understanding and addressing statelessness. Who knows; it may perhaps become a part of the official curriculum in schools one day.

On 4th & 5th of August 2016, we held a [public event](#) to launch the Journey to Belong Campaign at UCSI University. Approximately 400 people attended the event – among them were UN representatives and representatives from 40 NGOs and universities in Malaysia. The official launch was carried out by Razali Ismail, the Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia, and followed by Richard Towle, the UNHCR Representative for Malaysia, who both delivered their speeches during the launch. We also had the keynote speech by UNHCR on the Global #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024, a dialogue session with a formerly stateless youth and the lead civil society campaigners working towards eradication of statelessness in Malaysia. We also welcomed the visitors to an exciting exhibition space to help them experience what it is like to be stateless through 4 corners: The Malaysia corner, where the visitors saw the faces and read the stories of the stateless youths in Malaysia; a multimedia corner that depicted statelessness in its global #IBelong context; a U-Schos corner where the Scholar Enrichment Program (SEP)'s two projects with UNHCR were showcased; and the "Through Their Eyes" corner, where we exhibited photographs taken by stateless youths and children in Malaysia themselves.

We are currently working on the next phase following everything we have worked in the past eight months. The highlight of the event launch was the youth summit, which took place as the finale of the event. 32 selected youth leaders from 9 different organizations took part in the **Youth Summit & Roundtable on Statelessness**. We were driven by the idea of creating a platform for the youth to access and share information on statelessness and define the role

the youth must play in achieving the common goal of accelerating the end of statelessness in Malaysia. The need to strengthen capacity, particularly greater understanding of the causes of statelessness and circumstances of stateless people, was highlighted as the most significant challenge for young generations in uniting around a common goal of raising debates on identity and inclusion over the phenomenon of statelessness during the dialogue sessions. The summit culminated in a spirited consensus of the youth leaders to contribute to, sustain and advance the growth of national cooperation, mobilization and coordination among UNHCR, civil societies, academics and the Government to address statelessness in Malaysia. The outcome document of the youth roundtable and summit may be the first milestone in engaging the young leaders into establishing a youth network in Malaysia and extending our efforts to other youth initiatives and networks, in SE Asia. That is what we are looking at right now.

What do you most enjoy about this work and what challenges do you face?

Several months of involvement in the collaborative effort also prompted personal growths and development of empathy from each of us in my team. Also, we were delighted to receive questions and concerns on statelessness from students in our campus as we were running the campaign, because it shows that we were finally getting young people to begin taking the first step to understand statelessness. The Youth Summit and Roundtable on Statelessness that we underwent had inspired and motivated me in realizing that many young individuals from both East and West Malaysia are willing to involve themselves in the cause. The transition of youth's mind set regarding statelessness that we all witnessed together during the session was enlightening.

There are a lot of challenges! It took me some time to eventually realize and understand that overcoming statelessness means more than just dealing with one or two parties, but a multitude of other stakeholders ranging from the government to civil societies, from education institutions to the stateless communities themselves. Being able to see and 'appreciate' this is a tremendous challenge. For example, being a part of this collaborative efforts and running this campaign through my university allowed me to learn how different stakeholders and actors may be interested in different aspects of the issue. This enabled me to embark on the next step and think through advocacy in the long run while organizing our event and pitching our projects to a wide range of audiences. Also, being an engineering undergraduate student who had zero experience in statelessness and the aspects it covers, such as the legal and political aspects, had forced me to double my effort in understanding what statelessness means. It literally took us a couple of months to realize the complexity of statelessness and, really, be awed by it at first before we could implement our actions.

What advice would you give to someone who wants to get involved in / others working on statelessness?

Three things. First, ***be 'market-driven'***. Know and empathize with what the ongoing projects offering support to the stateless communities are and what the stateless people need first before you plan something. These needs may vary across locales. Second, ***innovate and solve challenges by creative means***. For example, if you are about to work on research and mapping, utilize big data. If you are about to advocate on statelessness to the public, use some really cool arts and interesting graphical representation because ultimately, it is about drawing public attention. Once you first pitch the issue, then you can get into serious business of changing perspectives within the wider public. If you want to include stateless children into education, think about how technology can amplify your reach and make your operations more effective and efficient. Third, ***nothing else besides humanity should underlie your cause***. It is only humanity, and humanity only. Solving statelessness requires cooperation of all aspects covering from political, economic, legal, social, cultural, among others, but ultimately the aspiration should be based on the firm belief that humanity deserves better and must be founded on equality and empathy for change.

What do you hope to accomplish through your work?

I hope to see that more young individuals are willing to join the endeavour. Education must be used as an engine to catalyse the process of bettering the society and the world. Youth must be redefined; global citizens and socially responsible leaders must be nurtured. I want to see a world where within the next five years, there will be an exponential increase in the population of individuals who know about statelessness. Through consistent and progressive capacity building I hope to see more actions and solutions being produced from across the societal spectrum regardless of faiths, colours and creed. Besides, I also wish to see a world with a better understanding on statelessness by means of big data and technological tools. Research and mapping need to be strengthened to allow world leaders to take better and more effective actions and better engage the public and various civil societies in galvanizing solutions. Constant innovation also needs to be included in the agenda. Also, and most important of all, I wish to see more stateless people included in the work of ending statelessness. Most of all, I hope that the goal of the global campaign to end statelessness by 2024 can come true.

Contribute to the Statelessness Monthly Bulletin via
news@InstituteSI.org or visit www.InstituteSI.org