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Realizing the Full Potential of International Day of the Girl Child [1]

This October 11, people around the world again had the opportunity to celebrate the United Nation's International Day of the Girl Child. This year's theme was to prepare girls to enter a world of innovative and automated work. The purpose of this theme was to engage individuals and organizations to close the gender gap in STEM employment.

This year, a lot of famous women spoke out on gender equality. In the United States, Michelle Obama, Jennifer Hudson, Meghan Trainor and Kelly Clarkson celebrated the day with over 1,000 girls and women on national television. They shared a message of hope. That no matter who we are, we should be treated the same. Around the world, girls celebrated the day in many different ways. Some even took over the roles of important people for day.

Personally, I celebrated the day by shadowing an amazing woman at a major geospatial company. Through the shadowing experience, I was able to experience what she did to promote women in STEM and the impact of her work on her team. Unfortunately, other girls at my school did not get to have such experiences. And, almost no one at my school had even heard of the day until they read an article that I wrote about my experience, or saw a tweet about it.

To take advantage of this opportunity, public diplomacy officers need to create programs that create awareness of the event. And, they need to start creating those programs now.

If not many kids at my school knew about the International Day of the Girl Child, then I imagine that many kids at other schools don't either.

In New Delhi, India, diplomatic missions are committed to promoting equal rights for girls and women and celebrating International Day of the Girl Child. Among the many sponsored activities are distribution of activity guides to schools, interaction with students at various academic institutions and even the organization of "Girls Takeovers."

Plan India is a child rights organization concerned about children's rights and equality for girls. Through this program, girls and women are able to interact with Ambassadors and High Commissioners. Afterwards, they can share their experiences with others and talk about girls' empowerment at a large gathering.

Next year, we need a lot more people to celebrate the International Day of the Girl around the world. For this to happen, I think that we need to start creating more awareness about the event farther ahead of time.

At a local level, we need school principals to list the event on their school calendars, host assemblies on the day for students, put news of the event in their school newsletters, and encourage discussions about the year's theme in classrooms. These actions will create more awareness for the event. And, that will hopefully get more people to celebrate the event next year.

The next International Day of the Girl therefore represents a great opportunity for embassies that are located in countries where girls have no chance of entering a world of innovative and automated work. To take advantage of this opportunity, public diplomacy officers need to create programs that create awareness of the event. And, they need to start creating those programs now.

Kana is a member of the Girl Scout Council of the National Capital and the British Girlguiding Overseas. She is also in the process of becoming a volunteer at the American Red Cross . This article is an extension of her Bronze Award Project for the Girl Scouts of the USA . That project was featured as part of the 2018 Higher Awards Ceremony, and it led to Girls Can Map. To view her open petition to the UN, click here.

To read her previous CPD Blog post, "Let Girls Map on International Day of the Girl Child," click here.