Knitting the Non-Profits with the Millennium Development Goals

Project summary
Twelve monthly live and/or pre-recorded “town hall meetings.” Each hour-long episode will highlight two or three Queens-based low-budget (see criteria below) non-profit organizations. The missions, programs, activities, and services of these organizations must be in line with the Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

One to three of the goals will make up the core theme of each episode. Understanding their essence will potentially contribute to human rights, democracy, and freedom of speech in the home countries of the immigrant communities. This may inspire “diaspora economies” to help their home countries achieve the goals.

With this series we hope to bridge the gap – to create opportunities for collaborations and partnerships – between UN-related agencies, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the borough of Queens, which is home to 138 spoken languages. We will seek regional footage from the United Nations that is relevant to the theme and the profiled non-profits. Experts from all walks of life will be invited to create public awareness, and to strengthen local ties. It will be a unique opportunity to knit together the diverse communities of Queens, as well as help them connect with national and global concerns.

Criteria for selecting the Queens-based non-profit/civil society/non-governmental organizations
1. Non-profits with annual operational budgets that fall into one of the following categories will be profiled (the smaller the budget, the higher the priority):
   1. $1000 – $25,000
   2. $26,000 – $49,000
   3. $50,000 – $99,000
   4. $100,000 – $149,000
5. $150,000 – $199,000

2. Local non-profits that are in line with the goals will take priority. However, local organizations in the first and second budget categories, as well as those that focus on homelessness, domestic violence, teen pregnancy, and drug abuse may also be given a platform alongside the other NGOs.

The Eight Millennium Development Goals
The MDGs are a response to the challenges of the modern world. They were drawn from the “Millennium Declaration,” which was adopted by 189 nations during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. The number of signatures increased to 192 during the 2010 Summit. The targeted year for achieving the first set of goals is 2015; since the deadline is rapidly approaching, there is an urgent need for public awareness and involvement. According to a UN report, although the United States is the most developed and powerful country in the world, and has been the host country to the United Nations since its inception, 64% of the US population is not aware of the MDGs. They will be explained and clarified throughout the series via street interviews, the LM website, and social media.
(Source: http://www.lightmillennium.org/mdgs/list.html)

Audience
All ages from all walks of life.

Language
English. Additionally, in order to reach the non-English-speaking communities, translations and cable-casting with subtitles will be made available, based upon our ability to obtain sponsorships.

Launching the series
If funds are available by October 2011, the series will be launched in January 2012 with a brief presentation to the media, local NGOs and officials, and representatives from the UN, followed by a reception. It will be open to the public.

Time line
January 2012 to December 2012

Production schedule
Light Millennium TV (LMTV) currently has a monthly half-hour taped series on Channel 57 of Queens Public Television (QPTV). The proposed program will preferably be live or both live and pre-recorded. Based upon securing funding, LMTV will apply for the 2012 live-studio time slot when QPTV opens it to its producers in the fall of 2011. As Executive Producer and Director of the LMTV Series and Specials, Bircan Ünver has the right to apply for a live-studio taping weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. If the project is funded, October 2011 will be spent identifying
and contacting twenty-four to thirty organizations. Some episodes might be produced in collaboration with a local school or library. The public will be encouraged to take part through live-call, instant e-mailing, on-camera street interviews, and surveys.

**Preferred days**
Mondays, Tuesdays, or Wednesdays at 7:00 pm or later

**Will the Light Millennium Organization be subject matter for the series?**
No. Bircan Ünver, Executive Producer and Director of the Light Millennium (LM), has already produced programs for and about her organization. These include UNNGO and NGO profiles, as well as programs on the arts, culture, poetry, literature, freedom of expression, climate change, and global issues. None of her programs (1992-1999) or those under LMTV (since 2000) have ever been funded. 
http://www.lightmillennium.org/lmtv/all.html

**How will the LM benefit?**
The LM will act as a bridge builder and promoter. Its mission and vision will be fulfilled by providing, on a monthly basis, a platform for partnerships between local organizations, and presenting them alongside local authorities, the UN, and representatives of members states.

**Why should this project be granted?**
The discussion forum for “Knitting the Non-Profits with the Millennium Development Goals” will create interest and energy, bring in voices from local organizations to their communities, and echo voices locally and through the organization’s website.
The project should also be granted because:

1. Low-budget organizations cannot afford media campaigns and are not able to reach out to their communities effectively or on a regular basis.

2. Other than at the United Nations, there is currently no MDG forum open to the public that highlights local organizations, or that builds bridges between organizations and communities.

3. There is a great disconnect between local non-profits, their communities, the UN, and the MDGs. The project will help close this gap so that each party will benefit.

4. The Light Millennium will promote the series through its website, social networks, and possibly public programs (when collaborations are available with educational institutions and libraries). The result will be increased visibility for other local cable-casted programs. This will contribute significantly to the effort to reach a global audience.
5. Without a grant, the LM would not be able to produce even a single episode in this capacity. It is a volunteer-based organization, and as such, neither has the funds nor any part-time or full-time paid staff.

**Outcome**

The series will be extensively promoted in the relevant UN agencies and member states. The dialogue between local CSOs, schools, libraries, UN representatives, member states representatives, and regional NGOs will be strengthened, and more democratic engagement and support of the MDGs will be encouraged. Students and teachers may be inspired to develop their own projects.

Besides the live recording, there will also be a field production that will be edited off-line in order to bring in more voices from Queens. Live or pre-recorded studio Question-and-Answer sessions and on-camera street interviews will increase the public’s involvement. We will attempt to expand the series to other states through public access channels, depending on the budget, and will make transcriptions available in at least two or three languages on the LM website. The subtitled cable-casting will include even more languages (again, depending on the budget).

DVDs will be delivered to local public libraries, and to the media and communications departments of local colleges and universities. The relevant UN agencies, along with the participants of each episode, will also receive DVDs. At the end of the series, highlights will be produced for special screenings open to the public.

**Producer information**

Bircan Ünver moved from Istanbul, Turkey, to Los Angeles in 1989. She visited QPTV in Flushing in 1990, then moved to New York that same year. In 1991 she started training in “field production,” and from time to time has contributed to the Voice of Anatolia TV Series at QPTV as field and studio interviewer, news anchor, art director, and video editor (1990-1993). She was a freelance journalist for the Turkish print media.

Bircan received Field and Studio Production certificates from QPTV in 1992. She has produced, directed, and edited more than seventy original programs for QPTV. They have aired on QPTV's four channels (34, 35, 56, and 57). She has worked as a volunteer crewmember in various capacities over the years, and has sponsored twelve other QPTV programs.


She is the originator (1999) and founder (2001) of the Light Millennium (http://www.lightmillennium.org). She has been the executive producer and...
director since its inception, and launched LMTV at QPTV in January 2000.

In 2005 Bircan applied for and led the Light Millennium’s association with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations (UN DPI); since then she has been the permanent representative of the LM to the UN. She produced UNNGO profiles during the UNNGO annual conferences in 2006 and 2007, is continuing the UNNGO profiles as a sub-series of LMTV in 2011, and served in the Planning Committee of the UNNGO Conferences from 2006 to 2008. She continues to present ideas from the UN-NGO briefings and various annual programs on the LM website and through LMTV programs.

Under the LM, Bircan has developed and organized fifty-seven public events in collaboration with various universities (Stevens Institute of Technology, Columbia, CUNY, NYU, Princeton, Yale, and Baruch, among others), the Consulate General of Turkey, the Consulate General of Sweden, and with CSO/NGOs. She led two events during the UNNGO Conferences.

She received a BA in fine Arts from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (1988) in Istanbul, and an MA in Media Studies from New School University (1999). She completed internships at ABC TV in 1993 and in “Women in Film and TV” in 1999.

Bircan has won several awards both for her television programs and for her work under the LM, in particular for e-publications and programs open to the public: “Merit of Award,” by Accolade, 2010; “Peace Worker,” Jaipur, India, 2008 awarded by the Anuvrat Global organization; “Honorary Guest” award presented by former president of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kamal, Jaipur, India (2008); “Peace Volunteer,” Turkish-Forum Newspaper, NYC, 2008; the Distinguished Woman Award in New York, 2004, awarded by the Daughters of Atatürk Organization; First place in “Ethnic” and “Crescent & Star” in 2004, awarded by CAPA Video Festival, Flushing, New York; First place in “Visual Arts” and “Matisse & Picasso at the MoMA” in 2004, awarded by CAPA Video Festival, November 2004, Flushing, New York; and First place in “Arts” in 1998, awarded by Northeast Video Festival.


**The Light Millennium (http://www.lightmillennium.org)**
The Light Millennium is built on the first article of the United States Bill of Rights: Freedom of Speech, in conjunction with the Universal Human Rights Article #19, on Freedom of Expression. It invites citizens of the world to submit, in an appropriate artistic medium, ideas, and experiences that will help foster better understanding between people of different cultures and beliefs.

“Associated with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations effective on December 12, 2005.55

The Light Millennium, is a 501 (c) (3) Tax Exempt and Public Benefit Organization and member of the Non-Profit Coordination Committee of New York

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The LM was introduced on the web in August 1999 by Bircan Ünver as a global multi-media platform inviting individuals to represent themselves and their communities. In January 2000, the LM brought in volunteers, and was formally incorporated as a not-for-profit organization on July 17, 2001. It obtained 501c3 status effective on July 17, 2001.

An innovative public benefit multi-media and arts-culture organization, the LM uses the Internet, TV, and public events to cross borders in order to conduct research and to compile and publish information concerning peace, the arts, poetry, and literature. To date, the LM has e-published twenty-six issues in English and twenty-two in Turkish. The website is visited in 165 countries, has 500,000-600,000 monthly hits, and has presented the work of more than a thousand contributors since 2000.


**Financial statements**

Below $25,000 (990-N was filed on May 13, 2011)

**Board of Directors** *(Based on the Board of Directors Meeting dated on Monday, June 27, 2011.)*

Ms. Bircan Ünver, Founding President
Mr. Sultan Catto, Vice President; professor and executive officer, natural sciences, Baruch College
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Emily Joyce, editor, Figen Bingül, advisory member, and Sirin Cengizalp, volunteer assistant

*(Updated: August 14, 2011 by B.Ü.)*