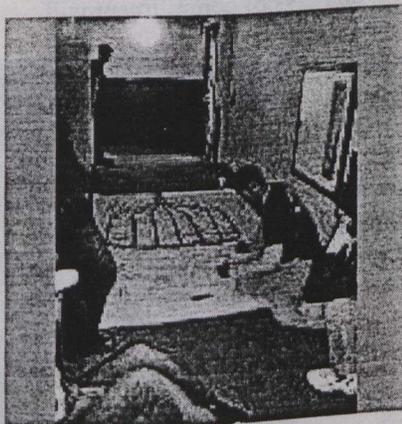


# Report on The National Forum 2000 and National Forum Youth during and after the Conference on War-Affected Children

Media pressures were huge during the event, because of the dramatic nature of the topic and the stories of the youth. Media was handled very successfully in Gimli, because we had more control of the venue, and the time slot which we granted media interviews. With Peter Moore and Tim Wilbur, heading it up, we were able to ensure that youth delegates were accompanied by a staff person. Once in Winnipeg, there was a greater number of media requesting interviews and we had to juggle the process for handling the pressure in a jam-packed program with no free time in it. There was excellent co-operation and support from the Conference Media Team, Brigitte Duschene, Mike Shaughnessy and others. The central issue became that telling their war stories was emotional, stressful and painful for youth; they had come to talk about ending war and promoting peace. The media needed their backgrounds to set the context for their stories, and each interviewer wanted to hear it for themselves. Eventually we were able to work out compromises with many of the media, and the coverage was considered to be a huge success. A recommendation coming from the media themselves is an excellent one: in cases like this where the youth stories are so personal, that the personal story be collected prior to the event and written down. This way the youth does not have to tell the story again and again, but it can be provided as a backgrounder to the reporter. This would enable the Communications staff to set parameters for the interview, which are outlined clearly to the press, prior to the interview (no questions on the personal story, no photo, or photo permitted etc.)

There are more specific details and recommendations on the Media Outreach Program in its section of this Report.



The event achieved its objectives:

The National Forum brought together a diverse group of young Canadians, with war-affected experience and/or knowledge of the issues. It was mostly a group of young people who normally don't attend conferences. They have held a comprehensive set of discussions, shared a wide variety of experiences and stories with each other, written a comprehensive set of recommendations, and become committed to sharing what they have learned with others.

