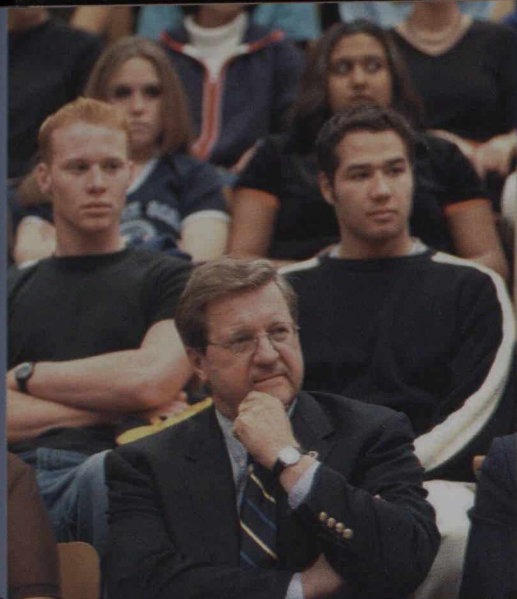


PHOTO: CANADIAN PRESS



Minister Axworthy with students at the University of Calgary

Last December, at Canada House in London, England, Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy joined in a unique venture with British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and students at Churchill High School in Winnipeg and Inveralmond High School in Edinburgh. Together they launched "YouthLinks" ([www.youthlinks.org](http://www.youthlinks.org)), an Internet dialogue on issues such as human security, human rights and war-affected children. YouthLinks is funded by the International Cultural Relations Program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The initiative has now developed into an international Web-based pilot project involving six high schools in Canada, three in Germany and three in Britain.

The Ministers are eager to make use of what the youth perspective has to offer. They know that young people have energy, knowledge, creativity, ideals and skills—just the qualities needed to help achieve major foreign policy objectives, such as international peace and human security.

In Canada, one way for youth to play a part is through DFAIT's Youth International

## Programs for young Canadians

Check out our programs for young people. They include Student Exchange Programs, Young Workers' Exchange Programs, the Student Work Abroad Program, International Academic Programs and others. To learn more about these and a career in Canada's Foreign Service, visit the "Canadian Youth" Web site ([www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/youth/menu-e.asp](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/youth/menu-e.asp)). And be sure to comment on the programs and issues that interest you.

# Canadian Youth

A role **today** for tomorrow's **foreign policy makers**

Internship Program. Each year, YIIP arranges internships for approximately 400 young people on projects in over 100 countries. The interns get their first career-related international work experience plus a perfect springboard to jobs with an international focus. For more information about YIIP and internships available for 2000-01, visit the Program's Web site ([www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/interns](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/interns)).

Around one third of the interns work on projects dealing with human security issues. For example, Ashna Vohra of Montréal spent six months in rural western Nepal, working on a survey to examine the precarious situation of children of bonded agricultural labourers. Fresh from her experience, she speaks of it with emotion: "The majority of children were working by age 12. One had already assumed the debts of his invalid father, himself a lifelong bonded labourer who was unaware how many generations before him had worked to pay the original debt to the landlord." The data she collected will now be analysed; the ultimate aim is to improve the human rights situation of inhabitants of the region.

Another opportunity for youth involvement was the Fourth Annual Canadian Peacebuilding Consultations, held in Ottawa from February 29 to March 1. The Consultations were attended by over 300 representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government, plus young people. A special plenary session was devoted to the perspectives of five young Canadians. They included the two winners of a peacebuilding essay contest, one recent immigrant from a war-affected country, and two youths who are active within the Canadian NGO network.

For Minister Axworthy, it's no passing whim to involve youth in the development of



Interns Ashna Vohra, Gaston Gramajo and Priya Ghandikota on training at Human Rights Internet, a Canadian NGO.

foreign policy. On every possible occasion, he meets with high school, college and university students all across Canada. He values their ideas, suggestions and comments, because some day soon they will be the ones making the decisions. The more quickly they find their feet amid the complex realities of today's international relations and begin to get involved, the more effectively will they be able to work toward a better and safer world. ●—