

grams, theater tours, posters, and workshops.

Radio, she says, has proven to be especially effective. "Particularly in Africa, radio is an important medium: It is inexpensive, it can reach a widely dispersed audience, and there's no need to be literate. There is a real culture of radio in most parts of Africa as the main source of information and entertainment, and, in many ways, it is a lifeline," says Chin.

SFCG has grown significantly since Idriss first came to the organization as an intern in 1993, the summer before his senior year at Swarthmore. At that time, SFCG had just one office in Washington, D.C. A double major in economics and philosophy, with a concentration in public policy, Idriss was drawn to SFCG by the opportunity to work on issues surrounding Middle Eastern policy. His mother is from Turkey, and his father is from Syria; so for Idriss, Middle Eastern policy "was always part of dinner-time conversations growing up." After joining SFCG, Idriss worked with the Middle

As COO, Idriss now gets to oversee peace-building efforts in all 13 nations where SFCG has branch offices as well as the organization's domestic projects. He travels frequently and says he loves being able to go to one country after another and find intelligent, creative individuals who are working for peace and reconciliation.

"These are not merely idealists working on the fringes," says Idriss. "They are social entrepreneurs who are moving us closer to the more peaceful and cooperative world in which we want to live. Their innovative work has a direct impact on people's lives."

SFCG, Idriss explains, works to "generate and build on the hopes of others" to discover the kinds of solutions that will bring communities across the globe closer to realizing peace. Primarily a site-based organization, staff members of international branch offices become immersed in local cultures and use this immersion and cultural understanding to develop conflict resolution strategies that make the most sense

Food Program in Rome during her junior year at Swarthmore. After graduating, she took a year off, moved to Paris, and completed an internship there with an English-language arts magazine. She then attended the London School of Economics, where she studied national and ethnic conflict and received a master's degree in comparative politics. Chin next spent a few years in London working on issues surrounding various conflicts in Africa, including the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, before joining the SFCG team in Washington in 2000.

"The idea of searching for the 'common ground' between groups in conflict—adversaries looking together for solutions they can all buy into and live with, as opposed to being beaten into submission—the former just seems like the logical long-term solution for conflicts," says Chin of her reason for coming to SFCG. She has lived in the DRC through historic times, including the signing of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in

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East Program and on U.S.-Iran relations until 1999, when he moved to Burundi to direct the SFCG program there.

"Being in Burundi really broadened my thinking beyond the Middle East and the Muslim world," Idriss says of the one-and-one-half years he spent there. In Burundi, Idriss worked to support such organizations as a Women's Peace Center, a group of Burundi women who aided local women's movements by organizing meetings and capacity-building workshops. He also helped set up a youth program for young men attempting to rebuild their lives after involvement in ethnic conflict and helped manage a radio studio that worked to promote "ethnic reconciliation and cooperation." Burundi was, Idriss says, simply inspiring. "I worked with people who have risked their lives for what they believe in, who have faced so many obstacles yet still have hope." He left the country in October 2000 to come back to Washington and accept his new position as COO of SFCG.

within the context of that country's struggles. It is a rewarding process but not always an easy one.

Chin has learned this firsthand during her time in the DRC. She works daily with the pain and potential of a nation struggling to rebuild itself. She describes the DRC's literacy, infant survival, and life expectancy rates as all depressingly low and says the taint of violence is ubiquitous and inescapable. Yet at the same time, "With everything that [these] people have been through, I am constantly amazed at how resilient, creative, and persevering people are to find solutions and make a life in the midst of chaos."

"Dealing personally and daily with these paradoxes is hard, but they are important paradoxes, and I am glad I am doing it," says Chin.

Chin, like Idriss, is no stranger to the international scene. A political science major with a minor in public policy, Chin obtained an internship with the World

early April. The agreement marks an optimistic step that Chin says "will usher in a transitional government made up of all beligerent parties—and hopefully peace." With the dialogue, however, SFCG's work has just begun—this step is only the first of many toward securing a lasting peace in the DRC.

Still, Chin says she often runs into people who wonder why she is there, why she counts the DRC's problems as her own. For Chin and her SFCG colleagues, though, peace knows no boundaries. "Sometimes I have been asked if the conflicts here and what people are experiencing here are 'not my problem,'" Chin says. "But I really do believe that all of our problems and conflicts are interrelated. There is no way I can say that my life and what I have grown up with bears no relation to the conflicts that go on halfway around the world." ❧

Elizabeth Redden spent some of the summer in Swarthmore writing articles for the Bulletin.