Teaming for peace

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Taking a stand on global issues, listening to the best speakers and sharing space with around 450 students from all over the world, four students from the city were a part of the International Student Festival in Trondheim, Norway, (ISFIT) the world’s largest student festival with a thematic focus.

Four students from Foundation for Liberal and Management Education (FLAME) Hemakshi Meghnani, Namrata Anirudh(Liberal Education), Neha Kedia and Vivek Chidambaram (Business) were among the seven students from India in the festival that is held once in two years on themes revolving around the society and politics.

The title of ISFIT 2009 was Building a Future with the theme of peace building.

Archbishop and Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu attended the opening ceremony of a meeting on the African philosophy Ubuntu. With orators like Hanx Blix (Current chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission) and Raymond Johansen (State Secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) the students also had debates and discussions on their contribution toward peace in various fields.

For Neha Kedia a second year student chosen amongst 4500 applicants from more than 150 countries it was an enriching experience. “There were sixteen workshops of which I chose Children - Silent Voices of the Society. I personally got to speak with Betty Williams who addressed us on the topic Peace is Everybody’s Business. We now plan to start initiatives on peace building in our respective countries. Author Bharati Mukherjee, spoke on how literature can help in peace building. The event was definitely grand and I would encourage more students to experience the international platform,” adds Kedia.

Stressing on Middle East and the role of women in the ongoing peace process Dr Shirin Ebadi, Iranian Human Rights Activist and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate shared her views on women empowerment instead of victimization.

Vivek another participant from the city was always interested in Social Entrepreneurship as he adds, “It was a new perspective that I was exposed to and also to people of very different social and cultural background. I explored new views and expressed mine, it’s a dream now to start something similar and that huge in my country and I just realized how small a life we are living and there is so much that need to be done and I can do.”