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My name is Zoya Zaeem and I am 15 years old. I currently live in Canada with my family. Although I was born in Karachi, Pakistan, I have not visited my country even once over the last ten years...

I first heard about the earthquake the day after it occurred. My family and I were sitting down eat iftari and my dad brought it up. At the moment, all I could think of was how hungry I was. So I dug into the food without giving the earthquake another thought. The topic was brought up again after dinner, I believe. We were all in the computer room and my mom was reading CNN on the internet. There had already been several thousand deaths. This caught my attention and I was quite taken aback. I am ashamed to say that while I felt bad about this disaster, the feeling lasted for about fifteen minutes and then I went to do my homework. Perhaps that night the earthquake entered my thoughts again, I do not remember. Whether it did is not the point. Rather, it should be noted how little I was affected by the devastation of my people; my country. I am not the lone case, however. The earthquake only entered the conversations of my friends' minimally, if ever. And that too, was only a fleeting comment on the number of deaths or an inquiry after one's relatives. Why is today's youth so distanced from their homeland? I, myself, don't have the answer to this question. These days I have been thinking about what I can do. Although contemplating over how I can help out is an improvement, it is only the first step of the journey. I'm pretty sure that, as usual, all I'll be expected to do is hand over about twenty dollars of my allowance and I'll do that without complaints. For some reason, though, twenty dollars just isn't enough for me anymore like it used to be. Maybe I can make a bigger difference by starting a fundraiser or something. Until parents start building a bridge between their kids and what's going on back home, this feeling of alienation will continue.

I came from a country where more than half the population doesn't know where their next meal is going to come from, to a country where obesity is an epidemic. They are two different worlds altogether. This winter, I am going to visit Pakistan for the first time in ten years. Perhaps my trip to a third world country will teach me what my life in North America hasn't been able to.