



SUMMARY

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1. MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear friends,

This will be the last newsletter of this year. 2006 has been a wonderful year; we managed to do great things together! This month's theme in focus section is about the experiences of the Youth Advocacy Team in New York.

This newsletter is also accompanied by a Special Edition on the outcomes of the Network Capacity Development Project with details about the changes in structure and functions. Please, read it carefully and send us your questions and comments!

We have also included an overview of the UNOY activities from over the entire year. At the moment we are preparing our annual report of the past activities. Please send us information on the activities YOU have done this year.

THANK you for your enthusiasm and commitment! Enjoy reading, and of course: all the best wishes to all of you for 2007.

Nelleke Kreeft
Editor

2. CAMPAIGN NEWS

2.1 Campaigner of the Month:

The campaigner of this month is Spéro Hector Akey. He is the chair person of the African Youth Organisation (A.Y.R.O) which was created in Benin in 2004.



Public Conference on the International Day of Peace.

The Organisation's main goal is to promote the culture of peace and non violence in Africa and also across the world. Other goals are to promote gender balance; fight against sexual violence committed against women and promote human rights.

Spéro's organisation has done a great job in the past by organising activities aimed at sensitizing and cultivating peace. For example when the presidential elections were held they've made tours in the colleges and university of Cotonou to create awareness on the necessity of non-violence and peace. Currently,



his organisation is developing collaboration with UNOY Peacebuilders on Advocacy Work. The aim is to advocate the decade of the culture of peace in Benin; and more specifically within the ministries of primary & secondary education and youth. So far he has done a great job; keep it up Spéro!

3. NETWORK NEWS

3.1 Overview of the Year 2006

The year 2006 was a very productive year for UNOY Peacebuilders. Here we've listed the main activities we have organised and participated in*:

March/April - Building Peace Skills Training in the Netherlands.

***2-4 June** - 2ème Salon International des Initiatives de Paix, Paris. The Salon was organised in the framework of the International Decade for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

24-28 July - Building Peace Skills Training in the Netherlands.

July/August - Visits to Kenya and West Africa for the Network Capacity Development Project.

19-25 August - Training in Crimea, Ukraine. Here are some comments of the participants on what the training learned them:

'I had the feeling that I was learning all these truly important skills about all this "grown-up" issues and found that my abilities exceed my imagination.'

'I got information which interested me and also new friends and partners for future projects. About peace building, about negotiation, about project management. It made me realise that it is not just extremely difficult but also truly possible to make a difference.'

'That peace and conflict are so multidimensional. That 'peace' means different things for different people. I learned something about negotiation and communication.'

21-27 August - Study Visit to the Philippines.

The purpose of the visit was to study the situation of children and youth affected by different forms of violence.

***September** Speech at the Soroptimist in Birmingham.

***18 September** - Mosque Visit, Persatuan Permuda Muslim se Europa Mosque in The Hague.

21 September - International Peace Day Celebration at the beach of Scheveningen, The Hague.

October - Youth Advocacy Team lobbying at the UN. Have a look at the theme in focus section for more information on this happening.

14 October - African Students Conference.

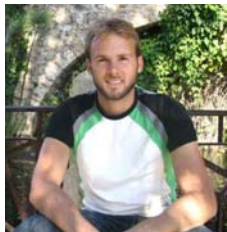
The annual African Students Conference was held at the Institute for Social Studies in The Hague. The theme of this year's conference was the impact of religion on peacebuilding: On the one hand many wars have involved religious aspects, and their numbers are on the increase. Meanwhile, it is also true, especially in countries in the global South, that many peace-builders and leaders of social change draw their inspiration from religious or spiritual sources. This year the event was organised by Vera Silva. All the efforts she has put in to this conference have truly paid off, since the day was a veritable success. Her

internship has just recently ended. We will surely miss her devotion and organising skills here in the office!

16-20 October - Expert Meeting, on the Network Capacity Development Project, School. The experts meeting in School provided us with many helpful suggestions to improve our network. Since there are important changes coming up, we've decided to send an extra annex in which we'll explain to you all the major developments and changes.

3.2 New International Coordinator

Past October we were glad to receive Menno Ettema joining the UNOY team as the new international coordinator.



Menno Ettema is from The Netherlands, but he has lived before in the UK, Israel and Palestine. He has an MA in Psychology of Culture and Religion, from the University of

Nijmegen, The Netherlands. He researched on the issues of identity and integration. These interests guided his social engagement in the fields of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, mediation and non-violent communication. He initiated the association 'Con-Young-Tion' and organised several youth exchanges in the Netherlands with participants from Israel (Jewish and Palestinian), Palestine, Belgium and The Netherlands. His motivation to work for UNOY Peacebuilders comes from these experiences and admiration for those that are making a difference in their communities.

Celina Del Felice will remain involved in a support and advising role. We thank Celina very much for her commitment and great work for the past three years.

4. THEME IN FOCUS; "Advocating at the UN" By Jessica van der Kamp.

In my 12-month tenure at UNOY Peacebuilders, I embarked on a journey that challenged me both intellectually, and most importantly convinced me of the infinite potential of youth. I had the honour of coordinating the Youth Advocacy Team a project organized by UNOY Peacebuilders and Fundacion Cultura de Paz that did advocacy at the United Nations, while also representing the youth voice at both the International Conference on the reform of international institutions, and the Netherlands NGO Platform for the International Criminal Court. Here's a brief story on the experiences of the Youth Advocacy Team in New York:

Convinced that it was within the capacity of the member states of the United Nations and its various organs, to strengthen efforts to create a Culture of Peace, twelve youth descended upon the headquarters of the United Nations in New York. In the first week, the youth came across several obstacles. Nevertheless, the youth found



Jessica and Robin Pitt in the office in The Hague.

creative ways to skirt the difficulties they faced. The youth made maximum use of the opportunities they had before them to arrange their meetings. Nonetheless it wasn't always easy to get what they wanted. In the end they still persisted and their enthusiasm pulled it off.

In the second week, the tides turned. As they found themselves suddenly snowballed with appointments, it became the youth with whom meetings were sought. Juggling the back-to-back meetings, the youth met with representatives from 67 Permanent Mission, and in many cases meeting the Ambassadors themselves. Representatives from several organs of the UN were also met, and advice was received on how the implementation of the proposals of the youth could best be achieved.



In the space of two weeks, the youth moved the United Nations several steps closer towards their vision of a Culture of Peace:

- The inclusion of the Culture of Peace within the mandate of Peacebuilding Commission, at the suggestion of the youths, was received and included as an amendment in this year's resolution on the Culture of Peace (A/Res/61/45).
- Recognising the efforts of the youth to mobilize a change, the Ambassador of Bangladesh, in the General Assembly, gave "*particular mention... must be made of the young foot-soldiers of Fundación Cultura de Paz*"¹.
- The number of co-sponsors to this year's resolution increased from 108 to 114.
- The Global Youth Report on the Culture of Peace was included in the high-level report of the Alliance of Civilizations, and "as a decisive contribution to the Culture of Peace", the creation Global Youth Alliance is now one of the recommended actions of the Alliance in its activities in relation to youth².
- The efforts of the team were noted by the Media Alert and several official press releases of the United Nations.

SUPPORT UNOY PEACEBUILDERS

UNOY Peacebuilders needs your help to develop and grow in outreach and strength, either in terms of finances, materials or work. Your donation of any size will be used to train and enhance the capacity of young people to engage effectively in building peace.

You can financially contribute by making a deposit in our bank account: ABN-AMRO Bank; ACCOUNT: 55 40 70 294; IBAN: NL91ABNA0554070294; BIC: ABNANL2A

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¹ Chowdhury, Dr., Ambassador. HE., I.A., Speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations, 3 November 2006

² Zapetero, J.L.R., Prime Minister of Spain, Speech on the Report of the High Level Group of the Alliance of Civilization, 13 November, 2006