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## 1. MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear friends,

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders is proud to announce in its 68 edition, the appointment of the new board as well as the induction of new members in the team. On 11 December, 2010, there will be an African Conference event held in Pier, Scheveningen in Den Haag. This conference would be an exciting opportunity for those interested in gender issues. Added to the specter of gender, is the UNOY Gender Study Session Report, which was held in cooperation with the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania, as well with Peace Dialogue from Armenia in December 2009.

This edition of the newsletter would also see the departure of former editor Angela Cartagena, who has left the UNOY family for Madrid, Spain to complete her Bachelor's in political science. Acting, on and behalf of the UNOY team, we wish her the very best in her future endeavours. In her place, I shall take over her position as Communications and Advocacy Outreach officer, and am delighted at the prospect of working with a team of hard working dedicated professionals who strive for excellence. Together, we hope to bring you well informed information on a variety of subject matter related to UNOY.

Peaceful regards,  
Suhith Sitharthan  
Editor

## 2. CAMPAIGN NEWS

### 2.1 Reflection on UNOY's gender activities in September



You can read below the reflections on these experiences from one of our participants, Armand Giramahoro, from the member organisation Amahoro Youth Club (AYC), Burundi, who participated in UNOY Peacebuilders week-long gender training as well as to the evaluation of UNOY Peacebuilders' gender programme.

*8 and 9 September were dates I titled "Learning Experience". With a good facilitation of the external*

*facilitator Richard Smith from South Africa. UNOY Peacebuilders has one more time brought in my life courage in being creative. Step by step, sharing ideas and reminding each other the history of the UNOY Gender Working Group, I realized that everything is possible and that networking is the efficient tool in order to get people from different parts of the world working together for issues that affect humanity. I found out that the UNOY Gender Working Group is the fruit of the combination of the work at UNOY Secretariat in The Hague and the work of members living in various countries of the world. This was amazing for me; it was amazing to see what we have achieved, starting by the participation of Menno in a conference in 2008, until the training session that UNOY organized on 10-13 September 2010. It was amazing to see that we can implement a project by networking and this will help us working with many people from far places and achieve our goals together as if we lived in the same country.*

*This was so related to the first training we had, together with wonderful 20 young people from Europe, Africa and Asia, which treated the issue of diversity. We are all citizens of the world; some may feel it others not due to different experiences of life, but I realized that by networking, youth are able to change the world because we have the same thinking. At the end of the training session, I was very happy to see how young people are concerned about the issue of gender and that they have planned to implement projects in their respective countries in order to work against all discriminations based on gender.*

*Armand Giramahoro*

### 2.2 Does the absence of war mean peace? The Discussion of the Month at UNOY's Africa Peace Group, by Roosmarijn de Geus

This month an interesting discussion was shared on Africapeacenet by one of the members. The following question was posed: "In Africa there are countries experiencing wars and there are others not experiencing wars. Is there really peace in those areas not experiencing wars?" This statement immediately led to debate and inspired a big "No" from other Africapeacenet members. The absence of war does not equal peace people said. Most argued that in order for there to be peace other factors such as peaceful neighbours, equal justice, sharing of resources and democracy are required.

The follow-up question was posed whether this meant peace equals democracy? Again, most participants did not agree with this statement. Several members stated when every citizen is heard by their government and are treated equally, then peace would prevail. In addition, it was argued that the meaning of peace differs from person to person and that peace is an individual state of mind. Nevertheless, others argued the absence of violence still remains the main feature of peace.

In conclusion, peace is considered to involve many things; absence of violence, peaceful neighbours, equal justice and rights for all, and also a state of mind.

Since this discussion was so lively and inspired more activity on the yahoo group, the idea originated to make it a recurring monthly-event. A Discussion of the Month! Every month the UNOY Africapeacenet moderator will post a discussion item to which everybody can react. Since the yahoo group has 320 members from very different backgrounds, all with their own knowledge and expertise, this should lead to some lively discussions! You are all invited to participate! Contact [africa@unoy.org](mailto:africa@unoy.org) if you want to join! Let's get the discussion started!

### 2.3. UNOY Peacebuilders' new board.

The UNOY Peacebuilders' board has completed its two year-term. A new board has been selected, consisting of young and experienced people. The appointment of six new board members on 6 November 2010, closed the chapter of previous team led by Wout Visser. Mr Visser, the former chair person of the board of 2008-10 was both reflective and appreciative of his time spent with former team mates. During his two year term, he worked with a group of dedicated people whose contribution to UNOY allowed the organisation to further develop. "I would like to thank Ama, Anika, Dinu, Lilian, Marloes, Pieternel, Rana, Sajeev and Sihle for their invaluable contributions to our successful term, and the fun we shared" he said.

Mr Visser was confident the efforts of his team coupled with the close collaboration with the staff at the Secretariat and the International Steering Group, has strengthened UNOY Peacebuilders as whole. Addressing the new board, Visser wished the members well in their endeavours whilst maintaining the new multi year strategy should provide them with clear directions for the future. Ms Marijke van Velzen, who is co-chair of the board, believes the next two years would be a challenge. "We have to work hard on our communication, advocacy, and outreach strategy and I am positive we will accomplish these goals within the next two years, because the team is outstanding," she said. Reaching more youths with UNOY's message continues to be relevant both in conflict and non-conflictual settings as their involvement is crucial for creating collective peace in the future.

The new board consist of: Rob Watson, Lieke Scheewe, Merlijn van Waas, Jennifer Aggus, Marije van Velzen, Maya Khudamurad, Wout Visser and Lilian Pieters.

### 2.4 Who Joined Us, Who Left

This month UNOY Peacebuilders is saying goodbye to one of its former Latin American Desk Officer, **Camila Ferro**, who is moving on to pursue new opportunities in her professional career.

Besides, **Marloes van Houten** left her post as Projects Coordinator and management team member at the end of October 2010.

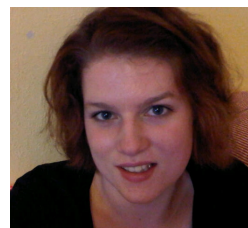
*Dear wonderful young peacemakers,*

*What inspired me when I first entered the office of UNOY Peacebuilders in April 2008 is that I saw a very dynamic group of young people from different nations joining hands to work on social justice and peace building at the global level. I am very grateful to have been introduced to this international network of moved young people whom have the courage to work towards the transformation of situations of violence to coexistence, cooperation, and peace. I have worked with a lot of pleasure and commitment for UNOY as a board member (2008 - 2009) and as a Projects Coordinator/management team member (2009 - 2010).*

*In december I will take up a research fellowship at the International Institute of Asian Studies (Leiden/Amsterdam). My research will be about the role of culture (sports, arts and rituals) in individual and collective trauma healing processes of victims/actors of violence. I wish everyone in the UNOY network inspiration to be innovative and authentic in their approaches to work on peace. If you want to contact me you can write an email to [mrls.vanhouten@gmail.com](mailto:mrls.vanhouten@gmail.com)*

*Peace out,  
Marloes*

On the other hand, we are happy to welcome three new members to the office whose profiles can be found below:



**Roosmarijn de Geus** is from the Netherlands and completed a Bachelor in International Relations and a Master in Conflict studies and Human Rights, both at Utrecht University. During her studies she focused on issues of human

rights, the changing character of war and democratization. In the course of her master she completed an internship with the Dutch NGO Cordaid for which she worked with the emergency aid and reconstruction sector, specifically on Sudan. She wrote her Master thesis on the recent elections in Sudan and democratization in post-conflict societies. She will work



with UNOY Peacebuilders at the Africa Desk and assist with the organization of the African Students' Conference.

**Jeltsje Boersma** is from the Netherlands and currently joins UNOY as Project Leader African Conference. She holds a BA in

International Relations (UvA) and a MSc in Conflict Resolution and Governance at the ISHSS. Jeltsje partly obtained her degree in Sydney at the University of New South Wales and carried out an internship as Project Assistant Lobby Politicians at Fairfood International. A study trip to Yemen inspired her to write her MA thesis on the security issues in this particular country. After finishing her Master she worked as a PR coordinator in India for a NGO called Calcutta Rescue. Besides UNOY, Jeltsje also works as a Junior Consultant at MeetingMoreMinds.



**Kathrin Gottwald** is from Germany. She holds a B.A. Honors in International Development Studies from McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and completed her M.A. in International Peace Studies at the University for Peace in Costa Rica. She has volunteered in Kenya and interned at the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy in Washington DC as Program Officer for Somalia and the Niger Delta. In 2009 Kathrin was working for UNOY Peacebuilders as African Desk Officer and to organize the African Students Conference 2009. She recently joined UNOY Peacebuilders again as African Training Project Leader.

### 3. HIGHLIGHTED RESOURCES

#### 3.1 UNOY Gender Study Session Report

From November 29 to December 6 2009, UNOY Peacebuilders together with PATRIR from Romania and Peace Dialogue from Armenia organised a study session on Gender Equality in Youth Peacebuilding Projects. The session was supported by the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sports and held at their European Youth Centre in Budapest. In addition to the five-person implementation team, 29 participants from 22 countries came together to share their experiences and learn from each other and the trainers. The purpose of the study session was to explore how youth peace NGOs can address and challenge gender inequality when implementing projects and activities. The report from the week-long study session is now available for downloading at:



[http://www.unoy.org/downloads/UNOY\\_gender\\_study\\_session\\_report.pdf](http://www.unoy.org/downloads/UNOY_gender_study_session_report.pdf)

We hope the report will be a useful document for other youth peace organisations that would like make their peacebuilding project more gender sensitive!

### 4. OPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS

#### 4.1 African Conference 2010

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders in Collaboration with The African Committee (TAC), Hirida, Support Trust Fund for African Development (STAD and African Sky is currently organising the 12th annual



charge!

African Conference, previously known as African Student Conference. This years' conference is: **Building Peace in Africa: Health through a gender lens in a human right and socio-economical perspective**

The conference will be held on 11 December 2010 at de Pier in Scheveningen, The Hague from 09:50-18:30. Participation will be free of

The African Conference (AC) has grown into a significant event attracting about 250-300 participants every year. The conference is primarily intended for African students residing in the Netherlands and African Diaspora youth. Other students or academics with an interest in the subject, representatives of NGOs, officials, and other concerned persons/organisations are invited as well.

This years' topic is "Building Peace in Africa: Health through a gender lens in a human right and socio-economical perspective". We are envisioning an inspiring event which creates awareness about the importance of gender perceptions and relations when looking at health in a holistic manner can be the start of an empowerment process of women and men. When both sexes work together this has great potential to result in an improvement of the health status of vulnerable groups and less strife and violence over all kinds of resources.

The AC 2010 will feature inspiring speakers, workshops and an information market. It is a leading event for awareness raising and promotion of interdisciplinary and inter-cultural dialogue, research and action and stresses the role of youth and civil society in peacebuilding efforts. In addition, the conference offers a forum for African students, African Diaspora youth and Dutch students to meet, discuss, and exchange inspiring ideas. For more information on this event, and how to register, please visit the conference website: [www.unoy.org](http://www.unoy.org)

#### 4.2 Preparation meeting for Global Jobshadowing project from 9 to 13 November, 2010

By Vera Santner

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders together with nine of its member organisations is organising a project where 10 youth leaders hailing from Argentina, Ghana, Italy, Kenya, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Sierra Leone, and Spain. These youth leaders are working on peace building in relation to poverty, social exclusion and gender equality initiatives which will engage in job shadowing exchanges will take place

in May and June next year. The main objective of the project is to improve future international cooperation, and through it ensure the partners have a good understanding of the working realities of their counterparts and the potential limitation and strengths of their future cooperation.



From 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> November, the members of the core team of this project met for a preparation meeting in the UNOY office in Den Haag. Victoria Vasalo from the Argentine Youth Organization for

the United Nations, Meghann Aurea Villanueva from the Fundació Catalunya Voluntària, and Mohamed Sillah Sesay from Young Leaders of Sierra Leone joined Lillian Solheim and Vera Santner from UNOY for four days of intensive work. During which the team was able to set a main framework for every aspect of the project. Issues discussed spanned from co-funding options over the projects website to a proposed program for the jobshadowing week and members from the core team were really satisfied with the amount of issues they were able to tackle. The outcomes of this project will also be made accessible for other organisations on the projects website that will be launched in March 2011. There you will be, for example, able to follow the jobshadowers' experience in their blogs.

#### **4.3 Upcoming project for Dutch students on the impact of the European Union's development policies and violence on youth in eight (post)conflict countries in the South**

UNOY Peacebuilders is very pleased to announce between December 2010, and July 2011, UNOY will organise a project for Dutch students on the impact of the European Union's development policies and violence on youth in eight (post)conflict countries in the South. Fifteen to 20 youth student teams comprising four to six persons from different cities in the Netherlands will research on these issues and summarize it in their position papers. They will be assisted by a youth active in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation from one of UNOY's member organisations.

Prior to that research period UNOY will offer trainings on conflict and actor mapping and advocacy in seven cities across the Netherlands for both participants and other interested youths. A team of experts and advisors

chosen by UNOY will select the best proposal submitted by the teams and the winning team together with their partner in the South will have the opportunity to go to an advocacy meeting to Brussels, Belgium. Once there, the winning team will meet EU representatives of the European Parliament and policy officers of the Directorate General for Development to present their position paper.

The project aims to give Dutch students the opportunity to be involved in the field of development cooperation advocacy and get acquainted with the day-to-day reality of young people in the global South and how their lives are influenced by EU policies. If anyone is interested in the project, either to support the team or to participate, please do not hesitate to contact us.

#### **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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