

Dear friends,

Welcome to the special edition of Peace It Together NEWS on the occasion of the International Day of Peace! As you might probably know, the International Day of Peace is celebrated annually on September 21, with the backing of United Nations and virtually all its member states. Of course, UNOY Peacebuilders, as well as its member organisations, have dedicated once again a huge amount of energy and effort to commemorate such an important day. You can find an outline of some of these activities and events in the following stories we have selected for you!

And remember! We are still looking forward to read about how did you celebrate 2010 International Day of Peace! If you would like to share your story with us, please submit it at: campaign@unoy.org.

Peaceful regards,
Angela Cartagena
Editor

1. UNOY Peacebuilders – THE NETHERLANDS

One-week campaign to commemorate the International Day of Peace



The International Day of Peace, recognized by practically all of United Nation's members, is celebrated yearly on the 21st of September since 1981. Naturally, UNOY

Peacebuilders, together with partner organisations from the Netherlands, prepared different events to celebrate such a special date.

It is important to mention that The Hague, known as the city of Peace and Justice, has been chosen by these organizations as the main location for these events. This year's International Day of Peace, however, coincided with an important Dutch holiday called "Prinsjesdag". This day is very important in the Netherlands, as the Dutch Parliament must present its plan for the coming year and the Queen delivers an opening speech in The Hague. This means the city was full of people from all over the country, all anxious to see the Queen and the rest of the Royal family passing by on their golden carriage. This, of course, was very helpful for the UNOY to raise awareness about the International Day of Peace, since the city was much busier than normal!

The events leading up to the International Day of Peace, however, began about a week before the day itself. Volunteers from UNOY have engaged in a street

More than fifty stories about the activities held worldwide on September 21 have been uploaded on the PeacePortal Blog on the International Day of Peace. If you would like to know more about how this special day was commemorated by different organisations all over the world, please visit www.peaceportal.org. You can vote and comment on your favourite ones there!

campaign, which means that different groups of people have visited schools in The Hague and surroundings collecting pictures with peace statements from students. These pictures were uploaded on the **Peaceportal.org** website, supported by the **European Center for Conflict Prevention (ECCP)**. Furthermore, another important feature of the website was the Blogs for Peace. These blogs had as their objective to raise awareness about conflicts in the Philippines, Georgia, Colombia, Burundi and Somalia. In order to humanize the people who daily endure these conflicts, youth representatives from each country were invited to host these blogs and answer any questions visitors may have.



Apart from promoting serious issues related to peace, volunteers were also at schools to promote other important events organized by UNOY's partner organizations: a GPS Game, from **Upact** and a party at the Grote Kerk, from **Culture Clash 4U**. These events were both going to take place in The Hague, on the 18th of September, the weekend before the International Day of Peace. Through the GPS Game, participants had the chance to discover The Hague and the Millennium Development Goals through a fun and interactive way: by solving (secret) battle missions. The winning team got a prize offered by the Coffee Company. The party, on its turn, had varied acts, ranging from Thai dancers to famous Dutch bands; all of which were happy to announce to the crowd we were celebrating the International Day of Peace.



The next and final step of these series of events was the distribution of peace roses and tulip bulbs provided by the **Valentine for Peace Project**, which were to be distributed at two Coffee Company locations in the center of The Hague on the 21st of September itself. Next to the roses, once more UNOY's volunteers were present at both

Coffee Companies inviting people to leave their peace statements and their picture on the PeacePortal website. The city, due to Prinsjesdag, was really busy that day, what helped UNOY's team of volunteers to execute an even more successful job at promoting peace and its very own day.

2. Amahoro Youth Club (AYC) - BURUNDI Former Street Children and Street Youngsters Celebrated the Peace Day



21st September 2010, afternoon, the weather was cool; the wind from the lake blew softly and the lake was so calm. This was the atmosphere around the edge of Lake Tanganyika near Bujumbura Port, when seventeen AYC members and five former street children who now live at Magnus' house met twenty street youngsters to celebrate the International Day of peace.

Just one minute was enough to get in touch as AYC is always with them; laughter jokes were signs of welcome. Names recalling and story telling, peace was apparent on their faces. To start the celebration, prayers through songs to thank God for the great moment he offered so that even street youngsters get able to see the peace day and meet people who can assist them and celebrate with them. Different drawings they made showed what real peace is. In peace, houses are built and people have where to stay in. Very meaningful because they do not have where take shelter, they sleep under open sky; rain and sun meet them there. They lack peace of heart.



After an introduction speech announcing the meaning of the day and the activities organized to celebrate the peace day, all took action in picking all dirty objects in that place that serves all people who use it to give peace to their hearts by contemplating the miraculous lake or

by doing some gymnastics. Very interesting and quickly understood activity because this place is their home. Everybody got to the duty and twenty trashcans were full within some minutes. It was unbelievable to see how those forgotten and thrown to them by the rest of the society were so motivated. The only thing they need is people who can orient them. They are wonderful guys.

Some peace songs to relax played by the former street children and hands claps from the rest, discussions on peace and development concepts begun. Very reach and building discussions from the guys, what someone could not expect from them. To the question of defining peace, they answered that peace is what we see through love that we have to each other. In peace, there are no children sleeping in streets or under trees or dying of hunger. Peace means total security. They know that development is possible when there is peace and that development is a supporting pillar of peace. When there is development, no more children seen in streets; they go to school, have homes and no more criminality.



AYC moderator during the discussions advised the street youngsters about the behavior to adopt in tempting situations such as inciting them to participate in war, robbery acts or prostitution. He asked them to be watchful and listen to those who tell them how they can participate in self and the country development.

They even made recommendations to promote peace and development that someone can divide in two orientations:

- *To the Government:* to promote justice, fight against famine, establish programs that will help children leave the streets, teach those who are beyond school age professional activities and send to school those who are in school age for capacity building, listen to them and promote their rights.
- *From themselves:* they promised love, happiness, to leave criminality, to go to school and learn professional activities.

After the wonderful discussions, came the good time of sharing the cake and glass to cheer of the peace day. They could not imagine that they could enjoy and share with someone different from them as they are hated and accused of all bad deeds by the society. They confirmed that they felt peace signs in their hearts; what brought satisfaction to AYC members because change starts by simple actions.



The celebration of the peace day went on by offering some cloths collected by AYC members as sign of awareness of the first needs of those street youngsters despite the limited means to assure all necessary needs.

They finally closed the activities with the promise of meeting often in order to share ideas on what to do to get their lives changed for the better and promote peace. It was around 17:45 when peace bye bye were exchanged.

3. Somaliland Youth Development Association (SOYDA) - SOMALIA

Somaliland Youth Development Association (SOYDA) organizes peace promoting Celebration Event on the international day of peace



SOYDA conducted a peace commemorating Gathering for the Somaliland young people on the 21st of Sept, 2010. Taking in account the importance of informing the young population on how the day is celebrated around the world and the intentionally accepted Theme of year, being Peace = Future, SOYDA has presented a well organized event and demonstrated Theme of the Year on a well-decorated banner as shown on the displayed photos. In response to the existing peace and security concern in Somaliland, SOYDA privileged to develop a local Theme addressing the significance of uniting for peace promotion and conflict prevention that was “Let us unite for security strengthening and Development”. The purpose behind addressing the above Theme was to encourage the young people actively participate in all efforts aiming at maintaining the prevailing peace and inspiring them develop the culture of peace builders and conflict resolution agents.

The commemoration Ceremony was held at SOYDA Conference HALL and attended by young participants from the civil society organizations, educational institutions (Universities, Colleges etc), distinguished individuals, the Media and other honorable guests. The participants have strongly expressed their demand on creating a sustainable peace in the Horn of Africa, particularly in the neighboring country of Somalia.



Additionally, SOYDA has publicized a press release calling for the Somaliland populace and those in the Horn of Africa to unite for the creation of sustainable peace in the region through

the involvement peace building activities. The Executive Director of SOYDA Mr. Hashi Abdillahi Hassan has delivered the Press Release with the presence of the different Media Actors.

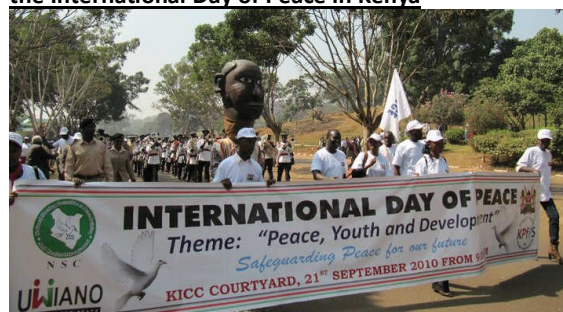


The Director briefly highlighted the significance of peace to social prosperity and its role in the context of realizing the Millennium Development Goals. He inspired the Somaliland young population to unite for the strengthening of peace and conflict prevention and be dynamic peace building activists. The other distinguished speakers included the chairperson of SOYDA Miss Faiza Ali who emphasized the importance of celebrating the international day of peace and inspired the young attendants be volunteer peace builders and come together and say no to more violence and conflicts.

It is notable that the participants of the celebration were mostly young people interesting in taking part the commemoration of the day as to learn more on the international day of peace and express their contributive feeling on the day. Ultimately the occasion was officially closed by the Director General of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affair his excellence Mr. Bashe Yusuf Ahmed who encouraged the participants and general public to actively contribute their energy and talent in the context of security strengthening and peace prevalence.

4. Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA) – KENYA

More than 30 organisations celebrate in partnership the International Day of Peace in Kenya



In partnership with other Civil Society organisations, coalescing under four umbrella organizations namely Kenya Partnership for Peace and Security, UWIANO Platform, NSC and Government Ministries, this year’s event on the International Day of Peace, was planned and implemented by over 30 organizations, being the Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA) one of them.

The event began with a 3km peace procession, started at 9.30 am at Uhuru Park, Nairobi, and flagged off by the Provincial Commissioner. The aim of the peace march was to promote awareness about the day to the citizens and also rally them to always choose peace. The procession passed through major streets in the city ending at Kenyatta International Conference Centre,

where guests were to be entertained by seven different youth groups on poems, songs and skits about peace. There were also speeches from youth and women representatives, Civil Society organisations representatives, development partners representatives and the chief guest, Secretary to the Cabinet, Ambassador Muthaura, who gave the keynote address.



As part of the programme, all participants stood for a moment of silence at 12.00, and finally the event came to an end with drumming for peace by invited artists.

The celebrations, which lasted over six hours and were attended by over 1,000 participants, culminated with the Peace Champions Awards, where peace organizations and individuals who had done outstanding work on peace were recognized by being given peace awards. We decided to reward some of the “peace champions” of Kenya as part of the International Day of Peace celebrations because at COPA, we believe in our communities there are individuals who have significantly contributed towards peace and unity, and influenced others to become agents of peace.



In order to recognise and reward their efforts, we asked people in different affected by conflict areas of Kenya to nominate a member of their community who

has done significant peacebuilding work within their community. The five most nominated individuals were offered a scholarship for attending a ten-day Peacebuilding Training in Nairobi in the beginning of November.

Besides, as part of this same process, we are creating a booklet with stories from the peace champions, highlighting their struggles, challenges and achievements which we hope will inspire others to choose the path of Peace.

5. Kenya Youth Foundation (KYF) - KENYA **Youth Building Bridges for Peace in Kibera Joint Forum (Kenya)**

Youth Building Bridges for Peace (YOBPEK), which is a project of Kenya Youth Foundation supported by Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), hosted a joint forum for Kibera residents to celebrate the International Day of Peace on 21 September 2010. It

was the first time that participants were brought together from the 13 villages where the project is being implemented.

The occasion was graced by the Government Representatives, the Chief of Sarangombe location, Mr. DO. Ouma Nykach, and CAFOD Regional Programme Manager for Eastern Africa, Mr. Willis Simfukwe, assisted by CAFOD Peace & Justice Programme Officer, Mr. Tom Onyango.

The forum, that brought together over 100 participants, comprising young people, women and men, discussed how bad leadership has contributed to conflict and violence in Kibera. Participants cried that leaders have been inciting, manipulating, and dividing people on tribal lines, and that they are so self-centred that would not mind keeping the status quo while people suffer as a result of violence.

It was agreed that Kibera residents will take the lead in ensuring that these self-centred leaders do not take advantage of the poverty of the people. Young people were advised to engage in income generating activities so that they do not fall prey to politicians.

Guests, meanwhile, challenged people to guard peace seriously and do not allow outsiders and self seekers to destabilize them.

The event, which ended at 1 pm., resolved that villages forums should be strengthened towards long lasting peace and stability in Kibera.

6. Generation Peace Youth Network (GenPeace) - PHILIPPINES

II Annual Collaborative Effort of the Peace Day Preparatory Committee spearheaded by Generation Peace Youth Network



Quezon City, Philippines--Generation Peace Youth Network spearheaded the 2010 Peace Day celebration with a community spirit. The community event consisted of a mélange of international organizations, NGOs, youth organizations, urban and rural community members, schools, religious organizations, government agencies, parliamentarians and prominent peace advocates.



The public event kicked off with a ribbon untying ceremony with the Vice Mayor of Quezon City and the Assistant Secretary of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process. This is followed by interfaith prayers from Muslim, Christian, Ba'hai, Indigenous traditions, Buddhist, and other world religions.

Representatives of war evacuees of Mindanao also flew to Manila to tell their stories to the youth. Solidarity messages from a parliamentarian, NGOs, youth leaders, the Muslim community, Christian associations, Indigenous peoples, and the UNDP and UNV were delivered during the event.

Cultural presentations, reading of peace poetry, musical numbers, a theatrical number, a symphonic band, a nose-flute instrumental music, and indigenous guitar jamming sessions were some of the highlights of the Peace Day themed: "Sustaining the Youth Engagement, Bridging the Peacebuilding Gaps." Exhibit booths showcased different advocacies and ways for youth to participate in them. Some booths sold shirts for causes such as interfaith dialogue, international humanitarian law, and youth involvement in peacebuilding.

The closing ritual involved the entire community where peace messages were written by everyone and pinned to a peace mural. The different peoples involved in the event pinned coloured flowers and formed a peace dove and the peace sign.



September 21 is the UN-declared International Day of Peace. In the Philippines September 21, 1972 is also the day that Presidential Decree 1081 or more popularly known as Martial Law is declared in the country. It is with these two historic events in mind that we celebrate and critically collaborate for peace.

GenPeace also addressed government leaders during the opening of the peace month on September 1 by sharing the importance of youth in peacebuilding and in finding lasting solutions to the armed conflict in the country. GenPeace also promotes peace through numerous workshops and forums around the country before and after the International Day of Peace Celebration. Some highlights of the youth projects on peace are found at www.genpeace.tk



7. Dinamismo Juvenil - MEXICO

Training on the Culture of Peace

In order to commemorate the International Day of Peace, on September 21, Dinamismo Juvenil began a training on the culture of peace aimed at 200 teen-agers which is expected to be finished by the second week of December.

Besides, the week beginning the 21st, different workshops were held. There, teens-agers analyzed how violence looks like normal in our every day life, and how we can change this "normal thing" into a culture of peace. As a way to do so, some teen-agers drew symbols of peace against symbols of violence, while others composed really beautiful poems about peace as a message to the world.

8. The African Youth Relief Organisation (AYRO) - BENIN

A marathon for peace in Benin.

The African Youth Relief Organisation (AYRO), in partnership with GLEBENU Network, Social Watch Benin and the entire Civil Society, organized the first edition of "a marathon for peace" to commemorate the International Day of Peace.

People gathered early in the morning of September 21, ready for the five and seven kilometres marathons women and men were going to run respectively. The signal to start was then given and, about four hours later, we got the first among men, Mr Amos Tienga, and the first among women Ms Eliane Oussou. Right after that, AYRO President, Mr Spero Hector ACKEY, shared with the audience a short message about peace notions, which was followed by GLEBENU Network representative and Social Watch Benin representative peace messages. Everyone went back home pleased; the marathon winners with their prizes, the others with great satisfaction in their hurts.

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:
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