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1. MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear friends,

As the new editor of this newsletter, I am delighted to present the February edition of Peace It Together News. In this edition, our member of month is Service Civil International - you can find an outline of their work in the section below. In Campaign News, UNOY Peacebuilders has planned and participated in a number of events, and has also been busy welcoming new interns, while saying 'so-long' to others. In Network News you will find that our member organizations have been active in a number of projects and initiatives - from creating animated videos, to having fun on the beach with street children - all of which are highlighted below. I hope that UNOY Peacebuilders February newsletter is an informative and motivating tool for all those working to build peace in the world. If you have articles, resources or ideas for future editions of the newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact campaign@unoy.org.

Peaceful regards,
Ashley Renders, Editor

2. MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Deeds not Words by Service Civil International

SCI is an international movement working for peace, tolerance and justice with 43 branches and groups, and an ever-growing number of partners all over the world. Founded in 1920, peace-activists from different countries gathered in the Netherlands to discuss the First World War which had just ended and ways to prevent such a destructive war from happening again. After two or three days of talking, someone stood up and stated it was time to start talking about what we should **do!** The idea of a social service was thus born as an alternative to military service. Volunteers from different countries would come together to live and work together for the benefit of the local society.

The first project, or so called work-camp, took place in nearby Verdun, France, and the work consisted of reconstructing houses that were destroyed during the war. The composition of the group of volunteers was special in the sense that both French and German volunteers, from countries which had been just fighting each other in recent past, worked together.

Nowadays, the core activities of Service Civil International are still work-camps: projects that last for two or three weeks and have the main aim of supporting local communities, who are striving for a better society. They are organized mostly in the summer period - from an environmental project in Russia to working with disabled people in France, to a building project in India, to working with migrants in Italy. Even though times have changed and the ideology of an alternative military service is not that strong anymore, a work-camp in the view of SCI is still a deed and a seed for peace.

The SCI international secretariat is situated in Antwerp, Belgium, whose main mission is supporting communication, cooperation and seminars and trainings on the international level in close cooperation with its branches. Nevertheless, SCI is mostly a decentralized organization with projects being organized by the branches and the groups. These are situated in Europe and Asia, and since December 2009 we have also added groups in Africa and Latin-America.

February is usually the month in which the camps are announced inside SCI and to the wider public, and in the middle of March the placement-season starts. In February, most branches work out the details of their camps - the dates, the place, the work, the study-theme, and write a short camp description. Those descriptions are nowadays uploaded in the 'work-camp-database'. This will be the first year in which the technical details are not being arranged by a physical meeting.

As said above, the camps can differ from each other and the peace-aspect may not be that profound anymore. Most volunteer participants also choose their camp, as they would like to have an alternative way of taking a holiday. Rather than becoming a tourist, they would like to play an active role in a local organization, which is striving for a better world on a small scale. In this way they also have contact with the local population.

Nevertheless, this year at the 90th anniversary of SCI, an initiative has been launched to organize twelve so called "no-more-war" work-camps in different countries. These work-camps have in common that they will especially promote the discussion about war and peace, look back at SCI's history and pay attention to war and conflict today. At the occasion of 90th anniversary of SCI, a travelling exhibition will be held reflecting on SCI's experience of volunteering for peace for nearly a century.

Meanwhile the regular activities of SCI will continue. Besides the work-camps, branches also organize long term voluntary (LTV) projects, where volunteers work for a period from three months up to one year on a local project. Moreover, SCI organizes regular seminars about topics such as volunteering, peace-education, project management etc. A recent seminar was held at the end of January in Ukraine with the title 'Staying Real, Going Virtual,' which examined the use of ICT for promoting volunteerism. Just this month, there was a seminar in Serbia entitled "Youth Facing The Global Challenges For Sustainable And Peaceful Future" which looked at sustainable living and climate change. In Sweden, at the beginning of April there will be training on Nonviolent Communication, called "Taking part in a world of conflicts." Also in April, there will be a seminar called "Open Your Mind to Diverse World", which will be held in Poland concerning intercultural learning. These seminars are in the first place for SCI-activists, but if other UNOY-members are interested they are of course welcome. An update of upcoming events is available through the International Secretariat who can be reached at info@sciint.org. Besides the regular website, (www.sciint.org) a special website about peace-education has been created where one can find methods of peace-education in general and peace-initiatives of SCI (www.spaceforpeace.net).

In the end, the work-camp is still the most inspiring event in SCI, which reaches about 3000 volunteers a year. The project is inspiring on a personal level by working and living together for two or three weeks on a common project, which leads to

global friendships and enriching personal experiences. It is also inspiring on a social level, as it leads to mutual understanding between people and cultures and it is often a sign of solidarity among people with fewer opportunities. As it was stated in the beginning, SCI's project is an alternative for military service - building a better and peaceful world together!

3. CAMPAIGN NEWS

3.1 Meeting on Euro-Med Youth Policies and Intercultural Dialogue by Fiona Burgess



From the 25 January to 28 January 2010, the meeting for 'Euro-Med Youth Policies on Intercultural Dialogue' took place in Strasbourg as part of the preparation for the Anna Lindh Forum 2010.

The meeting was co-

organised by the Foundation's headquarters in partnership with the Council of Europe and the European Commission. It tackled four major themes related to intercultural dialogue policies: mobility; integration and coexistence, non-formal education and new media. It gave an insight into youth policies in the region and the status of cooperation, as well as contributions to the development of recommendations for action in the framework of the Anna Lindh Forum 2010. A representative of UNOY Peacebuilders participated in the meeting and gave input from the perspective of young peacebuilders working in the field of intercultural dialogue.

3.2 Internal capacity building on sexual and gender based violence by Sarah Brun

On 4 February the UNOY gender officer Sarah Brun gave an internal capacity building session on gender based violence (GBV). Sarah focused her MA research on Sexual Violence in Conflict: Finding Justice in a Raped Society, Rebuilding Communities and Empowering Women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She drew on this research for the session, specifically discussing justice mechanisms available to the women in terms of traditional, national and international justice. This led to a general debate on gender based violence – what it is, who are the victims, who are the perpetrators, and what is being done to decrease the staggering numbers. One in three women will at some point in their life experience some form of violence against them. The group of participants, comprising about eight people discussed different forms of violence and how it should be dealt with. The purpose of the session was to remind people to continue putting GBV on the agenda, and to also give participants some tools for how to start a GBV discussion or include a module on it during a training they might give. All participants were given a list of resources and further reading after the session.

3.3 Follow up Evaluation on the Council of Europe Youth Forum on Human Rights Education by Menno Ettema

On 10-11 February 2010, the International Coordinator attended the Evaluation and Follow Up meeting of the Directorate Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe (CoE) in Budapest. During the meeting the Human Rights Education Forum for Youth held in October 2009 and the 60th anniversary of the CoE were discussed. The meeting was attended by youth participants among which the international Coordinator, Preparation team members of the Directorate youth and Sport, UN official and officials from other directorate of the CoE were present. Overall the group

concluded that the forum was a successful event, and led to a strong message from 200 youth from around the world in support of the importance of Human Rights Education and the work of the CoE. The youth called for continued efforts from the CoE and especially from all national governments of the CoE and world wide to promote an inclusive and constructive implementation of Human Rights Education.

During the two day follow up meeting this month, the recommendations were discussed and transformed into concrete recommendations and action points for the joint council of Youth and for us personally. For UNOY Peacebuilders it was of special importance to learn that gender and minority issues, especially the Roma community, will receive continued and growing attention, as will the focus on inclusion in general be a guiding principle in the youth directorate's work. For UNOY Peacebuilders, inclusion, gender equality and non discrimination are guiding principles for a Culture of Peace. Keep track of the developments on the website: <http://act4hre.opencontent.it/eng>

3.4 UNOY Considered for Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC by Ashley Renders

UNOY Peacebuilders is pleased to announce that after applying in May 2006, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations has recommended UNOY Peacebuilders for special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Receiving approval for this status will allow UNOY to work more closely with UN Agencies and other UN bodies by giving us the ability to attend ECOSOC meetings and circulate statements. We intend to use this as an opportunity to promote the role of youth in peacebuilding at the international level.

3.5 Who Joined Us and Who Left?

Sarah Brun and Rob Huysmans both finished their internships with UNOY Peacebuilders this month. We wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors. They will be missed at the UNOY Peacebuilders' office, but we have also welcomed three new interns to the team.



Darja Davydova is from Lithuania. She holds a BA in political science from Vilnius University and is about to finish her Research Master in social sciences at the University of Amsterdam, working on issues of homophobia and nationalism in Eastern Europe. Her research interests include intersections of gender, sexuality and nationalism, lesbian and gay politics and sexual health issues. Having previously worked with building civil society projects Darja is experienced in organising civic empowerment and informal education activities. At UNOY Darja will work as the Gender Officer.



Jenna Hietala is a Finnish national living, loving and studying in the Netherlands for the past four years. This spring, as the final part of her European Studies program at The Hague University, she is doing a five-month internship as the UNOY's Europe Desk Officer. Practical work experience in the multinational team and European network will ideally support her interest in culturally spiced Europe and her study focus in European cohesion and integration policies. Working with the European network also creates an opportunity to explore deeper into the Eastern European developments she has previously

learned about during her exchange in Czech Republic. After her internship Jenna is looking forward to continuing her studies with a Master's degree.



Ashley Renders is from Canada. She holds a Bachelors degree in Social Justice and Peace Studies and Political Science from the University of Western Ontario. After graduating she moved to the Netherlands to pursue a MA degree in Conflict Studies and Human Rights at Utrecht University. Her

research interests include the right to food, the role of the private sector in international human rights law, and non-violence as a social movement strategy. She will be filling the position of Advocacy and Communications Officer at UNOY.

4. NETWORK NEWS

4.1 Talking about Peace in the Middle of a Natural Disaster by the Latin American Network

The Club Initiative Jeune de Recherche, a corollary of Institute de Recherche et de Defense des Droits Humains (IREDH), runs socio-educative and cultural activities and it is working in the areas of the formation and the orientation of young people, including non violent solutions to conflicts, human rights and prevention of drug use. One month after the devastating earthquake in Haiti, UNOY Latin America network has received news from the organization's coordinator, Louis Moise. "Thank god," using his own words, he is still alive. With approximately 230 000 people dead, he feels very lucky to breathe, even in the middle of the rubble. He has lost his house and also the location of his association was destroyed. He is now one of more than a million homeless people remaining in Haiti, but even so, he has the strength to talk about the rebuilding of his association.

If building peace could be a struggle in societies where food and shelter are assured; for the Haitian population, where poverty is the rule, it is one of the biggest challenges, and the youth has a key role to play. The Latin American network wants to acknowledge its support to our affiliate in Haiti and will advocate for the reconstruction of his foundation and the continuity of his work.

4.2 The Little Red Riding Hood of Palestine by Arab Educational Institute – Open Windows

Warde, "Flower", is the Palestinian Little Red Riding Hood. A short animation movie with the same title was made by Camera Etc. (Liege, Belgium), jointly with the Arab Educational Institute (AEI-Open Windows), the Belgian organization Javva, and Anaele Hermans, an AEI volunteer at the time. Palestinian kids aged 8-12 years old imagined what *Warde* would do when one day, on her way to grandma's house, she encountered the Apartheid Wall. AEI-Open Windows has issued several publications about the Wall, including Palestinian *sumud* or "steadfastness" stories about the past and people's hopes for the future, mixed with Palestinian history and its cultural, social, religious, and political background. *Warde* is part of a youth information package, composed by Anaele Hermans, which contains a magazine about the youth of Palestine; 2 animation movies (*Warde* and *Hudud* or "borders" made by youth aged 15-17 illustrating the daily life of Palestinian youth); a documentary which interviews young Palestinians from the West Bank about the places that give them positive or negative feelings; and a checkpoint game, which is an edited version of snakes and ladders!

The inspiration behind *Warde* was to give the kids a place to express their feelings and emotions toward the 8 meter wall – the "wolf" - they see every day. The kids imagined what the little girl on her way to grandma's house would do, and gave creative solutions to overcome the obstacle - solutions which were pure of heart and simple at the same time. Moreover, this work aimed to show how the situation in Palestine affects every age segment, and gave the kids a safe space to express themselves and create something new.

4.3 AYC Members Pay a Visit to Street Kids by Amahero Youth Club

On Saturday January 16 former street kids, supported by Amahero Youth Club, paid a visit to their companions gathered on the verge of Lake Tanganyika. The sun was at Zenith when the team, led by Yvette and Panafrica, who are in charge of Magnus Kids commission of AYC, got to the beach located near Bujumbura Port. At this place, we found Cynthia who had already brought together thirty-seven street kids who were waiting in a circle for their companions.



The latter had done their best to carry the clothes collected by themselves and by AYC members. The contact between the two groups

was easy. Embraces, laughter, street jargon, words of hope and thankfulness, without any apparent reason, created a warm atmosphere. Meanwhile, it was easy to feel that the children were tired - tired because of their hard lives, characterized by so many nights past under the stars with empty stomachs. A strong emotion was easily seen in the group, as some could not forget the hard times they survived begging at the same beach. A prayer is performed in a circle and led by Sylvestre. During the prayer, the children's attention is not completely there. A child's strong voice rises from the group just to call God's attention, while others cannot take their eyes off the bags containing the gifts. When Marie Claire finishes her brief speech, revealing the intention of the initiative, Yvette takes her turn to give additional information about the objectives of the club and invites those children to visit the club one day.

Then the time for sharing came. Fiston, the chief of the former street boys, distributed lemonade. He is the one who makes the law in this place; it is even under his permission that we had permission to take some pictures of them. The lemonade and cake were quickly consumed so that pants and shirts could be distributed, since this is greatly important to our street children. Under the aegis of the team composed of Magnus Kids, the distribution was successful. The visit ended with taking pictures, and without any other discussion, we made a promise to meet very soon for a soccer match.

5. THEMES IN FOCUS

Islamophobia!? – Incidences, tendencies and discourse in Germany by Caroline Thon and Stephanie Zorn of Europe Mediterranean Youth Bridge

When 57.5% of the Swiss¹ voted for the prohibition of minarets at the end of November 2009, the German press and the political elite were mostly shocked. It was seen as a vote against one of the fundamental rights in a secular and liberal

¹ 54% of the Swiss eligible voters cast their vote.

society: the freedom of religion. Though there had been political debates over the building of mosques, the wearing of the head scarf in public areas in the past, the German Secretary of the Interior and member of the conservative Christian Democratic Party, Thomas de Maizière, promised that such a prohibition was unimaginable in Germany. That was obviously the same conviction many Swiss intellectuals and politicians shared before they learned that the broad population thought otherwise. What this lesson from Switzerland showed was a deep gap between mainstream discourse and the actual attitudes of the population. So, is the liberal stance of German mainstream media and politicians just not catching the islamophobic vibes which actually exist?

Just some months ago Germany actually had a fierce debate about the existence of Islamophobia. It was triggered by a most tragic and horrifying event: A young pregnant woman, Marwa el-Sherbini, who was wearing a headscarf, was murdered in a courtroom by a young right wing German, who she had been suing for a racist and anti-Islamic offence against her. Was this shocking incident a sign of a latent hatred in German society, which had surfaced here? Not only major Muslim organisations were alarmed - the General Secretary of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Stephan J. Kramer, who, together with the General Secretary of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, Aiman Mazyek, had paid a visit to the wounded husband of Marwa, and stated: "Islamophobia is not a phantom!" The controversial debate over this appraisal cannot be depicted here and – as it seems – media discourse is not a proper mirror for actual public opinion anyway. Still, a recent survey by German sociologists² implies that there are widespread resentments against Islam and Muslim culture. According to the study, in 2005, about 75% of the interviewees stated that Muslim culture does not comply with "our Western culture", for example. Almost 50% would not like to move to a quarter with a high number of Muslim inhabitants. So, if this study is taken as a scientific proof of islamophobic tendencies (which is debatable as this phenomenon is far more complex than it is presented in this first study – a fact which also the authors of the study were aware of), what has driven the fear and mistrust against Islam?

One reason may be that the idea of a multicultural society has lost a lot of support in Germany over the last years. Furthermore, Islam and Muslim culture somehow have come to be perceived as the "most foreign" of all foreign cultural features, which were brought with the migrants to Germany in the last 50 years. It was not only September 11 and "political Islam", but also discussions "at home" about forced marriages and honour killings which were often associated with Islam and raised suspicion among Germans – and probably made a generalised critique of Islam acceptable even for liberal minds. Moreover, an essentialist notion of Islam seems to be fed by rather stereotypical presentations by the German mainstream media.

Interestingly, in the political realm some minds have shown to be more progressive. In 2006, Germany's Secretary of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble, a conservative like his successor, set up the German Islam Conference – an institution which hosts representatives of the majority society and Muslims of different backgrounds in equal shares – and thus instigated a vital dialogue and a platform for inclusive integration policies for about 4 million Muslims in Germany. Thus, for example, it

supports the nationwide establishment of Islamic religious education at schools – a project which had been more or less unsuccessfully pursued by diverse Muslim organisations for over 30 years. Read more about the activities that EYMB does to promote intercultural dialogue and for creating better understanding between the Islamic worlds, Israel, the Balkan countries and their neighbour-states in Europe by visiting their website (www.emyb.org).

6. HIGHLIGHTED RESOURCES

Globals Foundation



Globals Foundation is an online resource aimed at bringing young people around the world into contact with each other in an effort to increase tolerance of different cultures, nations and religions. Visitors can communicate using the worldwide forum, as well as access easy background information on conflict situations to raise awareness on conflicts worldwide. Visit the website at www.globalsfoundation.org.

7. OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS

PLURAL+ Second Youth Video Festival on Migration and Diversity

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are once again calling for the world's youth to create and submit videos that express their ideas on migration, integration, inclusiveness, identity, and the human rights of migrant and related issues. Young people between the ages of 9 to 25 years, are invited to submit a short video between one to five minutes long to highlight the realities of migration and diversity issues, and to present their own ideas on how to build peaceful coexisting societies. Videos can be submitted from 1 March through 30 June 2010. For more information please visit www.unaoc.org/pluralplus.

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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² Namely Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Jürgen Leibold, and Steffen Kühnel.