



Conference Report

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2008-09-09

I had the opportunity to represent CISV International, together with Beatrice Lorino and Bastian Küentzel, in the UN 61st Annual DPI/NGO Conference. The main reason for me to attend this event was in order to get information, contacts, practices and in inputs in general for CISV International based on my studies in Human Rights and Peace Education.

I would like to thank Beatrice for her hospitality in Paris and her great job with UNESCO and ERC NGO relations group.

The Annual DPI/NGO Conference is gathering Non-Governmental Organizations associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI). The theme of the conference this year was “Reaffirming Human Rights for All: The Universal Declaration at 60” looking to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

More than 400 NGOs and other civil society partners from 90 countries attended the event. The conference was a good opportunity for us as CISVers to meet, learn and share knowledge and experiences with the NGO community, civil society organizations, UN agencies, representatives for academia, private sector and other institutions about the advancement of human rights in the world.

The Conference was divided by two round tables, two rounds of parallel break-out sessions and parallel mid-way workshops per day.

CISV International was involved in the organization and sent a speaker to one of the Break out sessions about HR education on September 5th, (see p.8.)

I did a selection of round tables, break-out sessions and workshops based on CISV International Strategic Planning and recommendations from ERC. Three different subjects are approach in this selection: Information for Inclusion practices, Network with LMOs and educational content in Peace Education and human rights.

Based on this, I attended the following meetings:

Round Tables

- Upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (3rd of September)
- Overcoming discrimination to realize Human Rights and Dignity for All (4th of September)
- Human Rights Education and learning as a way of life (5th of September)

Break-out Sessions

- The United Nations Human Rights System: How to make it work for you (3rd of September)
- From Vulnerability toward Empowerment (4th of September)
- Human Rights, Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter
- Conflict prevention and peace building, education in diverse cultural setting. Youth and Non formal education.

Mid-way workshops

- Dreams in Action, the Millennium Development Goals Realized: how to design human rights issues into the classroom curriculum to inspire leadership, creativity and social justice (3rd of September)
- Peace is a Human Right: Recognize it to build a Culture of Peace (4th of September)

I will describe briefly each on these meetings and its importance and future uses within CISV International.

Round Tables

1. Upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (3rd of September)

This round table was developed under Article 5 of Vienna Declaration from 1993: “All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated”.

The round table was a general introduction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. During this round table was highlighted the achievements of the United Nations and civil society in developing practices and legal remedies that protect and promote all the rights in the declaration.

Important links: [Every Human Has Rights](#)

2. Overcoming discrimination to realize Human Rights and Dignity for All (4th of September)

The round table was develop under Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

Elements as violence, impunity, social exclusion and extreme poverty exacerbate the vulnerability of discriminated groups. Human rights treaties and instruments have affirmed the principles of equality and non-discrimination and needs from the States and non-state actors take affirmative action.

This round table highlighted the efforts of many discriminated groups in claiming their rights and becoming empowered agents of change and by the approval of new UN mechanisms.

Eugen Brand focused his speech in the human rights of the poor and how millions of people are exclude it from the possibility to decide on their own lives. He mentioned that the most important step is to give them the possibilities to decide for their lives and to work towards human rights. For him it is extremely necessary to open a dialog within the ones who has power and the poor, instead of those who has power deciding what to do with the poor. He said: “What about the voices of those who has been hungry since they were born?”

Dan Pescod talked about rights of people with disabilities, especially blind people. People with disabilities have been discriminated for many years in many societies. In 2006, United Nations approved the Convention on the rights of persons with Disabilities.

Eugen Brand



Eugen Brand is the Director General of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, which runs grassroots anti-poverty projects on five continents in ways that fundamentally challenge the classic approach to development. Currently, he is supporting new initiatives in the Central African Republic, Madagascar, and elsewhere. In February 2008, he was the keynote speaker at a colloquium in Haiti, co-organized with the French Institute of Haiti.

In 2007, he oversaw the report, Dignity in the Face of Extreme Poverty, which examined the draft guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights adopted by the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. In the 1990s, Mr. Brand lived and worked in Bolivia where he established ATD Fourth World with local partners. He was originally trained as a teacher, and has run many educational and cultural projects with children, young people and families living in extreme poverty in urban areas of France, Switzerland, and the United States.

Eugen Brand is a national of Switzerland.

For more information about the International Movement ATD Fourth World, please visit, <http://www.atd-uk.org>.

Regarding inclusion in general, he deeply thinks that civil society need to work in terms of getting resources among the states. By example, using political channels to push states to sign and ratify the convention.

Dan Pescod



Dan Pescod is the Campaigns Manager, Europe, International and Accessibility, at the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) in the United Kingdom. Mr. Pescod campaigns internationally to increase public access to information, rights and services for blind and partially-sighted people. As part of the World Blind Union team, he participated in both the preparatory Ad Hoc Committee meetings and the negotiations on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He now works with others in support of persons with disabilities to ensure that their rights are protected. Mr. Pescod also works on EU legislation relevant to blind and partially-sighted people. Recently he was part of a lobbying effort to revise the Television Without Frontiers Directive, and ensure that it covers the access needs of people with sensory impairments. Before joining RNIB, Mr. Pescod studied languages at Exeter University and then worked as the European Relations Manager for Royal Mail.

Dan Pescod is a national of the United Kingdom.

The third speaker was René Stockman. His approach was focus in the discriminated for their Psychological diseases. It is very important to understand people sick of mental illness as a human being with dignity as any other. Stockman mentioned that there are hundreds of mental hospitals in the world treating people with mental illness without any dignity. There are many stigmas about mental illnesses in society who needs to be work and approach by everyone. It is fundamental to stop seeing people with mental illnesses as “mad” people for the rest of their lives and force to be out of society. He said: “If you cannot speak of it, you cannot address it”

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Important for CISV?

Absolutely! I believe that this round table gives us as CISVers many interesting themes that are under the scope of our educational proposal. This year at the AIM in the Italy, the board of trustees approved ITIP (Inclusion Taskforce for Inclusion Practices). The approval of this taskforce affirmed that CISV International perceive as a big necessity, within the organization and in our programs, to develop awareness and be a more inclusive organization. Inclusion practices are an indivisible part of our peaces educational approach.

Based on this is important to have in consideration the following links:

- > [Royal National Institute of Blind People \(United Kingdom\)](#)
- > [Fourth World International Movement](#)
- > [Brothers of Charity](#)

3. Human Rights Education and learning as a way of life (5th of September)

This round table used as inspiration the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: *“Now, therefore, the General Assembly proclaim the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms”*

Next year will be the [International year of human rights learning](#) as a complement to the [World Programme for Human Rights Education \(2005-2009\)](#). Discussion focused on the contribution of human rights education, peace education and learning at the community levels as a means of enhancing the participation of women and men in decisions that determine their lives. People from the panel explored how the UDHR can be used as a moral and political framework for learning, critical thinking and systemic analysis in order to foster positive actions.

The first panelist was Saskia Law. She discussed about the importance to work with Education for Peace, Education for Tolerance and Education for an active life in society. She also mentioned that, to approach youth is to empower them to look for their own solutions to the world instead offer them the solutions already made. From this perspective it is important to focus the work in developing good practices in human rights education such as:

- › Involvement of youth in practical learning
- › Give youth tools to develop their own projects, practical implementation
- › Share and teach from good projects that are happening in different NGOs
- › Give confidence to people to do their own initiatives

Saskia said: “Youth is not the future, youth is the present”

Tilder Kumichi



Tilder Kumichi Ndichia is the Programme Coordinator for the Global Education and Environmental Developmental Foundation (GEED) and is in charge of issues concerning gender and human rights promotion, protection and education. She is a sociologist with vast expertise in conflict resolution, development, gender, civil society and organizational development. She also leads a national network of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in Cameroon, and is also a member of the North West network of Human Rights Defenders. Ms. Ndichia has more than sixteen years

of experience in the field of education, promotion and protection of human rights issues.

Tilder Kumichi Ndichia is a national of Cameroon.

Tilder Kumichi Ndichia discussed a lot from her experiences in Cameroon and how human rights have to be work form a grassroots level. This means to give the opportunity to people to know what human rights are. She gave several examples of learning by doing educational approaches to empower people to start developing their rights. By example, in Cameroon she has been working with “Social Drama” where based on the dramatization of peoples own problems and their violated rights, people are encourage to develop their own strategies to take action and solve their problems. Another good example was “Peace Clubs”. These are open spaces in communities

where people gather and discuss about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and how to create awareness about it.

Finally, Ingrid Srinath discussed her experiences in India. She defended how Education in human rights is a very powerful tool once you learn about them and who to use them. This education gives a “[Rights based approach](#)” which she described with the following story:

“The teacher in a small village in India was never in the classroom. He did not care about his pupils and knew that the Indian educational system would never notice his behaviour or care about it. His pupils went to some authorities and complaint about the situation, but nothing happened. Having no support from anyone to solve the problem; the kids gathered money enough to buy a lock. They lock the school the day that the teacher was coming to get his salary (the only day of the month that he used to show up). Of course he could not get into the

Saskia Law



Saskia Law studied International Business Management in Bremen, Germany and consequently completed a Master of Arts in Peace and Development Studies at the University of Limerick, Ireland. While working for a leadership project with the rural population in Costa Rica in 2002 she was trained in civic education and has been active in this field ever since. The past three years she has been working as Trainer and Consultant in Human Rights Education, Intercultural Education, Values-based Leadership and Participation, mainly for youth and youth organizations in Europe.

Saskia Law is a national of Germany.

school and get his salary. The kids invited him to sit and negotiate the terms for their education and how to work together from that moment”

Ingrid Srinath



Ingrid Srinath has been the Secretary General of CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation since May 2008, where she strives for a vision of a global community of active, engaged citizens committed to the creation of a more just and equitable world. She also serves on the board of the IANGO Accountability Charter and the World Economic Forum NGO Advisory Group. Prior to these positions, Ms. Srinath was the Chief Executive of Child Rights

and You (CRY), based in Mumbai, India, an NGO dedicated to improving the situation of children in India who face obstacles when trying to achieve their full potential. Ms. Srinath’s work with CRY helped mobilize the amendment of India’s Constitution to make education a fundamental right. Before her work with NGOs, Ms. Srinath worked in the marketing and advertising field in the private sector, developing her skills in dialogue facilitation, resource mobilisation, and advocacy strategizing.

Ingrid Srinath is a national of India.

Finally, Srinath encouraged civil society to practice what they preach; this means a human rights approach, to empower people by work with their right by themselves.

Important for CISV?

Of course! This round table gave the possibility to CISV International to understand that our educational approach has all the necessary characteristics to empower people to use their human rights. This means to have a “rights based approach” as Srinath mentioned. It is to have the opportunity to everyone in CISV to feel that are civil actors of positive changing in society.

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These are very important links to check to work in CISV about human rights, environmental issues and peace:

- > [Global Education and Environmental Development Foundation](#)
- > [World Alliance for Civil Participation CIVICUS](#)
- > UNIFEM. [Say NO to Violence.](#)

Break-Out Sessions

1. The United Nations Human Rights System: How to make it work for you (3rd of September)

This session discussed the different avenues and opportunities for the engagement of civil society in the UN human rights system. The aim of the session was to exchange concrete experiences and best practices of engagement and participation. The session explored the advocacy experience of international NGOs represented in Geneva and New York, and engagement at the country level by NGOs and other civil society actors.

Some links with useful information are:

- > [United Nations High Commissioner officer for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#)
- > [United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service \(NGLS\)](#)
- > [United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organization \(UNESCO\)](#)

2. From Vulnerability toward Empowerment (4th of September)

This session highlighted experiences of people and groups having been subject to discrimination, and that have succeeded in realizing their rights, empowering themselves and others. Participants were

invited to exchange best practices and identify ways in which these can be replicated for underserved communities worldwide.

This was a very emotive session listening and learning from specific cases of discrimination. Most of the testimonies were from people being discriminated for their sexuality, race or illnesses. The panelists make a strong statement of the necessity to hear the voices of those that are discriminated. They focus on the main idea to offer some empowerment practices for people to understand that is possible to come up with real actions.

The session was opened reflecting about the following questions:

- › Did anyone help you to deal with your emotional reactions based on discriminating?
- › Have you ever felt that your voice was not heard?
- › Have you ever felt that it was not appropriate to speak your truth?

A person from the audience talked about “accent discrimination”. In some countries people (especially immigrants) are being discriminated because of the accent they have speaking the language of the receiving country.

Important for CISV?

YES. Especially now that the organization has an international structure dedicated to work with this topic. There is now the necessity in CISV International to become more professionals in the theme of Inclusion. The organization needs to learn from those group discriminated and change the structures that are not making that people feel welcome.

Important links and people for our work in CISV:

- › [UNESCO Inclusive quality education](#)
- › Bruce Knotts, [UN Representative of Unitarian Universalist](#)

3. Human Rights, Human Development and the Earth Chapter (4th of September)

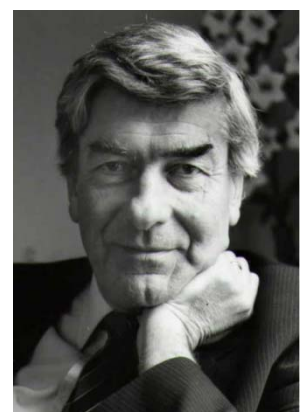
The first part of the session gave to the participants an overview of the Earth Charter and how its vision of global interdependence and universal responsibility complements and supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and global human rights movement.

This was one of most interesting sessions based on terms of the Earth Charter as a proposal.

“The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It seeks to inspire in all peoples a new sense of global interdependence and share responsibility for the wellbeing of the human family and the larger living world. It is an expression of hope and a call to help create a global partnership at a critical juncture in history”

Among the panelists, the participants had the opportunity to listen from one of the co-authors of the Earth Charter, the Prime Minister of The Netherlands,

Ruud Lubbers. Lubbers and the other panelists present the Earth Charter as a



1. [Ruud Lubbers](#)

proposal for a total change of mentality among human beings. This means to understand the role of human beings in the universe instead of focus the human beings as the center of it. This means that the rights of human beings are as important as the rights of other species and the planet. This leads to discuss in terms of a **Biocracy** in the planet instead of a **Democracy**.

The promoters of the Earth Charter affirmed that the respect for nature was not estimated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that is why this new proposal is a integral complement of this declaration. To work and take actions regarding the Earth Charter implies to work intensively with:

- > Human rights and planetary security
- > The sense of “comprehensive compassion”
- > Global Ethics and Cultural Values
- > Cultural Diversity
- > Bioethics

Important for CISV?

This should be one of the hardcore statements of CISV International based on our educational approach! The Earth Charter is divided in four interdependent principles that can be use as content guidelines to develop our programs and activities:

- > Respect and Care for Community Life
- > Ecological Integrity
- > Social en Economic Justice
- > Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace

The Earth Charter can be a theoretical tool to develop more CISV idea that peace can be reach through friendship. Youth organizations are the most in the campaign to promote the Earth Charter and CISV International can be an excellent example of how to concretize the content of the Earth Charter as an educational proposal.

Important links for the work in CISV International:

- > [The Earth Charter Initiative](#)
- > Professor Mary Evelyn Tucker, [Professor of World Religions, Yale University](#).
- > UNESCO. [Culture of Peace Decade](#) 2001-2010

4. Conflict prevention and peace building, education in diverse cultural setting. Youth and Non formal education

UNESCOs Youth commission (JPC on Youth) was in charge of this participatory session and Pax Christi International was associated. Speakers of World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, CISV International, represented by Bastian Küentzel, Pax Romana and AEGEE were. in charge to talk about Non-Formal education and how people “learn by doing” through ASK model.

Mid-way Workshops

1. Dreams in Action, the Millennium Development Goals Realized: how to design human rights issues into the classroom curriculum to inspire leadership, creativity and social justice (3rd of September)

The Speakers discussed the Dream Project and Design Matters and outlined how educators can incorporate digital storytelling and design with global technology into classrooms. The Dream Project is a initiative where students from high schools, in violent neighborhoods, are learning and implement the Millennium Development Goals in classrooms. Design Matters is a university project where graphic design students are learning how to implement their ideas and work in the defense and education of human rights.

Important for CISV?

It is important for CISV to learn from these initiatives how to incorporate and relate CISV with international programs like the Millennium Development Goals.

I believe CISV International needs to refer its education and take an important role in initiatives like the “International Year of Human Rights Learning 2009”, “Decade of Education for Peace 2001-2010”, “Millennium Development Goals”, “Earth Charter”, etc. These relations will give us more international status as a peace education organization and at the same time will get more content and practical initiatives to put in action in all our programs and activities.

Important links for CISV:

- [The Dream Project](#)
- [Design Matters](#)

2. Peace is a Human Right: Recognize it to build a Culture of Peace (4th of September)

This workshop brought together speakers from several disciplines: a diplomat, a poet, a physician and a youth. They discussed the challenging issues confronting the world today: war, violence and poverty, which are one of the main violations of human rights. A Culture of Peace demands that everyone make certain that human rights are included in the right to free expression through laws and culture. A human right to peace is an integral human right where values of nonviolence, gender equality, social and

economic rights and cultural rights are all protected and a reality.

Important for CISV?

Definitely. In order to get more relevance in a global perspective and to have more inputs to establish networks with other NGOs, it is necessary that CISV International discuss and take a position towards Peace as human right.



2. [Anwarul K. Chowdhury](#).

Former Under Secretary
General of the United
Nations

Spanish Society is preparing a big meeting in Geneva for 2010 where NGOs, states, private initiatives and society in general will write an official codification of the human right to Peace. Also in 2006, was written in Luarca, Spain; the LUARCA DECLARATION on the human right to peace. This declaration is now in consultation with international civil society, with a view to submitting to the UN a draft universal declaration on the human right to peace.

CISV International needs to be an example of those organizations working towards peace in the world through local and global programs from a non formal education approach.

Important links for CISV:

- > [Luarca Declaration](#)
- > [The Ribbon International](#)
- > [Peace One Day](#)

A small conclusion

Once again, thank you to Beatrice Lorino and ERC to give me the opportunity to attend this conference.

To anyone reading this report, please feel free to contact me to get more information about the conference or to answer questions.

I do believe that CISV can establish great contacts and do more for human rights and Peace in every people's lives. From our educational approach, we have the responsibility to be active civil actors in our societies and to do this, it is necessary that CISV International incorporate these initiatives as part of our mission (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Millennium Development Goals, Earth Charter, Luarca Declaration).

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UN DPI/NGO in pictures

