

NEWSLETTER FOR PROMOTING A VISION TO CONFRONT THE GLOBAL CHALLENGES CALLING FOR GLOBAL SOLUTIONS
WITH SEPTEMBER- OCTOBER 2014 ARTICLES



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This newsletter is part of Inter Press Service (IPS) and Soka Gakkai International (SGI) project. It includes independent news and analyses as well as columns by experts, news from international NGOs and a review of the global media for a glimpse of what is happening on the ground. Newspaper articles reproduced in this newsletter are for personal use and aim at giving information to readers. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is forbidden.



Image credit: Asian Broadcasting Union, Malaysia

Commercialization of Children’s Media Hampering Global Citizenship

KUALA LUMPUR (IDN) – Excessive commercialization of children’s media, especially television, is obstructing efforts aimed at education and capacity building for global citizenship and raising awareness among children of the diversity of the world, according to experts. [GERMAN](#) | [JAPANESE TEXT](#)
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Many of the speakers at the recent [World Summit on Media for Children](#) in Kuala Lumpur agreed with Dr Patricia Edgar, former director of the Australian Children’s Television Foundation, that the majority of children’s programmes are commercially driven and not educational.

“These less creative and cheaply produced programmes are made for entertainment with the intention to sell their merchandise,” she told participants in the Summit September 8 to 10. “An effective educational programme is about good values, constructive messages and most importantly, contains local elements to help the social and emotional development of children.”

Dr Edgar said it was important for children to understand the “real world” and to be taught the correct way to deal with problems rather than overprotect them and let them live in a fancy world.

Rosmah Mansor, the wife of the Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, said that programmes for children should be designed to “teach valuable lessons that will shape beliefs, attitudes and behaviour” for living in a multi-racial and multi-religious community.

She argued that children’s media should be seen as an educational tool rather than a commercial commodity. Educators needed to master the skill of using media as a teaching tool to foster reflective and critical thinking, and to encourage curiosity. In this endeavour, rather than de-regulating, government regulators and policymakers should address media content using legislation and incentives as effective tools to enhance the quantity and quality of educational and informational programmes.

“Children need to see human endeavour at its best, not just the side that produces conflict through stereotyping, hate speech and bullying,” argued Rosmah. “Good programming can help children cope with upsetting emotional responses to media content and to make critical judgments about violence on TV and advertisements.” [READ MORE](#)



Workshop on Sep. 16 | Photo Credit: NGO WG on HREL

Promoting Human Rights Through Global Citizenship Education

GENEVA, (IPS) - Amid escalating conflicts and rampant violations of human rights all over the world, spreading “human rights education” is not an easy task. But a non-governmental organisation from Japan is beginning to make an impact through its “global citizenship education” approach.

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At the current annual meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which began on Sep. 8, two side events marked the beginning of what promises to be a sustained campaign to spread human rights education (HRE).

Alongside the first, the launch of the web resource “The Right to Human Rights Education” by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, a special workshop was also convened on HRE for media professionals and journalists.

The workshop was an initiative of the NGO Working Group on HRE chaired by [Soka Gakkai International](#) (SGI), a prominent NGO from Japan fighting for the abolition of nuclear weapons, sustainable development and human rights education.

“This is the first time that the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning and a group of seven countries representing the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training have organised a workshop on human rights education for media professionals and journalists,” said Kazunari Fujii, SGI’s Geneva representative.

Fujii has been working among human rights pressure groups in Geneva to mobilise support for intensifying HRE campaigning. “Through the promotion of human rights education, SGI wants to foster a culture of human rights that prevents violations from occurring in the first place,” Fujii told IPS after the workshop on Tuesday (Sep. 16).

“While protection of human rights is the core objective of the U.N. Charter, it is equally important to prevent the occurrence of human rights abuses,” he argued. [READ MORE](#)



Jazz musician Marcus Miller (left), spokesman for the Slave Route Project, is using music to help educate people about slavery. Credit: A.D. McKenzie/IPS

Breaking Silence on the Slave Trade

PARIS (IPS) - The Oscar-winning film *12 Years a Slave* opened many people's eyes to the barbarity of slavery and fuelled some discussion about that period in world history. But the film is just one of the many initiatives to “break the silence” around the 400 years of the transatlantic slave trade and to “shed light” on its lasting historical consequences. [ITALIAN](#) | [JAPANESE TEXT VERSION PDF](#)

One of these – the Slave Route Project – which observed its 20th anniversary this month in Paris is pushing for greater education about slavery and the slave trade in schools around the world.

According to Ali Moussa Iye, chief of the History and Memory for Dialogue Section of UNESCO, the United Nations cultural agency, who directs the organisation's Slave Route Project, “the least the international community can do is to put this history into the textbooks. You can't deny this history to those who suffered and continue to experience the consequences of slavery.”

The Project is one of the forces behind a permanent memorial to slavery that is being constructed at UN headquarters in New York, scheduled to be completed in March 2015 and meant to honour the millions of victims of the traffic in humans.

UNESCO is also involved in the UN's International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), which is aimed at recognising people of African descent as a distinct group and at “addressing the historical and continuing violations of their rights”. The Decade will officially be launched in January next year.

“The approach is not to build guilt but to achieve reconciliation,” Moussa Iye said in an interview. “We need to know history in a different, more pluralistic way so that we can draw lessons and better understand our societies.” [READ MORE](#)



The U.N. has held High-Level Forums on the Culture of Peace for the past three years. Ambassador Chowdhury moderates a panel at last year's event. Credit: UN Photo/Evan Schneider

[Global Citizenship From Me to We to Peace](#)

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - If a Silicon Valley existed for the culture of peace, it would most likely look to global citizenship as the next big industry shake-up.

“Global citizenship, or oneness of humanity [is] the essential element of the culture of peace,” Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, former under-secretary general and high representative of the U.N., told IPS on the sidelines of the General Assembly's High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace on Sep. 10.

[ITALIAN](#) | [JAPANESE TEXT VERSION PDF](#)

The day-long forum included panel discussions on global citizenship and the contributions of women and youth to a nonviolent world community.

Ambassador Chowdhury took the lead in putting the culture of peace on the U.N. agenda in the late 1990s. The culture of peace concept was evolving in the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), but Chowdhury felt that it deserved to be discussed at an even higher level.

The U.N. needed “to shift gear” away from peacekeeping operations “to focus on individual and community transformation,” Chowdhury told IPS.

In 1999, at the urging of Chowdhury, the General Assembly (GA) passed the milestone [Resolution 53/243](#) on the “Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.” The resolution asserts that a culture of peace is a way of life based on non-violence, territorial integrity, human rights, the right to development, freedom of expression and the promotion of equal rights for women and men.

Article 4 of the resolution makes clear that “Education at all levels is one of the principal means to build a culture of peace.” Governments, civil society, the media, parents and teachers are all called upon to promote a peaceful culture.

The 1999 resolution also led to the observance from 2001 to 2010 of the U.N. International Decade for Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

While its official decade may be over, the culture of peace continues to be relevant 15 years after Resolution 53/243 was adopted. Each year, the GA adopts a resolution reaffirming the commitment of member states to building a culture of peace.

This year’s all-day event built on the success of two past high-level forums in 2012 and 2013, giving member states, U.N. entities and civil society a chance to exchange ideas on how to best promote nonviolence, cooperation and respect for all.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon kicked off the day with an endorsement of the culture of peace.

“We need new forms of cultural literacy and diplomacy, between societies and within them,” he said. “We need educational curricula to deepen global solidarity and citizenship.

“Every day, I see the need to build a new culture of mediation, conflict resolution, peace-building and peace-keeping.”

Interactive panels focused on the keys to attaining a culture of peace.

Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director of [UN Women](#), highlighted the role of women in building and sustaining the culture of peace.

Women “must be seen as agents of conflict prevention,” she said.

“With women, mothers, grandmothers, other family members often being the first teachers of children, they have and can play a vital role in educating young people to the value of peace.”

Women should bring their leadership and solutions to the peacemaking table, according to the panellists.

The youth population is also crucial to making a culture of peace a reality.

“Young people can be agents of peace,” said Ahmad Alhendawi, the Secretary General’s [Envoy on Youth](#). “We must continue working together to ensure that the largest generation of humans is an opportunity, not a liability for our time.” [READ MORE](#)