

**PREPARATION OF THE MID-TERM REPORT ON THE
INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE AND
NON-VIOLENCE FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD (2001-2010)**

1. Background

At its 53rd session in 1998, the United Nations General Assembly (resolution A/53/25) proclaimed the period 2001-2010 as the “International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World”, following on from the year 2000 as the “International Year for a Culture of Peace”.

In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (resolution A/53/243), defining eight areas of action for the construction of a culture of peace and non-violence. The eight action areas are:

- Fostering a culture of peace through education
- Promoting sustainable economic and social development
- Promoting respect for all human rights
- Ensuring equality between women and men
- Fostering democratic participation
- Advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity
- Supporting participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge
- Promoting international peace and security

The complete text of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace is available at :
<http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/kits/53243A.pdf>

2. Objectives

The present survey has the following aims:

- To gather information on implemented projects or projects in progress, and to find out about the difficulties encountered and the overall conclusions drawn by civil society organizations;
- To take into account the contributions from civil society organizations in the mid-term report which UNESCO will submit to the UN General Assembly;
- To identify main areas of action and to receive inputs regarding the direction of activities to be undertaken in the second part of the International Decade.

Contact Information

Please provide all necessary contact information for your Organization :

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Information requested

General guidelines

1. The questions are open-ended, thus allowing you to tackle the issues that you consider most important.
2. Your responses should address both successes and problems so that UNESCO, its Member States, and the UN System as such can learn from your experiences.

I

ACTIONS ACCOMPLISHED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION WITH REGARD TO PROMOTING A CULTURE OF PEACE

1. Please describe briefly the activities launched by your organization with a view to putting into practice the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace since the beginning of the International Decade (2001). You may find it helpful to comment on the following aspects:
 - o Objectives
 - o Beneficiaries
 - o Location of activities
 - o Resources
 - o Results

Women's Conferences for Peace in the Middle East,

WFWPI has been convening annual conferences for 9 years in the Middle East for women leaders with 30- 40 participants and with most of the countries of the region represented. The literal title has been "Culture of Peace" three times, but always related to themes of women's role in peace-building. Financing has been from donations and fundraising activities of Japanese WFWP members. Results have been increased intra-regional co-operation and shared knowledge, trans-national projects, (including 2 summer visits of groups of Palestinian refugee children to Cyprus for several weeks, an idea born during our conference in Cyprus in 2003).

UN Conferences

WFWPI held a conference at the United Nations in New York on Culture of Peace in 2001, In 2001, 2002 and 2003, WFWPI has held an Forum on Poverty Eradication at the United Nations in New York with themes related to women's empowerment, the role of education, family and globalisation.

Our 2004 Conference on role of Middle Eastern women in peacebuilding was held at the UN in Geneva with 120 participants.

Side Events/ Panels organised by WFWPI at the UN.

New York- A panel on poverty eradication through girls education (CSW, 2005)
A seminar on fostering racial harmony through bridges of peace(2005)

Geneva- Jointly organised panels :

Round Table Discussion on the World Conference against Racism , “ African Women’s Voices”. 2001
Women at the Negotiating Table, (2001,CHR)

Reconciliation and a Sustainable Culture of Peace (2002, CHR)

Security Council Resolution 1325 (2002, CHR)

Panel on *Culture of Peace* (2003, WSIS)

Education for Peace (2004, CHR)

Article as contribution to **EOLSS**, “Dignity: Cornerstone of the Culture of Peace” (2005)

Women’s Overseas Missions volunteer project in which hundreds of WFWPI members from Japan went out to foreign (developing) countries to work with local women over several years period and created projects based upon the needs locally. WFWP chapters in Japan supported the co-operation with their fundraising activities home. Projects varied from building schools and training facilities, setting up micro credit programs, offering literacy or language programs, professional training, AIDS prevention seminars etc. Many continue throughout Africa, Asia and S. America to this day.

“**1% Love Sharing**”, an ongoing project of WFWP- Korea and WFWPI to set aside 1% of income to give to children in need. First three years proceeds have gone to North Korean girls’ facilities.

Foster Parenting- a project in WFWP- USA to link women to orphaned children throughout the developing world, beyond just financial investment, but creating personal bonds between donor ‘parent’ and child.

Character Education- WFWP has founded (built and running) several schools that include a strong aspect of character education in the curriculum- which have also been recognised as AIDS prevention institutions by governmental officials.

Marriage Preparation Training- WFWP has a training program for marriage preparation /AIDS prevention that it has offered to thousands of youth throughout Africa, Asia and South America which puts the accent on character development, fidelity and parenting skills. (Also offered in some European countries and USA)

Commission on Human Rights-

WFWPI has made interventions on Culture of Peace/Education for Peace (Item 17) in 2001, 2003, and in 2005 (joint)

WFWPI has made a written intervention on the Right of Development (Item 7) in 2004 with explanation that the goal of development is to create a culture of peace and that women’s role is critical.

CONGO CSW Working Group on « Peace », active members in Geneva and Vienna

Part of Task Force on Culture of Peace, ((Geneva)

Part of Task Force on Disarmament, (**Geneva**) organising an annual Women’s Day Disarmament Seminar at the United Nations offering an alternative view to the disarmament negotiations. Every year an outcome statement of that seminar is delivered to the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

“**Bridge of Peace**” **Project** - A WFWP ceremony/project that involves bringing together representatives of “enemy” groups or former enemies in reconciliation and commitment to advancing the cause of peace together. Has been held hundreds of times in many countries of the world, bringing together very diverse counterparts (ie. France/ Germany, Japan/ Korea, Christian/ Moslem, Jewish/ Moslem, Hutu/ Tutsi, Ethiopia/ Eritrea, etc)

Women’s Middle East Peace Initiative- WFWP has organised a series of events in Israel to create solidarity with the local women. In 2004, 600 women from 5 continents travelled to Israel to participate in outreach activities. Peace rallies and peace marches were held inviting local Israeli and Palestinian women, who were contacted through our 3 week long door-to-door intensive outreach program. ‘Bridge of Peace’ ceremonies were also held. Visits were made to the holy sites of the 3 Abrahamic religions and to schools and institutions that have incorporated philosophies of peace through inter-cultural investment. A global signature campaign to show solidarity with the women there began last year and continues.

Scholarship programs

WFWP– Japan and WFPW-Korea have been offering scholarship programs to under-privileged girls who show a special aspirations about how to use their knowledge and their future for the betterment of humankind since it's founding.

Humanitarian Projects-

One of our recent projects was donating computers to children in developing countries as an improvement to access of educational materials.

2. What were the key difficulties encountered in your organization's activities for a culture of peace?

- Fostering a culture of peace through education (ongoing and regular financing)
- Promoting sustainable economic and social development (our programs have all been designed that locals inherit skills, training, talent for self- empowerment and sustainable development, in some cases, when WFPW volunteers leave, projects quality is reduced).
- Promoting respect for all human rights (fostering a spirit of volunteerism is not always easy, but when successful, can bring tremendous change to a community).
- Ensuring equality between women and men (harmful local traditions and practices that impede development of clear concept of equality must be delicately confronted in a case by case way, slow process sometimes to find right channel)
- Fostering democratic participation (often, but not always, a repercussion of increased volunteerism. Training for NGO's working in the field specifically about this issue could open a way for them to include that in their other functions)
- Advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity (again, because meeting local needs demands at least an initial physical presence, sometimes difficult to sustain).
- Supporting participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge – (as with our computer donations, this could be promoted in a way to stimulate others to do other creative acts of volunteerism going in that direction)
- Promoting international peace and security (Our advocacy at the UN is young and needs to be developed. Much of our expansive activity is grassroots. Local successes need to be better recorded, analysed and shared with UN and governments.)

3. Which of the eight areas of action listed on page 1 have been most important for your work and why do you consider them important?

Education- especially in the sense of the interaction between learning core values and living them. Improved norms of education in the family are very much affected by ethical /moral norms and quality of care of parents and caretakers. Better preparation for marriage and parenting can make the difference between a future generation's obsession with 'extreme thrills' or working to 'make a difference'.

Education makes the difference- and as in our programs and projects, proper learning needs to be practiced, ie. Talents, skills and all forms of knowledge are best developed when they can be integrated into a value of life and motivation for living. Although our projects are often very practical/ humanitarian ones, the aim is always to be the spark that ignites the spirit of healthy self empowerment. Through fostering a commitment to participatory improvement in the community, a huge step is taken towards a culture of peace.

II

GENERAL PROGRESS TOWARDS A CULTURE OF PEACE

4. Have you seen any progress towards a culture of peace (and its eight action areas) during the first five years of the International Decade (2001-2005)?

Clearly, yes, but in pockets. There are those lives have been affected very much by the vision and practice of culture of peace. UNESCO has devoted much to communicating the ideas and implementing the action plan in their domain. Other UN Agencies could brainstorm how to better integrate the idea into their programmes (UNDP, UNICEF, OHCHR, CD...). Of course the funding aspect can cause segregation if only one agency has the core responsibility. There needs to be a

universal sense of commitment to the goal- and use it as a way to move forward together, stronger as we go. There needs to be a broader involvement again as in 2000- something that can catch the grassroots , getting schools and youth involved. "Mayors for a Culture of Peace" (why not, mayors have stood up *against* nuclear proliferation)

5. What do you consider to be the major obstacles for the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence?

It has to be sustained long enough and in a broad enough base to show results. The momentum and resource drain of responding to global emergencies is not easy to divert. Maybe the unified commitment to culture of peace as a vision could be that source of resolve- if there is at least a core 'think tank' with access to resources.

6. Have you been able to develop any ways of measuring medium- or long-term progress as a result of your activities? If so, please specify.

We are working on that through noting the changes/ development in families and communities (micro-cosms) brought about through out programs and activities. Empowerment of the local women has brought many positive changes that affect the children, families and longer term, whole communities. The project to thoroughly record and analyse all the information and experiences that we have had is at an early stage.

III

PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION

7. To a great extent, the creation of a culture of peace depends on the development of partnerships and cooperation among various actors. Have you created such partnerships in the process of working for a culture of peace? If so, please describe.

Recently we have worked with governments in some nations in Africa, like Uganda, with our AIDS prevention programs. Locally, we now work with some local governments. Because we began our international outreach by going to foreign countries to live with locals and discover case by case how the women could best be supported to improve lives there, we were recognized by local governments later.

There are national or city Culture of Peace Programs/ Associations that have been joined by our WFWPI representatives. (I don't have all the details)

Through our active participation in the CONGO Committee on the Status of Women Working Groups in Geneva and Vienna, we network with other international NGO's on the issue of culture of peace. We were the chair of the CP task force in Geneva. In NY, our advocacy mechanisms are more towards missions of the UN members, having organized several conferences within and outside of the UN on the theme of culture of peace co-sponsored and attended by various missions.

8. Are you aware of UNESCO's website on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (www.unesco.org/cp)? To what extent are its resources and tools (calendar of events, project database) useful for your organization?

We have used it to some extend, but it is surely under-utilized. As I've learned with web-sites and other IT mechanisms, sometimes an introduction or some form of advertisement is helpful to catch the interest of those not already 'converted'.

IV

COMMITMENT TOWARDS NEW INITIATIVES AND NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE

9. Please list the new projects planned by your organization to promote a culture of peace in the next five years.

We will continue all the projects that were mentioned above.

10. Do you think there are any priority domains amongst the areas defined in the Programme of Action? If so, please specify.

As answered in no. 5.

11. Please describe briefly how you envisage the approaches to a culture of peace and the promotion thereof over the next five years.

The title Culture of Peace, as attractive as it is, is less important than the general momentum to join forces across agencies and governments as well as throughout the civil society towards preventive or peace- promoting strategies. We're convinced that if the will is there, the resources will be too. Heightened grassroots involvement, media campaigns would be necessary to sell the 'difference' that such a focus-change would make in our daily lives and the future of this world.

(ps. Due to having heard about the questionnaire so late, we could not thoroughly answer all questions. There would be much more to be said about all the local activities that we are doing in line with a Culture of Peace and in describing the various aspects of them.)
