



Intercultural dialogue - the fourth pillar of sustainable global development

by Alina Böling - UN Youth Delegate of Finland

Everyone that has lately been following the news have most certainly come across news dealing with social unrest, rising extremism and polarization. In a majority of cases these phenomena are somehow linked with young people.

These issues were dealt with in Helsinki on the 6th of September when the high level representative of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, mr Jorge Sampaio visited Helsinki and spoke to a group of young people. At the same occasion both me, as the UN YD, Janne Peltola from the Guides and Scouts of Finland and the Finnish UNESCO YD Miika Tomi got to address the audience and raise valid points about young people promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding.

The AoC was established in 2005 as an initiative of the UN Secretary General. It emerged out of the conviction that, in order to achieve sustainable peace, long-standing divisions and misperceptions between cultures need to be addressed.

Mr Sampaio presented the Aoc and the work it does with both youth, media, migration and education, all special focuses of the AoC. Sampaio pointed out that intercultural tolerance, equality and understanding could be seen as the fourth fundamental pillar for sustainable development. The AoC supports various initiatives, and has for example supported a programme building the competence of journalists to deal with intercultural questions.

Janne Peltola from the Guides and Scouts of Finland used the occasion to present "Youth, peace and

security", a joint initiative between the Guides and Scouts of Finland, The UN association and the national youth council Allianssi. As a majority of the world's population are under 30, the well-being and inclusion of young people is also an important security question. If for example a billion young people will in the coming years be left without decent work, as the ILO predicts, there is a big risk that these young people will turn their frustration into violence. An effective way to include young people in peace building and conflict resolution would be passing a security council resolution about youth, peace and security with SC res. 1325 about women, peace and security serving as a model.

In my own contribution to the discussion I wanted to point out that youth are key actors when it comes to creating intercultural dialogue and understanding, as well as that all young people have the right to live a life free from violence, racism and xenophobia. To ensure this, supporting intercultural education in both formal and non-formal education is necessary. This is however not enough; as mass unemployment, poverty and marginalization are threatening the young generation both polarization and extremism are likely to emerge. Hence, policies striving to empower young people are not acts of goodwill but both a security and rights-based issue.

The discussion will not end here, but hopefully the fact that including young people is necessary to create intercultural understanding will be recognized, and the potential of youth utilised in building a constructive intercultural dialogue.

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Recent Developments on the Bulgarian YD Program and German-Bulgarian Cooperation Project

by Katerina Lovtchinova - UN Youth Delegate of Bulgaria

For its 6 years of existence till now the Bulgarian Youth Delegate to the UN Program has been

constantly evolving. Some of this year's improvements include a selection of a third delegate specifically for the Commission for Social Development. Furthermore, the YD team plans to make a more extensive national tour around the biggest Bulgarian cities to meet with high-school and university students, and representatives from youth-led clubs, associations and organizations.



The goal is to echo the voice and the ideas of as many young people as possible, increase the program's presence and popularity in Bulgarian society, and make Bulgarian youth more socially involved in the decision-making processes of the country.

Moreover, in the spirit of youth related initiatives during the International Year of Youth and the willingness to progress, the Bulgarian and the German youth delegates started a unique cooperation, which both sides hope will become an annual event. The project is funded by the "Youth in Action Programme" by the EU Commission and includes 3 stages: 1). Sofia workshop (23-27 June) with introduction of the Bulgarian and German programs, sharing best practices, exchange of expertise and ideas; 2) Berlin workshop (18-22 August) with both teams working on improving fundraising and media strategies, contacts with key stakeholders and developing agreed language research and resolutions drafting skills; 3) Mannheim workshop (11-13 November) on working together with representatives from EU states who do not have

a UN YD program in teaching and helping them establish such. From the few UN Member States which have Youth Delegate Programs, Germany and Bulgaria are among the first to start joint projects.



The Bulgarian and German UN Youth Delegates

Youth Delegates around the world in focus: Jamaica - Ruth Lawrence & Meeckel B. Beecher

Jamaica's United Nations youth delegate programme falls within the Jamaica Youth Ambassadors Programme (JaYAP). The JaYAP is established by the Government of Jamaica and operated by the National Centre for Youth Development, the youth arm of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture.

Since its inception in 2000, JAYAP's primary aim is to enable young people to become youth advocates. These advocates ensure that the concerns, needs, and successes of Jamaica's youth are voiced at the local, regional and international levels. The programme appoints 22 ambassadors ages 18-26 years who act as advocates for various areas including United Nations, Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Commonwealth, Disabilities, Organisation of American States, Youth in Agriculture, Youth and Technology et al.



Ruth Lawrence- Receiving her instrument of Officer- Jamaica Youth Ambassador-at-Large UN

The United Nations' arm of the programme appoints two ambassadors who serve a two years tenure. These ambassadors prior to their appointment would have been active youth advocates who displayed extraordinary commitments to youth development, and are



passionate about their country and fellow youth. The UN Youth ambassadors complete projects to aid the mandate of the United Nations and serve as representatives to UNESCO General Assembly in Paris, the United Nation General Assembly, China, the Latin America Festival and any other events that concerns youth.

The Jamaica Youth Ambassadors aim to affect policy development and ensure that a youth voice is heard at all levels of decision making of Jamaica. We are in the process of planning a skills expo to promote the many possibilities of youth in Jamaica. The expo is titled "You and Your skills" that will expose Jamaican youth to the entrepreneurial opportunities that exist. We will encourage youth to utilize their abilities to start their own businesses and also promote ways of making themselves employable. This is in an effort to aid in curbing Youth Unemployment, one of the many problems affecting youth in the world.



Meeckel B. Beecher- Receiving his instrument of Officer- Jamaica Youth Ambassador-at-Large UN

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