

UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE AND CEASEFIRE 2007

The UN International Day of Peace and Ceasefire, which is celebrated annually on 21 September, was commemorated this year all over the world and throughout the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC). We have received reports of many inspiring events, which we would like to highlight in this special 21st of September newsletter. More information on all events can be found on www.peoplebuildingpeace.org.

By Caroline Guldenmund



One of the winning entries in the competition, by Nicolás Sanguinetti and Javier Chiriello, Argentina

ARGENTINA

For the International Day of Peace, GPPAC Regional Secretariat and Media Focal Point CRIES held the first annual *Latidos de Paz* ('Heartbeats of Peace') contest for five- to eighteen-year-olds from all across Latin America and the Caribbean. Youngsters were encouraged to send in artwork expressing their ideas on peace and nonviolence. The winning entry will be on the front cover of the next edition of CRIES' publication *Pensamiento Propio*. Both the contest and the International Day of Peace got a lot of media coverage throughout the region.

BANGLADESH

Jubo Nagorik Adhikar Jote (Youth Citizen's Rights Alliance) is a national youth organisation for Peace and Human Rights, which organised a discussion meeting on the eve of the International Day of Peace in Bangladesh. The theme of the discussion was "Peace and Harmony through the Eyes of the Young Generation". Youth from different universities, colleges and civil society members attended the discussion.

BULGARIA

The Youth Organisation of the UN Association of Bulgaria brought together 250 youths in South Park, Sofia, to celebrate the International Day of Peace. The event included diverse performances by students and children from an orphanage. Students from two Sofia universities shared the history of the International Day of Peace as well as the importance of having peace, not just internationally, but in our immediate community. Youngsters from different ethnic groups participated in various workshops to learn to work together.



Children building a city of peace in South Park, Sofia, Bulgaria

CANADA

The Canadian Department of Peace Initiative together with the UN Association and other Ottawa-based organisations organised a 12-day peace festival on the theme of Peace, Unity and Harmony, with activities for anyone concerned with the issue. On the International Day of Peace people held one minute of silence for cessation of conflicts. A petition on Disarmament and a Department of Peace was presented to MPs, and several seminars took place, including one on the application of the principles of the creative process to manifest peace.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The UN and UNICEF organised a day full of activities for hundreds of people in the Kadutu Stadion in Bukayu. War Child was selected to showcase its work. Children gave spectacular performances with music and traditional dances, and formed a huge peace sign, while singing songs. The best poems and songs from a competition for children in the run-up to the day were performed on the 21st on local radio and television. The day ended with a friendly soccer match.

FUJI

GPPAC Regional Secretariat, Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF) participated in a 'People, Peace and Playback' event organised by Women's Action for Change (WAC). CCF was among many organisations that set up a display for the event. Activities included a peace story, peace songs and skits, poems and a short introduction to Playback Theatre followed by Playback Theatre enacted by WAC actors.

To mark International Peace Day, CCF's CEO Rev. Akuila Yabaki presented a letter of support for Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution to Mr Hirotsugu Ikeda, the First Secretary of the Embassy of Japan in Fiji. Article 9 renounces war as a means of settling international disputes and the maintenance of armed forces for those purposes. On receiving the letter,



WAC's People, Peace and Playback event, Fiji

➔ continued: Day of Peace and Ceasefire 2007

Mr Ikeda commented, "We hope Article 9 will stay forever (in Japan's Constitution)". The GPPAC Regional Secretariat for Northeast Asia, Japan-based Peaceboat, also focused its 21 September activities on Article 9, and is running a broader campaign for a Global Article 9 (www.article-9.org). The campaign is supported by many GPPAC members from around the world.

At noon on 21 September, FemLINKPACIFIC commemorated the International Day of Peace with a Vigil. Local instruments, the beating of the Lali drum and the resonating sound of the Davui horn, signified the start of unified global action by members of GPPAC and others, which took place around the world on the International Day of Peace. With the Vigil, Suva joined others throughout the world who dedicated their prayers, thoughts and actions to 24 hours of global ceasefire and non-violence.

Another Fiji-based event was the official opening of a Peace Garden, inspired by the Cook Islands Peace Garden which was opened in 2000. As the country looked for avenues to attain Peace and Reconciliation, PPSEAWA Fiji felt that a Peace Garden would be the most appropriate symbol of peace in the heart of Suva. The Peace Garden serves as a vivid reminder of the work that needs to be done if we are to rebuild, transform and sustain peace in our own communities.

GAMBIA

The Gambia Chapter of the World Peace Prayer Society held a peace-inspired picnic at the Palma Rima Beach. One hundred and twenty "Peace Pals" attended the picnic and highlighted the need for friendly, harmonious and loving co-existence, putting these values into practice during

various activities, such as games, dancing and competitions. The picnic ended with the students sending out the message of Peace by singing a rendition of "May Peace Prevail on Earth" and distributing of souvenirs with the inscription: "May Peace Prevail on Earth".

GEORGIA

Since the first visit of Netherlands-based Hope Box to Georgia in 2003, several Georgian artists and many children and youngsters have participated in the Hope Box Art projects. In September, Hope



Hope Box in Georgia

Box held a travelling interactive art-event against the backdrop of Hope Box projects "Kites of Life" and "Piece for Peace". On 19 and 20 September, Kites of Life were created in workshops in Tbilisi. For Piece for Peace, art and music pieces were created with local as well as international artists and youngsters in Georgia. There were also art- and music workshops and a performance with Dutch and local artists and youth.

On the International Day of Peace, the "Hope Box Ice Cream Event" took place in Tbilisi, showcasing the art, music and kites produced during the workshops.

Also in Georgia, the Human Rights Center's Kakheti Office held a "Word Demonstration" in Gurjaani. The slogan of the demonstration was "What would you tell Abkhazian people fifteen years later?" referring to the Abkhazian war that started fifteen years ago. Nearly a thousand young people took part in the event, painting and writing messages of peace and reconciliation to the Abkhaz people on the asphalt. ➔



Gurjaani children writing appeals to the Abkhaz people on the asphalt, Georgia

➔ continued: Day of Peace and Ceasefire 2007

With the support of local government the demonstration ended with a free concert in the local Culture Centre. The demonstration enabled people to think over the situation again and appeal to Abkhaz society.

GERMANY

This was the first year the International Day of Peace was a focal point for joint activities in Germany. The Platform for Peaceful Conflict Management took the initiative to celebrate the day, beginning with a public event in the morning, followed by a workshop session in the afternoon and ending with a dinner in the home of a member of the Women's Network for Peace. Three peacemakers shared their experiences and their work for peace.

INDIA

The Andhra Pradesh United Nations Association (APUNA) celebrated the International Day of Peace with a Peace Walk. Various NGO's participated in this Peace Day Event, starting at 07.00, from three places around the city simultaneously.

St.Xavier's Social Service Society in Gujarat organised an exhibition of artwork of Children from different slums of Ahmedabad, at St. Xavier's Loyola Hall and Loyola Evening School on the 20th of September. On the International Day of



Guamel M. Alim and Florence Mpaayei share their experiences in Bonn, Germany

Peace itself, a collective of NGOs organised various events, including a peace rally, a cultural program and messages of peace by various religious leaders.

INDONESIA

The Center for Security and Peace Studies of Gadjah Mada University (CSPS-UGM) hosted "Yogya in Peace '07" on 21 September. The Center celebrated the day by calling people's attention to peace-related issues and empowering them to take a stand on those issues. Events included workshops for civil society organisations in Yogyakarta, as well as exhibits and contests. People were encouraged to design peace posters and T-shirts, take photos and write articles, which served as tools for the peace campaign. Designs of the peace T-shirt competition were used for the September collection of local T-shirt companies and

the essays, poems and peace journalism entries were published in the local papers throughout September. Specific issues that came back in many of these writings were discussed in radio and TV talk shows. Visuals such as posters and photos were put on display in public places all throughout Yogyakarta.

ISRAEL - PALESTINE

For The Parents Circle-Families Forum, the International Day of Peace is one of commemoration and reconciliation. This year's program included music and poems for peace, a moment of silence in memory of fallen family members, Israelis and Palestinians alike, and the awarding of the 2007 Reconciliation Award to persons and groups or institutions that have contributed in an outstanding way to the reconciliation between the two peoples. ➔



APUNA Secretary General Ms. Moti Kumari (left), Peace Walk in Andhra Pradesh, India (below)
Photographs by P. Anil Kumar





“Nine in the world”, Peace Day celebrations in Tokyo, Japan

JAPAN

Convened by GPPAC Northeast Asia Regional Secretariat and Media Focal Point Peace Boat, citizens gathered at Shiba Park at the foot of the Tokyo Tower to spread messages of peace and nonviolence. The efforts of civil society in Japan are crucial, and the day was an expression of the strength of Tokyo’s peace movement and their dedication to creating peace through



The lighting of the peace torch by the Kenyan president, Kenya

nonviolent means. Article nine, the ‘no-war clause’ of the Japanese constitution played a prominent role in the Peace Day celebrations.

KENYA

Events took place across Kenya on 21 September. Africa Peace Point with a group of NGO’s, including GPPAC National Focal Point PeaceNet Kenya, religious organisations and grassroots initiatives working in Nairobi walked from Kibera to Uhuru Park to commemorate the 8th Nairobi International Peace March, which coincides with the International Day of Peace. This year’s theme was: “towards a more inclusive society”. The national commemorations took place at Uhuru Park on the 21st of September and were graced by H.E the President among other political leaders.

In Kenya’s North Rift Valley province, District Peace Committees identified



Young Nairobi artists and musicians composed a peace song for the elections, Kenya

and honoured peace icons from amongst community members. Every district held a peaceful procession that culminated in a tree planting event, followed by an open discussion forum.

In cooperation with a number of organisations, on 21 September GPPAC Regional Secretariat for Central and Eastern Africa, the Nairobi Peace Initiative–Africa launched a campaign for peaceful elections around the parliamentary and presidential elections which are to be held at the end of this year. Ongoing activities include a media campaign, a tour of the country by young Nairobi artists and musicians with a song they composed for the campaign, the lighting of a peace torch by the president and peace charters stating a personal commitment to peaceful behaviour for the elections, which was signed, among others, by the President on 21 September. ➔



Kids for Peace Kosovo

World Vision Kosovo organised a Peace Day event with 350 children from “Kids for Peace” Clubs for school children from different ethnic groups. The day was a big

success, with song, role-play, poetry and dance to celebrate peace and express a desire for a life free of violence.



Children at the Beirut Peace Day Celebration, Lebanon

LEBANON

The Permanent Peace Movement in Lebanon was the GPPAC Regional Secretariat and Media Focal Point for the Middle East and North Africa. The celebrations for the International Peace Day took place at the UNESCO Palace, where hundreds of children and adults gathered for entertaining and thoughtful theatre, dance, and music. The crowd was as colourful as Lebanon is diverse, with children from orphanages, Red Cross volunteers, young men from the internal security forces and the Lebanese army, as well as many peace activists. In a playful way, the children learned that it is better to forgive than to argue, and that it is a beautiful thing to live together despite all differences. At the end of the day people who earned special merits in peacebuilding were honoured.

MALAWI

All Malawian regions celebrated the 21st of September together. The regions held rallies, jointly organised by the Human Rights Consultative Committee in Malawi. In the southern region Peoples Federation



Bagdad car bomb wreckages in Utrecht, The Netherlands, photo by Laura Bolle



21 September in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

for National Peace and Development joined hands with the Civil Liberties Committee and others for a rally which took place at Lunzu primary School ground in Blantyre.

MONGOLIA

The events in Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia were mainly focused on youth and students. The Blue Banner organised a photo exhibition and held a town-hall meeting. The meeting was addressed by well-known and inspirational people who talked about peace, the peace day, international efforts to promote peace and specifically on the importance of Article 9 of Japan's constitution.

THE NETHERLANDS

A series of events took place across the Netherlands, varying from lectures, debates,

vigils and documentary viewings, to festivals and children's activities. For instance, the United Network of Young Peacebuilders introduced their campaign against Violence Against Children and Youth to the public. With partners, they organised an event to raise awareness on child-related violence and to give children the chance to make their voices heard. A wall was erected in The Hague, on which close to one hundred children left behind a symbolic handprint to give peace a helping hand.

The Dutch national GPPAC network, PBP-NL, organised the Planet Peace festival in Utrecht. The wreckage of a car bomb from Bagdad attracted a lot of attention, as did the 'peace tank' on which various "world leaders" cycled through the centre of Utrecht. In the evening there were debates and workshops, followed by the Planet Peace Party. A lot of people came to listen to speeches and to enjoy the various bands that gave away great performances.

PBP-NL also called upon dutch municipalities to fly 'Peace' peace flags over Town Halls on 21 September, and a number of them did so. ➔



Giving peace a "helping hand" in the Hague, The Netherlands



➔ continued: Day of Peace and Ceasefire 2007

PAKISTAN

The Asian Network for Trust, Hiroshima, published and distributed Fauzia Minallah's recent childrens book "Sadako's Prayer" (in the Dari language) in Bamiyan and Parwan Provinces of Afghanistan. The book is based on the true story of Sadako, an 11-year-old Japanese girl who was a victim of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The Funkor Childart Centre from Pakistan, of which Fauzia Minallah is the Director, arranged book reading sessions in Pakistan on the International Day of Peace to help children to understand the impact of war and the importance of peace. "The book is about an event in history where a whole city was destroyed and a nation devastated, but the people of Hiroshima set an example to the world by rebuilding their city and making it into a center of peace,(...) *This is our cry, this is our prayer, peace in the world (Sadako's Prayer)*".

PHILIPPINES

The GZO Peace Institute and the newly established Generation Peace Youth Network (GenPeace) initiated an inspiring month-long celebration for peace in September, rather than just the one day, focusing on the popularisation and mainstreaming of peace with youth.



Reading Sadako's Prayer in Pakistan

Caloocan City kicked off with the Camerin Peace Festival. The GZO Peace Institute and GenPeace hosted its first ever edition, with a main focus on youth subcultures. The day itself was celebrated with a peace film festival at the University of the Philippines and an art competition and exhibit.

Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), the GPPAC Regional Secretariat and Media Focal Point for Southeast Asia, sent out a press statement to raise awareness for the International Day of Peace, and Miriam College's Center for Peace Education organised a seminar- workshop (18 to

22 September) on peace education for 23 educators from eight Southeast Asian countries. The event was co-organised with the Peace Education Working Group of GPPAC-Southeast Asia. In what may be a first, teachers and education ministry officials, as well as representatives from several non-governmental organisations gathered to learn about the knowledge base, skills and values relevant to the field of peace education. The participants of this workshop also decided to form a South-East Asia Peace Education Network. The seminar was supported by Cordaid and the Australian Embassy in the Philippines.



➔ continued: Day of Peace and Ceasefire 2007

NIGERIA

The Centre for Preventive Action Nigeria organised various Peace Day events. This year's theme was 'Blessed are the peacemakers'. There were rallies and lectures in Lagos and Enugu to promote peace and preventive diplomacy. Lectures took place on the 21st of September, and rallies followed on the Saturday the 22nd.

RWANDA

Rwanda commemorated the day with a focus on children as active peacebuilders in their communities. Two events took place, one in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda and another in Butare in the southern province. In Kigali, a total of 1200 people came together from GPPAC member organisations, the Kinunga Primary School pupils, their teachers and many others. The theme was 'embedding the culture of peace among children for they are tomorrow's leaders'. The event was animated with songs and dances by children dressed



Kinunga primary school pupils commemorating the UN Day of Peace on September 21st 2007 together with the GPPAC members

in traditional Rwandan style and poems prepared by some GPPAC members, all conveying messages of peace. The event was covered by Rwandan national television.

SERBIA

The Nansen Dialogue Centre Serbia, GPPAC Regional Secretariat for the Balkans garnered media attention for two of its projects: "Mediation in Schools in Southern Serbia" and "Education for Decision-Makers in the Sandzak Region", which are being implemented in divided multi-ethnic

communities in Serbia. For example, in the municipality of Bujanovac, Serbian and Albanian children attend completely separate schools. The mediation project was initiated in order to open inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation in the education sector and to run combined school subjects (such as language classes and sports activities) for both Albanian and Serbian schoolchildren. NDC Serbia staff members were interviewed by the BETA Radio France International and BETA News Agency as a part of media awareness activities. Similarly, media awareness was raised on the importance of 21 September by highlighting peacebuilding projects in former Yugoslavia.

SIERRA LEONE

As part of a War Child program, four villages of the Bombali-district organised an event in Makeni city. The event attracted a couple of thousand participants and proved to be a huge success. Both youth and adults formed small groups and created a "peace parade". During the day people could participate in theatre performances,

sporting activities and traditional games. A final soccer match decided the overall winner of the day. The teams were mixed in order to promote the integration of children, youth and adults of the four different villages.

SOMALIA

World Vision Somalia marked this year's International Day of Peace on September 22nd in Waajid, southern Somalia. The occasion also marked 15 years of World Vision's work in the country, in a Child Friendly Space which was opened officially as part of the celebrations. The Waajid Child Friendly Space provides a place for Somali children to play, laugh and heal. Group therapy is one of the activities that takes place at the centre, funded by World Vision Australia. World Vision UK funded the activities marking the International Day of Peace. After a football match 11-year old Ahmed said, "If all of the events and activities that have taken place here today took place every day, there would be unity in Somalia."

SRI LANKA

To mark the International Peace Day, GPPAC Regional Secretariat the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies joined with the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies and the International Centre for Ethnic Studies to organise a panel discussion with eminent panellists, titled "Making Peace Processes Work: What Roles for Third Parties?" The audience consisted of people both for and against the involvement of third parties in a peace process, and the discussion was highly constructive. Answering numerous issues raised by the audience the panel addressed dilemmas of impartiality and neutrality as well as perspectives on how the potential of third party involvement can be improved. ➔

COMING UP: GPPAC ISSUE PAPER #4

GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY COOPERATION ON CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING

This upcoming issue paper follows from a discussion paper written by Dr. Catherine Barnes in 2006. In addition to a framework for government – civil society cooperation, it will be enriched by a wide variety of case studies of successful cooperation between different stakeholders in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding all over the world, leading us through Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, the United States, Germany and many other countries.

The issue paper will be used as input for various GPPAC meetings, including the International Steering Group meeting in Buenos Aires in April 2008 and a second strategy meeting with GPPAC members from around the world, governments and donors in October 2008. Furthermore, it will provide a useful reference for anyone interested in multi-stakeholder collaboration in this field. The paper will be available both in print and online at www.gppac.net in January 2008.

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OTHER GPPAC NEWS

- GPPAC International Steering Group Meeting 2007
- GPPAC members rally in support of the people of Burma
- GPPAC Peace Education Evaluation Project
- Peace and Conflict Resolution Education in the Balkans
- The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development
- Campaign for Peaceful Elections in Kenya
- New blog on the UN Peacebuilding Commission from the Global Policy Institute

Go to www.gppac.net to read more!

➔ continued: *Day of Peace and Ceasefire 2007*

UGANDA

Conflict Resolution by Youth (CRY) organised a week long “peace camp” for a hundred youngsters, with the International Day of Peace as the highlight of the week. They held a peace march and discussed various peace related topics. In addition to DJ Super’s performance, various tribes performed and watched each others performances. They all took a minute of silence to commemorate the victims of the 21 year conflict in the country.

UKRAINE

The research centre Integration and Development conducted a special class with the theme “Lessons of Peace” for students of the Schools of Simpheropol (Crimea). In addition, several meetings, roundtables and other events were held in the region with participation of youth representatives of the three main communities of Crimea: Ukrainians, Russians and Crimean Tartars.

U.S.A.

The International Day of Peace was celebrated in numerous places across the USA. The fifth United Nations Association Film Festival marked the International Day of Peace in New York, whereas the Loveland Peacemakers showed an exceptional documentary with Nobel laureates, global peacemakers and victims of war telling their story. The Greater Lansing Chapter celebrated the day with a varied program with music, peace songs, words of peace and experience sharing.

The “Work a Day for Peace” event, promoted by the Minnesota-based international organisation Nonviolent Peaceforce encouraged citizens to gather with others to reflect on the teachings of Gandhi. In Fort Collins Colorado the day was marked with a “Passport Event”. Participants could share their readings, poems, stories, articles, songs and inter-faith prayers focusing on peace.

The United Nations Association of the National Capital Area honoured Betty Bigombe for her unique efforts to end a brutal insurgency in Uganda, and retired Ambassador Jonathan Dean for his lifelong efforts working for peace and security.

ZAMBIA

The Network of African Peace Builders (NAPS), the GPPAC Media Focal Point for Southern Africa, connected the activities around 21 September to advocacy and lobbying with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and specifically the government of Zambia as it took up the Chairmanship of SADC. The International Day of Peace Campaign was launched in mid-August during the SADC Summit in Lusaka, Zambia. GPPAC Southern Africa called upon SADC to address the many issues that challenge regional stability, such as governance and constitutionalism, socio-economic instability, vulnerable groups, proliferation of small arms and HIV/Aids. NAPS also made press releases and flyers, held press conferences, spoke about the International Day of Peace and GPPAC in radio programmes, and sent an SMS text message of peace to people across the region.

FUNDING

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