

GLOBAL NETWORK NEWS

A quarterly newsletter for groups organising international meetings of children and youth

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Summer 94

RESCUE MISSION HITS BEST SELLER LISTS

The Children's edition of *Agenda 21* was launched by its young editors in London, New York, Bonn and Barbados. Over 100,000 copies of the book are now in print, in 14 languages. It has reached best-seller lists in the UK and USA. Many things are happening as a result.....

Day of Access

In January, Peace Child hosted a conference of young people, teachers and municipal councillors to brainstorm the Day of Access. The resulting Statement of Principles and Action Plan outlined a campaign for a Day of Access that was presented to Shridath Ramphal and Ingvar Carlsson of the UN Commission on Global Governance and a campaign was mapped out. At the UN launch of Rescue Mission, Undersecretary Nitin Desai, speaking on behalf of the Secretary General, announced UN Support for the idea of a Day of Access: "We encourage every country to hold an annual Day of Access for Children...." He also announced his support for awarding Rescue Mission Representative Cards to those groups who can provide evidence of long-term activity in pursuit of Agenda 21 goals. These cards are an idea developed by young people to help give them the authority and credibility they need to gain access to decision-makers in government and industry.

Electronic Focal Points Meeting

The Rescue Mission editors had begged the UN to allow them to reconvene to plan the Rescue Mission Action Plan. No funds were available, so they held the meeting anyway - via phone and fax. It was great! - this way we got to meet over the phone all members of the groups, not just one or two representatives. An agenda was set, views were expressed and a Strategy Document was developed as a result. It was a great medium to meet, and the practice will be repeated in the fall.

Commission for Sustainable Development

This is perhaps the most significant news of all for our network. Nitin Desai, who calls Rescue Mission "my favorite edition of Agenda 21" - invited Peace Child to put together a Youth presentation to the CSD. We held a 90-minute session with Desai plus ministers from Holland and Malaysia in front of an audience of about 50. The six kids were clear, bright, fresh, funny, intelligent as they related the results of the Focal Points meeting - the indifference of governments and school staff; the need for Agenda 21 to be on school curricula; the difficulty of motivating their peers: eco-enthusiasm is "un-cool" to most kids over 13; the need for global networking to make the kids feel they are not alone.

War

One spoke of the war in ex-Yugoslavia - how impossible it is to even dream about sustainable development until peace can be secured. It was all a refreshing change from the usual diplo-babble doled out from soft pulpits elsewhere in the UN. As a result, CSD is planning a major project to find out how different governments

are involving young people in the implementing Agenda 21. Nothing official yet, but we are hoping that Rescue Missioners will be invited to do this research and prepare the report. Then a major conference will be held in early 1996 when those governments who are listening to the Voices of Children will encourage other governments to do likewise.

Action Newsletter released

Edited by kids, for kids, this newsletter is choc-full of action ideas that kids - and adults - can undertake to implement Agenda 21.

Kids translate the book themselves


Two Finnish schools are undertaking the Finnish translation of Rescue Mission; the Thai International School has edited the Thai translation. Great language practice and great for the book as it preserves the youthful feel in the different languages.

Rescue Mission to the UN

Based on the success of the book, the UN 50 secretariat has invited us to create a Young People's History of the United Nations - past, present and future. UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, making the invitation, said: "I hope young people everywhere will help with this project and find out what the UN has meant to your community over the past half century." Most books we have seen about the UN are difficult and dull. Please fill in the attached card and let us know what kind of book you would like to read about the UN.

For more information contact: Rescue Mission HQ, The White House, Buntingford, England, SG9 9AH

Suhail Sherriff-Youth Editor-Zanzibar, Tanzania

From his address to the UNICEF Council May 94
"Think of a street kid who is in a bad situation. He lives with a vision of what he wants to be and how he will get to be that. He is frustrated; he wants to do something, but he cannot. He walks up and down the street with ideas and energy flowing in him. Chances are a UNICEF car will pull up, give him an immunization jab and leave him. But he needs more than that. Eventually, he will get tired of walking and sit down. Frustration turns to despair, and in despair he will put out his hand for the extra change which is all the system has to offer him. BUT - if he had a place to go, somewhere to be heard and helped, somewhere that could be helping him or her in their personal development, that would allow UNICEF to know what children really need - that is our vision of what UNICEF should be doing. And we'd like to help 

IT'S OUR TURN!

"It's Our Turn" - April 8-18; Murzsteg, Austria. Under the challenging leadership of Voice of the Children and United Games, with funding from the Norwegian government, 30 kids from ex-Yugoslavia gathered to "get to know each other, learn each other's perspectives on what's been happening, and establish lines of communication."

Sessions

In the week, they produced a film, a newsletter, a radio programme and some animated film. They also attended morning sessions conducted by some brilliant UNICEF-selected psycho-sociologists. At the end of the session, the European Peace negotiator, Thorvald Stoltenburg, spent several hours with them, listening to their points.

Direct communication

Jelena (Serb) "I'm generally a cheerful person but today, in the morning workshop, when Damir spoke about his life, I was crying. I think the war has taught me to enjoy life more. I believe that existence has a deeper meaning. I don't know how they make people slaughter and rape. A psychologist told me that 80% of people are actually psychopaths: in a normal environment, you don't notice it, but in a war, they do whatever they are told. I believe that..."

Petrit (Albanian, Kosovo) "I feel I was born in the wrong place at the wrong time. I'd like to go abroad, to England. What can I do to help my people? Do my little workshops? How great - I can't do nothing, I'm just a young boy. I'm alone - I'm afraid - I can't see another way this is going to end up than war..."

Daniela (Croatia - after the bombing of Gorazde) "I'm not sorry - I hope they (Serbs) know now what it means to be afraid. Funny - I have tried to see Schindler's List but something always comes between. It's not really a movie for us. This is our Schindler's List. We live it every day."

Contact: Kristin Eskeland, PO Box 8844, Youngstorget, N-0028, Oslo, Norway; (47) 22 03 7776; Fax: 22 11 17 70;

A second meeting is planned for December '94, again in Murzsteg. Youth from Croatia and Serbia are meeting in Hungary to produce a second edition of the Newsletter (which is in Serbo-Croatian, Albanian and English).

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

"It's Only Right!" - UNICEF have produced a super new teaching guide on the Convention of the Rights of the Child. It explains the Convention in simple terms, provides excellent classroom exercises and gives examples of how kids can take action in different parts of the world. For example, a restaurant run by Street Children in India, workshops run by students in the USA on "unequal education" and Street Theatre performed by ex-prostitutes in Brazil on health issues. Contact: Nora Godwin, UNICEF, 3 UN Plaza, H-9F, New York, NY 10017, or Andres Guererro, UNICEF, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland.

Hague Model United Nations (THIMUN)

Netherlands, Jan. 24-30. This 26th Session made a determined effort to "more accurately reflect the structure and workings of the real UN" while retaining the quality of a "Model" meaning "exemplary" UN.

Excellent

The new instructional guide helps prepare for teachers and delegates, and makes clear what an excellent educational instrument the MUN is: run by schools for schools, it allows traditional educational institutions to address global issues in their curricula in a practical, youth involving, and deeply youth empowering way.

Disputes ended

Natalia von Mensdorf-Pouilly, the young Secretary General of THIMUN 26, reports: "In one week, we managed to find solutions to global environmental and social problems, ended the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia, found a way to end the bloody war in Bosnia, saw the US embargo on Cuba lifted and witnessed the signing of an agreement between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus."

Justice

We also included a Special Conference on the International Court of Justice. To me, this conference has shown that our generation has the strength and the vision to cope with, and to solve, the many grave problems that our planet faces today."

Next session: January 95. Apply: 2e van Blankenburgstraat 119, 2517 HC Den Haag, The Netherlands.(31) 70 356 3273.

World Summit of Children

An impressive number of Prepcoms have been set up in different parts of the world by the Children of the Earth Coalition (COEC)

- Costa Rica, June 17-19; Bahai Youth Movement
- England July 16-19; Intl. Council of Women
- Sierra Leone Sept. 4-12; Peace Link
- Italy September; Children's Peace C'ncil
- Vermont US Sept. 22-25; Children of the Earth
- Philippines Nov. 21-Dec.2 Women's University
- India Dec. 26-31; Tamilnadu UNA
- Poland Dec. 28-Jan 5 WYSPA - The Island

Electronic Connections

The fact that no location has yet been found for the actual summit in San Francisco may work to the programme's advantage as the plan now is to try to connect as many of the groups as possible electronically.

Lining Efforts

Nina Lynn, Director of COEC, is also trying to link this summit with others happening in San Francisco at that time. In this office, we have heard of five:

- COEC: World Summit of Children + Prepcoms
- Worldlink: The Global Youth Summit
- Global Education Associates: Global 2000
- Earth Island Institute: Youth Link
- Gateway Pacific Foundation: An Earth Train event

None of these events are listed in the official San Francisco UN 50 programme. YET!

Pathways to Peace

Meanwhile, Pathways to Peace is planning a Children's World Peace Festival, June 22-26 in Sausalito, across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. The Festival will build a "community eco-system which will mirror the process of living sustainably on the earth..." while also building a 6,000lb 5-story Globe using bicycle power. Interactive educational activities, exhibitions, music, face-painting etc. will allow children to "experience their interconnection with each other, with the natural environment and with the human spirit." Contact: Noah Zim, PO Box 1057, Larkspur, Ca 94977, USA;

HEAL THE WORLD

Plans for the big Children's Forum are on hold while Michael Jackson heals his own world, but the Foundation has been collecting toys from children in USA, Canada, UK and Europe on Operation Christmas Child which brought 125,000 gifts in shoe-boxes to the refugee children of ex-Yugoslavia in December.

European Youth Parliament

Two sessions to report, one in Fontainebleau, November '93 with 200 participants representing 16 countries, the other in Berlin, February '94 with the General Assembly in the Reichstag (350 participants from 23 countries). Future sessions planned in Brussels(July), Holstebro(October), Goteborg (April '95).

Europe 2020

The Oxford University undergraduate conference in March was a great success and is expected to become an annual event. The theme was "Europe 2020" with 120 students from 17 Universities; the conference papers were presented to the EU Forward Studies Unit.

New Committees

New national EYP committees have been set up in Finland and Poland; the new EYP headquarters in Marlow (Between Oxford & London) is expected to open within the year. The House was a gift from a supporter, Mr Kenneth Balfour. - Some gift!! Meanwhile, address remains: 110a Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6JU, UK. (44) 865 311 946

DALAI LAMA RAISES SPIRITS

UNOY(United Nations of Youth): UNOY staff had an audience with their Patron, HH Dalai Lama, in June which raised their spirits for the year's challenging schedule which includes:

Inter-regional Youth Peace-Building Conference

August 20-30, 1994, Alma-Aty, Kazakhstan; 50 participants from CIS & Europe; Organizer: UNOY-Net Kazakhstan, Rouslan Kaskenov; Tel. (7) 32 72 530 619; Fax: (7) 32 72 631 207 (attn. 238)

Cross Conflict Participation

Peace-Building in Caucasia, to develop an Agenda for Peace with representatives from the conflict areas of former Soviet Union. Dates: 10-24 September, Netherlands. Organizer: Maria Kooijman

International Conference

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, October '94; Theme: Our Environment, Our Responsibility; 40 participants from UNOY nets will prepare for Global Alliance Youth Assembly (GAYA) in 1995. Organizer: Eric Ansah, UNOY Intl. Secretariat, Venedien 25, 1441 AK Purmerend, NL. (31) 2990 36093;

Guest Editorial

I am just back from a wonderful experience with young people from the former Yugoslavia, a meeting which came about because adults and children were able to listen to each other. The meeting, which took place in Mürzsteg in Austria, was a success because

- the three organizations were open to the ideas which came from the young people themselves;
- the young people participated in the practical planning of the event
- the adults were willing to listen to the young ones and let them make all the major decisions;

Listen

The more I work with children and young people, the more I realise how important it is to really listen to them. They are not always right. They make mistakes and they misunderstand just like everybody else. But they have many ideas, many concerns, and they have a need and a right to be heard and taken seriously.

Adults

Most adults are not used to the role of just listening. Our intentions may be the most noble but, deep inside, most of us still believe that we are the ones who know best. We want to help the children say and do what we feel would be best for them. By organizing

different kinds of events, where children, young people and adults cooperate on equal terms, I hope we shall be able to learn a lot from each other.

Open

We all have to be more open and more critical. If children feel that they are being manipulated, however gently, they should say so. If adults feel uneasy about something, they should learn to raise the question and discuss it openly. The best way to learn is by being open and by listening to one another.

It is not easy. All NGOs have their own agenda. We all need positive publicity and we are afraid that other groups may run off with our ideas. Let us not forget that we all work for the same aim: children's right to participate and to be heard. We shall not succeed until we have learned to cooperate and to share with each other.

Cooperation

I sincerely hope that we who work with children and young people will be able to show the way to genuine cooperation. The day when NGOs are able to come down from their different mountain tops to work together will be a happy one. The day when children and adults are able to listen to each other and participate as equal partners will be even better.

Kristin Eskeland, Voice of the Children

A Joint Youth Newspaper ?

David Pines of New Futures has proposed a new way of glueing us all together: a joint news paper incorporating Global Network News, the Rescue Mission Action Update, + plus other "for-youth-by-youth" journals. The idea was discussed at a recent meeting in Geneva of the staff and funders of the *Earth Focus* newspaper which is written by students of the International School there. David has in mind a bi-monthly publication, initially in English but subsequently in other languages, written, designed and edited by youth. It would be funded by advertising to enable it to be sold at low cost throughout the world.

Who would edit it? - young people, of course, but the task would revolve between different NGOs so that young people from groups throughout the world would be involved.

What do you think?? we shall have a meeting in the fall in Geneva to discuss it. If you'd like to be a part of that discussion, please get in touch. All are welcome.

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OR

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