

Shalom, Educating for Peace Newsletter, May, 2011



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In brief

The first quarter of 2011 has been a time for us to plan, strategise and envision paths of peace for the future. We've been excited about the partnerships we're developing with other organizations, the projects that are beginning to unfold, and the growth in our passion for peace education in Rwanda.

Board Meeting

On the 1st of February we had our annual board meeting across three countries (and two continents)! Using skype, our members in South Africa and Costa Rica were able to join the rest of the board in Kigali to review the past year and plan for the year ahead. We were also able to welcome two new members to the board as well as third director, Mary Coffman, who is currently based in Washington D.C. We are very excited to welcome Mary and are certain her contribution will be immeasurable. Mary says, "To work with SEP is to go alongside a people that seeks peace and reconciliation. I look forward to contributing and growing with this community in shalom."

During the meeting, the audit report for the 2009-2010 financial year was approved, the action plans for 2011 were discussed, and members were encouraged to play a more active role in the organization through the development of action committees.

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Mary Coffman, SEP's new co-director, brings peacebuilding experience from the US and Latin America.

To read more about the board meeting, visit [this link](#).

Regional Consultation in South Africa

Jean de Dieu Basabose participated in a Regional Consultation annually organized by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. The consultation took place in Johannesburg, from 21 to 22 February 2011, under the theme: *The International Criminal Court and Community-Level Reconciliation: In-Country Perspective*. Participants from different parts of Africa and abroad discussed the role of the ICC in moving transitional and post conflict societies towards sustainable reconciliation. "The ICC has gained increasing prominence on the African continent and it is necessary for us to take time to reflect on its impact on the social and political dynamics of the continent," said Dr. Fanie Du Toit, Executive Director of IJR. Jean de Dieu Basabose took this opportunity to arrange an informal meeting with some of the staff of the IJR in order to explore the possibility of developing a partnership between SEP and IJR in working for reconciliation in Rwanda.

Great Lakes Leadership Institute

The Center for Reconciliation at Duke Divinity School, in partnership with the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), World Vision International (WVI), and African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries (ALARM), organized the first Great Lakes Leadership Institute that was held from January 16-22, 2011, at Ggaba National Seminary in Kampala, Uganda. Three members of Shalom Educating for Peace, namely Jean de Dieu Basabose, Charles Karangwa and Heli Habyarimana, participated in this unique regional event.

Participants worked together on constructing a theology and methodologies of reconciliation that come from both the cries and hopes of the entire region and individual communities. Everyone journeyed together on a pilgrimage to envision the kind of community in which God's vision for peace and reconciliation is being lived out. The GLI offered good opportunities to learn from other peacebuilders' work and to explore possibilities of enlarging our network in the Great Lakes region.

Rulindo Community Project

Together with the Rulindo District Authority, SEP hosted a meeting in December, which included representatives of the district development partner organizations, Rulindo district staff, Gako community representatives, and religious leaders operating in the district. The strategies to move the Gako cell community towards sustainable reconciliation and social cohesion were discussed. The participants responded positively to SEPs proposed project in the area.



Jean de Dieu Basabose and Cori Wielenga visit the Union Buildings in Pretoria during Jean's visit to South Africa in February.

Plans for 2011

The Action Plan for 2011 includes the following:

- Weekly radio broadcasts
- Ubupfura project together with Children of the Earth
- Rulindo Community Project
- World Peace Day celebration in September
- Mentorship for the Ministry of Peace in Rwanda
- Peace education through songs and theatre at Les Enfants de Dieu centre
- Educating cooperatives about conflict resolution
- Developing a volunteer guidebook



Basabose explains the guidelines for the Sports for Peace project to young people in Ndera Village.



Youth purposeful about peace!

Upcoming event:

In July, Cori Wielenga, along with a team of young South Africans passionate about peace, will 'Walk for Peace' during the annual 702 Walk the

SEP envisages developing an holistic community peacebuilding program that impacts every aspect of the community. After doing a needs-assessment, various activities aimed at building and sustaining positive peace and moving the community towards genuine reconciliation have been proposed.

Read more about this [here](#).

Peace through Radio

In November and December, the focus of our radio broadcasts were on effective mediation. Listeners were educated on how to conduct effective mediation processes and were encouraged to use collaborative methods to resolve conflict.

From January to March, the focus was on the necessity of educating children and youth for peace. Various methods and approaches used for developing appropriate education for children and youth were discussed. SEP presented two of the approaches it uses: Peace education through sports (PES) and Peace and Reconciliation education through songs and theatre (PREST).

From March onwards, the concept of peace education has been presented to the listeners: What do we mean by peace education? What objectives do we have when campaigning for peace education development? What content should be developed? Those are some of the questions that were asked.

SEP is thankful for the support from Umucyo Community Radio who continue to air our broadcast free of charge. Their contribution to our work and to peace is invaluable!

Partnerships

We've signed a memorandum of understanding with the [Children of the Earth](#), a non-profit organization that works with child and youth development worldwide. We are excited about the potential benefits to both organizations through this partnership.

We hope to see several volunteers join us in Rwanda for various lengths of time this year and welcome anyone who would like to work with us towards educating communities for peace.

Get involved!

We urgently need funds to implement the many projects in our action plan for 2011. Donations can be made via credit card [here](#). Every donation, big and small, will make a significant difference in bringing sustainable, positive peace

Talk event held in Johannesburg. They aim to raise R10 000 towards the Schools for Peace project. Contact Cori if you'd like to sponsor them.



Members of the Rulindo Community symbolically commit to working together towards peace.

Reflection

Geoff Harris, Director of the Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies program at the University of KwaZulu Natal writes the following for us to reflect on.

"I have been struck by the title of a book by the black American writer, Alice Walker - *We are the ones we have been waiting for*. Do you see the point she is making? We are waiting for someone to come along and build peace.

But we are the ones who have to do it.

What would it take to really build peace in ... (write the name of your household, your community or your country in this space)?

Often, we don't THINK we have any answers to such a question. But when we sit down with pen and paper, or talk with others, we find that we really do understand some ways in which it might happen. Phrases will come to mind - like the importance of respecting one another, of having dialogue in order to understand each other, of being committed to nonviolence and these help us see ways in which we might help build peace.

to Rwanda.

We would love to receive feedback, advice, input and materials from any of you who are involved with peace work!

We are the ones we have been waiting for."

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