

Questionnaire on the implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of peace, addressed to NGOs maintaining official relations with UNESCO:

**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 the Programme of Action on a Culture of peace is available at: <http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/kits/53243A.pdf>

In 2001, the Executive Board of UNESCO invited the Organization's Member States and all partners of UNESCO to continue and deepen their commitment to a culture of peace in the framework of the International Decade for a Culture of peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (document 161 EX/3.6.1). In the same year, the annual NGO conference at UNESCO headquarters adopted its own action plan for the International Decade. It can be accessed online via the following link: http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/kits/uk_reso_ong.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 non-governmental organizations maintaining official relations with UNESCO;
- To integrate the NGO contributions into the mid-term report which UNESCO will submit to the UN General Assembly in its capacity as lead agency for the International Decade;
- To identify main areas of action and to receive input regarding the direction of activities undertaken in the second part of the International Decade.

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
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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*

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation-IFOR is a worldwide federation of individuals and member organisations committed to non-violence from a spiritual and faith perspective. In 2005, there were 70 member organisations. IFOR has branches, groups and affiliates in more than 40 countries, the majority being in the global South. The members are independent and autonomous. Many of them have significantly greater resources than the International Secretariat, which operates with 2.1 full time equivalent staff plus an intern plus two full-time volunteers. IFOR encourages its branches, groups and affiliates (BGAs) to come up with their own activities using the Decade as a theme or focus. The enclosed report describes some of the IFOR BGAs' activities and also mentions the work of IFOR regional and global levels.

IFOR acts as a link between its network and different events that have taken place around the world.

IFOR, mainly through Pierre Marchand from the organization Partage [which was then an IFOR member] was directly involved in the creation of this Decade.

IFOR has strongly promoted the Decade in its publications, circulars to its member organisations, in press statements and on its website.

In 1999, IFOR adopted a nine-point plan to promote the Decade:

- education and training for children
- education and training for adults
- development of non-violence media (worldwide media network)
- responding to gender and family violence
- disarmament
- economic justice
- inter-religious dialogue
- promoting peace teams and zones of peace
- structure for peace building

In 2002, an IFOR working group was established to help IFOR to promote the Decade. Christian Renoux is currently the convenor of this working group. IFOR supported the French Coalition in establishing the International Coalition for the Decade with its base in Paris. Some IFOR member organisations considered the challenges of the Decade could best be addressed by working in formal cooperation with other similar minded organisations. So one way forward was to establish national platforms or coalitions to support the work of the Decade.

There are currently national coalitions for the Decade in France, Austria, Italy and the Netherlands, all of which are members of the International Coalition for the Decade. IFOR is also aware of national coalitions in Sweden and the Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville). IFOR member organisations have been heavily involved in the establishment of these coalitions and are active members of them.

In 2004, an IFOR UNESCO working group was created. Among other matters this group will prepare IFOR proposals for UNESCO, UNESCO national commissions, and will work with the IFOR UNESCO representative. Currently, Maria Antonietta Malleo is the IFOR UNESCO representative and convenor of the IFOR UNESCO working group.

The main programme at present being implemented on by IFOR is the WPP-Women Peacemakers Program (WPP). Its primary goal is to increase the empowerment of women through active non-violence. WPP has supported the Decade through publications and trainings. IFOR considers the issue of gender to be a crucial matter in working towards a Culture of Peace.

IFOR is about to start a new research project provisionally entitled 'Kindergarten project'. This project will undertake research on how children between 3 and 6 years old learn about non-violence. IFOR is currently identifying three kindergartens in Europe and one or two from outside Europe to form the core group of this project. One of the expected outcomes will be a greater understanding of the best way of educating 3 to 6 years old pupils in non-violence and sharing these insights with kindergarten staff and parents of the children. The project will also allow exchanges between research centres and universities.

Another project focusing on schools is the creation of a peace kit that will give knowledge and skills to 14-18 year old students to initiate their own projects and school peace clubs, as well as spread the idea of non-violence to their fellow students.

Halfway through the Decade, the main result we can now see is the existence of coalitions at the national and international level. The Decade has also helped to create an atmosphere which gives legitimacy to events and projects promoting a culture of peace.

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

As an international organisation, IFOR does not have enough funds to start large projects, so lack of money has slowed down the process of promoting the Decade. In 1999, IFOR went ahead in faith and appointed a staff member to be specifically responsible for working on the Decade. Unfortunately, additional funding was not forthcoming to support this post and the departure of the staff person was a major setback to IFOR's support for the Decade at the Secretariat.

The absence of a specific IFOR staff member for the Decade at IFOR was and is a key difficulty in supporting the work. At present whether this task is fully carried out depends on whether there is a full-time volunteer in the Secretariat available to work on the Decade.

The Decade to Overcome Violence of the WCC is taking place at the same time as the Decade for a Culture of Peace. This has been both a great advantage and a difficulty. The difficulty arose in that a number of IFOR member organisations felt that they were faced with

an either/or choice. Some, for example FOR Germany, decided to support the WCC Decade and to put fewer resources into supporting the Decade for a Culture of Peace.

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?*

- *Fostering a culture of peace through education:* many of our branches are involved in peace education. IFOR is about to implement a research project aiming non-violence education in kindergartens as explained above. Another project focusing on schools is the creation of a peace kit that will be distributed in schools to help pupils to establish school peace groups and gain a better understanding of non-violence. Having the knowledge, these students would then have the skill-base to create projects and spread the idea of non-violence to their peers. The development of school peace clubs is an area with which IFOR groups in Africa are especially concerned. The IFOR group in Zambia is currently being funded by IFOR to establish peace clubs in schools in the Copper Belt region of Zambia.

IFOR also participates in EURED- Education For Europe as Peace Education, a project on peace education in Europe, started in the framework of the Decade for a Culture of peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World. Their organizational center is the Klagenfurt University in Austria. EURED developed an in-service training course for teachers and school consultants (both primary, secondary and higher education) to help implement peace education in the schools. IFOR is represented by Janne Poort van Eeden.

This project has existed since 2002. There will be a total of 4 seminars followed by a closing conference where the result of 2 years of work will be presented.

One of their projects in the framework of EURED in the Netherlands is to develop a summer school on Peace Education.

- *Ensure equality between women and men/ Advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity:* IFOR's Women Peacemakers Program believes that the empowerment of women through active non-violence promotes equality. Without women, neither peace nor development can take place. This program not only helps to ensure equality between men and women but also helps to foster a Culture of peace through education and promoting sustainable economic and social development through empowering women.

Between 2002 and 2004 this programme trained more than 1300 women from over 40 countries at 24 trainings in nonviolence. Each person trained then conducted further trainings in their own regions which trained a further 20,000 women in active non-violence - a crucial contribution to a Culture of Peace.

- *Advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity:* IFOR has been promoting a culture of peace and non-violence since its founding. Every project initiated by one of IFOR's member organisations contributes to a more peaceful society.

Wi'am, an IFOR member organisation based in Bethlehem, is only one of many IFOR members that arranges regular inter-faith meetings between religious leaders and helps build up trust and friendship as well as reflection on the things which make for peace within each faith tradition.

IFOR members in India and Bangladesh are deeply concerned in working to counter inter-communal tension and conflict.

IFOR's own publications have emphasised inter-religious work and inter-faith understanding. The most recent issue of the IFOR magazine, International Reconciliation, focused on Islam, Non-violence and the Muslim Renaissance. IFOR's

series of longer pamphlets called 'Patterns' include an issue which examines non-violence in Islam, one which looks at non-violence in Christianity and one which has a comparative reflection on non-violence in the different spiritual traditions.

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)?*

IFOR's impression is that there is greater awareness of the reality of violence at the domestic level and greater awareness that the use of violence needs to be challenged in all levels of society. This includes especial emphasis on eliminating violence against women and children.

Our impression is that greater equality between men and women is one action area in which globally there is continuing progress .

The impact of the media and especially of the dominant American culture has been to entrench violence as an integral aspect of conflict resolution, especially when violence is used by the side that is 'just'.

Internationally the invasion of Iraq by the US and its allies was a major setback for all attempts to settle conflicts without recourse to war and in accordance with international law.

Another aspect in which we can see some progress is fostering a culture of peace through education. Nowadays, culture of peace education on every level (from kindergarten to universities) has been promoted. IFOR welcomes a greater awareness of a non-violence approach in schools.

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

The first major obstacle is that of translating a global aspiration for a culture of peace into achievable targets.

The lack of staff at UNESCO slows down the process of implementing the Decade. The Decade has been significantly under-funded and under-resourced by UNESCO. The existing staff has been doing an excellent job given the limited resources they have. A very substantial increase in staff and resources is required if there is going to be greater impact in the next five years.

IFOR would specifically recommend the appointment of additional staff charged with the organisation of regional conferences and seminars on the themes of the Decade.

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.*

IFOR/WPP have criteria for evaluating the impact of local and regional trainings in non-violence on participants and the participants' network. However, IFOR itself has not developed any ways of measuring progress but we are aware of the project conducted by Graham Dyson from the Centre for Peacebuilding and Conflict Management in Norway. He has conducted a survey in Norway to find some indicators of changes in society towards a culture of peace.

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.

IFOR as an international secretariat depends on its network. IFOR has 70 member organizations: branches, groups and affiliates.

IFOR works closely with other partner international organisations. We have asterisked* those bodies in whose foundation IFOR was involved.

On the peace and non-violence side, IFOR works especially with the International Peace Bureau, War Resisters International, the United Nations in Geneva, New York and Vienna, the International Coalition for the Decade*, Nonviolent Peaceforce*, the European Centre for Conflict Prevention* and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

On the spiritual, faith and non-violence side, IFOR works closely with the World Council of Churches, Pax Christi International, the Conference of European Churches*, Eirene*, SERPAJ (Latin America)* and Church and Peace*.

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?

Yes, IFOR is aware of it and is registered in the UNESCO database. There is a link from the IFOR website to the UNESCO website. IFOR has used the UNESCO website, it has been useful. Were additional resources available, then the site could be further improved and developed.

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.

As cited above, IFOR is on its way to implementing a new research project focusing on non-violence education for 3 to 6 years old pupils. Another project aiming schools is the creation of a peace kit, which will be then distributed to schools so students can create their own peace clubs and by doing so, increasing their knowledge of non-violence and learning how they can implement their own projects.

IFOR is committed to a renewed emphasis on inter-faith dialogue and on encouraging each faith tradition to reflect anew on all that makes for reconciliation and non-violence within its own faith tradition. The latest issue of the IFOR magazine International Reconciliation reflects this commitment and concern.

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

The first emphasis should be on peace education both inside and outside schools. Many governments would be open to work that helps reduce bullying and violence within schools. The teaching unions would be receptive to work that promotes a culture of non-violence within

schools. An emphasis on spreading non-violent conflict resolution skills from kindergarten to high schools might commend itself to many of the governments of the world.

This emphasis would help to mainstream a concern for a culture of peace. Overall many governments are not motivated by the Decade. Where governments have been involved in initiatives that could be part of the concern of the Decade - such as reducing bullying in schools - this has not usually been seen as connected with the Decade at all. On the other hand, National Coalitions for the Decade are often comprised of groups who have been working on peace issues for many years and who have little in the way of additional resources.

The second main emphasis should be on encouraging the United Nations to establish an effective non-violent intervention unit. There is a wide disparity between the way in which peacekeeping operations are implemented and awareness of the desirability of working towards a culture of peace and reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict. There is wide agreement that violence should be a last resort - but far less work is done on increasing the capacities and resources to bring about a non-violent resolution of conflicts. Children are among those worst affected by violent conflict. A non-violent intervention unit - inspired by the model of Gandhi's Shanti Sena and building on the experiences gained by the Nonviolent Peaceforce in Sri Lanka - would be a very significant addition to working for a culture of peace and in promoting international peace. Recourse to war is a crucial factor militating against the development of a culture of peace.

The third main emphasis should be on ensuring equality between women and men. As said earlier, IFOR's Women Peacemakers Program believes that the empowerment of women through active non-violence promotes equality. Without women, neither peace nor development can take place.

The Decade could be promoted with a more inter-sectorial strategy, in line with the nature and the method of working of UNESCO as an educative, scientific and cultural organization, which can take a more global and cultural approach to the challenge of violence and non-violence. Such an approach was a significant contribution of the Decade towards a "culture of peace". In the United Nation's definition, the Decade was seen "as a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour, and ways of life".

The global and coordinated effort, which was visible at the beginning of the campaign with the international year for a culture of peace in 2000, is still necessary. It can only happen through the work of UNESCO and other UN agencies in cooperation with civil society.

Such a global and coordinated approach can be facilitated through a greater coordination between the goals of the Decade and the goals of the major programmes that are the core of the future strategic plan of UNESCO - Education for all, Education for Sustainable development (focusing the attention not only on the development of educative processes and literacy, but also on the educative contents and methodologies through non-violent awareness and approaches) and within the Human Rights strategy, the defence of cultural diversity and the dialogue among civilizations.

IFOR proposes one public exercise - the holding of regional conferences for a Culture of Peace culminating in a worldwide conference towards the end of the Decade.

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

By building up a stronger network, by reinforcing existing projects and encouraging the promotion of new ones.

IFOR hopes for adequate level of staffing within UNESCO for the Decade including appropriate clerical and administrative support for staff.

IFOR hopes for a higher profile for the Decade within the United Nations, UNESCO and UNESCO national commissions. Additional members of staff should be appointed with the remit of improving the awareness of national UNESCO commissions about the tasks of the Decade and facilitating the funding of projects and programmes connected with the Decade.

IFOR hopes that more resources will be channelled towards promoting the human rights of children in the context of the Decade.

IFOR also proposes that more resources be committed to promoting the development of National Coalitions for the Decade.

Future plan could include updating the website of the Decade after 2010. It would also be a good thing to set up a permanent conference after the end of the Decade, where progress toward a Culture of Peace could be discussed. A topic such as peace should not be forgotten at the end of the Decade. So we strongly believe that either another department at UNESCO takes over or the existing one is allowed to create a permanent conference.

The possibility of establishing an external reference group to support the work of the Decade should be explored.

IFOR will encourage both its own members and the national coalitions to formulate proposals for consideration by UNESCO national commissions.

At IFOR we will focus on peace education in schools and through the Women Peacemakers Program. The emphasis will continue to be placed on ensuring equality between women and men in civil society.

Today the challenge is to face the cultural normalization of violence existing through the global product of the mass industry, which is mostly violence inspired and has a large impact especially on children and young generations (with tv, cinema, advertising, toys, web, etc.). The violence of war and terrorism is in this sense the latest point of this process of visual education to violence.

The Decade needs to create bridges between the world of non-violent culture on one hand with its message of civilization, freedom from violence and the unity of human beings, and, on the other hand, those who work in communications, mass media and production.

A campaign can be launched within the framework of the Decade for the Children of the World, which gives input to the education and transformation of societies themselves. IFOR hopes to cooperate with UNESCO in the next 5 years in promoting the commitment of artists, personalities of world of culture and the mass media to a non-violent culture. Such a commitment to a non-violent culture will favour dialogue between civilizations and can foster projects for the cooperation of workers within the cinema, cultural institutions and organizations of civil society.

IFOR envisages a campaign to celebrate worldwide the 21 September as International Day for Peace according to the UN Resolution 55/282, with personalities of the world of art, sciences, culture, sports, education and intellectuals involved in an integrated and intersectorial strategy.

The current gap between approaches to conflict between the vision and experiences of civil society and the solutions adopted by governments must be overcome.

International Fellowship of Reconciliation,
Alkmaar, 17 March 2005