

# Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

A mid-term report from the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.

In 1997 the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed that the year 2000 would be the International Year for a Culture of Peace. In 1998 the United Nations decided to adopt the **Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World** to give greater worldwide support for a Culture of Peace.

Since the very beginning IFOR primarily through Pierre Marchand, leading force of this idea, was very involved in this Decade. Some IFOR branches decided to undertake projects so that the Decade would not be only a general aspiration but a concrete project. In this report, you will find actions undertaken by some IFOR branches and member organizations.

## 1. I FOR:

In September 1997, FOR/USA held an IFOR press conference at the United Nations to support the establishment of a Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence. They also introduced the Appeal of the Nobel Peace Laureates, the foremost supporters of the idea of this Decade.

In 1998 IFOR branches, especially FOR India's youth wing and FOR Austria, gathered many signatures in order to promote the Appeal for the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, the official campaign for this Decade.

In November 1998, the United Nation's General Assembly voted unanimously to establish the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

The following year, in 1999, IFOR decided on a nine-point plan for the Decade:

- *Education and training for children:* Children will be taught conflict resolution and respect for human rights in both the home and in their schools. This means inviting all the ministries of education to introduce education for a culture of peace and non-violence into school curricula at all educational levels. Violence in schools such as bullying and violence against girls will be examined and remedies sought. Another effort would be to exclude military language and violent metaphors and to rewrite history books.
- *Education and trainings for adults:* all IFOR member groups and partners organize conferences, workshops and trainings related to a culture of non-violence. IFOR is also building worldwide & regional training networks as an IFOR strategy to pass on

knowledge on active non-violence. IFOR had a non-violence education and training program in 1992. Now this component has now been mainstreamed by many of our BGAs. Women Peacemakers Program (WPP) was also promoting non-violence education and training.

- *Development of non-violence media (worldwide media network):* contacts were established with Media Peace Centre (South Africa) and Forest Creatures Entertainment (United States) to develop interactive communication and information on alternatives to violence, the creation of interest within the media for the Decade, the training of journalists and the production of materials.
- *Responding to gender and family violence:* this kind of violence is often hidden from the public domain. It is private and therefore becomes even more violent. There are many links between gender and family violence as well as issues of education of children and economic justice.
- *Disarmament:* IFOR believes there is no room for weapons in a culture of non-violence. Since its formation, IFOR has been involved in campaigns against all kinds of weapons.
- *Economic justice:* Peace cannot exist without justice. IFOR co-operated with the World Council of Churches in the Jubilee 2000 campaign to abolish the debts of the Global South by the countries and bankers in the Global North and with the program of the International Network of Engaged Buddhism.
- *Inter-religious dialogue:* with its own spiritually based tradition in non-violence, IFOR wants to focus on this aspect. In the Women Peacemakers Program regional consultations, inter-religious dialogues also play an important role.
- *Promoting peace teams and zones of peace:* the concept of peace zones has been developed in different parts of the world and is especially advanced in Central America. The concept of peace teams should be reconsidered also. In 1999, IFOR was involved in several peace team initiatives and organizations like the Balkan Peace Team, the SIPAZ team in Chiapas, Eirene, Peace Brigades International and the European Network on Civilian Peace Services.
- *Structure for peace building:* campaign will focus on decision makers and institutional changes at various levels to encourage the creation of ministries and councils for peace as well as to encourage the conversion of military and the control of arms trade.

These nine different areas should not be considered as separate. The connections between and overlaps of these areas should be emphasized.

In order to present the Decade plan, IFOR was involved in several events. In 1999, IFOR participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Non-violence, in Atlanta, Georgia,

USA. The same year, there were IFOR speakers on the Decade at the annual conference of the Scottish and the UK FOR as well as at a conference organized by Church and Peace. IFOR was involved in the production of a book entitled “From Coexistence towards Peace Building and reconciliation: Challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”.

IFOR also published Decade material: 7 leaflets were made available, Child soldiers and Acholi chiefs in Uganda; Peace Teams in former Yugoslavia; Militarism in Chile; Walk for Peace and Reconciliation in Cambodia; Creative Leadership for Non-violent Social Transformation; Education for Girl Child workers in Nepal; Working with Rwandese Refugees.

A petition to support the Decade was launched and IFOR received thousand of signatures mainly from supporters in Sweden, Pakistan, India and Japan.

In 2000, a six-point Manifesto in support of the Decade was launched in Paris by UNESCO, in the presence of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Adolfo Perez Esquivel and Mairead Maguire (both members of IFOR). The Manifesto was a personal commitment drafted by a group of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, which gathered more than 75 million signatures worldwide.

During its quadrennial Council in New York in 2002, IFOR reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the work of the Decade. A working group was established with the Decade as its central focus. In 2004, this working group divided into two, with one group with Maria Antonietta Malleo as convener concentrating on IFOR relations with UNESCO. The other working group, of which Christian Renoux is presently convener, concentrates on promoting the Decade, especially encouraging national coalitions to support the Decade. In 2003, Maria Antonietta Malleo was appointed as the IFOR UNESCO representative.

IFOR has 70 member organizations in 40 countries: branches, groups and affiliates. Some member organizations felt that they faced a choice whether to place their energy promoting the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace or the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence.

Many member organizations considered that the challenges of the Decade could best be addressed by working in formal co-operation with similar minded organizations. One way forward was to establish national platforms, or coalitions, to support the work of the Decade.

IFOR encouraged its members to support such platforms. IFOR directly supported the formation of the International Coalition for the Decade to coordinate the work of national coalitions and Catherine Meyland (from MIR Romand – Switzerland), the official IFOR representative on the International Coalition Committee.

Currently IFOR knows of national coalitions in Austria, Congo (Brazzaville), France, Italy, Netherlands and Sweden. Discussions are taking place in other countries with a view to establishing further national coalitions.

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. Their organizational centre is 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 in EURED by Janne Poort van Eeden.

This project has existed since 2002. There will be a total of 4 seminars and then 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.

In 2004, IFOR began promoting a project introduced by Eva Füssinger of the German-speaking Swiss For branch to carry out research in non-violence education among kindergartens students. The kindergarten age range, between 3 and 6 years old, is a very important stage for learning about ways of social interaction. Children do not innately discover the range of possible non-violent strategies for resolving conflicts and learning conflict resolution skills will give them the tools they will need to help resolve conflicts without recourse to violence. Also, teaching these skills will help children live more peacefully in to-day's world and encourage a culture of peace. The aim of this project is also to allow exchanges and cooperation on the international and European level.

IFOR continues to promote peace teams and zones of peace. IFOR is presently involved in supporting the Nonviolent Peaceforce, an IFOR member is on the governing council. IFOR also supports the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, which in turn supports the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. IFOR will have a representative at the GPPAC conference in New York in July 2005.

Another project focusing on education 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 will have the skills to create projects and spread the idea of non-violence to their peers.

IFOR's own publications have emphasised the area of inter-religious work and interfaith 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 examining non-violence in Islam, non-violence in Christianity and a comparative reflection on non-violence in the different spiritual traditions.

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 with support from Brot für die Welt, a charitable organization based in Germany, to run a scheme establishing peace clubs in schools in the Copperbelt Region of Zambia.

## 2. IFOR - work directly with UNESCO

Maria Antonietta Malleo has been the IFOR representative at UNESCO since 2003. She is supported by an IFOR UNESCO working group.

The United Nations defines a Culture of Peace as "*a set of values, attitudes, traditions, modes of behaviour and ways of life*". IFOR considers that it is important to see future activities including practical and strong changes in cultural messages as well as more theoretical formulations. This should be done within a broader commitment to non-violence both by IFOR and also by other international organizations.

In the message to the President of the General Conference 2003, which was recorded in the official proceedings as an IFOR contribution to the issues under discussion, IFOR made four proposals:

1-To consider the introduction of an international agreement covering the theory and practice of non-violence and human rights in the national educational systems of the Member States of UN as a goal for the Decade;

2- to implement studies and research on methodologies and educational approaches for the practice of non-violence, including the process of dialogue and reconciliation, and to spread knowledge on the theory and practice of non-violence. This is already practised in several universities in the world.

3- to support the commitment of world artists and cultural personalities (in education, sports and other fields of human activity represented at UNESCO), in order to promote non-violence, dialogue between civilizations, and cultural diversity. These are the focal points in the global strategy for a Culture of Peace and in the new goals of UNESCO. They are also central to the International Day of Peace on the 21st of September;

4 - to strength a strategy against the forms of physical and psychological violence, especially against the cultural industry of violence (cinema, videos, television, advertising, toys production and internet communications), which communicate the contents of violence. Such a strategy would emphasize the role of the mass media in mainstreaming a mentality and culture of dialogue and non-violence.

At the International Conference of NGOs in December 2003, the IFOR representative obtained a recommendation in the final resolution for the promotion of the Decade to take place not only within the framework of the campaign "Heritage and Culture of Peace" but also through "an intersectorial approach...in cooperation with the other United Nation

agencies, in order to create more dynamic synergies” (Resolution NGOs Conference, December 2003).

Today the challenge is to face the cultural normalization of violence. Such cultural normalization is a product of the mass culture industry, which draws strongly on conflictual and violent inspiration and which has a major impact on children and young people. Such visual education strengthens violence and militarism. Many organizations are working against a culture of violence. The work of 'New Profile' in Israel is only one such example.

There is a place for a linked campaign against cultural violence that would involve people who work in mass communication, in cinema, in television and other areas of the visual arts and culture.

These themes have been shared with UNESCO and with other NGOs, international filmmakers, artists and cultural institutions and have received general agreement. Perhaps this is an area in which UNESCO itself could take a lead.

#### **PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND CULTURE OF NON-VIOLENCE THROUGH CINEMA:**

The dominant message of the last festival of Locarno was the refusal of violence and war. This festival is strongly committed to the promotion of human rights. It hosted the General Secretary of Amnesty International and a round-table on violence against women. The winning film was “Private”, a film about the non-violent resistance of a Palestinian family in the occupied territories, with Palestinian and Israeli actors.

The Video productions of IFOR WPP will be recorded in the Video Library of Human Rights of the Festival di Locarno in order to have a wider public circulation.

#### **CULTURAL DIVERSITY:**

After the participation in the debate on cultural diversity at the 2003 UNESCO General Conference, IFOR took part in the process of consultation of NGOs for the elaboration of a preliminary draft text for the convention on the protection of “cultural diversity and artistic expression” in 2004. IFOR made observations in favour of minorities and against the emergence of a global cultural industry. Even if the observations of NGOs have been not accepted, they have been recorded in the documents of the meetings at the request of the Liaison Committee.

Unfortunately, at the moment the process is an a phase of standstill; only 11 of the articles have been approved, and article 11 (the only one approved with consensus) has reduced the position of civil society in the protection of cultural diversity from having “responsibility” for protecting of cultural diversity, as in the initial text, to only being allowed to “participate” in it. The approved article affirms that "*The States Parties shall encourage civil society to participate in the protection and promotion of the diversity of*

*cultural contents and expressions, and shall foster the participation of civil society in their efforts in this domain."*

### **COLOMBIA.** :

After a meeting with a representative of the communities of peace of Colombia, which are supported by FOR USA and MIR Italia, IFOR is examining the idea of sustaining their non-violent struggle through the promotion of their heritage, educational model and economy within the frameworks of the "Heritage and Culture of Peace" campaign, the defence of cultural diversity and the commitment for sustainable development (as in the new UN Decade for Education for Sustainable development 2005-2014) of UNESCO.

Maria Antonietta Malleo participated in the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference and spoke during the debate on cultural diversity. She stressed the value of cultural diversity in spiritual traditions and their role in a culture of reconciliation.

She also proposed an international agreement to include the teaching of non-violence in national school curricula by 2010 as a goal of the Decade.

In December 2003, she participated in the International Conference of NGO's in official relations with UNESCO and in November 2004, in the annual meeting of NGOs at UNESCO.

IFOR has supported the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education. In Paris in September 2003 on the occasion of the awarding of the UNESCO prize, the Rev. David Mumford, IFOR International Coordinator, participated as a main speaker in a round-table on the theme of 'Culture of Peace and the Foundations of Reconciliation'.

IFOR has a link on its website to the UNESCO website on the Decade.

## **3. I FOR- Women Peacemakers Program**

The United Nations defined eight areas on how civil society and NGOs can promote the Decade. Among these, three match the work of the WPP:

1. Create a culture of peace through education *by revising the educational curricula to promote qualitative values, attitudes and behaviours of a culture of peace, including peaceful conflict-resolution, dialogue, consensus-building and active non-violence*
2. Promote sustainable economic and social development *by reducing economic and social inequalities, by eradicating poverty and by assuring sustainable food security, social justice, durable tensions to debt problems, empowerment of women, special measures for groups with special needs, environmental sustainability*
3. Ensure equality between men and women *through full participation of women in economic, social and political decision-making, elimination of all forms of*

*discrimination and violence against women, support and assistance to women in need.*

The WPP believes that the empowerment of the women through active non-violence promotes equality and that encouraging women and girls to become involved in peace building and civil society building is essential for development. WPP believes that without peace, development is impossible – and without women, neither peace nor development can take place. This program is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The program helps women peace activists deepen their skills and link up with like-minded activists and groups by:

- Organizing an annual training for women trainers in active non-violence. This consists of a two-week training of trainers who then return home and conduct two gender-sensitive non-violence trainings. They are put in touch with a mentor. The WPP helps provide seed money for these non-violence trainings. The next year the same women come back together for a follow-up two weeks training in which they discuss the challenges and obstacles that they face as non-violence trainers. This process means that one training of 17/20 women by the end can affect over 700 women.
- Supporting active non-violence trainings for women, with an emphasis on gender (trainings have taken place in Aceh, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Kenya, Romania, the Thai-Burma border, Zimbabwe and elsewhere)
- Holding regional consultations for women from different sides of armed conflicts
- Organizing exchange programs for women in peace organizations
- Conducting regional gender trainings
- Holding media trainings for women peace activists

In 2001, WPP published a workshop kit consisting of information, suggestions, exercises and resources. This is a very useful tool for anyone interested in conducting trainings about active non-violence. The United Nations Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence gives opportunities for creating awareness of the need to support women's peace initiatives. This kit is used all over the world and is available in English, French, German, Arabic, Georgian and Spanish.

In 2004, Aurore Salinas and Daniel Laqua from UNESCO asked IFOR to write an article about gender and the WPP; this article was published in the UNESCO Decade newsletter in January 2005.

#### **4. DECADE WORK AND MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:**

The following describes the situation as far as it is known by the IFOR secretariat. Communication can be difficult and much may well be taking place that the secretariat is

unaware of. However if something is included, then it is definitely happening. Although IFOR initially wished to appoint a paid staff person specifically to work on the Decade, funding constraints meant that this that this was not a possibility.

IFOR's ability to support the Decade depends on one of the two or three full time volunteers having the interest and the competency to take on this task.

## **AFRI CA:**

WPP have carried out or supported trainings and events in the following countries: Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Nigeria.

### **MIR-MAD: (Madagascar)**

In October 2004, MIR-MAD organized a training for trainers with the theme '*Non-violence and gender communication*'; this training had the objective of promoting peace and justice by non-violent means. This clearly endorses one of the aspects of a Culture of Peace as seen by the UN, promoting peace through education.

### **ASSOCIATION CONGOLAISE POUR LA NON-VIOLENCE:**

In June 2003, the Coordination Congolaise pour la Décennie was formed with 7 organizations and there are now 18. An IFOR member, the Association Congolaise pour la Non Violence was deeply involved in the formation of this coordination.

In 2004, they launched the Program Femmes Artisanes de Paix, a women peacemakers program, which examine the gender issue as well as non-violence.

They have regular debates and conference on non-violence in their centre in Brazzaville.

## **ASI A:**

### **ANANDO:**

ANANDO, an IFOR group based in Bangladesh, has worked since 1999 on specific action programs for the Decade. ANANDO started basic peace education that works on child education, trainings in conflict transformation, conflict resolution and mediation. They have selected about 100 educational institutions to implement this program with a training for trainers organized for 30 trainers. They planned activities as workshop for students and teachers. This work is supported by publicity, peace theatre and follow-up actions after each initiative.

They also aim to promote cooperation and inter-religious dialogue in the Chittagong Hill Tracts<sup>1</sup>. In order to do so, they have worked with ethnic communities and the Bengali settlers. They organized youth work camps, and a women's income generation project.

### **FOR-INDIA:**

In India, the IFOR branch<sup>2</sup> has been committed to promoting the Decade since the very beginning.

In 2000, after 8 months of work, FOR-INDIA in association with the Cultural Academy of Peace (CAP) opened a desk in Ernakum to coordinate the Decade program which centred on a five-point action plan: work on peace education, training in active non-violence, eradication of family and domestic violence and inter-religious cooperation and coexistence. Activities have included mediation camps, family empowerment programs and monthly meetings on inter-religious cooperation. The state educator was approached with the proposal to include peace education in schools and college curricula. The state education system responded positively to the idea. In Cochin, a pilot program was undertaken to form peace groups in schools and college. It attracted more than 1000 students.

FOR-INDIA released a video in 2000 entitled '*Building the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence*'. This video features the Asia Girl Child Peace Camp held in Katmandu, Nepal, in 1999. The camp is one example of what can be done to implement peace education training.

FOR-INDIA launched the message of peace campaigns in several hundred schools. Their work has been done so far with great acceptance. They also conducted periodical competitions with the theme '*peace and reconciliation*' like debates, essays writing, posters, paintings, etc, as well as conflict transformation and conflict management programs in association with the district administration, the educational authority and several other NGO.

To spread the message of the Decade, they have tried to get people involved at the level of legislature and representatives.

FOR India is also deeply concerned in work to counter inter-communal tension and conflict.

### **PAG-AALAY NG PUSO FONDATION**

One of our members, Pag-aalay NG Puso<sup>3</sup> in the Philippines has been actively involved in promoting the Decade. In 2002, they proposed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that

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<sup>1</sup> The Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord 1997 signed between the Government of Bangladesh and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) recognises the reestablishment of the rights of the Jumma indigenous peoples over the CHT region, southeastern part of Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup> Mathew George, general secretary, georgemathew@vsnl.net

an Asiatic Centre for Peace be established. They have been working with 15 non-violent NGO for a common commitment for peace through a sustainable development in the frame of the Decade. They also have focused their work to promote the Decade through families in economically depressed areas. In 2004, they introduced their plan to conduct an active non-violence training for families in the areas of the informal settlers.

### **WI'AM:**

WI'AM, an IFOR member organization based in Bethlehem is one of many IFOR members which arrange regular inter-faith meetings between religious leaders and help build up trust and friendship as well as reflection on the things which make for peace within each faith tradition.

### **EUROPE:**

#### **FOR AUSTRIA<sup>4</sup>:**

In 2000, FOR-AUSTRIA initiated an Austrian Platform called 'Österreichisches Netzwerk für Frieden und Gewaltfreiheit'- Austrian Network for Peace and Non-violence, with 35 member organizations. FOR-AUSTRIA took the leading role in organizing the meeting and the network. In November 2000, an opening public panel discussion and a day with students of high schools, which both attracted more than 120 participants, was organized with Mairead Maguire in Vienna.

FOR-AUSTRIA has a yearly study day of the 'Netzwerk' and the Austrian Ecumenical Council of Churches on different aspects to overcome violence. Topics so far have included 'Overcoming violence' (2001, with Fernando Enns/WCC as main speaker), 'Peace Education' (2002, with Uli Jäger/Institut für Friedenspädagogik Tübingen), 'Violence and/in language', 'Media' (2003) and 'Learning from each other as neighbours' (2004, with guests from Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic). Last year, the event took place in Vienna on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December and David Mumford, IFOR International Coordinator, participated.

Since 2001, they have participated in the Global Education Week of the Council of Europe, which takes place in combination with peace weeks in November. The activities during this time are focused on schools and training/education for adults.

A 16-page booklet "Gewaltfrei handeln" has been published with the support of the Ministry of Education. About 10,000 copies have been given away. They also released a book '*Dem Rad in die Speichen fallen. Stimmen von FriedensnobelpreisträgerInnen und das Österreichische Netzwerk für eine Kultur des Friedens und der Gewaltfreiheit*', compiling articles by Nobel Peace Prize Laureates and from Austrian organizations.

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<sup>3</sup> Theresa ( Tere) Dalumpines-Project Director, ppf@navotas.com.ph

<sup>4</sup> Pete- Internationaler Versöhnungsbund IFOR Austria, office@versoehnungsbund.at

Since 2000, the Austrian FOR has conducted annual training course on non-violence in the framework of the Decade, with 10-16 participants each year. Additionally, there are workshops in schools and for adults on various aspects of a culture of peace and non-violence going on regularly.

In 1999, they cooperated with the former Afghans Network by working with schools for displaced Afghan children in Islamabad, Pakistan. They sent them IFOR Decade material as well as cooperating through an exchange of information.

FOR-Austria, through the Austrian Platform, is a member of the International Coalition for the Decade.

FOR- AUSTRIA mentioned the positive and close cooperation between the groups for the UN Decade and the Austrian Ecumenical Council of Churches, which seems to be unique and which was inspired by Hildegard Goss-Mayr. Also, there is a broad spectrum of organizations which are members of the Network (peace and development organizations, children's' rights groups, church groups and organizations). On the negative side, FOR-AUSTRIA mentioned they have had less success in making the Decade really known to the public or in bringing their demands to a political level. There is not much support for the intentions of the Decade among politicians in general, and future developments do not seem likely to further a Culture of Peace and Non-violence.

## **FOR GERMANY**

FOR Germany is not giving priority to promoting the United Nations' Decade as they decided to focus on the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence. However a significant part of their work has clearly supportive consequences for the goals of the Decade.

Activities found on their website include: training in non-violent actions, workshops in non-violent communication according to Marshal Rosenberg and the project "Kreative Konfliktbearbeitung im kommunalen Zusammenhang" (Creative Conflict Resolution in Communal context) together with the ORCA institute. The Einfühlsam Zuhören (compassionate or mindful listening) project aims at furthering the understanding between Jews and Germans in regard to their common historical background. Their peace secretary and ecumenical secretary work also for the demilitarisation of society and for international youth exchange.

So even though they are not dedicating their work to the UNESCO Decade, their activities support a Culture of Peace.

## **MIR ITALY:**

MIR Italy runs several projects supporting the Decade. This was decided in the working plan during their national assembly held in Rome 2001.

A bill has been submitted to both the houses of the Italian Parliament to pass a regulation creating an International Institute of Peace Research and Conflict Resolution. MIR Italy also submitted a resolution to the local administrations to encourage them to promote a non-violence and peace culture in Italian schools. At the national level, a bill has been signed by almost 100 members of all political parties and has now been introduced into the Chamber of Deputies to provide the financing for peace and non-violence education in schools.

In 2003, MIR Italy set up the Italian Committee for the Decade which now has 5 organization: Associazione per la Pace, Beati I Costruttori di Pace, GAVCI-Gruppo Autonomo Volontariato Civile in Italia, Movimento Internazionale della Riconciliazione, Movimento Nonviolento, Banca Popolare Etica) and whose secretariat is based in Padova. This committee has joined the International Coalition for the Decade.

The Italian Committee is active and has undertaken several projects; they are now a legally established organization. They have designed their logo and have a Decade website. They have published posters and leaflets. They compiled a survey to find out more about peace education experiences, which is now being used in schools. To help in promoting the Decade, they also give lectures and put on activities in schools. Soon, they will distribute a CD-Rom about the Culture of Peace and Non-violence in high schools.

In May 2003, they organized their first international meeting during Civitas, the Third Sector Fair. They again took part in this fair in 2004. In Assisi, they attended a meeting organized by the group of organizations named “Tavola per la Pace” and participated in the political debate before this year's local elections. In October 2004, they organized a study conference entitled “ Se vuoi la pace educa alla pace’ (if you want peace, teach peace).

During 2005, they plan on having a conference on peace and non-violence education issues and reviewing what has been done during the first half of the Decade.

Several articles related to their activities on the Decade were published in the ‘Azione nonviolenta’ and the ‘Cahiers de la Réconciliation’.

The MIR local group of Padova has now a project, ‘Dieci anni per la pace e la nonviolenza’ (Ten years for peace and non-violence) including the announcement of a competition for the voluntary Civilian Service, approved by the Council of Ministers. From August 2003 to July 2004, two interns worked within the framework of this project.

The groups of MIR Italy in Val d’Aosta and Sicilia have been running educational projects promoting non-violence and a culture of peace in different schools. They also

created an award in memory of Professor Rocco Campanella, a former IFOR member and conscientious objector.

Since 2002, Ileana Alparone, artist and a MIR member has created artworks and a logo with the theme 'War and Peace' in order to promote the Decade. This work was given to the Franciscan Order of Lipari (see attached images).

### **KERK AND VREDE (Netherlands)**

In 1998, Kerk en Vrede took the initiative for the establishment of a platform for a culture of peace and non-violence. Currently, this platform has 18 members. There are three main areas on which its campaigns and activities focus: peace education, civil peace services, and a national commission for peace and non-violence. Particularly in the area of peace education there has been a lot of progress in terms of cooperation and a broader range of projects.

Furthermore Kerk en Vrede is also a member of the project group for the implementation of the Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence that was set up by the Dutch Council of Churches. The work that they do in this group focuses on three main themes: violence in the public area, domestic violence, and violence in church and theology. Especially related to the last point Kerk en Vrede has written a critical book about the sources of violence within Christianity that was published in September 2003. They regularly publish worksheets titled "Overcome" to stimulate local churches and communities to work on the themes of the World Council of Churches' ecumenical Decade.

Another topic that the Dutch IFOR branch is involved in is intercultural and inter-religious peace work. To reveal the backgrounds of the discussion about wearing a veil in public, they published a booklet that gives a thorough picture of the meaning of veils from a historic perspective. Moreover they offer support to communities, organizations, and individuals on how they can support cross-community work.

### **FOR SWEDEN:**

In 2002, SweFOR undertook many activities to promote the Decade. In November 2002, they had a non-violence training weekend for Christian youth in Stockholm, some non-violence lessons in schools in Vaxjo and a non-violence workshop including role-plays with the Swedish UN-Committee. They also had a workshop for the 100th year anniversary of the Student Christian Movement in Lund and another workshop with the theme 'Non-violence and global justice' held in Stockholm.

In January 2003, they held a workshop at a conference about the European Union together with the Swedish Church and the Democracy Academy. Since 2003, they have observed Martin Luther King Day in cooperation with the Swedish Baptist Church. The King Day 2004 was observed in several places in Sweden with theatre, demonstration and church services.

During summer 2004, SweFOR organized a meeting with the theme 'South Africa and Non-violence', to learn from the non-violent struggle that freed South Africa from apartheid. In October 2004, in association with the Muslim Youth of Sweden, they organized an evening about non-violence and religion. This helped spread the message of peace, which is strong in the world religions. With this cooperation, they aim to uphold the tradition of non-violence in both Christianity and Islam and learn from each other's religions. By doing so, they will develop new ways on how they can cooperate to bring forward peace and non-violence.

In a more general perspective, SweFOR has given trainings and information in non-violence and conflict transformation in association with five other organizations (SweFOR, Christian Council of Sweden, PeaceQuest, Teachers for Peace and the United Nations Association of Sweden). This project is a part of the 'peace in our hands' project in which they also made a proposal to include conflict transformation and non-violence in teachers' education and in the Swedish curriculum. They train youth who will in turn train other youth in non-violence. So within this project, they teach non-violence and conflict management skills to teachers, their members and anyone interested in promoting a culture of non-violence.

As a faith organization, SweFOR and four other organizations EFS Youth, The Student Christian Movement, Swedish Catholic Youth and the Swedish Baptist Youth formed the Peace Network. Together they also give trainings and seminars in non-violence.

With the Council of Churches in Sweden, they offer seminars about non-violence and conflict transformation; this project is called "Parishes for Peace". To highlight the World Council of Churches Decade they will have an ecumenical mid-Decade conference on non-violence with the Council of Churches.

#### **FOR SWITZERLAND:**

##### ➤ MIR Romand

The French speaking Swiss branch is a member of a platform in the Canton de Vaud. They regularly intervene in churches to promote the goals of the Decade.

##### ➤ FORUM FUR FRIEDENSERZIEHUNG

This branch conducts activities in parishes. They organize weekly peace-prayer services, role-plays, workshops about conflict resolution and non-violence. They also hold panel discussions about violence and non-violence and other informative events.

Different parishes work from time to time in cooperation by holding larger events. Even though the main focus is not actually the UNESCO Decade, their aim is the same. They work to promote the Decade decided by the Swiss Churches entitled 'Time of Peace'.

### **AMERICA:**

#### **FOR-USA:**

In 2000, from July to August FOR-USA held a people's campaign for non-violence in Washington DC. Within this context, special events like non-violence trainings, vigils, demonstrations and entertainment took place. The campaign centred on two key demands, one being racial, social and economic justice and the other demilitarisation.

FOR-USA was very supportive in helping Christian Renoux during his trip to New York in April 2004, where he gave a briefing about the International Coalition for the Decade to the NGO representatives at the UN. John Kim, FOR/IFOR representative at the UN-NY, assisted Christian in organizing the briefing.

## **5. DECADE WORK BY NATIONAL COALITIONS OF WHICH I FOR MEMBERS ARE A PART:**

### **COORDINATION CONGOLAISE POUR LA DECENNIE:**

In November 2003, they organized a training about non-violent communication and mediation that was followed by another training in February 2004. The person who conducted the training was Michel Monod, from Geneva, Switzerland. He is an IFOR UN representative in Geneva. The training took place in cooperation with the Institut Vie et Paix-Brazzaville. During these trainings participants were taught how to prevent violence and how to resolve conflicts. They focused on the following points: self-affirmation, understanding others, attitudes in conflicts and mediation.

In June 2004, a forum for consciousness-raising about the United Nations Decade for a Culture of Peace was organized in Brazzaville. The theme was: *non-violence at school from kindergarten to university*. Representatives from the Ministry of Technical and Professional Education as well as members of UNESCO, NGO and other associations were present.

### **FRANCE:**

In 2000, MIR France took the initiative to create a French coalition, which now consists of around 50 NGO's.

To promote a Culture of Peace, they celebrate the International Day of Peace every 21<sup>st</sup> of September. Since 2002, they have campaigned on the national level requesting the

introduction of non-violence and peace education in the French educational system. In October 2003, they organized a forum with the theme: *la non violence à l'école, de la maternelle à l'université* (non-violence at school from kindergarten to university) and in October 2004 they organized a second forum with the same theme.

They held a 'Salon des initiatives de Paix' in June 2004 in Paris at which many different peace organizations, including IFOR were represented. The salon introduced different means to overcome violence.

### **THE NETHERLANDS:**

In 1999, a Dutch platform for Culture of Peace was initiated by IFOR and Kerk and Vrede. There are now 18 member organizations. This platform connects Dutch peace organizations by making an inventory to know in which field they operate and where cooperation is possible. The platform has taken part in several campaigns like the movement against the war in Iraq, the Dutch Social Forum and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

The platform tries to address Dutch politics but so far has not been very successful. In the educational field, it connects initiatives, advertises them and brings the coordinators together.

It published a brochure in Dutch on a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence as a tool that will be used for the campaign. It tries to involve other NGO's working for a Culture of Peace.

In March 2005, the platform plans to organise a march for all member organizations working for peace and non-violence and individuals willing to participate. They also scheduled a review on what has been done so far on the promotion of the Decade. They have invited prominent Dutch people to give presentations and discussions on the results and methods used.

### **THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION:**

In June 2003, the International Coalition was set up in France with national coalitions and international NGO's. The aims of the International Coordination are the following:

- promoting the United Nations Decade,
- coordinating its members' actions by gathering resources and information,
- sharing the experiences and dialogue, particularly about education for peace and non-violence;
- representing its member coalitions on the international level and acting as a supporting and advisory body for the creation of new national coalitions in countries where they do not yet exist;
- coordinating international campaigns or actions upon themes of the Decade.

Such actions can be supported by those national coalitions that are not yet able to lead them by themselves.

## **6. CONCLUSION:**

Work for a Culture of Peace cannot be carried out in isolation from political, social and economic backgrounds. It is profoundly unfortunate that major world powers show by their actions that they continue to be committed to the use of violence as a method of settling disputes. IFOR notes with particular disappointment the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the failure to make significant progress towards disarmament, especially in respect of weapons of mass destruction. The rise of militarism is in conflict with a culture of non-violence.

IFOR also notes with concern the increasing trend towards neo-liberal globalisation and reliance on market forces in the provision of communications. Culture is not a commodity to be assessed only by commercial values. Spiritual and social values are profoundly important. Civil society needs to be supported in acting more strongly to defend spiritual and social values and affirm our common humanity, the necessary background for a commitment to non-violence.

As well as global factors, which have militated against the success of the Decade there have also been resource and organizational constraints.

The Decade has been significantly under-funded and under-resourced in its first five years. Staff have done excellent work in almost impossible conditions. A substantial increase in UNESCO staff and resources is required if there is going to be greater impact in the next five years. In particular, IFOR hopes for the appointment of additional staff concerned with the promotion of peace education. IFOR also hopes for the appointment of additional staff with regional responsibilities charged with improving the awareness of national UNESCO commissions of the tasks of the Decade, funding projects and programs connected with the Decade and with the encouragement and development of national coalitions for the Decade. IFOR hopes for at least one officer directly concerned with the overlap between the human rights of children and the work of the Decade. IFOR would hope for additional staff for organizing of regional conferences and seminars on the themes of the Decade. Adequate clerical and administrative support is needed as well for UNESCO Decade staff to raise the profile of the Decade within UNESCO and the UN.

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

The extent to which UNESCO national commissions are aware of the Decade and have moved towards including it in their work is variable.

