



Bridges of Peace



Newsletter of Peace Education
Centers/issue #6, 2005/



*Rashoyan Ani /16 years/.
Gyumri Extraschool Center*



***Welcoming speech of Armine Mikayelyan,
President of NGO "Women for
Development"***

Dear readers,

I want to congratulate everybody for the 6th publication of "Peace Bridges" newsletter.

Newsletter "New birth of Peace", the 5 issues of which you have already read was renamed "Peace Bridges". This gives a more exact depiction of the newsletter's present goal, i.e. to build "peace bridges" between schoolchildren in Gyumri, promote to the creation of a peaceful and friendly atmosphere in our schools, as well as inform Armenian and foreign schoolchildren about the Peace Centers' activities.

In this issue, you will know about the "open" classes conducted by the Peace Center members, about their impressions, suggestions and wishes.

In the section "Admirer's Corner", you'll read "Peace Bell" story, get information about the projects being implemented in schools of Gegharghunik Region by NGO "Education for Sustainable Development", etc.

This year "Peace Education and Conflict Resolution in Schools of Gyumri" project, in the frame of which the newsletter is being issued, has entered a new phase. 5 new schools were added to the existing 5 schools involved in the project, these are Gyumri schools ## 26, 4, 40, 9 and Meghrashat secondary school of Shirak Region.

I am sure that the "army" of 250 Peace Center members actually will become the army of "peace disseminators".

Good luck to everybody!

April 4, 2005 in the office of NGO Women for Development, a meeting was held with "Peace Education and Conflict Resolution" project members, directors and teachers of the 5 schools with established Peace Centers.

The main objective of the meeting was to reach agreement with school administrations for conducting "open" peace classes in April-May.

The president of Women for Development NGO, Armine Mikayelyan presented the guests various activities implemented by the organization, its current projects and future plans, after which further working and organizational questions related to conducting "open" peace classes were discussed with the participants.

Concrete suggestions were made regarding the selection

of schoolchildren's age group, classrooms and class hours.

School directors and heads of educational departments in their turn promised to do everything to facilitate the conduction of "open" peace classes.

All the participants of the meeting noted that schoolchildren attend the trainings

"...Peace Education is Necessary for Everybody"

with great enthusiasm: "...Children participate in the trainings with great pleasure and interest, they miss no classes..."-said R. Hakobyan, head of educational department, school #20.

Participants also mentioned the positive changes that have taken place in school

children's behaviour after peace classes.

"The Center's members have changed a lot, they listen to each other and are more tolerant"-said S. Badalyan, head of the educational department of school #30. He offered organizing meetings with parents, too. "...conflicts of social nature often occur in our quarter,

while organizing for the best way of involving them in Peace Education project".

A. Mughnetsyan, director of school #29 suggested that all schoolteachers be involved in Peace Education project, for in many cases teachers make conflicts themselves; “It would be nice if teachers

admitted their fault and in some cases could ask pupils for an excuse”. All the participants of the meeting were convinced that peace education and peace culture formation are priority

for everybody and should be initiated with schoolchildren. It was decided to make conducting of “open” peace classes a beautiful tradition and spread it in other schools of Gyumri, too.



Open Peace Classes: (Schoolchildren for schoolchildren)

...first I feared that children won't be interested, they will not listen to me and the lesson will fail. But after two days of teaching in the 7th grade, a pupil came up to me, told me about the conflict he was having and asked for help. I listened to him with great attention and gave several advices. My joy was boundless when he thanked me the next day, saying that my advice helped him to solve the conflict peacefully. The example of this boy was the greatest estimation for me...

Hasmik Galstyan -
pupil of the 8th grade,
member of "Peace
Education" Center, School #7

In order to spread skills on peace culture formation, peace education and peaceful conflict resolution among a larger number of schoolchildren it was decided to organize "open" peace classes in 5 schools involved in the project. Classes were to be conducted by the Peace Center member in peer-to-peer method.

First step was the development of theoretical and didactic materials necessary for conducting "open" classes; the second was the training of Centers' members as peer to peer educators.

At first pupils were cautious to know they must act in the place of educators. They feared; if they were not listened to, if they couldn't present the material well, if the lesson wouldn't be interesting, etc., but over time their fear passed and they became more confident.

With the help of our specialists, the members of the centers for nearly a month got ready for the "Open" class, learned materials, got familiar with the methods of interactive teaching.

From the 25 members of each Center, groups were formed of 2-3, sometimes 4-5 people, who first tried to conduct the "Open" class for the members of their Centers. During each lesson, one of the groups conducted the class, while the members of the Center listened and at the end of the lesson discussed it, pointed out its positive sides, revealed deficiencies. That helped not only the direct "educators", but also the other groups to better conduct the class, not repeat the deficiencies of the previous groups, overcome uncertainty they had and study the material in-depth.



school # 7

With its own initiative, each group also thought of a small performance, presenting some conflict situation. The performed conflict was deepening because the participants didn't have appropriate knowledge and skills

The same conflict situation was being presented with a peaceful outcome, where schoolchildren, applying the skills gained, could resolve the conflict in a peaceful way. The first classes

were conducted by the groups of more "confident" schoolchildren, while other groups were listening. Not only the theme of the lesson was new for the schoolchildren, but also the fact that the lesson was conducted not by the teachers, but the schoolchildren like them.

But just several minutes later when the group of educators presented themselves to the class and briefly told about the school's "Peace Education" Center and its activities, presented the theme of the lesson, everything became interesting for schoolchildren. To the raise of interest among them especially helped the illuminated posters fastened in the classroom, which in the appearance of talking and risible dwarfs were presenting the skills of peaceful conflict resolution. So, when the anxiety and tension of the first few minutes were left behind, our educators, like experienced teachers, were able to conduct the class, present the whole material, revise the lesson through questions, and what is most important, they could make the class participate in the small performances. At the end of the "Open" class almost all the pupils with great enthusiasm were telling about the conflict situations they have had and were trying to find peaceful solutions for them.

Discussion, analysis of monitoring results and lesson evaluation were made after the "open" classes. First members of the group conducting the lesson gave their objective evaluation of the lesson. It was very important for us as the managers of the project, because during discussions there was sound criticism and self-criticism. Such criticism instead of bringing to conflicts helped to bring out the noticed deficiencies and try not to repeat them. It must be mentioned that very often the educators themselves were "very strict" to their deficiencies and had a desire to do their best to make the material more available.

It became clear from the analysis of the testing's results, that nearly 98% of schoolchildren thought that a lesson like that was very necessary. Several examples from pupils' answers;



"...yes it's very necessary. Those skills and commandments will come in handy in all our life. This was a lesson of life...", "...the lesson helped us to be more patient...", "...we learned that we must explain and not quarrel...", "...if we had such skills earlier we could avoid many conflicts..."

To the question “How did this lesson differ from the others?”, the schoolchildren gave very interesting answers; “...this lesson gave the right and chance of speaking to all of us ...”, “ ... we could express our opinion and not fear from the thought, that we wouldn’t be understood...”, “...at first it was unusual to see pupils of our age in the role of teachers, but they were talking so interestingly, I want to become a member of “Peace” center, too...”. While, a pupil from 5th grade expressed the importance of the lesson with the following words; “... this lesson is very necessary, it teaches to take the right road in life, it is especially pleasant, when a pupil of your age is conducting the lesson, because he/she is a person who better understands your problems...”

As managers of the project, the most important thing for us is that after the “Peace” class schoolchildren are able to make changes in their behavior, so that they can think about the raised questions, reassess their behavior and relations with the surrounding people.

Project director-A. Mikayelyan
Project coordinator-G. Markossyan



school # 29



school # 30



school# 20

They know about “Open” peace
classes also in Europe



During the workshop on “Human Rights and Peace Education-Education Methodology and Specialization” 2005 July 10-14, project managers made a presentation about “Peace Education and Conflict Resolution” project and the “open” peace classes organized in schools.

It was the 3rd seminar to be organized in the frames of UNESCO/EURED In - Service

Teacher Training Course “Human Rights and Peace Education in Europe” 2004-2006.

Representatives from almost every European country were participating in the training, as well as representatives from local and governmental bodies working in the field of education.

Not only the participants but also the leaders of the training greatly appreciated our experience gained in the field of Peace Education in Armenia. A special attention was paid to the fact that our schoolchildren could pass knowledge on peace and peaceful conflict resolution to their schoolmates through peer-to-peer education method.

In the comments of the directors of the training Dayan Henrix and Miteya Urangay about the presentation it is particularly mentioned; “Your project where schoolchildren act as educators, opens a new field for Peace Education, which is quite new and is not widely spread. In this respect such innovation is rather promising and integrative...”

New Acquaintances Exchange of Experience and Skills



Meetings were organized with the Peace Center members of schools ## 7, 20 and 2 for the spreading of skills and knowledge obtained at Peace centers, as well as making acquaintance with each other and sharing their impressions about “open” peace classes conducted in their schools.

Children’s impressions of the meetings:

...meeting with schoolchildren of school #7 was very interesting. They had their own way of presenting and interpreting skills and commandments necessary for peaceful conflict resolution. Together we performed several conflict situations, after which a lively discussion started...

**Emma Ghukassyan
School #20**

Exchange experience, spread knowledge, this is all that we did for this term. It was pleasant to be acquainted with children, who were well informed about the project and had their own way of thinking. The atmosphere was especially warm in school #20, where the director and head of the educational department were also present.

Their intervention and suggestion of conflicts made the lesson more interesting and impressive.

We are proud to become “disseminators of peace” by taking the first step with the help of our teachers.

**Hayastan Karapetyan
School #7**



Meetings with schoolchildren in schools# 2 and 20 were very impressive. We wondered what kind of entertainments and meetings they had organized in their centers.

The Centers' children started hot discussions mainly about teacher-pupil relationships, while with the Peace center



members of school #20 we performed a conflict from everyday school life and received storm of applauses. We got new friends after these meetings.

**Zara Arakelyan
School #7**

...Before the class I feared that they won't accept us, moreover they will mock at us, but everything was the other way. To my surprise, 6-grade schoolchildren took the educated material rather seriously and with great interest.

The number of children was great in that class and we were only 2 years older but we were treated as mature educators.



We even performed several conflicts that had happened with them. But it was most interesting when schoolchildren came up to us after the class and expressed their wish to join our center.

I must note that the meeting with schoolchildren of school #7 greatly helped us in conducting classes freely and easily.

**Ruzanna Hartenyan
School #20**

Admires corner

From the history of the Peace Bell



.....This Japanese gift reminds us about the human price of war.

It is our most sincere hope that the deep and calming sounds of the Peace Bell will continue to remind us all of the importance of Peace. The inscription on the bell says-“Long live world peace”.

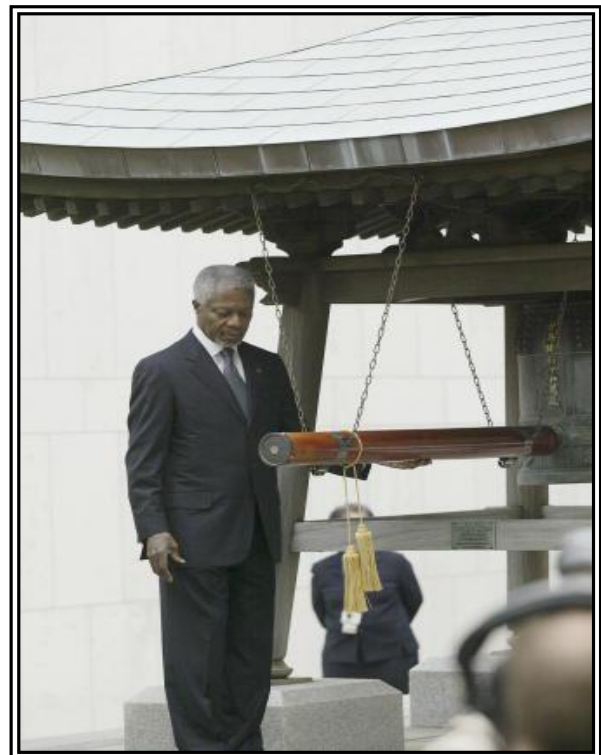
*An extract from the message of
UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan
made on the International Day of Peace*

The United Nations recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Japanese Peace Bell that was presented to the UN in June 1954 by the United Nations Association of Japan. The Peace Bell was made from coins collected by people in more than 60 countries and weighs 256 pounds. In a whole, the bell is protected by a typical Japanese structure made of cypress wood that resembles a Shinto shrine.

It has become a tradition to ring the bell twice a year: on the first day of Spring, at the Vernal Equinox, and on 21 September to coincide with the opening of the General Assembly. In 2002, the General Assembly set 21 September as the permanent date for the International Day of Peace.

In 1994, there was a special ceremony marking the fortieth anniversary of the Japanese Peace Bell. On that occasion, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said: “whenever it has sounded, this Japanese Peace Bell has sent a clear message. The message is addressed to all humanity. Peace is precious.

It is not enough to yearn for peace. Peace requires work — long, hard, difficult work.”



Secretary-General Kofi Annan marks the International Day of Peace by ringing the Japanese Peace Bell at United Nations Headquarters.



*Development begins with people
and their education*

“Education for Sustainable Development” foundation welcomes NGO Women for Development and values its contribution in Shirak Region community development and the promotion of women’s role in social life.

The mission of “Education for Sustainable Development” foundation is to promote to the empowerment of civil society through facilitating the process of long lasting and sustainable development of local communities. Organization follows the principle that any development process gains significance if it is community based and contributes to local initiatives.

Organization carries out its mission through educational projects, campaigns, technical support, grants, as well as through network collaboration promoting.

The main project directions of “Education for Sustainable Development” foundation are the promotion of community resource centers/community active school development, youth engagement, women promotion and the support to reforms in educational sphere.

“Community Resource Centers” project contributes to the development process of community school when the community and school together try to solve their problems through dialogue and collaboration. The project is implemented in Gegharghunik region with the funding of EED, Germany. The project also aims to promote collaboration between community schools in Armenia.

The Foundation has developed and published in English a reading manual for middle and high-grade schoolchildren. The aim of the manual is to enhance English skills of the learners and promote to the dissemination of ideas on Peace and Tolerance.



***“Community is my house” pupils’
action at school #4, Sevan***



***Educational training for community
resource center boards of schools. The
training is conducted by Hamazasp
Khachatryan, director of Gyumri
school #15.***



***Training on Community development at
the Community resource center of
Chambarak school #3
in Gegharghunik Region.***



Famous People about Peace

People say that walking on water is a miracle; but to me, walking peacefully on Earth is the real miracle.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Peace is not only better than war, but infinitely more arduous.

Bernard Shaw

Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means we arrive at that goal.

Martin Luther King Jr

...peace is the healing and elevating influence of the world...

Woodrow Wilson

He who lives in harmony with himself lives in harmony with the universe.

Markus Aurelius

*This is the way of peace: overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth,
and hatred with love.*

Peace Pilgrim

Five enemies of peace inhabit with us; avarice, ambition, envy, anger and pride; if these all were to be banished, we should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace.

Petrarch

"Peace Bridges" managed to be in many countries



"Peace Bridges" ("Peace New Birth) has managed to be in many countries, host schoolchildren of different age and nationality, make them familiar with the daily life of Armenian schoolchildren, Peace Centers' activities, organized various entertainments, etc.

Adults -partners of "Women for Development" NGO in different countries are also looking forward to the new issue of the newsletter.

As you already know from the previous issues, Peace Centers of schools ## 2 and 20 participate in European Studies Programme, and only through this programme our newsletter regularly reaches to schoolchildren of 9 schools in Denmark, England, Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.



Due to the efforts of Peace Center members at school #29, the newsletter reached Caribbean Islands, to the children from organization "Circles of Light". They read the newspaper with great interest and publish essays from the newsletter in "Spirit Talk" newspaper.



Professor at Klagenfurt University, Austria and the director of UNESCO/EURED "Human Rights and Peace Education in Europe" program, Verner Uinterstain distributes "Peace Bridges" also to his students in the university.

This is not the whole list of countries where our newsletter has been reached, accepted and admired. We'll continue talking about it in the next issues of the newsletter.



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Sch. #7, 13 years old,*